



Rhode Island Department of Administration  
Office of Library and Information Services

# Five-Year State Plan

for Library Services and Technology Act Funding  
2018-2022

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## Introduction

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. The IMLS Grants to States program distributes Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding to state library administrative agencies across the country, including the Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS). LSTA funding provides approximately half of OLIS' budget and is critical in the development of programs and services that support Rhode Island's libraries.

The IMLS Grants to States program supports the purposes and priorities outlined in LSTA as stated in 20 U.S.C. § 9141:

1. expand services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages in order to support such individuals' needs for education, lifelong learning, workforce development, and digital literacy skills;
2. establish or enhance electronic and other linkages and improved coordination among and between libraries and entities for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to library and information services;
3. a) provide training and professional development, including continuing education, to enhance the skills of the current library workforce and leadership, and advance the delivery of library and information services; b) enhance efforts to recruit future professionals to the field of library and information services;
4. develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations;
5. target library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills;
6. target library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through age 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 9902(2) of title 42) applicable to a family of the size involved;
7. develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks; and
8. carry out other activities consistent with the purposes set forth in section 9121, as described in the state library administrative agency's plan.

Funding is allocated to the states through a formula that includes a base grant plus a supplemental amount based on population. The IMLS requires each state to submit a plan that details service goals for a five-year period and to conduct an evaluation of projects and activities implemented under the plan.

OLIS is charged in Rhode Island General Law (RIGL) § 29-3.1-1 to cooperate with the IMLS and carry out the purposes of any and all acts of Congress for the benefit of library and information services in the state; RIGL § 29-3.1-7 further charges OLIS to develop the program for the use of federal funds. The OLIS Five-Year State Plan for the use of LSTA funds has been developed in accordance with the guidelines established by IMLS and the statutory mandates of the State of Rhode Island.

The OLIS Five-Year State Plan is derived from and aligns with the comprehensive OLIS Strategic Plan Framework, which addresses both state and federal mandates for library services.<sup>1</sup> The foundation of both plans lies in the comprehensive assessment of statewide needs for library services and evaluation of the previous Five-Year State Plan for 2013-2017.<sup>2</sup> The Five-Year State Plan outlined in this document will be executed by OLIS staff from 2018-2022. The plan assumes funding of approximately one million dollars annually from IMLS. Progress and evaluation of plan goals and projects will be monitored through regular review of the plan and through the annual state program report to IMLS. In conjunction with the assessment of plan progress, the statewide needs for library services will be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary.

This Five-Year State Plan for the expenditure of federal LSTA funds was approved by the Library Board of Rhode Island, OLIS' advisory council, on June 12, 2017.

## **Mission**

The Office of Library and Information Services strengthens, connects and empowers libraries to advance knowledge, connect communities and enrich the lives of all Rhode Islanders.

The mission of the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) is based on the fundamental vision that Rhode Island libraries inspire and transform lives. OLIS provides services and programs for all types of libraries, including but not limited to, academic, public, school and special libraries. These services include coordination of statewide resource sharing among libraries and the development of libraries to serve the library and information needs of all Rhode Islanders. OLIS also directly serves the public through the Talking Books Library, statewide databases and resources available on AskRI, and online directories to Rhode Island government and library services statewide.

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<sup>1</sup> Office of Library and Information Services Strategic Plan Framework, <http://www.olis.ri.gov/aboutus/plan2018/framework.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Documents used in developing the plan, including the environmental scan and the LSTA Evaluation of the 2013-17 plan are available on the Office of Library and Information website at <http://www.olis.ri.gov/aboutus/plan2018/>

## Needs Assessment

### Demographics

Rhode Island is the smallest of the fifty states, encompassing an area of just 1,545 square miles, of which 511 square miles is water. With a population of 1,056,426 people occupying the 1,034 square miles of land, it is the second most densely populated state in the country after New Jersey. The population has increased a mere 0.3% since the 2010 U.S. Census and is projected to stay relatively unchanged over the next 5 years. Rhode Island's primary political subdivisions are its 39 cities and towns, many of which encompass smaller villages with unique identities.

