THE ALABAMA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE
LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY ACT
FIVE-YEAR PLAN
October 1, 2013 - September 30, 2017

The Alabama Public Library Service
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), a federal program for libraries administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), requires a five-year plan from each state. This plan covers the period October 1, 2013, through September 30, 2017, or the federal fiscal years 2013 through 2017. The plan must fall within the purposes established by the Act. The APLS plan addresses 3 needs: (1) Lifelong learning, (2) Strengthening families (children, youth and adults) and communities, and (3) Information access–knowledge, information, ideas and cultural heritage in all formats. Each need has a goal, a set of output and outcome targets, and a set of activities. After the plan has been approved by IMLS, APLS then has the authority to establish grant rules and spend LSTA funds for purposes as stated in the plan.

The plan addresses the library needs of all Alabamians, including people of all ages, people with disabilities, persons having difficulty using a library, and persons residing in underserved urban and rural communities. Under the plan APLS will use federal funds for statewide programs such as interlibrary loan, online homework help, online learning tools for Alabama workers, travel for

consultants, library workforce training, and a summer reading program for people of all ages. Also, of equal importance, APLS will award grants to public libraries and to state institutions that offer library services equivalent to those of public libraries. Grants may be used for a number of library-related projects including collection development, technology, digital literacy, and educational programs for people of all ages.

INTRODUCTION

The Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) was established in 1939 as a separate division of the Department of Archives & History. In 1959 the Alabama Legislature passed an act creating the Alabama Public Library Service as a separate state agency charged with development of a cooperative system of providing books and library service for the various municipalities and counties of the state. Under statute (*Code of Alabama*, 1975, Section 41-8-1- et seq.) the agency is "empowered to receive and administer all funds, books or other property from whatever source, under such conditions as may be deemed necessary to carry out the purpose of this article."

As of 2012 the state of Alabama has 226 public libraries providing service for all residents. Each library is autonomous and establishes its own policies and procedures. To qualify to apply for LSTA grants, a public library must first be in compliance with all of the rules required to receive state aid. The grant application process is competitive.

MISSION

The mission of the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) is to provide the services and leadership necessary to meet the educational, informational, cultural and economic needs of Alabama's citizens of all ages by providing leadership, guidance and support for the development and maintenance of local public libraries in funding resources and programs; and through service as the information resource center for state government, including the Governor, the legislature, elected and appointed officials and state employees.

OVERVIEW

APLS will meet its mission using LSTA by addressing three identified areas of need with three corresponding goals. The goals all respond to one or more of the purposes as stated in the LSTA, 20 USC Sec. 9141:

1. Expanding services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages in order to support such individuals' needs for education, life-long learning, workforce development, and digital literacy skills;
2. Establishing or enhancing electronic and other linkages and improved coordination among and between libraries and entities, as described in 9134(b)(6), for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to library and information services;

3. (A) Providing training and professional development, including continuing education, to enhance the skills of the current library workforce and leadership, and advance the delivery of library and information services; and

   (B) Enhancing efforts to recruit future professionals to the field of library and information services;
4. Developing public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations;
5. Targeting library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills;
6. Targeting library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through age 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with USC Sec. 9902 (2) of title 42) applicable to a family of the size involved;
7. Developing library services that provide all users access to information through local, State, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks; and
8. Carrying out other activities consistent with the purposes set forth in section 9121, as described in the State library administrative agency's plan.

APLS has identified the following three areas of need:

1. Lifelong learning
2. Strengthening families (children, youth and adults) and communities
3. Information access–knowledge, information, ideas and cultural heritage in all formats

The needs were identified by an agency planning committee. The committee started with a wide view of the environment in which the agency and libraries operate in Alabama, while keeping in mind the parameters established by the mission of the agency. It analyzed (a) comments made by stakeholders at town meetings, (b) statistical data about the people of Alabama, (c) the results of statewide surveys, (d) statistical data on library usage, (e) the current capacity and strength of Alabama's libraries and library staffs, and (f) the evaluation of the previous five-year plan, *Evaluation of the Alabama Public Library Service State Plan 2007-2012 and Recommendations for Future Funding*, prepared by Dr. Elizabeth Aversa and Dr. Jennifer Campbell-Meier, faculty members of the School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alabama.

