



Connecting People to Information and Ideas

July 7, 2022

Mr. James Ritter
State Librarian
Maine State Library
64 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0064

Dear Mr. Ritter:

IMLS staff have completed the initial review of the Five-Year Evaluations submitted by State Library Administrative Agencies (SLAAs) and have already begun to synthesize the findings. We look forward to disseminating this national analysis, which speaks to your ability to rapidly iterate and continue serving communities during a global pandemic.

The evaluations clearly demonstrate that LSTA funds support projects that align with national priorities and the IMLS focal areas, such as lifelong learning, civic engagement, and economic and employment development. It is very gratifying to see all that the SLAAs have accomplished.

The evaluations also document how federal funds reached groups that are a priority in our legislation, such as individuals with disabilities and the library workforce. In many cases, the evaluations demonstrate the power of partnerships to provide enhanced library and information services. We look forward to seeing how these partnerships grow as you fulfill the goals and objectives outlined in your new Five-Year Plan.

On behalf of IMLS, I want to extend our thanks to you and all your staff for the important work you do in delivering library services to the communities in your state.

Sincerely,

Crosby Kemper
Director
Institute of Museum and Library Services

Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)
20 U.S.C. 9141

Maine Five-Year State Plan: 2022-2027

SUBMITTED June 28, 2022

Approved by the Maine Library Commission
June 27, 2022



Mission

The Maine State Library helps people, makes Maine libraries stronger and transforms information into knowledge.

The Maine State Library seeks to assist Maine libraries and the communities they serve towards resiliency through sustainable practices relating to operations and services. We acknowledge that such sustainable practices touch on activities associated with initiatives to combat climate change, promote environmental justice, and address pervasive inequities that have and continue to exclude many from the benefits of library services.

As such, we commit to the practices of:

Diversity by recognizing, embracing, and serving, all human characteristics, identities, lived experiences, and ways of knowing that make us unique as individuals and members of cultures and communities.

Equity by discovering, creating, and providing what is required or requested by each individual, to ensure fairness in opportunity and that all needs are met

Inclusion by insuring everyone is empowered to contribute, be seen, be heard, feel valued and be counted in a way that is safe and fosters a sense of belonging

The Maine State Library is led by James Ritter, Maine State Librarian under the guidance of the Maine Library Commission (the Commission). The Commission is a 15-member board appointed by the Governor and is broadly representative of the state's library community as detailed in [27 MRS §111](#). The Commission establishes the policies and operations of the State Library, provides advice, makes recommendations on the expenditure of state and federal funds, and establishes guidelines and policies for statewide library programs.

The Maine State Library has three distinct divisions that serve a variety of constituents.

1. **Library Development Division**

The Library Development Division provides for the development of all types of libraries throughout the state. The division supports both statewide infrastructure and direct support to all libraries. Specific programs include: the Maine Regional Library System (specialist and consulting services, interlibrary loan, continuing education and professional development) and other federal and state programs for all libraries, media services, Maine InfoNet, and online content. The Grants to State Program is managed and implemented through this division. The Library Development Division strives to provide services that: are relevant to the changing library landscape, have measurable outcomes, are scaled to the size and type of library, improve statewide services, and empower Maine library directors and staff.

2. **Public and Outreach Services, Research & Innovation Division**

The Public and Outreach Services, Research & Innovation Division manages all direct one-to-one services. These include but are not limited to direct free walk-in service, direct library lending and reference services, Books by Mail, and Talking Books Plus (Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped).

3. **Collection Development, Digital Initiatives and Promotion**

The Collection Development, Digital Initiatives and Promotion Division is responsible for traditional collection development activities at the Maine State Library including acquiring, cataloging, repairing, and preserving library collections. The unit also leads the Maine State Library's digitization efforts and manages the [Digital Maine Repository](#), the statewide digital repository of collections and serves as Maine's service hub for the [Digital Public Library of America](#) (DPLA).

Needs Assessment

The Maine State Library (MSL) used the following data and input for the need assessment for the 2023-2027 Five Year Plan.

- Maine State Library: Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), Grants to States [Implementation Evaluation, FFY2018 – FFY 2022](#) from QualityMetrics
- [Survey](#) and [evaluation data](#) collected specifically for the Five-Year Plan from librarians statewide
- MSL’s own administrative data
- Advisory input from MSL staff, librarians, constituents, and partners working with LSTA supported programs

Implementation Evaluation, FFY2018 – FFY 2022 from QualityMetrics, LLC

In the recently submitted *LSTA Grants to States Implementation Evaluation for 2018-2022* prepared by QualityMetrics, LLC, Table 1 offers a summary of both the Maine State Library’s internal assessment and the evaluators’ conclusions. ¹

Table 1 - Maine State Library’s and Evaluators’ Assessment of Achievement		
GOAL	Maine State Library’s Internal Assessment	Evaluators’ Assessment
GOAL 1: Expand library resource sharing and services for all Maine residents	Achieved	Achieved
GOAL 2: Improve the Maine library workforce via continuing education, professional development and leadership opportunities	Achieved	Achieved
GOAL 3: Provide and improve library services to individuals with disabilities; and to Maine residents, including children, living in underserved areas and rural areas.	Achieved	Partly Achieved
GOAL 4: Expand and enhance life-long learning opportunities for Maine residents	Partly Achieved	Partly Achieved

¹ Maine State Library: Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to states Program Implementation Evaluation Federal Fiscal Year 2018 – Federal Fiscal year 2022. QualityMetrics, LLC., March 10, 2022. P.3, 6-7.

Two comments from the evaluators should be noted:

“Maine’s LSTA program isn’t flashy nor is it characterized by shiny objects in the form of innovative subgrant activities. Rather, the program allocates most of its funds to solid, fundamental projects that help ensure that all residents of the Pine Tree State have access to quality collections and e-resources and that they are served by library staff who are competent and have the tools and skills needed to connect people and the information they desire and require.”

“One other earmark of MSL’s overall program of service that must be understood to assess the state’s performance using LSTA funds relates to the high degree of collaboration that is evident in most of its initiatives. Whether it is MSL’s relationship with the University of Maine System in the Maine InfoNet project or the remarkable success of the Maine School and Library Network (MSLN) and NetworkMaine, through a collaboration that includes a host of major partners including the Maine Department of Education, the University of Maine System, and the State’s Office of Information Technology, the state library agency consistently demonstrates its commitment to forging partnerships that deliver results and that enable MSL to leverage LSTA funds in a way that is arguably unparalleled in the nation.”

Review of Goals Achieved and Partially Achieved in the Evaluation²

Evaluators’ Goal 1 Summary

Expand library resource sharing and services for all Maine residents.

“All three of the projects undertaken by MSL in support of Goal 1 (MRLS - Area Reference and Resource Centers, Maine InfoNet, and the Maine School and Library Network) have either achieved or exceeded the outcomes envisioned for these programs. The Area Reference and Resource Centers were negatively impacted by the pandemic but are now on the road to recovery. The Maine InfoNet and MSLN programs were, if anything, more important during the COVID shutdown. Furthermore, Maine has demonstrated the importance and power of robust partnerships and collaboration in a powerful way. The evaluators concluded that Maine State Library **achieved Goal 1.**”

Evaluators’ Goal 2 Summary

Improve the Maine library workforce via continuing education, professional development, and leadership opportunities.

“This goal includes two projects: MRLS - Specialists and Consulting and Continuing Education. Both projects conducted in support of Goal 2 were heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. “MSL staff rose to the challenge and, in fact, managed to exceed all expectations for effectiveness and success. New lessons were learned that will change and improve the way these services are conducted in the future. The evaluators conclude that Maine State Library has **achieved Goal 2.**”

Evaluators’ Goal 3 Summary

Provide and improve library services to individuals with disabilities; and to Maine residents, including children, living in underserved areas and rural areas.

“Maine’s Talking Books Plus project is a solid, well-managed implementation of the LOC/NLS program that satisfies the first half of Goal 1 (Provide and improve library services to individuals with disabilities). The weakness of the large print

² Maine State Library: Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to states Program Implementation Evaluation Federal Fiscal Year 2018 – Federal Fiscal year 2022. QualityMetrics, LLC., March 10, 2022. P. 3-4.

activity pales in comparison to the strength of the balance of the project. However, the Books by Mail project, while technically achieving the outcomes outlined in the 2018-2022 Five-Year Plan, is not adequately addressing the needs of those identified in the second half of the Goal statement (those living in underserved areas and rural areas). Because of this shortcoming, which is clearly acknowledged by MSL administration and staff, the evaluators conclude that Maine State Library has only **Partly Achieved Goal 3**. Nevertheless, the evaluators believe that it is necessary to reiterate that MSL is actively seeking new mechanisms to address the difficult challenge presented by Maine’s geography, topography, and population distribution.”

