

Alabama

Public Library Service

ANNUAL REPORT
2015



The Alabama Public Library Service was created in 1939 to serve the needs of Alabama's public libraries. The Alabama Public Library Service is charged with improving library services throughout the state to ensure that all citizens have access to quality library and information services. The agency's four divisions (Administration, Library Development, Library Operations, and the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped) are responsible for carrying out this charge.



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2014-2015

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The Alabama Public Library Service is a state library agency serving all citizens of Alabama through more than 220 public libraries, direct services through the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and direct services to state employees.

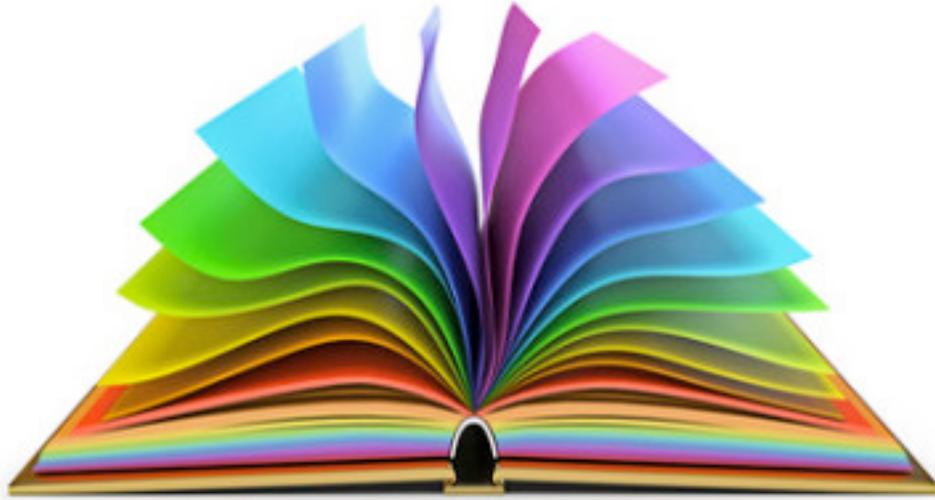


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Nancy C. Pack, Ph. D.
Director

Director's Message

In September 2015, I completed my first year as the director of the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS). My experience coming to the position includes over twenty-five years of librarianship in seven states and serving in a variety of libraries. There is a huge learning curve in state government and with much help from others, the process has been easier. Some of the adjectives that describe this first year are: exhilarating, terrifying, exciting, nerve-racking, exhausting, and transformational.

Most of the emphasis of this year has been learning the lay of the land and getting to know the sixty-seven counties in Alabama. The distinguishing features of each county and public library weave together a splendid story. There are large, medium and small libraries serving a diverse population and crafting their services to meet the community needs. Another focus was to give APLS a much needed facelift and to provide a more inviting experience for those that visit onsite.

It is an honor to serve in this position and to work with public libraries, state officials, the University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies, the staff of APLS and especially the residents of Alabama. I am excited about the work that APLS is doing and look forward to new opportunities that ensure all citizens have access to quality library service.

This annual report provides information about the ongoing services that APLS provides. It is not a comprehensive look but only a snapshot of what is occurring.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Nancy C. Pack'.

Nancy C. Pack, Ph. D.
Director

“There are many little ways to enlarge your child’s world. Love of books is the best of all.”
Jackie Kennedy

Funding and Spending



APLS receives funding from both state and federal sources. The state provides operational funds for the agency. The Alabama Legislature supports State Aid to Libraries. These funds are administered through APLS and are given quarterly to public libraries. The amount of funds that each public library receives