Below, each of the three areas of need has its own summary needs assessment, goal, set of unique LSTA purposes numbered as they appear in the Act, key output and outcome targets, and program activities.

NEED #1: LIFELONG LEARNING

Summary Needs Assessment:

To succeed in our rapidly changing society and economy, individuals must keep informed of relevant events and trends, develop perspective and judgment, gain new knowledge to maintain currency in their occupations, and continually update their skills. Everyone is welcome at Alabama's public libraries, giving these institutions the unique capacity to reach marginalized and underserved audiences and to develop learning experiences in every discipline, including science; engineering; business; and basic digital, health and financial literacies. Through their collections, exhibits, programs (onsite, offsite, and online) and partnerships, these institutions serve as essential and trusted components of the state's learning ecosystem, providing opportunities for lifelong, "life-wide" learning. They help satisfy a critical need for pre-K, out-of-school, after-school, summer, and adult learning.

Libraries need to provide a wide range of learning experiences for a diverse population–for people of all ages, conditions, and walks of life. Libraries enable people to learn from books, e-books, periodicals, audio-visual materials, and online information services, as well as from lectures, exhibits and other types of programs. In our world, change is the only constant. Many people have to change their occupations in the course of their lives. New knowledge and information is constantly being published. Therefore libraries must be all-encompassing and continuously provide up-to-date information and knowledge to help people learn and succeed throughout their lives.

Educational levels of Alabamians are below the national average. According to the 2010 American Community Survey, of those aged 25 and older, 82.1% were high school graduates or higher, compared to the national rate of 85.6%. Of those aged 25 and older, 21.9% had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to the national rate of 28.2%. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics the average Alabama public high school freshman graduation rate for the 2008-09 school year was 69.9%, compared to the national rate of 75.5%. Dropping out of high school is related to a number of negative outcomes. For example, the median income of persons ages 18 through 67 who had not completed high school was roughly $23,000 in 2008. By comparison, the median income of persons ages 18 through 67 who completed their education with at least a high school credential, including a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, was approximately $42,000. Over a person's lifetime, this translates into a loss of approximately $630,000 in income for a person who did not complete high school compared with a person with at least a high school credential.

The American Community Survey for 2010 estimated that in Alabama 888,290 people were in the poverty status—19% of the Alabama population (versus 15.3% nationally). It further showed that the poverty status existed for the following Alabama groups: (a) 14.7% of Alabama families, (b) 27.7% of children under 18 and (c) 10.7% of people 65 and older. These rates are higher than the national poverty rates, which are: (a) 11.3% of families, (b) 21.6% of children under 18 and (c) 9.0% of people 65 and older.

There is a direct correlation between education and income. By offering improved learning opportunities for all Alabamians, libraries play an important role in helping individuals of all ages to learn not only during their years of formal education but also to help them continue learning throughout their lives.

There is a need to strengthen the skills of the library workforce and leadership, and advance the delivery of library and information services to all Alabamians by providing training for library staff and trustees in all areas of library service. Approximately 143 of the directors of Alabama public libraries do not have the master's degree required for most professional library positions: either the Master of Library and Information Science/Studies (MLIS) or Master of Library Science (MLS). Because of constant changes in technology, the law, and social conditions, there is a need for training and re-training of the library workforce to keep up with the changes. There are new people constantly entering the library workforce when others retire or leave. Many of these new people have little or no library training. Library directors and supervisors need continuing education in personnel supervision, administration and technology.

Goal 1: Place the learner at the center and support engaging experiences in libraries that prepare people to be full participants in their local communities and our global society.

LSTA :

1. Expanding services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages in order to support such individuals' needs for education, life-long learning, workforce development, and digital literacy skills.
3. (A) Providing training and professional development, including continuing education, to enhance the skills of the current library workforce and leadership, and advance the delivery of library and information services; and

   (B) Enhancing efforts to recruit future professionals to the field of library and information services
4. Developing public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations.
5. Targeting library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills.