Evaluators’ Goal 4 Summary

Expand and enhance life-long learning opportunities Maine residents

“The evaluators find that the Maine State Library is well on its way to achieving Goal 4. MSL has clearly accomplished the single desired outcome via the Digital Maine Library (Maine residents and libraries have access to a variety of learning and information resources) expressed for the only project (Procurement, Evaluation and Selection of Online Content: Databases and Learning Tools) undertaken in support of the Goal. However, the State Library’s self-assessment that it has only partly achieved Goal 4 is well founded. The usage of many of the databases has declined and the MSL administration expressed their strong commitment to making sure that Maine residents receive the highest value possible from the information resources that are licensed. The title of the project undertaken isn’t limited to “procurement.” It also includes “evaluation and selection”, it is in this area that MSL feels that it is still striving. MSL is working hard to achieve the right mix of content products to meet the needs of all residents whether they are elementary or high school students, college students, the business community, and everyday residents seeking productive employment and a fulfilling life. Finally, the evaluators want to indicate that the potential of the upcoming Bendable [Maine] project is tremendous. It promises to be a model for the nation. The evaluators agree with MSL’s assessment that they have only PARTLY ACHIEVED Goal 4 ... however, we also wish to point out that they are on a trajectory that is very likely to make the impact of this Goal equal to or greater than the success experienced in Goals 1, 2, and 3.”

Maine’s four goals primarily address three of the six IMLS Focal Areas according to the evaluators, Information Access, Institutional Capacity to improve the library workforce, and Lifelong Learning. *“The rationale behind the attention given to the Information Access and Institutional Capacity focal areas becomes clear when the sizes of libraries and the rural, remote nature of the majority of communities in the state are considered.”*³

³ Maine State Library: Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to states Program Implementation Evaluation Federal Fiscal Year 2018 – Federal Fiscal year 2022. QualityMetrics, LLC., March 10, 2022. P.5.

Maine State Library: Assessment of the Maine Library Landscape and Needs

According to the 2020 Census, Maine grew from 1,328,361 to 1,362,359 people in ten years, a difference of just under 34,000 habitants and an increase of about 6%. Maine's population grew by 2.6% between 2010-2020. The three most densely populated counties in the southern part of the state are Cumberland, York, and Androscoggin Counties. This population of 662,180 represents 49% of the total population. The remaining population is distributed among the other 13 counties.⁴

Population Density in Maine Counties: 2020



Over 21% of Maine's population is over 65 and the median age of 44.7 makes Maine the oldest population in the nation. Maine's population is majorly white (90.8%) with only Androscoggin, Cumberland, and Washington Counties with figures below that mark. There are [483 incorporated municipalities consisting of cities, towns, and plantations in Maine](#). Approximately 125,653 Maine residents live in the 170 towns or plantations with no local public library.

The Maine State Library utilizes federal funds to serve all library types in Maine, primarily through a variety of statewide services. All libraries are supported with continuing education and professional development opportunities through national webinars and other learning opportunities posted on MSL's [Statewide CE calendar](#). See the [directories of Maine libraries by type](#):

Public Libraries

Of the 255 recognized public libraries in Maine, 99% are single outlet libraries with only three libraries that have branch locations. Most Maine public libraries are private/non-profit organizations (57%) with the remaining 43% designated as municipal departments. Maine has no county or regional systems as commonly found elsewhere in the United States. Almost three-quarters of Maine's public libraries are managed by directors who do not have master's degrees in library or information science. Over forty six percent (46.3 %) of Maine's public libraries serve populations of fewer than 2,500 people with 70% of the libraries serving populations below 5000. Maine's public libraries are predominantly rural.⁵ Maine's largest libraries all serve populations below 70,000, Portland (65,645), Lewiston (36,501) and Bangor (31,753).

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau (2020). Maine State Profile. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/state-by-state/maine-population-change-between-census-decade.html>

⁵ Maine State Library: Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to states Program Implementation Evaluation Federal Fiscal Year 2018 – Federal Fiscal year 2022. QualityMetrics, LLC., March 10, 2022. P.1.

School Libraries

Maine's has 617 K-12 school in 174 districts. There are 150 certified School Media Specialists serving the state's 185,739 students. Most school libraries are managed by Ed Techs with the Library Media Specialist overseeing all libraries in the district. Schools are significant users of the Digital Maine Library's K-12 resources. School librarians also receive professional development through the [Maine Association of School Libraries](#) (MASL).

Academic Libraries

Maine has 33 Academic Libraries. The University of Maine System has 12 campuses with academic libraries. The Maine Community College System has seven (7) campuses. The remaining 15 academic libraries are in private, two or four-year institutions. Maine's academic libraries benefit from the federally supported state infrastructure through Maine InfoNet, digital/online resources, ILL, the Download Library and van delivery.

Special Libraries

Maine's special libraries consist of a variety of non-profit, for-profit, government, and correctional institutions that also include Health Science libraries. Of the 43 special libraries the level of support from MSL is directly related to their non-profit or for-profit status as well as the participation in interlibrary loan. The Health Science libraries utilize statewide interlibrary loan and van delivery services as does a few of the non-profit special libraries. All may use the statewide digital resources available.

Maine Library Survey Data

MSL collects data periodically through the duration of the five-year plan through survey instruments, meetings and local library input and suggestions from both the Maine Library Commission and the Maine Library Advisory Council.

The Maine State Library conducted a [Five Year Plan Assessment Survey](#) in April 2022, which was done in addition to the QualityMetrics evaluation survey. The survey asked Maine library staff to respond to questions about goals and programs. [Survey results](#) and [comments](#) are available at the MSL website.

There were 135 respondents, from all counties and all library types. Most of the responses were from public libraries. By and large, Maine library staff support and greatly appreciate current programs. Some offered suggestions for rewording/rephrasing of goal language and for minor modifications in some programs. All goals from the previous plan were considered important for the new five-year plan by 92-98% of the respondents.

Maine State Library Administrative Data and Advisory Input

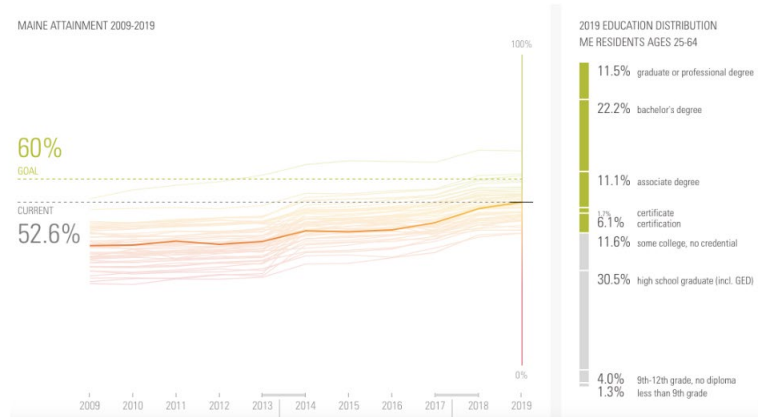
Lifelong Learning Needs in Maine

The Maine State Library (MSL) has had ongoing communication and discussions with libraries, other Maine state agencies (including the Department of Labor, Department of Economic and Community Development, Department of Education) as well as the University of Maine System, Maine Community College System, Educate Maine and Maine Sparks about the need for providing informal learning, opportunities for attaining micro-credentials to help Maine attain goals outlined in Maine’s Economic Development Strategy 2020-2029 (DECD) ⁶ and Educational Indicators for Maine:2021 (Educate Maine). Maine has one of the highest high school graduations rates in the country but lags in the number of students who pursue a formal secondary degree. “Just 53% of Maine adults hold a degree or credential of value – a precursor to skilled employment with family-sustaining wages.”⁷

The Maine State Library’s self-assessment and that of the evaluators of its online offerings concluded there was a critical need to reach beyond the provision of traditional databases and pivot to providing online learning

opportunities for Maine residents through libraries. Lifelong learning, be it informal, informal with credentialing opportunities, or informal with pathways to formal credentialing and degrees, is essential to contribute to statewide efforts to promote Maine as a great place to live, work, and learn. “...the workforce of tomorrow will require continuous upgrading of knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet ever-changing market needs. And to support that culture of continuous learning, Maine will also need an education system that is accessible, affordable, and effective...By 2025, this report predicts that Maine’s economy will need 60 to 65 percent of its workers to have credentials. So not only does Maine need more people in the workforce, but Maine needs more people with credentials.”⁸

53% percent of working-age Maine adults (25-64) have a postsecondary degree or credential



⁶ Maine’s Economic Development Strategy 2020-2029. Maine DECD. Retrieved from https://www.maine.gov/decd/sites/maine.gov.decd/files/inline-files/DECD_120919_sm.pdf. P. 21.