The demographics of the state's population are shifting, both in age and ethnic breakdown. The number of Rhode Islanders under the age of 5 has decreased from 5.5% in 2010 to 5.2% in 2015. The number of residents under the age of 18 has decreased even more, from 21.3% in 2010 to 20.0% of the total population in 2015. On the other hand, the percentage of residents age 65 years and over has increased from 14.4% in 2010 to 16.1% in 2015. There are 66,076 veterans in the state, or a total of 7.9% of the population over the age of 18; 28.7% of veterans have a disability. The percentage of all Rhode Islanders with a disability in 2015 was 13.4%, a rate that has remained steady since 2010. The National Federation for the Blind estimates that 23,700 Rhode Islanders have vision impairments and would qualify for library service for blind and visually impaired people.

Racial and ethnic demographics have also shifted: from 2010 to 2015, the percentage of Black or African Americans increased from 5.7% to 7.9%, the population of Asians increased from 2.9% to 3.6%, and the population of Native Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders increased from 0.7% to 1.2%. The population reporting that they were two or more races decreased from 3.3% to 2.6%. The balance of the state's population, 84.8%, is White. The percentage of the population that reported ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino increased from 12.4% to 14.4%.<sup>3</sup> 21.4% of Rhode Islanders speak a language other than English at home, with Spanish making up 11% of that total, followed by 7.2% who speak Indo-European languages. The number of foreign-born residents has increased from 12.9% in 2010 to 13.3% in 2015. Data from the 2010 census shows that the largest percentage of foreign-born residents are from Latin and South America (43%), followed by 23% from Europe, 19% from Asia and 12% from Africa (includes Cape Verde). Recent estimates (2015) indicate that 2-3% of the total population of Rhode Islanders are undocumented immigrants.

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<sup>3</sup> Federal policy defines "Hispanic" as an ethnicity, not a race. Hispanics may be any race, or multiple races.

The state's population is concentrated in the capital city of Providence and its surrounding cities, which are the most diverse, while the western and southeastern parts of the state are less densely populated and more rural in character. From 2011–2015, the median household income was \$56,852, and per capita income was \$31,118. 13.9% of the total population lives under the federal poverty level, with the number increasing to 21.5% for children under 18. Urban communities have much higher rates of poverty: in the capital city of Providence, 39.7% of children live in poverty while in Woonsocket 42% live in poverty.

While 86.2% of Rhode Islanders over the age of 25 have a high school diploma and 31.9% hold a bachelor's degree or higher, the educational attainment of state residents is lower than other New England states. With nearly 14% of workforce adults lacking a high school diploma, Rhode Island has the lowest rate in New England of adults with high school credentials, and the second lowest rate of adults with a bachelor's or professional degree. The number of working age adults lacking a diploma is considerably higher for minority groups, where more than one in three Latinos and one in five African Americans do not have high school credentials. Additionally, RI has the highest rate in New England of people attempting to earn, but not completing, a college degree. Among veterans, 28.9% have just a high school diploma, and 10.6% lack high school credentials.

### **State Priorities**

Governor Gina M. Raimondo took office in 2015 and is committed to ensuring that everyone can “Make It in Rhode Island.” Her strategic plan for the state articulates the following goals:

- Help people build the skills needed to succeed in the 21st century
- Foster innovation and collaboration to create jobs that pay
- Make it easier to do business in Rhode Island

The Governor's initiatives focus on creating jobs and expanding opportunity for all Rhode Islanders through innovative approaches, new programs and the revamping of existing programs and systems. Education is a key element of the Governor's plan, with a campaign for grade level reading for third graders that has the ambitious goal of moving the number of students reading at grade level from the current 33% to 75% by 2025. The Governor's Computer Science for Rhode Island (CS4RI) initiative aims to establish Rhode Island as the first state with computer science classes at every public school. Additionally, the Governor is seeking to make Rhode Island the first state in the nation to guarantee two years of free tuition at state colleges to make it possible for all to earn a college degree. Unfortunately, the

projected budget deficit for the 2018 fiscal year combined with the state's limited economic growth may delay full realization of these objectives in the upcoming years.