Key Output Targets:

- Based on existing trends, each year between the start of FY2013 and the end of FY2016 the homework help service will increase in usage but at a slowing rate from one year to the next: FY2013-10%, FY2014-8%, FY2015-6%, FY2016-4%.
- Provide a minimum of three educational opportunities per year for public library staff and trustees.
- Each year provide grants for a part-time professional training program leading to an MLS or MLIS. Enrollees will have up to five years in which to complete the program. Each year

approximately 10 grants will be given to new and current enrollees. By year-end FY2017, three people will have received the degree, and seven others will still be in the program and will acquire their degrees within a five-year period after starting the program.

- Provide consulting visits (in person or remotely) to 90% of the public libraries each year (provided that travel is not limited by state restrictions caused by economic constraints).

Key Outcome Targets:

- Each year from FY2013 through FY2017 at least 90% of respondents to a homework help service survey will indicate they are satisfied with the service.
- Every two years a survey will be conducted of subscribers to *WhAT's Line* (the newsletter from the Blind and Physically Handicapped Department). 80% of the respondents will indicate that they have been well informed of the services offered and of issues that may affect them.
- The part-time professional training program leading to an MLS or MLIS will advance the delivery of library and information services to the citizens of Alabama by the year FY2017, when three people will have received the degree, and seven others will still be in the program and will acquire their degrees within a five-year period after starting the program.
- Each year, on evaluation forms turned in by attendees after each library training opportunity (program, workshop or institute) 80% of the respondents will indicate that their skill level in the areas covered has been improved as a result of their attendance. Follow-up surveys will be conducted each year in March and September to determine the effectiveness of the training opportunities in actual practice in libraries, with 75% of respondents indicating they have made changes in their library procedures or services as a result of the training.
- On an annual survey of subscribers to *APLSeeds* (the agency's newsletter) 80% of the respondents will indicate that as a result of reading *APLSeeds* they have increased their knowledge as it pertains to the effective operation of their libraries.

Program Activities:

1. Support informational and cultural programs for persons of all ages and of diverse ethnic or cultural backgrounds to support their needs for education, life-long learning, workforce development, and digital literacy skills, within the scope of LSTA purposes 1 and 5. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
2. Support programs for individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills, within the scope of LSTA purpose 5. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
3. Support technology training for library users and staff to help them learn how to access information and materials online, within the scope of LSTA purposes 1 and 3. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
4. Provide an online learning and homework help service for people in grades pre-K through 12, at the beginning college level, and at the adult level, within the scope of LSTA purpose 1. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*

5. Provide an online selection of career and academic resources to prepare people for jobs, career advancement, basic skills, academic achievement, and re-entry into the workforce. Emphasize/promote availability of e-books as part of this service. This activity is within the scope of LSTA purpose 1. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
6. Coordinate and offer programs, workshops and institutes for public library staff, trustees and volunteers on serving patrons with diverse backgrounds and needs. These educational opportunities will include: (a) instruction in the basic skills of librarianship and leadership, (b) training to help staff recognize their role in early childhood literacy and the provision of strategies for promoting early childhood literacy, (c) training to help staff recognize their role in information literacy and the provision of strategies for promoting information literacy. Also, partner with other organizations to offer these types of educational opportunities. This activity is within the scope of LSTA purposes 3 and 4. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
7. Make funds available for professional training leading to the MLS or MLIS, within the scope of LSTA purpose 3. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
8. Improve the effectiveness of grant projects by providing subgrant recipients with staff training in LSTA grant project development, implementation, and evaluation, within the scope of LSTA purpose 3. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
9. Acquire, promote, and circulate materials on library operations and services (books and other resources) for the use of the public library workforce throughout the state to help in the provision of continuing education. These materials will become part of the APLS collection. This activity is within the scope of LSTA purposes 1 and 3. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
10. Support the statewide video/audio telecommunication system for libraries for purposes of training and dissemination of information, within the scope of LSTA purpose 3. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
11. Publish a bi-weekly newsletter (*APLSeeds*) to keep public library staff, trustees, and government officials informed of trends in librarianship and of news of importance to the operation of public libraries, within the scope of LSTA purpose 3. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
12. Publish a quarterly newsletter for the blind and physically handicapped (*WhAT's Line*) to keep users of the Blind and Physically Handicapped Department informed of the services offered and of issues that may affect them, within the scope of LSTA purposes 1 and 5. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
13. Support other library service programs and projects for the purpose of helping to achieve the above goal, within the scope of LSTA purposes 1, 3, 4, and 5. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*