⁷ Education Indicators for Maine: 2021, Educate Maine. Retrieved from <https://educationindicators.me/#1635172591896-9bc70cc6-2ce4>

⁸ Maine’s Economic Development Strategy 2020-2029. DECD, November 15, 2019. Retrieved from https://www.maine.gov/decd/sites/maine.gov.decd/files/inline-files/DECD_120919_sm.pdf

Equitable library services for underserved, under-represented, those with disabilities and those experiencing other challenges accessing library services.

The Maine State Library has long served Maine residents with the Talking Books Plus and Books by Mail programs but has spent considerable time studying, evaluating, and envisioning new approaches to these services.

The Talking Books Plus program made the transition to the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) Duplication on Demand system. This new system allows MSL Talking Books staff to create digital cartridges containing the files for talking books based on the requests of Maine patrons thus reducing wait times and improving access to patrons. This approach puts the entire NLS collection at the fingertips of all Maine Talking Books patrons without the need to stock prepared cartridges from NLS headquarters at the Library of Congress. For the Large Print Program, in house changes for a new plan are intended to infuse newer Large Print (LP) into our regular catalog to provide access to both Talking Books patrons and statewide via Interlibrary Loan through the statewide catalog. Our Books by Mail staff and the evaluators at Quality Metrics also agreed that our Books by Mail program needed attention, funding, and reconsideration. The reimagined program to the MSL Outreach Library will help patrons living close to nearby library to afford a nonresident card if needed and focus on residents living in the truly underserved areas and rural areas “addressing the difficult challenge presented by Maine’s geography and population distribution.”⁹

Identified Needs

- *Due to size, operating revenues, and geography there is continued need for LSTA to fund statewide infrastructure and support for all library types to provide equitable access.*
- *There continues to be a high turnover in library directors, media specialists and frontline staff. A significant percentage of public library directors (72%) have no MLS degree and 32% of non-MLS librarians have no degree beyond a HS education. This drives the Maine State Library’s commitment to informal training in librarianship through continuing education offerings, professional development, and leadership training. It is MSL’s vital effort to maintain the high level of service expected by the people of Maine.*
- *Lifelong learning needs of Maine residents is a crucial component of equitable and inclusive library services*
- *The library service needs of Maine’s disabled, underserved and remote, rural residents is ongoing*

The Maine State Library works closely with all libraries and LSTA project managers to continuously evaluate needs as they evolve. Our monthly statewide “Continuing the Conversation” using our cloud-based licensed Zoom™ communications platform fosters this process.

⁹ Maine State Library: Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to states Program Implementation Evaluation Federal Fiscal Year 2018 – Federal Fiscal year 2022. QualityMetrics, LLC., March 10, 2022. P.6.

Goals for Maine’s Five-Year State Plan

Based upon the needs assessment the Maine State Library will retain four broad statewide goals and continue to direct LSTA funds to statewide programs and projects to provide the highest benefit to Maine residents through its libraries. The goals align with the IMLS’s LSTA-specified Grants to States Priorities (20 U.S.C. § 9141).

Goal Priority	Goal
1	All Maine residents have equitable access to high quality information resources through libraries, Maine State Library programs and statewide resources sharing.
2	The Maine library workforce are provided equitable access to support, guidance, and opportunities to advance knowledge and skills to in turn ensure equitable and inclusive library services via continuing education, professional development, and leadership opportunities.
3	Opportunities for Life-Long Learning for Maine residents is attainable and enhanced through Maine State Library online resources and local library programs and offerings, both in-person and virtual.
4	Maine’s diverse population, including people who are underserved and underrepresented, living in rural and remote communities, the disabled and those who are homebound, immigrants, or any resident who struggles with financial and other challenges may improve their lives through library services.

The goal priority numbers are based upon identified needs for our core constituency, Maine’s libraries, followed by the wider statewide needs of Maine residents served by libraries or with no library services. The Maine State Library endeavors to serve the largest number with equitable library services. Our goals are in alignment with the [IMLS Grants to States Priorities](#).

The Maine State Library Five Year Plan for 2023-2027 has four goals that reflect library needs statewide. Our primary goal to expand library resource sharing and services for Maine residents is our first priority. These projects provide support for interlibrary loan, integrated library systems and a statewide catalog, e-books and audio books, broadband connections, and more.

Our second goal to improve the library workforce is supported by the projects that offer direct support to librarians in the state – continuing education and specialist and consulting services. Our intent is to improve statewide library services by improving the library workforce.

Our third goal is to expand and enhance life-long learning by purchasing, evaluating and selecting online content that benefits all Maine residents – in their libraries and at their homes – with resources that meet the needs of all ages and audiences.

Finally, our fourth goal targets Maine’s disabled and under-served communities. These residents are spread over Maine’s large geographic area, some with limited access to broadband to access online resources. The two projects that address this goal to improve services to Maine’s disadvantaged populations provide access to books in a variety of formats delivered both online and via the mail.

Overall, the Maine State Library formally partners with over fifteen organizations and agencies via contracts and agreements and always works in partnership with all Maine libraries to fulfill our mission to help people, make Maine libraries stronger and transform information into knowledge. LSTA funds this comprehensive and collaborative approach utilizing partners to support infrastructure and people via statewide programs.

Projects with Aligned Goals

Goal 1: All Maine residents have equitable access to high quality information resources through libraries, Maine State Library programs and statewide resources sharing.

Projects

1. Maine InfoNet: Partnership between the University of Maine and the Maine State Library
2. Area Reference and Resource Centers (ARRCs) for the Maine Regional Library System
3. Maine School and Library Network (MSLN): Partnership with Networkmaine, Maine Department of Education, Maine Public Utilities Commission, and the Maine State Government Office of Information Technology

Goal 2: The Maine library workforce are provided equitable access to support, guidance, and opportunities to advance knowledge and skills to in turn ensure equitable and inclusive library services via continuing education, professional development, and leadership opportunities.

Projects

4. Continuing Education
5. Specialists and Consulting for the Maine Regional Library System

Goal 3: Opportunities for Life-Long Learning for Maine residents is attainable and enhanced through Maine State Library online resources and local library programs and offerings, both in-person and virtual.

Projects

6. Bendable Maine
7. Digital Maine Library

Goal 4: Maine's diverse population, including people who are underserved and underrepresented, living in rural and remote communities, the disabled, those who are homebound, immigrants, or any resident who struggles with financial and other challenges may improve their lives through library services.

Projects

8. MSL Outreach Library
9. Talking Books Plus

Goal 1 Projects

Project 1: Maine InfoNet: Partnership between the University of Maine and the Maine State Library

Description:

The Maine State Library and the University of Maine System/Fogler Library will continue to partner to support the goals of [Maine InfoNet](#). Maine InfoNet (MIN) provides leadership and management through a collaborative of public, academic, school, and special libraries for resource sharing, promotes cost effective solutions for quality library information services, and supports the cultural, educational, and economic development of Maine. Supported by the Maine State Library and the University of Maine System and Fogler Library, Maine InfoNet connects the people of Maine to information and ideas through library cooperation. A board of directors oversees the overall operation of Maine InfoNet and takes the lead in planning and establishment of policies.

What the project will do:

The Maine State library contracts with the University of Maine System and the University of Maine's Fogler Library for services, ILS management, salaries, support plus content administration.