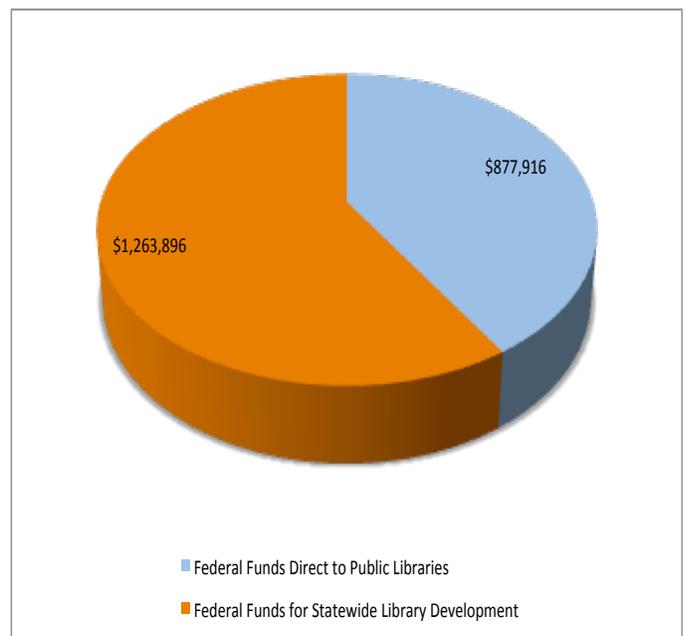
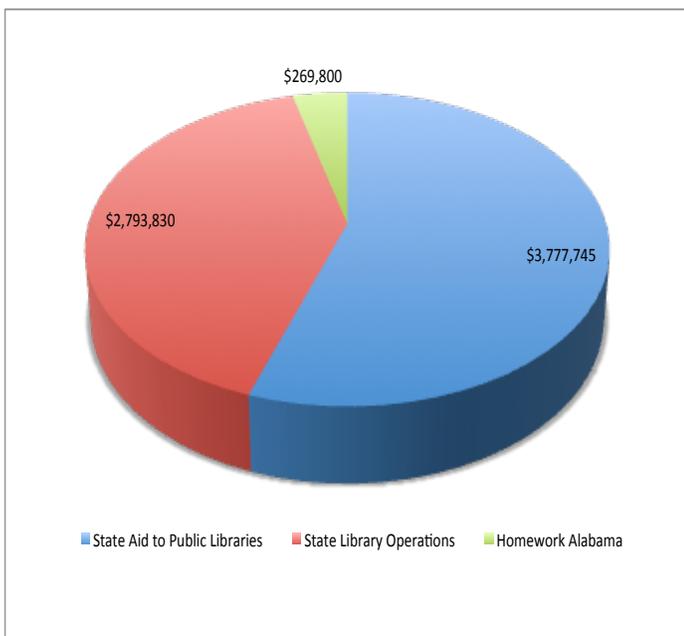
is based on a per capita formula. For the past several years, the awards have been determined using a rate of 78 cents per capita.

Federal funds are used to support library development (i.e. Consultant and IT Services) and provide statewide services such as the summer reading program,

library materials, databases, and other resources. The Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped uses a combination of state and federal dollars to provide services to their patrons. APLS also offers a competitive federal grant program to public libraries for innovative initiatives. Over \$850,000 was awarded for projects in 2015.

State Funds \$6,841,375

Federal Funds \$2,141,812



Alabama Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

The Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (BPH) is a part of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) which is a division of the Library of Congress. BPH has active patrons in all 67 counties of Alabama. There are also two subregional libraries in the state. One is located at the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB) in Talladega and the other one is part of the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library.

The no-cost, home-delivered services of the BPH are available to all Alabama residents of any age (children, teens, and adults) whose ability to read is affected by a physical or visual impairment or a reading disability. This includes anyone who cannot read standard print or who cannot hold a book or turn its pages.

The BPH provides books in Braille and audio formats. The collection has more than 82,000 book titles and 42 periodicals available. Machines for playing the recorded materials are available on loan from BPH. There is also a BARD Mobile app for iPad, iPhone, iPod, Android, and Kindle devices.



BPH By the Numbers

ACTIVE PATRONS

6,971

ACTIVE INSTITUTIONS

97

ITEMS CHECKED OUT

181,381

DOWNLOAD ALABAMA

4,587*

MONTHLY AVERAGE SENT BOOKS

15,115

***The Download Alabama program of customized downloads is for patrons who do not have access to BARD or do not have access to high-speed Internet.**

Presentations, Speaking Engagements, Exhibits and Tours

The BPH staff provided outreach to various groups throughout the state. Speaking engagements include civic organizations such as the Montgomery Lions Club and the Montgomery Exchange Club. Staff attended youth leadership forums, the Montgomery Schools MPACT Expo, and vocational rehabilitation training sessions to inform teachers and youth about BPH services. Presentations and information were also distributed at Veteran Affairs meetings, low vision conferences, adult congregate facilities, and nursing homes.