NEED #2: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES (CHILDREN, YOUTH AND ADULTS) AND COMMUNITIES

Summary Needs Assessment:

Healthy, thriving, sustainable communities need institutions that help individuals of all ages and that strengthen families, strengthen civic life, understand and respond to community needs, and

provide common experiences that knit community members together through common experiences and shared interests. APLS provides important state leadership to help local public libraries advance solutions to their most difficult problems by providing safe places for families and individuals of all ages to visit, places for community gathering, centers for community vitality, a connecting point to community services, and a venue for cultural expression and lifelong learning.

Public libraries serve everyone in their communities, regardless of economic status, and these libraries are especially important for the poor—for those who cannot afford to buy their own reading materials or pay for cultural activities. Poverty in America is measured by the U.S. Census Bureau, which uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty thresholds do not vary geographically. See the table in Appendix A titled "Poverty Thresholds for 2010 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years".

The American Community Survey for 2010 estimated that in Alabama 888,290 people were in the poverty status—19% of the Alabama population (versus 15.3% nationally). It further showed that the poverty status existed for the following Alabama groups: (a) 14.7% of Alabama families, (b) 27.7% of children under 18 and (c) 10.7% of people 65 and older. These rates are higher than the national poverty rates, which are: (a) 11.3% of families, (b) 21.6% of children under 18 and (c) 9.0% of people 65 and older.

Referring to the table in Appendix A, in 2010 the poverty threshold for a family of four with 2 children under 18 was $22,113. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, families need an income of about twice the federal poverty level to meet their most basic needs, and children living in families with incomes below this level are referred to as low income. According to a U.S. Census Bureau estimate, in Alabama in 2010, 49% of children under 18 lived in families with an income less than twice the federal poverty level (national average: 43%).

According to the Alabama Department of Education, in the 2010-2011 school year the enrollment of Alabama public school students K-12 was 744,696. Of this number, 55.8% qualified for free or reduced-price lunches.

Goal 2: Promote public libraries as strong community anchors that partner with other community organizations to (1) enhance the involvement of children, youth, adults and families and (2) enhance civic engagement, cultural opportunities, and economic vitality.

LSTA Purposes:

1. Expanding services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages in order to support such individuals' needs for education, life-long learning, workforce development, and digital literacy skills.

4. Developing public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations.

5. Targeting library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills.
6. Targeting library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through age 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with USC Sec. 9902 (2) of title 42) applicable to a family of the size involved.

Key Output Targets:

- Each year from FY2013 through FY2016, 95% of the public libraries will participate in the annual summer reading program sponsored in part by APLS.
- The number of registered participants (children, teens and adults) in the Statewide Summer Reading Program will exceed 90,000 by 2016.
- From FY2013 through FY2016, APLS will have funded 40 children, youth, adult (including seniors) and family program projects for individual public libraries.
- Each year in FY2013 through FY2016, 25% of public libraries that had not applied for an LSTA grant within a period of three previous fiscal years will apply for a grant.
- Each year from FY2013 through FY2016, 5% of the public libraries receiving LSTA grants will partner with other community organizations, such as the police, fire department, churches, schools, daycare centers, corporations, businesses, sponsors, and state and local government.

Key Outcome Targets:

- Each year from FY2013 through FY2017, of the children who have completed grades three through seven participating in the summer reading program, 30% will have read a minimum of six books. On an annual survey of those reading a minimum of six books and responding, (a) 90% will indicate that they liked the program and (b) 95% will indicate that they liked going to the library.
- By FY2016 50% of the public libraries will have a summer reading program for teens. Each year from FY2013 through FY2016 on a survey of those completing the program and responding, (a) 90% will indicate that they liked the program and (b) 95% will indicate that they liked going to the library.
- By FY2016 20% of the public libraries will have a summer reading program for adults (18 and older). Each year from FY2013 through FY2016 on a survey of those completing the program and responding, 80% will indicate that they liked the program, were motivated by it to read, and felt a sense of cultural enrichment by participating in it.
- Each year from FY2013 through FY2017 recipients of LSTA grants that partner with other community organizations in projects targeted to at-risk individuals will conduct outcome surveys for the targeted people. 80% of the respondents will indicate that as a result of the project they have learned a new skill or have received useful knowledge or information.