MIN will provide Maine libraries leadership, management, and access to:

1. The [Digital Maine Library](#) (DML)-- The DML is comprised of 84 research indexes, databases, and other online content each with its own search interface. The DML provides every resident of Maine with access to a collection of full text articles and abstracts from magazines, newspapers, journals, and reference books that are credible, reputable resources. The DML also provides access to other online tools for learning and research.
2. The [MaineCat Statewide Catalog](#) combines and links more than 10 million items in nearly 100 library Collections. These include public, school, academic and special libraries. There are currently three consortia supported by MIN: URSUS, Minerva and MILS but during the next five-year plan there is expected to be changes in the structure and makeup of these consortia, including growth in the number of participating libraries. MIN will continue to play the lead role in the management of ILS services for Maine libraries.
3. The [Download Library](#) provides online access to e-books and downloadable audio books through CloudLibrary. Patrons from member libraries can checkout e- books and downloadable digital audiobooks for free, 24/7, from a shared collection. Over 243 libraries in Maine participate in the consortial statewide system. The growing collection currently includes over 15,000 downloadable audiobooks and e-books.

Who benefits from this project and what are the expected outcomes?

All Maine residents and all academic, public, school (K-12), and special libraries in good standing with Maine Library Commission rules are project beneficiaries.

Expected outcomes:

- Digital Maine Library (DML) - Maine residents have access to comprehensive online resources.
- MaineCat - Maine residents, library patrons and students have increased access to the collections of many Maine libraries
- Download Library -Maine residents and all libraries have expanded access to downloadable audio and e-books.

Procedures:

Maine InfoNet will continue the expansion, refinement, and evolution of all its services and resources for Maine libraries, library patrons and all Maine residents for supported programs below:

MaineCat: Maine InfoNet will expand the number of libraries that actively participate in MaineCat:

- In consultation with identified consortium governance, increase participation in Maine Cat resource sharing to over 100 libraries of all types during the 2023-2027 period of the five-year plan.
- Build on the use of API technologies for Koha, Evergreen, Polaris, and other ILS programs to enable more libraries to facilitate their own interlibrary loan requests
- Continue agreements with ILS consortia to sustain MaineCat or another unified catalog solution.
- Evaluate the current state ILS architecture and explore possible changes to the mix of ILS software and connections statewide to better serve the needs of libraries and their patrons. solutions.

Digital Maine Library:

- Work with contracted content providers to facilitate access statewide
- Support authentication from public, academic, and K-12 libraries buildings annually
- Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of the discovery system annually
- Utilize geo-authentication, geo-location, and/or other means to provide ease of access to Maine residents from home during the length of the plan

Download Library:

- Monitor use and quality of service from Bibliotheca’s CloudLibrary and/or other solutions to e-book and audio book demand by Maine libraries and patrons (Annually)
- Provide yearly opportunities for new library participants

The Maine InfoNet project will continue the Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Maine System/Fogler Library and MSL to employ an InfoNet Director and staff members.

Project 2: Area Reference and Resource Centers (ARRCs) for the Maine Regional Library System

Description:

The MRLS ARRC system was established by legislation in 1973 (MRSA Title 27, Chapter 4). Currently there are three ARRC libraries serving 16 counties divided into nine regions. The ARRC libraries were selected to improve library services to the residents of Maine. Portland Public Library (PPL) provides services in the southern counties (York and Cumberland - population 500,594). Bangor Public Library (BPL) provides services for the northern and eastern counties (Aroostook, Hancock, Knox, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Waldo, and Washington – population 401,773) and the Maine State Library (MSL) provides services for the central and western counties (Androscoggin, Franklin, Kennebec, Lincoln, Oxford, Sagadahoc, and Somerset population 438,498). Lewiston Public Library (LPL) supplements ILL services for fiction for the MSL’s regions under a contract.

What the project will do:

The Maine State Library contracts with PPL, BPL, and LPL for ARRC services to expand library resource sharing and services for all Maine residents.

All three ARRCs will:

- Provide ILL services to libraries in their respective counties
- Provide free borrower’s cards to Maine residents residing in their respective counties
- Provide reference and additional information services to libraries and patrons in those counties
- Provide support to Bendable Maine with library learning events, community collections, and stakeholder communications

In addition, MSL will:

- Manage van delivery program for libraries
- Support and manage statewide digitization efforts

Who benefits from this project and what are the expected outcomes?

All Maine residents and all academic, public, school (K-12), and special libraries in good standing in accordance with Maine Library Commission rules are project beneficiaries.

Expected outcomes:

Provide ILL services to libraries in their respective counties

- Libraries that are not members of a state ILS consortium can offer ILL services to their patrons.
- Library users in all areas of Maine have access to more materials.

Provide free borrowers cards to Maine residents residing their respective counties

- Maine residents have access to a wider array of services, programs, and materials than many small libraries can offer.

Provide reference and additional information services to libraries and patrons in those counties with no library.

- The information needs of all Maine residents in the areas served are met.

Work with Bendable Maine fellows and Drucker team to create community collections, communicate with area stakeholders and share library events through the platform

- Users of the Bendable Maine platform will be provided access to local events and local community collections

MSL will manage van delivery program for libraries statewide

- Libraries have increased access to in-state materials for their patrons.
- Patrons receive library materials quickly and cost effectively.

MSL will serve as the DPLA Service Hub for Maine

- Maine organizations meta data can be harvested and uploaded to DPLA
- MSL will facilitate use of the [Digital Maine Repository](#)

MSL will support the work of the [Maine Contemporary Archives](#) Collaborative

- Libraries and partners can collect, preserve, and provide access to materials related to Maine community members' experiences of current events.

Procedures:

Resource sharing and services will be provided through the MRLS ARRC libraries. Each ARRC library will:

- Provide instruction via website and other means to area libraries about ILL services and process and procedures to request items.
- Provide a free library borrower's card to Maine residents. Applicants may apply in person, online or through a library.
- Attend Maine Library Commission meetings
- Participate in other cooperative activities and services as member libraries may need or require (e.g. providing meeting spaces).
- Provide cardholder access to library databases to area libraries and residents

MSL Delivery Services project activities will:

- Negotiate statewide contract for delivery services.
- Bill libraries yearly for van delivery service, facilitate inquiries from libraries regarding service issues and maintain regular communication with van delivery service provider for resolution

- Subsidize one day of delivery service for public libraries as budget allows
- Maintain van delivery labels with route #s for all participating libraries.
- MSL will route unfilled fiction requests to Lewiston Public Library (fiction ARRC)
- MSL will convene meetings to assess impact of statewide MaineCat initiative on ILL volume
- MSL will convene a Delivery Working Group to address rising costs

MSL Digitization activities will

- Work with Maine organizations and then DPLA to harvest metadata
- Promote, facilitate and train librarians on how to use the Digital Maine Repository
- Financially support the work of the Maine Contemporary Archives for their platform and stipends

Project 3: Maine School and Library Network (MSLN) Partnership with Networkmaine, Maine Department of Education, Maine Public Utilities Commission, and the Maine State Government Office of Information Technology

Description:

The Maine State Library partners with Networkmaine, Maine Department of Education (MDOE), Maine Office of Information Technology (OIT) and the Maine Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) and other stakeholders to manage and administer the Maine School and Library Network (MSLN) which provides Internet connectivity and technical support at no cost to Maine public libraries and K- 12 schools by utilizing the Maine Telecommunications Education Access Fund (MTEAF) and the federal Universal Service “E-rate” funds program.

What will the project do?

The Maine State Library (MSL) is a member of the [Networkmaine Council](#) that has oversight for planning and budgeting for the Networkmaine infrastructure, including management of the Maine School and Library Network, video conferencing and other technology infrastructure programs that are utilized by the Maine School and Library Network broadband connections.

The MSL and the Council work closely with the Maine PUC who administers the Maine Telecommunications Education Access Fund (MTEAF). The Council reviews and makes yearly recommendations on the annual budget request to the MPUC. Both the federal E-rate program and the state MTEAF fund the connections for the MSLN. The Maine State Library, as a member of the Networkmaine Advisory Council is responsible for representing the needs, missions, and views of MSLN public library consortia participants, appointing two library representatives to the council, and communicating the decisions and outcomes of the Council to MSLN libraries.

Networkmaine maintains a help desk, provides web hosting, and a domain name hosting service for MSLN public libraries. Currently 240 (94%) of Maine public libraries participate in the MSLN Consortium. Networkmaine manages the RFP, E-rate application process and vendor payments for the MSLN.

The Maine State Library staff supports Networkmaine Council and individual libraries in the e-rate application process. The current level of connectivity for Maine public libraries is a 1 gigabit or more fiber, except for a few remote locations or islands. The Federal E-rate program funds approximately 70% and the state MTEAF funds the remaining 30% for the Maine School and Library Network.

