



Washington State Library LSTA Five-Year Evaluation Report 2013-2017

An independent evaluation of the use of Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding in Washington, prepared for the Washington State Library.

Summary of Recommendations

Analysis of LSTA-related program budgets (Table 1) show that during the grant period, WSL invested significantly more funding towards Goal 1: Access to Library Resources than towards training and other expenditures aimed at Goal 2: Quality of Library Services.

TABLE 1: BUDGET BY GOAL (2013-2015)

Goal	LSTA Funds	Total Project Cost
Goal 1: Access to Library Resources	\$5,935,097	\$12,187,272
Goal 2: Quality Library Services	\$2,836,656	\$2,923,427
Total	\$8,771,753	\$15,110,698

Program: Electronic Resources

Recommendations

- **Recreate the SDL and Anytime Library models of interaction with libraries for other potential group purchases.** WSL should consider other areas where coordinating group purchases may lower costs or expand availability of resources, such as the purchasing of floating collections/resource kits, paid speaker series, catalog software/services, professional development opportunities, and technology equipment and service.
- **Assess available data and develop an evaluation rubric to monitor changes in use patterns.** Better data, in particular about student use of databases, would help to clarify the significance of database availability in Washington.
- **Develop outreach and promotional strategies for databases to use in libraries and their communities.** For the databases to be used to a level consistent with the budget capture they represent, libraries will need assistance in promoting database use to their communities as well.

Program: Institutional Libraries

Recommendations

- **Continue to build relationships with the DOC.** DOC could be a valuable partner in increasing measurable outcomes enabled through LSTA funding, particularly related to lifelong learning and informal education.
- **Build programming that leverages library strengths and fills gaps for DOC.** Additional programming in Measuring Success lifelong learning and human services focal areas, such as information literacy, would help meet the needs of inmates not involved in formal educational programs offered through the community and technical colleges, and may encourage increased support from the DOC.
- **Work with community and technical colleges and DOC to address the infrastructure barriers to digital literacy education.** Colleges that have successfully incorporated technology in educational programs for prisoners would be effective collaborators in addressing DOC security and logistical challenges in development of digital skills programs.

Program: Washington Talking Book & Braille Library

Recommendations

- **Increase awareness of WTBBL's services.** Based on Census estimates of disabilities rates and other sources of information about the prevalence of low vision, it is likely that a larger proportion of Washington residents could benefit from WTBBL services. The electronic downloads and associated reading apps are likely to be of growing interest and particularly worthy of promotion.
- **Seek new funding and resource sharing partnerships to extend disability services.** With appropriate stakeholder engagement, creative approaches to service delivery, and greater reliance on funding from other sources, WSL may be able to expand the services it offers to support people with other types of disabilities. Such an initiative could include additional training and support for local libraries that may be struggling with how to best serve community members with disabilities.
- **Help libraries address accessibility barriers in libraries.** As noted in WSL's recent needs assessment, many public library websites are not accessible for use with assistive devices and screen readers, and to populations with mobility, learning, and other types of disabilities. Training for library staff on online accessibility requirements in serving patrons with disabilities, would help WSL reach a greater number of Washingtonians who are excluded from the use of library resources due to avoidable barriers.

Program: Digitization

Recommendations

- **Continue to invest in supporting local Digitization projects and training the library workforce to preserve historic artifacts.** The two-pronged approach of providing grants to start Digitization, along with WSL training library workforce, results in increased collections.
- **Seek to broaden discovery of digitized materials through linked data and partnerships.** To enhance access, WSL may publish collections using Linked Open Data practices, improving interoperability for other organizations that want to share WSL's digitized collections. WSL may become a Content Hub within the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). Developing a partnership among Washington libraries holding large collections of digitized materials (e.g., University of Washington, Washington State University, Seattle Public Library), may help WSL more quickly prepare collections for Linked Open Data and DPLA applications.

Program: Digital Literacy

Recommendations

- **Set up environment for libraries to share teaching materials developed as a result of LSTA funding.** Increase attention to capturing results, collecting materials developed, and making them available to other libraries.
- **Carefully track available data about persistence and completion rates for Microsoft Imagine Academy.** Some online classes tend to have low retention rates, with some studies of MOOCs observing passing/completion rates of just 5-10%. Tracking the persistence and completion rates of Washington users of the Imagine Academy would help WSL evaluate the return on the investment.

Program: Continuing Education

Recommendations

- **Continue offering a variety of continuing education opportunities.** Library staff must continuously update their skills and seek out new ideas and approaches to services in order to respond to the changing needs and expectations of their communities.

Program: Consulting Services; Statewide Assistance for Libraries

Recommendations

- **Develop robust metrics and tracking systems for consulting services.** This would allow the state library to better quantify their efforts, especially in tracking the circulating kits and collections. Use of cloud-based ticketing software might also rapidly introduce a tracking system.
- **Develop a standardized data collection method for tracking training sessions, attendance, and learning outcomes.** These data are inconsistent and, therefore, difficult to compile and analyze. Implement standardized rosters and use of online forms would help track activities.

Program: Teacher Librarian Common Core Cadre (TLC3)

Recommendations

- ▶ **Continue to develop collaborative curriculum support initiatives as additional standards are adopted in schools.** WSL should continue developing support packages. Creating a master development schedule and roll-out process would maintain momentum and attract support. Working collaboratively and sharing with SLAAs and school libraries in other states would be a contribution to the entire library community.

Program: Libraries as Open Education Leaders

Recommendations

- **No further LSTA funding will be directed to Libraries as Open Education Leaders as the program is in its final year.** Further work should focus on disseminating educational content and best practices gathered. The program has laid a solid foundation for further work in this area by bringing key stakeholders together and starting the work of supporting collaboration.

Focus on the Future: Recommendations for the Next Five Years

- **Forming partnerships:** WSL is a potential agent in helping form inter-library partnerships among libraries of different types (e.g., public libraries and Community and Technical College libraries). The most significant barriers to forming partnerships is time to cultivate relationships, uncertainty on how to share resources, and concerns about equity in contributions and benefits.
- **Communications and collaboration:** Individual library efforts are difficult for libraries to maintain. Libraries across the state look to WSL for assistance in providing collaboration tools and opportunities for libraries to reduce redundancies and enhance their ability to quickly respond to emerging community needs.

Focus on the Future: Recommendations for the Next Five Years (cont.)

- **Evaluation and metrics:** WSL could provide leadership by increasing training opportunities on evaluation practices and facilitating work on common metrics among libraries in the state. While some of the difficulty producing evaluation data is connected to concerns about patron privacy, a larger issue is uncertainty about what to measure and how to gather reliable data.
- **Staffing:** WOIS/The Career Information System projects about 450 annual vacancies in library positions through 2022. WSL leadership is needed in cultivating new librarians and working with professional library education programs to ensure graduates are equipped with the skills they need to be successful.

Focus on the Future: Recommendations for the Next Five Years (cont.)

- **Professional development: WSL provides many professional development opportunities and surveys to determine topics.** There is still room for more continuing education, especially in management and other traditional areas where new librarians may not be receiving formal training (e.g., reference interviews and book mending).
- **Statewide Services: WSL provides a variety of statewide services to libraries to enhance local levels of service to library users and potential users.** These services include development and implementation of statewide projects, award of grants, consulting and training, and development of best practices. WSL should continue this work to build further capacity within libraries of all types and sizes, and within all areas of the state.