Examples of other community organizations are the police, fire department, churches, schools, daycare centers, corporations, businesses, sponsors, and state and local government.

Program Activities:

1. Each year APLS will provide high-quality summer reading program materials for children, youth and adults at all participating public libraries at no cost. These will include posters, reading logs, bookmarks, and certificates. In addition APLS will provide libraries with an extensive manual of programming and promotional ideas. This activity is within the scope of LSTA purposes 1, 5, and 6. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
2. Increase participation in Alabama's Statewide Summer Reading Program by expanding the visibility of the program. Methods will include the expansion of partnerships among library systems, public libraries, schools, corporations, businesses, sponsors, state and local government, and others to improve publicity, promotion, and usage of Alabama's Summer Reading Program. This activity is within the scope of LSTA purpose 4. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
3. Provide competitive grants to public libraries and to state departments and institutions to provide services targeted to at-risk individuals. These services may include the development of partnerships with other organizations providing services to individuals such as schools, pre-schools, youth detention centers, youth courts, housing authorities, community services, child-care centers and adult-care centers. This activity is within the scope of LSTA purposes 1, 4, 5 and 6. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
4. Provide competitive grants to public libraries for programs that do one or more of the following: (a) promote awareness of community services, (b) provide a connecting point to community services, (c) strengthen civic life, (d) respond to community needs, (e) knit community members together through common experiences and shared interests, and (f) promote cultural expression. This activity is within the scope of LSTA purposes 1, 4, 5, and 6. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*

NEED #3: INFORMATION ACCESS–KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION, IDEAS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ALL FORMATS

Summary Needs Assessment:

In an economy powered by knowledge, public libraries play essential roles in ensuring for everyone equitable access to knowledge, information and ideas–a cornerstone of a healthy economy and strong democracy. Access to library collections in all formats and access to information through local, state, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks help to fuel innovation, inspire the development of new knowledge, and boost global understanding. Technology is improving the ways that people access and use public library services.

There is a great need in Alabama public libraries for more library materials in all formats. Alabama is an information-poor state based on the Institute of Museum and Library Services

publication, *Public Libraries Survey Fiscal Year 2009*. Compared with other states, Alabama's public libraries rank:

- 42nd for print materials per capita.
- 43rd for audio materials per capita.
- 44th for video materials per 1,000 population.
- 48th for current print serial subscriptions per 1,000 population.
- 49th total collection expenditures per capita
- 46th circulation transactions per capita.
- 46th library visits per capita

There is a need to improve access to Alabama public library collections and to all types of information available within the libraries and throughout the world. In Alabama public libraries there is a need to upgrade technological equipment and software to maintain and improve access to information and services. Most libraries have computers and basic automation for circulation, cataloging and catalog access. Over the years Alabama libraries have benefited much from technology grants from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation as well as from LSTA grants awarded by APLS. According to the IMLS *Public Libraries Survey Fiscal Year 2009*, compared with other states, Alabama's public libraries rank 13th for the average number of public-use Internet computers per stationary outlet and 17th for public-use Internet computers per 5,000 population. Having much computer equipment also means that resources for upgrades will continue to be necessary as equipment ages and as new technology is developed and improved by vendors. There is a need to provide the public with the best forms of access available.

Goal 3: Support access to information, knowledge, ideas and cultural heritage through the provision of library materials in all formats and through the provision of up-to-date technology.

LSTA Purposes:

1. Expanding services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages in order to support such individuals' needs for education, life-long learning, workforce development and digital literacy skills.
2. Establishing or enhancing electronic and other linkages and improved coordination among and between libraries and entities, as described in 9134(b)(6), for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to library and information services.
4. Developing public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations;
5. Targeting library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills.
6. Targeting library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through age 17)

from families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with USC Sec. 9902 (2) of title 42) applicable to a family of the size involved.