There were BPH exhibits at the Alabama Federation of the Blind and Alabama Council of the Blind regional meetings. Tri-County preschoolers took a library tour and were curious about the adaptive games and tactile objects in the collection. AIDB employees and employees from the VA in Tuskegee also visited the library.

The *WhAT's Line* newsletter was published on a quarterly basis, keeping patrons informed on technological developments, other newsworthy items, and current activities at BPH.

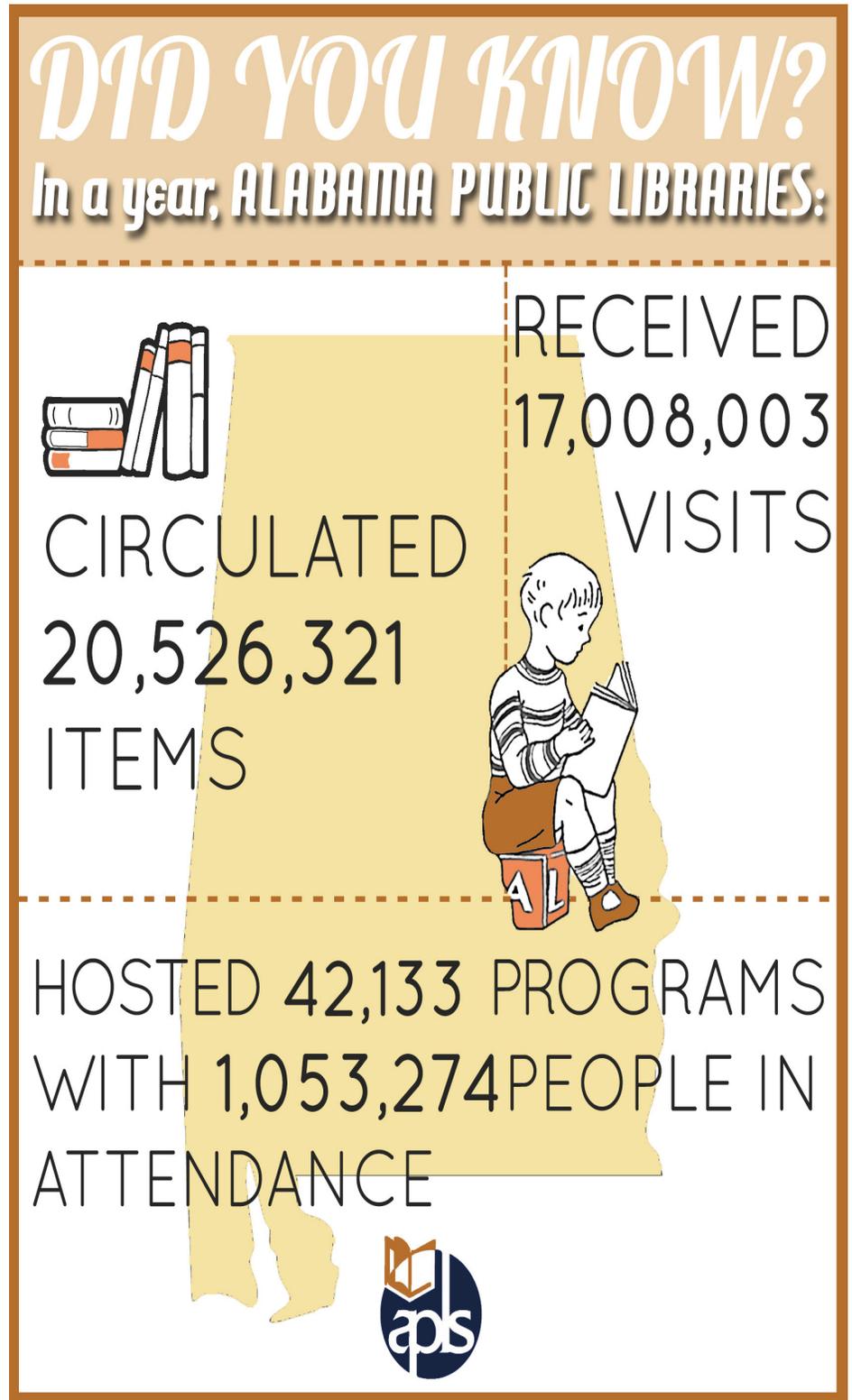
Learning the Trends

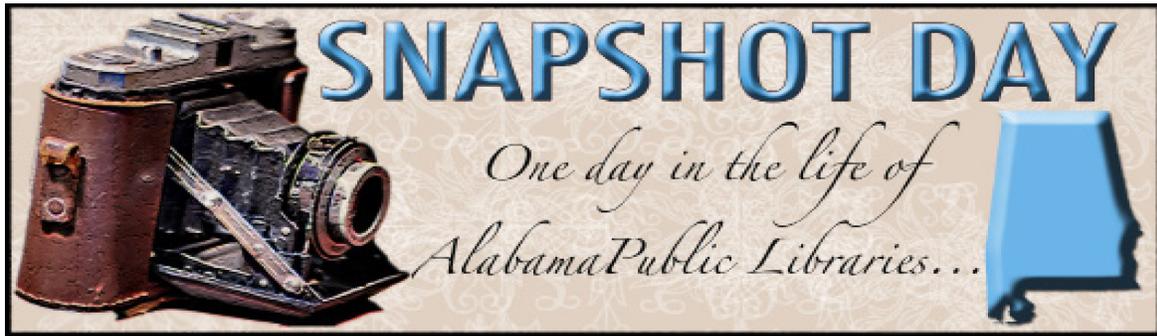
This year staff attended an assistive technology exposition, a technology symposium, and the Governor's Office on Disability's State Rehabilitation Council meetings.

Regional Librarian Ruth Evans attended the NLS Regional

Conference in Indianapolis, IN and used information gathered to improve services here at home. Inspections of the Talladega and Huntsville subregional libraries were conducted and passed with flying colors. In July, the National Library Service consultant visited BPH. A

positive report was provided.





STATISTICS:

Visitors: 16,633

Circulation: 14,452

Reference Questions
Answered: 2,105