As a result of CARES and ARPA funding, MSL now partners with Networkmaine to provide low-cost Zoom Pro subscriptions to over 150 public libraries. MSL will use LSTA funds to provide what is now an essential tool for public libraries.

Who benefits from this project and what are the expected outcomes?

All LSTA/E-rate eligible public libraries are eligible to benefit from this project. At this time 94% of eligible Maine public libraries participate in the MSLN. Eligibility for a Zoom Pro subscription is available to any public library in good standing.

The Maine Library Commission determines eligibility that meet standards and MSL staff data for LSTA certification.

<http://www.maine.gov/msl/about/commission/rule.htm>

Expected outcomes:

- Public libraries provide high speed broadband connections both wired and wirelessly to their communities
- Public libraries upgrade internal network infrastructure using local, state, and federal e- rate funds.
- Public libraries comply with federal E-rate rules
- Zoom Pro subscriptions enable libraries to provide virtual programming, meetings, and other library services.

Procedures:

- Networkmaine manages the yearly e-rate application, pays invoices and tracks vendor performance and reports to the Council.
- Networkmaine monitors usage to ensure adequate bandwidth is provided and adjusts applications in accordance with bandwidth needs.
- MSL staff contracts with Networkmaine for payment of yearly Zoom subscriptions and maintains the list of participating libraries
- MSL staff provides updated lists yearly and facilitates requests from public libraries.
- Networkmaine, along with council membership, engages in an e-rate compliant RFP process every 3-5 years.
- Networkmaine negotiates contracts with services providers for the MSLN.
- The Maine State Library attends all Networkmaine Council meetings and actively participates in the work of the council.
- The Networkmaine Council prepares an annual budget request and plan to submit to the Maine PUC.
- The MSL E-rate/Technology specialist attends workshops and participates in monthly phone calls to learn, stay up-to-date and then communicate knowledge to libraries about new federal and statewide E-rate and technology initiatives.
- The MSL E-rate/Technology specialist provides leadership to MSL digital literacy initiatives that utilize the MSLN.

Use of Federal Funds for Goal 1:

The Maine State Library will spend federal funds in support of Goal 1 for these projects on:

- Salaries/Wages/Benefits for MSL personnel for all three projects
- Consultant Fees on a project-by-project basis, determined by needs on a yearly basis
- Project related travel for MSL staff, both in-state and out-of-state;
- Supplies/Materials for work on all projects
- Equipment – none anticipated for any project at this time
- Services provided by outside contracts and from state government
- Other Operational Expenses – none anticipated for any project at this time

Goal 2 Projects

Project 4: Continuing Education

Description

The Continuing Education project provides library staff learning and leadership opportunities to strengthen library programs and services in Maine. Programs are delivered in person at statewide and regional meetings or virtually via live or archived presentations. Programs are designed to meet the evolving needs of library staff at all levels. The Voluntary Public Library Certification Program is targeted to Maine library staff without library degrees but also

offers the opportunity for degreed professionals to remain up to date with the latest in library trends and innovations.

What the project will do:

- Facilitate, plan, and deliver professional development opportunities to foster life-long learning among librarians in Maine. This includes work in the areas of 21st century and emergent skills, all literacies (early, digital, STEM, health, etc.), family engagement, workforce development, data-driven decision making and advocacy, and core competencies, aligned with professional best practice for library staff with and without professional degrees. Professional development opportunities also focus on emergent trends in library service such as environmental sustainability and climate change and services for entrepreneurs and small businesses
- Address the specific needs and general professional development of the library workforce through evaluating and further developing the Voluntary Public Library Certification program
- Facilitate opportunities for library staff to build skill in developing equity-based services in their communities
- Facilitate library leadership programs and professional development opportunities to support beginning and mid-career library leaders. Planning will also focus on growing a pipeline of future leaders and succession planning
- Provide learning opportunities to assist libraries in building and/or strengthening community engagement and partnerships
- Continue as a WebJunction Community Partner to deliver online course opportunities
- Deliver continuing education programs and opportunities for library trustees and MSL will continue a contract with the Maine Association of Nonprofits partner to augment board development training
- Coordinate the evaluation of library CE programs, including the development of evaluative criteria and the implementation of evaluation programs
- Work with MSL staff to deliver the training and leadership needs of library staff

Who benefits from this project and what are the expected outcomes?

All Maine library staff will benefit from continuing education and leadership opportunities.

Expected outcomes:

- Maine library staff increase their knowledge of the library profession and library operations.
- Maine library staff increase their ability to strengthen library services that are responsive to community need and will contribute to resilience and vitality in the communities they serve

Procedures:

- MSL staff will develop a yearly CE schedule and plan for statewide meetings based on a survey of needs which library staff at all library types and at all staff levels (including governance) are encouraged to take. Other input includes observations through site visits, interviews, and feedback from the regions.
- MSL staff will plan two statewide meetings that include expert speakers that can address critical issues impacting library services and/or the communities they serve
- MSL staff will sponsor and work with the Reading Round Up committee and other state or regional conference committees for annual events
- Evaluate the Voluntary Public Library Certification program and curate the program content to include focused areas that support library staff at all levels and specialties with the objective of shifting toward a program that directly aligns with library roles and responsibilities and leads toward a credentialing model
- Schedule a New Public Library Director orientation as needed and provide continual support for new directors
- MSL staff will participate in their own professional development and determine priority areas each year in collaboration with the CE coordinator and/or Director of Library Development.

Project 5 Specialists and Regional Consulting for the Maine Regional Library System

Description:

The Maine State Library's Library Development Division currently operates a specialist and regional liaison model for delivery of services statewide to libraries. The primary focus for specialists has always been to provide and advice to library staff to improve library services for the residents of There are seven MSL staff that work directly with directors, library staff, but governing bodies (library boards and municipal officials). In their role as Library Development staff can concentrate on specific library services as well needs to meet community needs and priorities. Specialists cover a wide library related issues and programming. See a broader list of specialties at: <http://www.maine.gov/msl/libs/Specialties.shtml>



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The specialists work on a statewide basis providing resources, guidance, and other support in their areas of expertise. In addition to leveraging the specialists for statewide services, Maine is currently divided into nine library regions that each have an MSL staff liaison and a representative on the [Maine Library Advisory Council](#) (MLAC). MLAC also includes a representative from a school library, an academic library, and a liaison with the Maine Library Commission.

training,

What the project will do?

The MSL Library Development specialists will support public, school, academic, and special libraries in all Maine counties. The nine-region model has been in place since 2016 and weathered the past two and one-half years of the COVID19 pandemic. As libraries and communities in Maine begin a post pandemic recovery, there are lessons learned from how libraries and MSL responded and pivoted during the pandemic that can be applied to the region model. Taking those lessons into account, the specialists will also work with MLAC to review the current structure to determine where changes and improvements might be made to better leverage the regional model in light of the large percentage of small and rural libraries, high turnover among library staff, and Maine's widespread geography. Through this two-part review, the specialists will identify statewide service goals that reflect regional priorities and needs.

Who benefits from this project and what are the expected outcomes?

Libraries of all types benefit from this project as well as trustees and community partners

Expected outcomes

- Library staff informational needs are met
- Library staff begin to augment equity and inclusion practices in their work and in library policies and operations
- Libraries strengthen and develop new programs
- Libraries convene and collaborate regionally and statewide to improve library services
- Statewide goals are established, achieved, and reviewed regularly

Procedures- Specialists

- Coordinate regional and statewide activities in their specialties
- Serve on statewide, regional, and special interests committees
- Make presentations at statewide and regional trainings, and to other professional groups
- Serve as professional consultants to libraries in their specialties working with libraries in groups and/or one-to-one

- Model programming in their specialties where applicable
- Study the needs of the regions and statewide in their area(s) of specialties and make recommendations to MLAC
- Provide consulting services to library staff, trustees, and municipal officials
- Meet with partners and other organizations in the state in their area of specialty
- Work on statewide and national initiatives in their areas of specialties or as assigned

Procedures - Regional Liaisons

- Work with MLAC regional representatives to convene libraries in their regions, virtually and/or in-person as appropriate and in response regional priorities
- Work with MLAC on statewide and regional goals for equitable library services
- Work with MLAC to provide opportunities for peer learning focused on equity-based services and practices within the regions
- Collaborate with regional representatives in their regular communications with regional libraries through virtual meetings, site visits, and/or through other communication channels
- Foster cooperation and networking among libraries and librarians to increase collaboration among libraries to better serve Maine residents

All MSL library development staff with these roles will meet as a team to share observations, plan new programs and determine areas of collaboration to best utilize resources.