7. Developing library services that provide all users access to information through local, State, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks.

Key Output Targets:

- The state library will provide E-rate and technological planning assistance and technology support consulting to public libraries
- By the end of FY2016, 72% of public libraries will have a public catalog accessible via the Internet.
- By the end of FY2016, 95% of public libraries will have a web presence, such as a web site, a page available through their governing authority, or a link from a heavily used social media service.
- Each year from FY2013 through FY2017 APLS will review the following data elements from the annual statistical report to determine the state of information technology services at each public library and to observe the trends: (1) type of Internet connection, (2) number of Internet workstations, (3) annual number of uses of Internet computers, (4) number of libraries applying for E-rate, (5) number of libraries having an integrated system for circulation, cataloging and public access catalog and (6) name of library's commercial vendor.
- By year-end FY2016, 36 public libraries will report on their statistical reports to the state library that they offer outreach programs such as services via a library vehicle, deposit collection services, books-by-mail, or services for those who cannot readily come to a library (but who either reside or spend time at such places as an institution, hospital, nursing home, or senior citizen center where the outreach service is offered).
- By year-end FY2016, there will be two new library service vehicles serving library users. These vehicles will either add to the current number of vehicles statewide or replace old equipment.

Key Outcome Targets:

- In FY2016 APLS will start the evaluation of the overall plan. In the agreement with the professional evaluator APLS will require the evaluator to conduct an online statewide random citizen survey. Respondents will be asked if they or members of their households use public libraries. Those who respond affirmatively will be asked to answer the following questions (the percentages of expected affirmative responses are noted for each): (1) "Have you heard of the state library's online databases?"–80%, (2) Those who have heard of the state online databases will be asked "Have you or any household member used the state online databases within the past 12 months?"–30%, (3) "Does the public library used by you or any household member have an online public access catalog?"–75%, (4) Those who respond affirmatively to question 3 will be asked "Have you or any household member used the online catalog, and if so was your experience satisfactory?"–80%.

- By year-end FY2016, APLS will conduct a survey (telephone or written) of the users of the services of the APLS Blind and Physically Handicapped Department. 90% of respondents will indicate that the special format materials they have used have significantly enhanced their lives, as ranked on a satisfaction scale.

Program Activities:

1. Support strengthening collections in all formats at the state and local level, for individuals described within the scope of LSTA purposes 1, 5, and 6. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
2. Support the acquisition and utilization of library service delivery vehicles, within the scope of LSTA purpose 6. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
3. Support information services for the disabled at the state and local level, within the scope of LSTA purposes 5 and 7. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*

   This activity includes:

   (a) The acquisition and use of technology to enable library users with special needs to access library resources and services.

   (b) The statewide services of the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, a division of APLS.

   (c) Providing deposit collections at convenient locations for library users with special needs.
4. Support information services for those having difficulty using a library, including support for outreach programs for such places as institutions, hospitals, nursing homes and senior citizen centers, within the scope of LSTA purpose 6. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
5. Strengthen the electronic infrastructure of libraries throughout the state by providing grant funds for technological equipment, software, rapid telecommunications, partnering with other agencies, and upgrading equipment for learning opportunities, within the scope of LSTA purposes 2 and 7. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
6. Provide funds for resource-sharing, including the following components: 1) databases, 2) electronic interlibrary loan, and (3) electronic statewide union catalog of public library holdings, within the scope of LSTA purposes 2 and 7. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
7. Provide funds for making technical assistance consulting available to public libraries throughout the state, within the scope of LSTA purpose 7. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
8. Provide grant funds for the digitization of library materials for the purposes of preservation and electronic access, within the scope of LSTA purposes 1 and 7. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
9. Support public libraries' and public library systems' efforts to secure E-rate telecommunication discounts, within the scope of LSTA purpose 7. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*
10. Partner with other state agencies and organizations to maintain and improve statewide public access to information services, within the scope of LSTA purposes 1 and 4. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*

11. Support other public library service programs and projects for the purpose of helping to achieve the above goal, within the scope of LSTA purposes 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7. *Time frame: FY 2013-2017*

EVALUATION PLAN

To evaluate the success of the activities in meeting identified goals and priorities, APLS will contract with a professional evaluator, who will collaborate with APLS staff to do research and prepare a report on the results and impact of the first four years of the plan. Town meetings will be conducted to which stakeholders will be invited to share their thoughts. Surveys will be conducted of users, the general public and public library staff to measure the effectiveness of programs. Statistical data will be analyzed to measure the degree to which targets have been met.