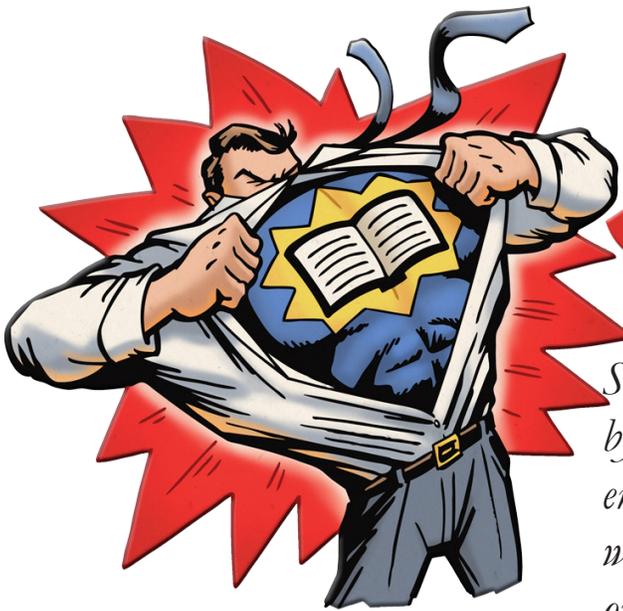
Computer Usage:
4,820

Job Related Issues:
558

Snapshot Day Alabama is a statewide initiative purposed to show the importance of Alabama public libraries. On August 11, 2015, public libraries all over the state took photos, collected patrons' comments, and gathered statistics with a toolkit provided by APLS. The information the libraries assembled captured the positive impact libraries make in their communities each and every day. This year, 51 libraries and several branch libraries participated in Snapshot Day.







Summer Reading

Summer Reading Programs are highly anticipated by Alabama residents of all ages. Public libraries entertained and educated communities this year with a hero theme. Each age group had their own theme for a personalized experience: Every Hero (children), Unmask (teen), and Escape the Ordinary (adult).



As the 2015 summer reading program began, 130,957 children (including teens) registered for/participated in the summer reading program activities. The participating youngsters read approximately 1,779,847 books, and there was a total attendance of 343,637 at 6,373 program events. 40,115 children received reading certificates.