All MSL library development staff will track library contacts for reporting: site visits, video calls, email, and phone.

Use of Federal Funds for Goal 2:

The Maine State Library will spend federal funds in support of Goal 2 for these projects on:

- Salaries/Wages/Benefits for MSL personnel for the 2 projects
- Consultant Fees determined by needs.
- Project related travel for MSL staff, in-state and out-of-state; travel reimbursement for library participants on a project-by-project basis – as needed
- Supplies/Materials for work on all projects
- Equipment – none anticipated for any project at this time
- Services provided by contract for organizations or trainers outside state government; some state government services related to phone and IT
- Other Operational Expenses – none anticipated for any project at this time

Goal 3 Projects

Project 6: Digital Maine Library

Description:

The Maine State Library will use both state and federal funds to purchase and/or subscribe to online content to support the academic needs of K-12, academic and public library patrons. The Digital Maine Library includes databases and other research resources currently consisting of 84 online resources. These online resources provide Maine residents the ability to search a variety of resources at individually or collectively for information. Online content covers a choice of subjects in a variety of resource types targeted for different populations and audiences.

These resources include a collection of full text articles and abstracts from magazines, newspapers, academic journals, and reference books that are credible and reputable resources plus other online tools to support learning and public library patron needs. Access to all these resources is delivered through the [Digital Maine Library](#) portal.

What will the project do?

The project will select and procure online content in collaboration with the University of Maine Fogler Library, Maine InfoNet and other partner organizations using a combination of federal, state and Maine Telecommunication and Education Access Fund (MTEAF) money.

MSL staff and a small group of stakeholders will re-determine needs every three years, or when contracts lapse, based on usage, budget, and vendor pricing. MSL staff will keep the portal page up to date and Maine InfoNet will manage authentication as part of their project. See Project XX.

Who benefits from this project and what are the expected outcomes?

K-12 students, college students, public library patrons and any Maine residents with access to a computer, tablet, or smartphone will benefit from this project. This statewide project reduces costs at the local level by leveraging federal, state and MTEAF funds to provide statewide access.

Expected outcomes:

- Maine students of all ages, public library patrons and any Maine resident is provided access to a variety of information resources
- Reduced costs at the local school, college, nonprofit libraries, and communities for library services

Procedures:

- MSL staff, library stakeholders will review usage data and the analytics from current online content and make recommendations to the Director of Library Development and the State Librarian regarding subscription continuance.
- MSL staff will keep the portal page descriptions, images, and instructions up to date.
- MSL, Maine InfoNet and Fogler Library will collaborate to sustain a robust offering of databases with the goal of meeting the needs of K-12, academic and public libraries.
- MSL, Maine InfoNet and Fogler Library will determine the need to issue RFPs, make mid-course changes to contracts and/or subscriptions, or discontinue subscriptions of content.
- MSL will manage the contracts or subscriptions for the Digital Maine Library content via state procurement processes.

Project 7: Bendable Maine

Description:

Bendable Maine is a statewide initiative to provide a lifelong learning system to the people of Maine through libraries. The platform was initially created by the Drucker Institute, a nonprofit social enterprise based at Claremont Graduate University, for South Bend, Indiana.

Bendable Maine will allow residents of all ages and backgrounds to easily acquire new knowledge and skills through online courses as well as in-person learning opportunities at libraries and other learning providers. Learning content is a mix of national provider content as well as local content developed in Maine and classes delivered in Maine libraries and in other locations statewide.

The aim is to make Maine residents more resilient in the face of a fast-changing economy, evolving technology by providing free and/or subsidized classes so that cost and location are not obstacles to learning. It is truly lifelong, for ages

13 and older, for learners at all stages of their personal development with a focus on reaching those in the community who underserved due to any obstacle.

What will the project do?

The Bendable Maine platform will launch in August 2022 and will be comprised of the following:

- National catalog of course content with more than 15 national providers of online course content, career and academic test prep, and foreign language learning.
- State catalog of course content with more than 20 statewide providers online learning content or place-based learning.
- Community collections at least 30 playlists of learning resources (classes, TED Talks, podcasts, books, etc.) organized around a particular subject—and curated by local Maine residents. Maine residents can learn from their neighbors about a wide range of topics: learning to code, how to fix your bike and where to ride it, starting a small business and much more.
- Career collections consisting of at least 10 sets of learning resources aimed at preparing Mainers for in-demand jobs in the state. Users may receive credit in the form of digital badges for the hard work put into completing courses. Each Career Collection is put together in partnership with a major local employer or industry group, giving those who've earned Career Collection badges an extra edge as they look to get hired or promoted.

Who benefits from this project and what are the expected outcomes?

Maine residents over 13 years old with access to a computer or a local library. Bendable Maine will meet Mainers where they are in life. The focus is multi-faceted with one eye towards supporting those in Maine's workforce who are on unemployed, under-employed or who want to further develop skills and the other towards improving lives for those retired or who want to learn or obtain skills unrelated to work. Bendable Maine will strive to have content for everyone. What do you want to learn, how do you like to learn, who do you like to learn with?

Expected outcomes:

- Maine residents have a place to come online that will lead them to a variety of learning options from online, face-to-face, to improve their lives
- Help Maine reach workforce and educational goals for 2025
- Expand local library learning resources and use local Maine community residents as learning resources

Procedures:

- Build on the work done through the 2021-22 co-design, content curation, and promotion phases and launch Bendable Maine in August 2022
- Use the 16 Hub Champion libraries to serve as the core group of experts to grow the local community involvement statewide
- Educate all Maine libraries to understand, utilize resources, and broaden participation in adding resources to the Bendable Maine catalog of local resources

Use of Federal Funds for Goal 3:

The Maine State Library will spend federal funds in support of Goal 3 for these projects on:

- Salaries/Wages/Benefits for MSL personnel for the 2 projects
- Consultant Fees only if determined by needs.
- Project related travel for MSL staff, in-state and out-of-state; travel reimbursement for library participants on a project-by-project basis – as needed
- Supplies/Materials for work on all projects
- Equipment – none anticipated for any project at this time

- Services provided by vendors for on online learning tools, content, and databases plus platform maintenance
- Project related travel for MSL staff or stakeholders when needed; state government services related to phone and IT
- Other Operational Expenses – none anticipated for any project at this time

Goal 4 Projects

Project 8: Maine State Library Outreach Library (Formerly Books by Mail)

Description:

The MSL Outreach Library (OL) project provides library materials via U.S. Postal Service to residents of Maine communities considered “library deserts,” where there is either no public library or no full-service public library, and to people who are homebound. There are approximately 198 towns or townships without public libraries and 22 towns with a library open 12 or fewer hours per week during all or part of the calendar year.

What will the project do?

The Outreach Library section of the Maine State Library serves as the lending library for Maine residents living in un-served or underserved areas or who are homebound by delivering library materials via U.S. Mail. Patrons can order materials through the online catalog, mail or via phone. This project provides Maine rural and homebound residents physical library materials, in addition to having access to audio and e-books via the Download Library, and other online resources and databases already accessible with an MSL library card. Every effort is made to connect patrons to local public libraries in neighboring communities when available, to keep the Outreach Library for the truly un-served and underserved.

Who benefits from this project and what are the expected outcomes?

Maine residents living in towns without a full-service library, or who face challenges that prevent or reduce their access to a library, will benefit from this project.

Expected outcomes:

- Rural, underserved, and homebound Maine residents are provided equitable access to library materials in a variety of formats.
- Rural Maine residents with no library or with a library open less than 12 hours have greater access to library materials in a variety of formats.
- Homebound Maine residents have access to library materials in a variety of formats at no cost

Procedures:

- MSL will develop new eligibility criteria that is clear and consistent (year to year) and accurately captures our target population’s circumstances.
- MSL Outreach Library staff will identify current Outreach Library patrons that could be better served by local libraries in neighboring communities.
- MSL staff will process requests through the online catalog (fulfilling from the MSL collection or interlibrary loan) and mail books with return labels and return postage to patrons.
- Outreach Library patrons will have access to the Maine InfoNet Download library, Digital Library resources and MSL Reference Services.
- Outreach Library patrons can use the online catalog if they have internet access. Patrons without internet may request library materials via mail or phone.
- Social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook) will be utilized to promote MSL-OL
- MSL will establish partnerships with towns that have no, or limited, library access to promote the Outreach Library’s services.