SUMMARY OF PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

Stakeholder Involvement Procedures

Stakeholders were initially involved during the evaluation phase of the five-year plan ending September 30, 2012. The evaluation not only sought input from stakeholders to evaluate the results of the past five years but also sought their input for the new plan covering FY2013-FY2017. The evaluation called for two online surveys and a series of seven town hall meetings at which those interested in libraries identified and prioritized library accomplishments and needs.

The first survey, titled the APLS Planning Survey, was for key elected officials throughout Alabama. It sought opinions about library services in the state. This survey was designed to inform the design for the APLS Public Survey that was administered at a later point.

The APLS Public Survey was for the general public. It requested demographic data and had questions about library use, potential use, and priorities that public libraries have addressed or might address in the future.

In addition to the surveys, seven town hall meetings were held at libraries in distinct regions of the State during June and July 2011. The locations and dates are reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Town Meeting Schedule

Town	Date	Location
Enterprise	June 9, 2011	Enterprise Public Library
Montgomery	June 10, 2011	Alabama Public Library Service
Boaz	June 20, 2011	Boaz Public Library
Florence	June 21, 2011	Florence Public Library
Hoover	July 18, 2011	Hoover Public Library
Demopolis	July 19, 2011	Demopolis Public Library
Daphne	July 22, 2011	Daphne Public Library

The town meeting announcements were sent by APLS to libraries; local, county and state elected officials; state officials representing educational institutions at all levels; and to four major newspapers widely distributed over the state.

Table 2 is a summary of participant demographics.

Table 2. Summary of Participant Demographics

Participant Type	**Number of Participants**	**Percentage of Participants**
Library director	8	8%
Library user	9	9%
Library staff member	67	67%
Elected official (municipal, county, or state)	1	1%
Library trustee/board member	8	8%
Municipal or county employee	1	1%
Other and unidentified	6	6%
Total	100	100%

A detailed analysis of the results of the surveys and town meetings is included in the Evaluation document titled *Evaluation of the Alabama Public Library Service State Plan 2007-2012 and Recommendations for Future Planning*, submitted by the independent evaluators with whom APLS had contracted through the University of Alabama, Dr. Elizabeth Aversa and Dr. Jennifer Campbell-Meier, both professors at the School of Library and Information Studies.

A Planning Committee was established to develop the draft Five-Year Plan. The Committee consisted of the Director of APLS, members of the APLS field services staff, and the head of the agency's Blind and Physically Handicapped Department. In addition seven administrators representing both large and smaller libraries from diverse parts of the state reviewed the draft and made further suggestions for improvements. The plan was also reviewed by the APLS Executive Board.

APLS will continue its practice of holding quarterly library administrators meetings, at which administrators will have ample opportunity to discuss the LSTA program and provide feedback to APLS staff.

During the annual process for developing revised rules for grant applications APLS will solicit feedback and suggestions from the library community for changes in the rules.

APLS has an LSTA Advisory Council appointed by the APLS Executive Board. Its members include 16 persons who are broadly representative of public libraries, institutional libraries, library users and an ALA-accredited library school. The Council has the following purposes:

1. To advise APLS on the development of the state plan, including the preparation of long-range and annual programs.

2. To advise APLS on policy matters arising in the administration of the state plan.
3. To assist APLS in evaluating library programs, services and activities under the state plan.

The full Council meets quarterly. It has a planning committee, which develops and evaluates the state plan. It also has a rules committee to develop rules and procedures to implement the state plan through grant projects.