APLS Library Development

Six public library consultants and seven IT techs are available to provide research and verify and deliver solutions to Alabama's 220+ public libraries via phone, email, and onsite visits. In addition to general assistance, each of our consultants and IT techs are assigned a special area of expertise to better assist the libraries on specific issues when needed.

Schools and Libraries Program: E-Rate

The Schools and Libraries Program ("E-Rate") of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) helps ensure that eligible schools and libraries can obtain high-speed Internet access and telecommunications at affordable rates. Four categories of service are available: telecommunications, Internet access, internal connections,

and basic maintenance of internal connections. USAC is governed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Alabama public libraries received nearly \$1.5 million in discounts in 2015. Over two-thirds of these libraries received discounts in the amount of 80% to 90%. Libraries and schools in low-income communities and rural areas qualify for the highest discounts. Discounts are based on the percentage of students eligible for the National School Lunch Program.

Emergency Management

The partnership between the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AMEA) and the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) continues to flourish. This

partnership began after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and was especially valuable during the tornado outbreak in 2011. APLS has an active role in emergency preparedness and recovery. Alabama's public libraries are a valuable asset when natural disasters occur. They assist with FEMA relief applications, offer Internet access to connect to vital recovery resources and family, and host command centers for relief efforts.

The IT department of APLS provides laptops to libraries to set up FEMA registration centers, provides manpower to assist with setting up the Internet, and performs activities to assist libraries to get back to operations. All public libraries are required to have a disaster plan on file with APLS in order to receive State Aid.

Databases and Resources

Learning Express Library and Homework Alabama are two statewide databases provided by APLS to help Alabama residents reach their academic, professional, and life goals. Both of these databases are available on the APLS website (http://webmini.apls.state.al.us/apls_web/apls/apls/).

Learning Express Library is divided into six centers: Adult Learning Center, Career Center, College Center, College Prep Center, High School Equivalency Center, and School Center. The information

Common Questions for the APLS Team

"What is the best resource for purchasing e-books?"

"I am having trouble with my server. Can you help me?"

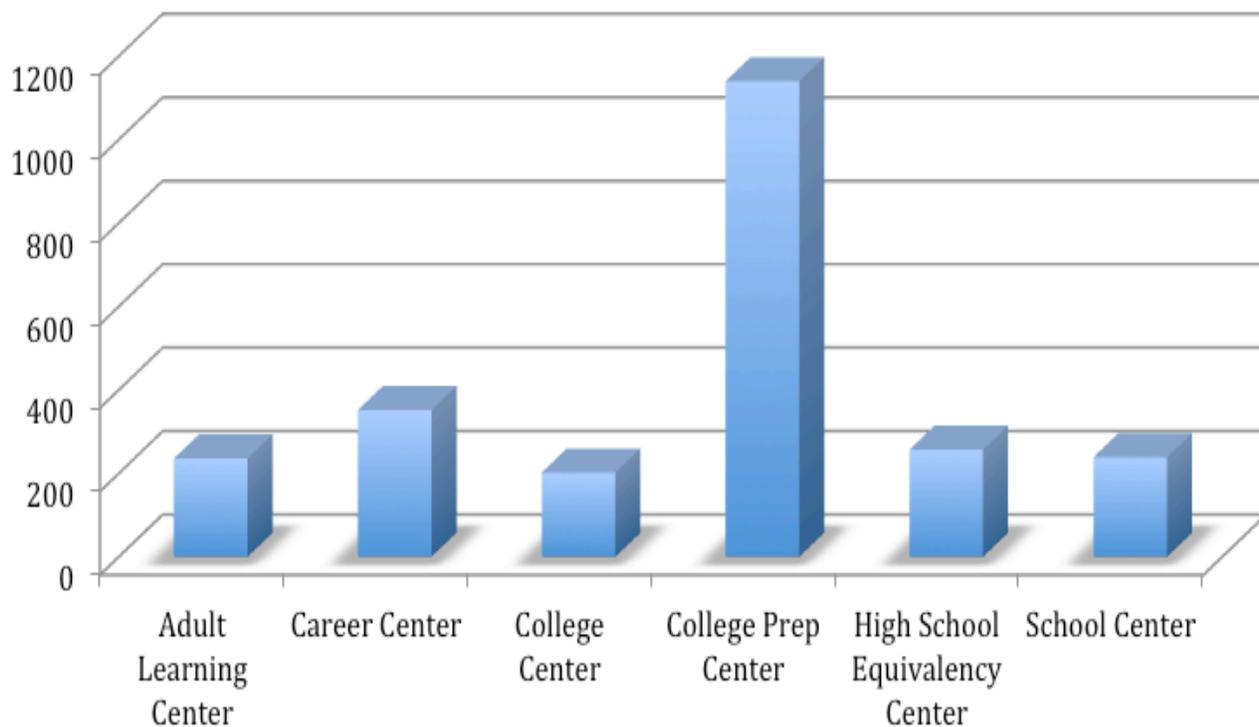
"I need this book for a patron. Can you send one through Interlibrary Loan?"