- MSL staff will maintain usage statistics, patron satisfaction outcomes, and costs.
- MSL provides information in various parts of the state on the Outreach Library programs.
- MSL staff will maintain usage statistics, patron satisfaction and costs.
- Keep the former Books by Mail users informed about any changes in eligibility for the new program.

Project 9: Talking Books PLUS:

Talking Books, BARD - Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD), and Partner Library User Services (PLUS): NFB-Newsline, Perkins School for the Blind Services, and the MSL Books Recording Project.

Description of the Project

Talking Books PLUS consists of a variety of services for the visually impaired in Maine. The Maine State Library is part of the national network of cooperating libraries, administered by the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) and provides a free library program of braille and audio materials. The MSL Talking Books project distributes digital books and accessible format digital book players free to Maine residents who are blind, visually impaired, physically disabled (cannot hold a book) or have a reading disability. The MSL also circulates large print books to eligible borrowers in Maine by Free Matter mail or via interlibrary loan through local libraries. The MSL provides access and support for BARD Mobile, the free app that provides access to the National Library Service Collection (NLS) books on smartphones and tablets. MSL also maintains a local digital recording studio that produces quality recordings of Maine and local interest books for the National Talking Books program.

The project has three services:

Talking Books PLUS

1. Online Talking Books Catalog and Delivery Services

The Online Talking Books catalog provides complete access to information about every book in the Talking Books collection. The Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) displays the complete bibliographic record, so users can find out what books are available for download, a summary of what each book is about, who the author and narrators are, and how long the running time is for each book. MSL staff manage delivery of cartridges to patrons.

2. BARD - Braille and Audio Reading Download: BARD stands for the NLS's Braille and Audio

Reading Download. By registering for BARD, patrons using a digital machine can download digital audio or electronic braille books from the Internet to their computer. Digital copies are always available. Patrons also have access and support for BARD Mobile.

3. Partner Library User Services (PLUS): In addition to administering the NLS Talking Books program, the Maine State Library provides enhanced access to library materials through its Partner Library User Services:

- NFB-Newsline: The MSL has partnered with the National Federation for the Blind to provide access to NFB-Newsline which is a service that connects print disabled patrons to local and national newspapers, emergency weather alerts, and other material via phone or app. MSL's role is to provide registration and basic technical support.
- Perkins School for The Blind: MSL also contracts with the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, MA who provides eligible MSL Talking Books Plus patrons with print braille materials.
- MSL Book Recording Project: The Maine State Library (MSL) records Maine materials not recorded by the National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). The MSL has an onsite recording studio and a part-time librarian who manages the projects and the volunteers.

What will the project do?

The project provides eligible Maine residents and organizations access to and delivery of digital audio, and electronic braille books, newspapers, print braille materials, and large print books from Maine State Library Talking Books PLUS Services via:

- Talking Books Plus online catalog
- BARD Download website
- NFB-Newsline (newspapers)
- Perkins School for The Blind (Print Braille Materials)
- MSL Book Recording project

The Maine State Library maintains the Talking Books catalog, provides support and access to BARD, maintains a large print collection, provides Reader’s Advisory services, handles registrations, and provides basic technical support for NFB-Newsline and delivers Talking Books Plus patrons with print braille materials through the Perkins School for the Blind and records Maine materials not recorded by the National Library Services (NLS) through the MSL Book Recording Project.

Who benefits from this project and what are the expected outcomes?

Maine residents who are print disabled i.e., blind, visually impaired, physically impaired - cannot hold a book, or have a reading disability are eligible for the NLS programs. The NLS programs requires certification by a qualified professional. Organizations who service eligible Maine residents also participate.

Expected outcomes:

- All Maine residents who are eligible for these programs have equitable access to a robust collection of library materials in accessible formats regardless of age, economic circumstances, or technical expertise
- Improved library and public awareness of MSL’s Talking Books PLUS Program and our services for the blind, visually impaired, and physically disabled in Maine.

Procedures:

Maine State Library Outreach Services Talking Books Plus staff will

- Manage the application process to register for the program
- Provide reader’s advisory, support and service via phone and email to program participants.
- Provide Large Print Books via Free Matter postage to program participants.
- Provide aids for patrons to learn about and use current online features including a video on [how to use BARD](#).
- Provide an accessible web site for patrons who access these services.
- Schedule presentations in various parts of the state on Talking Books PLUS, BARD, NFB-Newsline, Perkins School for the Blind printed braille materials and the MSL Book Recording Project.
- Serve on advisory boards, including Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) and Maine AIM.
- Maintain a local Talking Books digital recording studio that will produce quality recordings of Maine and local interest books to make available through the national Talking Books program or regionally.
- Collect statistics and analyze usage and costs to evaluate value and use of services.
- Stay current on emerging technology and assistive devices used by libraries
- Comply with NLS reporting requirements
- Survey users at least once during the five-year plan

Goals with Project Timelines

Goal	Project Name	Project Length	Expected Milestones
Goal 1: All Maine residents have equitable access to high quality information resources through libraries, Maine State Library programs and statewide resources sharing.	Maine InfoNet Partnership	2023-2027	Progress report on MaineCat expansion in 2025
	Area Reference and Resource Centers (MRLS)	2023-2027	ARRC ILL Assessment in 2025
	Networkmaine Partnership for MSLN	2023-2027	Annual Report/Budget request to PUC. RFP in XXXX
Goal 2: Improve the Maine library workforce via continuing education, professional development, and leadership opportunities	Continuing Education	2023-2027	Spring and Fall council meetings yearly; other training as needed
	Specialists and Liaisons (MRLS)	2023-2027	Regional meetings at least yearly
Goal 3: Opportunities for Life-Long Learning for Maine residents is attainable and enhanced through Maine State Library online resources and local library programs and offerings, both in-person and virtual.	Bendable Maine	2023-2027	Evaluate usage of national and local content. Scale promotion as needed. Meet with Drucker and Fellows monthly. Issue at 2025 analysis report
	Digital Maine Library	2023-2027	Evaluate database usage prior to the end of each vendor's contract. Renegotiate terms based on usage and budget available. (Yearly)
Goal 4: Maine's diverse population, including people who are underserved and underrepresented, living in rural and remote communities, the disabled and those who are homebound, immigrants, or any resident who struggles with financial and other challenges may improve their lives through library services.	MSL Outreach Library	2023-2027	2023-2024 Transition patrons to a card at a nearby library. ` Survey program participants at least once during the plan but no later than 2025
	Talking Books PLUS	2023-2027	2023-24 Purchase new LP books; end public library program and transition to ILL Survey program participants at least once during the plan but no later than 2025

Coordination Efforts

Crosswalk: Goals, Projects, Focal Areas, Intents and IMLS Priorities

State Goal	Associated Project	IMLS Focal Area(s)	IMLS Intent	IMLS Priority
Goal 1: All Maine residents have equitable access to high quality information resources through libraries, Maine State Library programs and statewide resources sharing.	Maine InfoNet Partnership	Information Access	Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources	1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8
	ARRC (MRLS)	Information Access	Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources.	1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8
	Networkmaine Partnership for MSLN	Information Access	Improve the library's physical and technological infrastructure	1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8
Goal 2: Improve the Maine library workforce via continuing education, professional development, and leadership opportunities	Continuing Education	Institutional Capacity to improve the library workforce	Improve library operations	3, 5, 7, 8
	Specialists and Liaisons (MRLS)	Institutional Capacity to improve the library workforce	Improve library operations	3, 5, 7, 8
Goal 3: Opportunities for Life-Long Learning for Maine residents is attainable and enhanced through Maine State Library online resources and local library programs and offerings, both in-person and virtual.	Bendable Maine	Lifelong Learning	Improve users' general knowledge and skills.	1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8
	Digital Maine Library	Lifelong Learning	Improve users' formal education	1, 2, 7, 8
Goal 4: Maine's diverse population, including people who are underserved and underrepresented, living in rural and remote communities, the disabled and those who are homebound, immigrants, or any resident who struggles with financial and other challenges may improve their lives through library services.	MSL Outreach Library	Information Access	Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources	5, 6, 7, 8
	Talking Books Plus	Information Access	Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources	6,7,8

Evaluation Plan

The Maine State Library has developed outcomes, indicators, and methods for evaluating each program in this plan. We will use a combination of output measures and user surveys to gauge our progress toward the goals throughout this plan's life.