Communication and public availability

The purpose of this section is to describe the channels that will be used to communicate to the stakeholders the content of the State Plan and any results, products, processes or benefits. It describes how APLS will make the State Plan readily available to the public and share it with the library community.

APLS will use the following communication channels:

1. The plan itself will be placed on the APLS website. Any Alabamian with Internet access can read the plan or download it and print it at their convenience. If they do not have Internet access at home, virtually all public libraries have it available to the public at no cost.
2. Press releases on the plan will be distributed to newspapers which cover broad geographic areas of the state.
3. APLS publishes on its website a newsletter, *APLSeeds*, in which articles will appear describing a) the content of the State Plan, b) the grant application process, c) lists of grant awards, d) the process for revising grant rules, e) announcements of town meetings, f) announcements of library administrators meetings and g) benefits resulting from the State Plan.
4. APLS administers two listservs for library administrators and staff on which the same kinds of information will be distributed as stated above for *APLSeeds*.
5. Information similar to that distributed through the APLS listservs will be distributed through the listserv of the Alabama Library Association.
6. From time to time, the APLS director issues administrative memoranda to library administrators bringing to their attention important matters related to the State Plan.
7. The grant application rules and application forms are also available on the APLS website. Grant applications may be completed and submitted online.
8. Each year APLS staff will conduct grant application workshops at convenient locations throughout the state. The grant rules and application will, of course, be based on the State Plan.

Monitoring Procedures

1. Libraries receiving grants will be required to submit quarterly status reports describing the progress of the project. The purpose is to ensure APLS staff that project goals, evaluation criteria, targets and the timeline result in the desired outcomes.
2. When submitting payment requests libraries may only request funds which can be expended within three business days after receipt of a check from APLS, in compliance with the Federal Cash Management Act.
3. With limited staff, site visits to all projects may not be feasible, but there will be random site visits. Also, monitoring will be done concurrently with APLS staff visits to libraries for other reasons. Further, phone interviews will be conducted with project administrators.
4. A final evaluation report will have the following parts: 1) a description of the extent to which objectives were achieved, 2) a description of specific benefits or outcomes, 3) relevant statistical data, 4) a list of equipment acquired and the cost of each item and 5) a financial report showing actual cumulative disbursements of LSTA funds and required local matching funds.

Monitoring of APLS state-wide projects

1. Financial monitoring of each statewide project will be continuous as financial data is entered.
2. Data will be kept on all projects. This data will include library materials acquired, program attendance, program evaluations from attendees, program statistical data, site visit data and resource-sharing data.
3. The purpose of the above monitoring is to ensure that project goals, evaluation criteria, targets and the timeline result in the desired outcomes.

Monitoring will comply with federal law

1. If APLS makes a substantive revision to its State Plan, the agency will submit to the IMLS Director an amendment to the State Plan containing such revision not later than April 1 of the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the amendment will be effective.
2. The State Plan provides assurances to the IMLS Director that APLS will make such reports, in such form and containing such information, as the Director may require.
3. APLS will independently evaluate, and report to the IMLS Director regarding, the activities assisted with LSTA funds prior to the end of the Five-Year Plan.

APPENDIX A

Poverty Thresholds for 2010 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years

Size of family unit	Weighted average thresholds	Related children under 18 years								
		None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight or more
One person (unrelated individual).....	11,139									
Under 65 years.....	11,344	11,344								
65 years and over.....	10,458	10,458								
Two people.....	14,218									
Householder under 65 years.....	14,676	14,602	15,030							
Householder 65 years and over.....	13,194	13,180	14,973							
Three people.....	17,374	17,057	17,552	17,568						
Four people.....	22,314	22,491	22,859	22,113	22,190					
Five people.....	26,439	27,123	27,518	26,675	26,023	25,625				
Six people.....	29,897	31,197	31,320	30,675	30,056	29,137	28,591			
Seven people.....	34,009	35,896	36,120	35,347	34,809	33,805	32,635	31,351		
Eight people.....	37,934	40,146	40,501	39,772	39,133	38,227	37,076	35,879	35,575	
Nine people or more.....	45,220	48,293	48,527	47,882	47,340	46,451	45,227	44,120	43,845	42,156

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.