"There are so many databases available. Can you train my staff on database selection?"

"Our webpage needs updating. What is a good software for this?"

"Our building flooded. Can you help us?"

Learning Express Usage 2015



offered in each center varies and includes practice tests, tutorials, and eBooks. A patron can refresh their skills in math, reading, writing, and public speaking. Resources are available to help prepare for the U.S. Citizenship Test. Computer skill tutorials are provided for the beginner, intermediate, and advanced learner. The College Prep Center received the most usage (46%) in 2015 as students practiced for their ACT, SAT, and AP (Advanced Placement) exams.

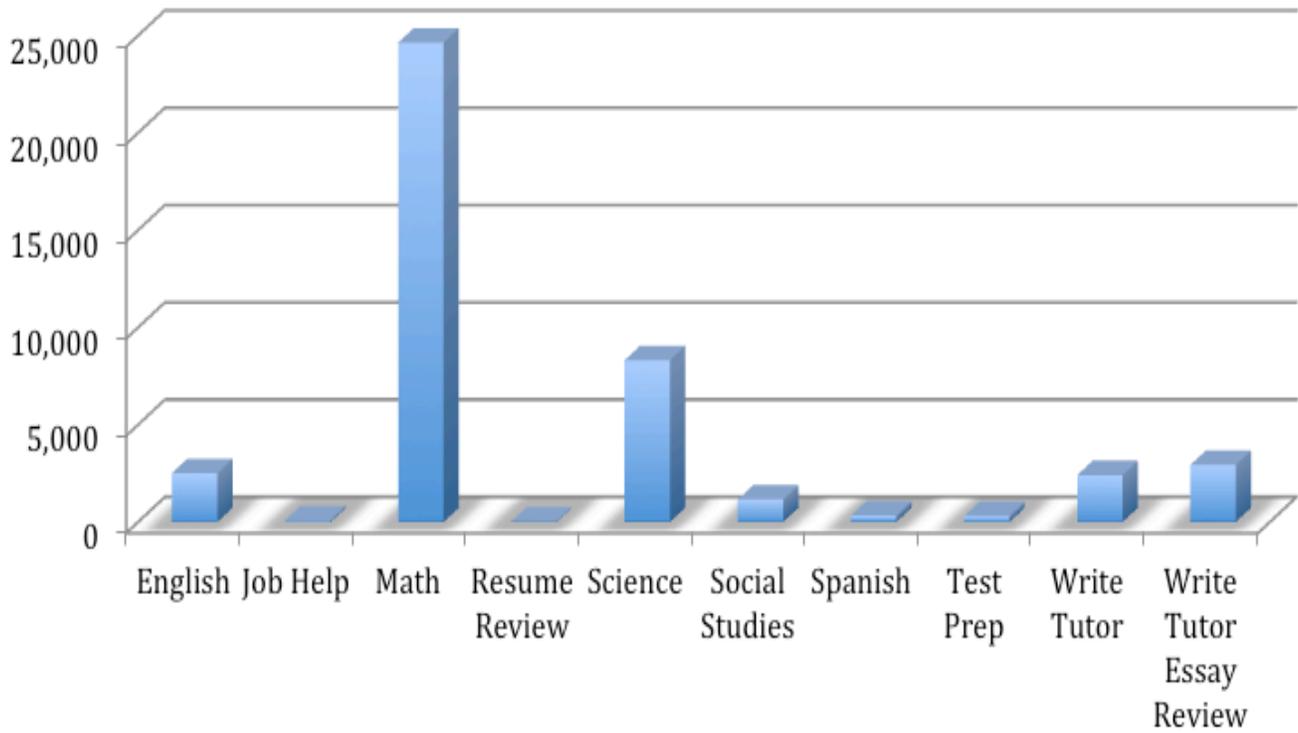
HomeworkAlabama.org

HomeworkAlabama.org is a two-prong database that offers free online tutoring and a separate SkillsCenter Resource Library for students and adult learners. The online tutoring is available Sundays through Thursdays from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. to provide students