Evaluation Matrix – Outcomes and Indicators

Goal 1:	Outcomes	Indicators	Indicators
Maine InfoNet Partnership			
	Maine residents have easy access to a large number of comprehensive online resources either through their local library or at home. (Digital Maine Library)	# of database hits	Feedback/Help Form analysis and statistics
	Maine citizens, library patrons and students have increased access to the collections of many Maine libraries (MaineCat)	Circulation #s	% and/or number increase of Maine libraries in MaineCat #APIs deployed
	Maine citizens and all library types have expanded access to downloadable audio and e-books. (Download library)	Circulation #s	% increase in collection size
MRLS: ARRC Project			
	Libraries that are not members of a state ILS consortium can offer ILL services to their patrons.	ILL statistics	
	Library users in all areas of Maine have access to more materials.	ILL statistics	List/map of user distribution
	Maine citizens have access to a wider array of services, programs, and materials than many small libraries can offer	ILL statistics	
	The information needs of library patrons in areas served by small libraries staffed with paraprofessionals are met.	Library User Survey	
	Libraries have increased access to in-state materials for their patrons via statewide delivery service	# items via delivery	# libraries participating in van delivery
	ARRCs will facilitate growth of the Bendable Maine Platform	# community collections	# of library events added to the Bendable platform
	Libraries and other organizations have access to digitization and archiving services	# visits to MSL Digitization Lab	# items in Maine Cotemporary Archives
Networkmaine Partnership for MSLN			
	Public libraries provide high speed broadband connections both wired and wirelessly to their communities	# and % of MSLN libraries	connection speed reports
	Public libraries comply with federal E-rate rules	# and % of MSLN libraries compliant with CIPA	
	Public libraries have access to videoconferencing cloud services	# libraries with Zoom subscriptions	# Zoom sessions per year

Goal 2:	Outcomes	Indicator	Indicator
	Continuing Education		
	Maine library staff increase their knowledge of the library profession.	IMLS survey of workshop participants	
	Maine library staff increase their ability to strengthen library services in their communities	IMLS survey of workshop participants	
	Specialists and Liaisons: MRLS		
	Library staff informational needs are met	# of communications (email, phone, Zoom)	
	Library staff begin to augment equity and inclusion practices in their work and in library policies and operations	Survey and meetings with libraries	
	Libraries strengthen and develop new programs	PLS and MPLF statistics	
	Libraries convene and collaborate regionally and statewide to improve library services	# meetings	IMLS survey of meeting participants
	Statewide goals are established, achieved, and reviewed regularly	Section goals established and published	

Goal 3:	Outcomes	Indicator	Indicator
	Digital Maine Library		
	Maine students of all ages, public library patrons, and Maine resident have access to a variety of information resources	# of learning tools	# of information resources
	Local level costs are minimized for school, academic and public libraries for databases	Report from vendors	
	Bendable Maine		
	Maine residents have access to online learning tools to improve their skills for work and life.	# of learning tools	# Courses taken
	Maine reaches workforce and educational goals for 2025	User surveys	State data
	Expand local library learning resources and use local Maine community residents as learning resources	# of Community Collections	# libraries with community collections

Goal 4: Outcomes	Indicator	Indicator	Indicator
MSL Outreach Library			
Rural Maine residents have access to library materials in a variety of formats	# and % increase of patron participation and geographic distribution	# circulations	# and % of positive responses on user satisfaction surveys
Rural Maine residents with no library or with a library open less than 12 hours have greater access to library materials in a variety of formats.	# and % who participate	# circulations	# and % of positive responses on user satisfaction surveys
Homebound Maine residents have access to library materials in a variety of formats at no cost	# and % who participate	# circulations	# and % of positive responses on user satisfaction surveys
Talking Books PLUS			
All eligible Maine citizens have equitable access to NSL materials in accessible formats regardless of age, economic circumstances, or technical expertise	# of patrons served	# items circulated	# and % of positive responses on user satisfaction surveys
Improved library and public awareness of MSL's Talking Books PLUS Program and our services for the blind, visually impaired, and physically disabled in Maine.	# presentations and meetings;		

Stakeholder Involvement

The Maine State Library involves stakeholders statewide using a variety of methods and tools. Communication through listservs, regularly scheduled meetings, conferences, online meetings monthly, surveys and program evaluations are on-going through each year of the plan. Information is then used to develop, implement, and evaluate the plan. The Maine Library Commission is a 17-member board appointed by the Governor, with a broad representation of the state's library community. The Commission establishes the policies and operations of the State Library, gives advice, and makes recommendations on the expenditure of state and federal funds, and establishes guidelines and policies for statewide library programs. The Maine Library Commission serves as the designated State Advisory Council on Libraries in statute ([27 M.R.S. §112\(4\) \(1989\)](#)) and is the approver of federal plans. The Commission approved this plan on June 27, 2022.

The 2023-2027 plan for Maine was developed with feedback from stakeholders gathered in the following ways:

Maine State Library statewide surveys

- MSL Continuing Education Survey for Public Libraries (November 2022)
- QualityMetrics, LLC LSTA Evaluation Survey (January 2022)
- MSL Five Year Plan Survey (April 2022)

Evaluations from regional and statewide training events

- Review of comments in evaluations during the last five-year plan (2018-2022)

Statewide Zoom Meetings (March 2020 to March 2022)

Responses to drafts from the Maine State Library and LSTA project staff responsible for carrying out the plan.

Project early drafts drafts reviewed by:

- Outreach Library and Talking Books Plus (Chris Boynton, Alison Maxell)
- Continuing Education and Specialists and Liaisons: MRLS (Marijke Visser)
- Bendable Maine and Digital Maine Library (James Ritter, Janet McKenney)

- Maine InfoNet Partnership (James Jackson Sanborn, Janet McKenney)
- Area Reference and Resource Centers: MRLS (James Ritter, Janet McKenney)
- Networkmaine Partnership for MSLN (Jared Leadbetter, Janet McKenney)

Maine InfoNet ARPA grant proposal- MaineCat Library Systems Environment: Expanding Access and Improving Services in Response to Pandemic Needs

Bendable Maine Stakeholder Meetings – libraries, University of Maine System, Maine Community College System, Maine Adult Education, Maine DOL, Maine DECD, Maine DOE, and many community organizations.

For implementation and evaluation feedback for this plan communication and feedback will be continuous during the 2023-2027 timeframe. The Maine State Library’s Library Development Director and LSTA Coordinator will utilize the following tools and methods to evaluate and make mid-course corrections and adjustments as needed.

- Listserv discussions monitored: MELIBS-L, MEINFO-L, Minerva-L, Download Library -L, MELIB-TRUSTEE, Academic Librarians, E-rate-Maine, Public Lib Directors, MSLNTC-L
- Meeting presentations and discussions at state conferences (MLA and MASL)
- Participation in regular meetings of: Networkmaine Advisory Council, Maine InfoNet Board
- Reporting at Maine Library Commission and MLAC meetings Meetings in each of the 9 service regions (usage of [IMLS Evaluation Form](#) either via Survey Monkey or via paper at face-to-face events)
- Meetings with LSTA Project Directors and participants
- Usage of [IMLS Evaluation Form](#) for training programs

Communications and Public Availability

The Maine State Library posts approved LSTA Five Year Plans, State Program Reports and LSTA Five Year Plan Evaluations at the Maine State Library website at: <https://www1.maine.gov/msl/libs/lsta/index.shtml>

Plans, reports, and evaluations are also submitted to the Digital Maine archive: <http://digitalmaine.com/>

Notice of all LSTA reports are announced on the MELIBS and MEINFO listservs and are provided to the Maine Library Commission and the Maine Library Advisory Council (MLAC).

Monitoring

The Maine State Library uses federal funds for statewide services and contracts with organizations for services. MSL does not have a LSTA sub-grant program. Monitoring of contracted services is done through ongoing meetings and is interwoven in the MSL’s ongoing work with all these organizations. Meetings include:

- Maine Library Commission
- Maine InfoNet Board Meetings
- Maine State Library Division Directors Monthly meetings
- Maine Library Advisory Council meetings
- Monthly Statewide Zoom meetings

Assurances

The following are the required certifications and assurances been submitted separately.

1. Assurances of Non-Construction Programs
2. State Legal Officer’s Certification of Authorized Certifying Official
3. Internet Safety Certification for Applicant Public Libraries, Public Elementary and Secondary School Libraries, and Consortia with Public and/or Public School Libraries