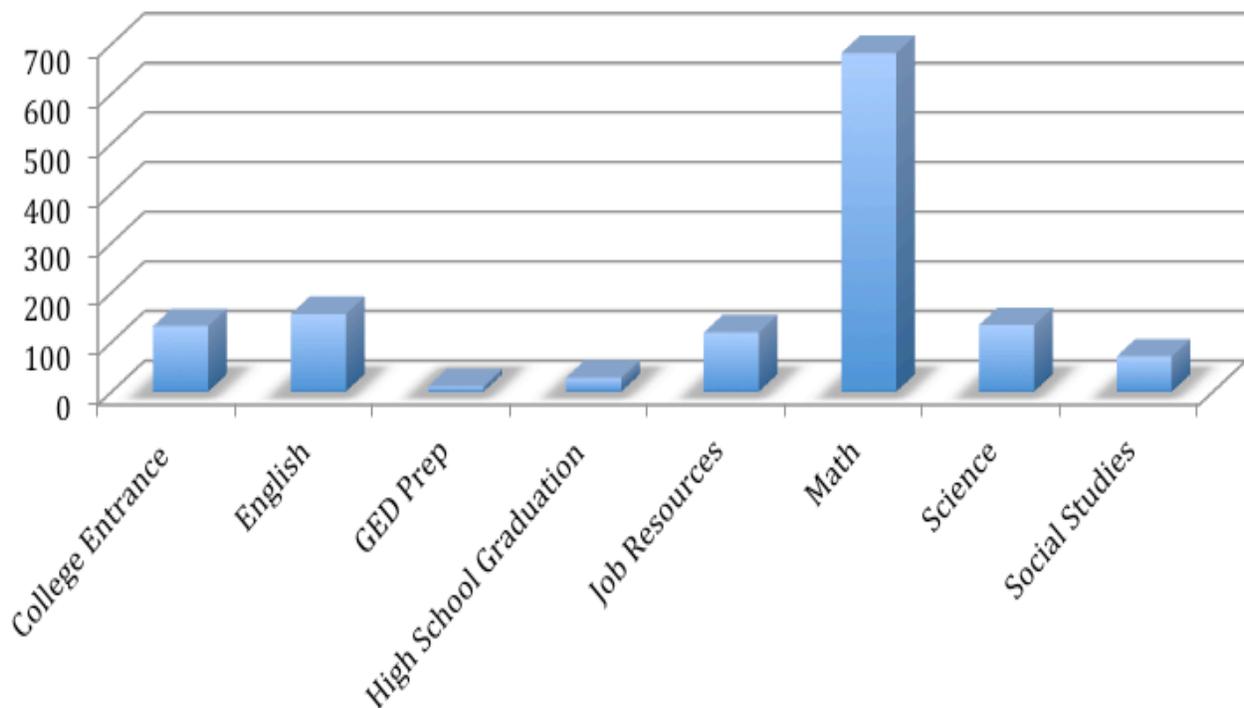
with homework help in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. The SkillsCenter is a 24/7 service that includes study, test prep, and career resources. Homework Alabama is made possible with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and dedicated state funds appropriated by the State Legislature. This free high-quality program provides tutoring that supports parts of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) initiative by the U.S. Department of Education. Professional teachers, college professors and graduate students provide one-on-one help to patrons of all ages in a secure online classroom. Sessions are available in English and Spanish. Math help was the most requested service for both one-on-one tutoring (57%) and SkillsCenter usage (79%) in 2015.

The SkillsCenter Resource Library is divided into three categories: Study Resources, Test Prep Resources, and Career Resources. The study resources include lessons, worksheets, study guides, and videos for help with English, Math, Science, and Social Studies for students in elementary school through college level. The test prep resources include practice for the ACT, SAT, PSAT, Advanced Placement (AP), Alabama High School Graduation Exam, and others. The career resources include help with exam preparation (i.e. GED and U.S. Citizenship), financial literacy, job searching, and resumes. There is even an option to send a resume to a tutor for review and feedback. The SkillsCenter tutoring hours are Sundays through Thursdays from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Homework Alabama Tutoring Sessions 2015



Homework Alabama SkillsCenter Usage 2015



Information Technology

The Public Library has transformed from that quiet place where a person visited to primarily read and conduct research into a thriving technology hub. From a time that fax and microfiche machines were cutting edge. Today computers, laptops, tablets, smartphones and Internet hotspots are the norm.

With great technology comes great responsibility and management. Not to over simplify, but public libraries are not just about ISBN and call numbers. Today questions exist like:

- How do we secure our network?
- Should we use a workgroup or domain?
- Do I need a server?
- Do we need to upgrade?
- When do we need to upgrade?
- How do we upgrade?
- Do we need a static IP address or dynamic?
- Is my Internet speed fast enough?

One of the goals for Alabama Public Library Service's Information Technology staff is to be able to mitigate the management and maintenance of information technology for Alabama's public libraries. As a result, this allows libraries to focus on enrichment and outreach programs as well as other strategic planning and daily operations. With the information we provide, a library can make an informed decision on how they want to accomplish their

technology goals. Furthermore, we can help ensure that a library's technical implementation aligns with the library's current and future technology plans.

In addition to responding to technology inquiries from libraries, APLS Information Technology staff utilizes a hands-on, person-to-person approach to computer, operating system and/or network troubleshooting. We continue to make site visits when necessary to repair complex problems or assist with minor technical issues using remote access software. We also provide site evaluations to determine the best way to improve and optimize the library's existing infrastructure.

As more vendors add support for Microsoft's Windows 10 and Server 2012 and Apple's El Capitan, our IT staff remains a step ahead of technology with training and testing on these systems so we can make the best technological recommendations for a library's environment. We specialize in creating functional and safe kiosk environments for public access where patrons can be productive whether it's educational, job searching or entertainment purposes.

In addition, an upgraded virtual infrastructure allows for more capacity, availability, better security and failover. This upgrade will increase capacity for hosting more websites as more public libraries continue to increase their digital footprint. Furthermore, our upgraded infrastructure provides the capability to offer offsite storage

through cloud-based systems that are maintained in-house. Libraries will have the opportunity to store important data offsite, which goes hand in hand in developing an effective disaster recovery plan.

As the use of technology grows, so will the needs and expectations of the libraries' patrons and staff. Alabama's public libraries have come a long way from using manual cataloging and checkout systems. Now that new automated systems have emerged, almost every library has some form of computerized system to accomplish daily tasks. Our focus is to alleviate most of the expense and time consuming issues that arise when using these systems and other technology in the library. With our training and knowledge, we help libraries move to the next level in meeting technological needs for their patrons and library staff.

Meet the Team

<i>Dorothy Baker</i>	<i>Kevin Goff</i>	<i>Sondra Nix</i>
<i>Carol Burchett</i>	<i>Kim Goodson</i>	<i>Nancy Pack</i>
<i>Vanessa Carr</i>	<i>Tony Hale</i>	<i>Alex Perry</i>
<i>Wanda Chrietzberg</i>	<i>Bryan Harris</i>	<i>Jeannie Price</i>
<i>Mike Coleman</i>	<i>Ken Herston</i>	<i>Kelyn Ralya</i>
<i>Leonard Coprich</i>	<i>Trevor Johnson</i>	<i>Jim Smith</i>
<i>Tim Emmons</i>	<i>Theresa Jones</i>	<i>Melinda Smith</i>
<i>Ruth Evans</i>	<i>Alisa McLeod</i>	<i>Matt Sponsler</i>
<i>Jeff Finklea</i>	<i>Clyde Mills</i>	<i>Stephanie Taylor</i>
<i>Daniel Gilmore</i>	<i>James Milton</i>	<i>Keith Walker</i>



**ALABAMA
PUBLIC LIBRARY
SERVICE**

Adventures Await You At your Alabama Public Libraries