### **Library Landscape**

Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns are home to 48 public library systems, all of which belong to Ocean State Libraries, the public library consortium. There are 12 colleges and universities; half of these institutions' libraries belong to HELIN, the academic library consortium. There are over 400 public and private K-12 schools in the state, of which 177 belong to RILINK, the school library consortium. Additionally, there are a number of special libraries, including libraries at several state agencies, the historical society and two subscription libraries.

Rhode Island libraries serve communities ranging from 1,000 people to 180,000 people, with 65% of public libraries serving communities of less than 25,000. School districts similarly serve a range of small rural communities to large urban areas. While poverty and unemployment are higher in urban areas, rural communities struggle with limited tax bases and pockets of poverty.

The University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, located in Kingston, has the only public university library degree program in New England; it plays a critical role in training librarians in Rhode Island and throughout the region. Rhode Island also has a rich ecosystem of library organizations, from professional organizations to library consortia to library advocates.

OLIS has the statutory authority and responsibility to administer state and federal funding and a charge to develop and coordinate statewide programs to meet Rhode Island's needs for library and information services. The Library of Rhode Island (LORI) is the OLIS-administered library network that brings together the resources and services of libraries across the state, connecting different types of libraries and providing access to their collections for all Rhode Islanders. The network includes all public libraries, all academic libraries, 106 school libraries and most special libraries, a total of 178 libraries or 215 library facilities. OLIS is advised by the 15-member Library Board of Rhode Island; its members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate and represent different groups of library users and various types of libraries, including public, academic, school and special libraries.

### **Library Needs**

OLIS engaged ESC of New England to conduct a comprehensive environmental scan of the Rhode Island library landscape in March 2017. The objective of the project was to assess OLIS

strengths and weaknesses in supporting libraries and to identify key opportunities for OLIS to lead the development of library services in the state over the next five years. Data was gathered through an online survey, focus groups, and stakeholder interviews with a total of 180 participant responses gathered from all types of libraries, users of the Talking Books Library and other stakeholders. The final report “Environment Scan: Current and Future Needs for Library Services in Rhode Island” was published on the OLIS website in April 2017. The data included in the LSTA Five-Year State Plan Evaluation conducted by QualityMetrics outlined the success and shortcomings of the previous five-year plan. In addition, OLIS examined data collected annually through the Public Library Annual Survey and LORI Certification (which includes a technology scan of its 178 member libraries), through interviews with public library directors through OLIS’ Library Development Team, and through the Talking Books Library biennial user satisfaction survey. This data, along with observations drawn from participation in state, regional and national organizations, provides the foundation for Rhode Island’s Five-Year State Plan.

Analysis of data returned from the environmental scan survey identified the importance of current services provided by libraries and how important these services will be over the next five years. The following list shows what services libraries rated as very important:

1. Lend print books and magazines	91%
2. Provide services for children/teens	86%
3. Provide study or group work spaces	83%
4. Lend e-books and e-magazines	75%
5. Provide technology training	73%
6. Provide services for adults	69%
7. Provide technology space	67%
8. Provide services for seniors	64%
9. Provide access to historical documents/artifacts	59%
10. Lend CDs, DVDs (music, videos)	54%
11. Provide services for veterans	52%
12. Provide assistance with job applications/resumes	51%

Out of the top 12 services identified as very important, lending print, electronic and audio visual materials ranked within these top priorities. However, services for different age groups or populations and work space occupied the other top spots, showing the shift from library as materials provider to library as service provider. This trend was highlighted in the focus groups and throughout the survey in open-ended questions. The top trends for libraries that emerged from the scan include:

- Transformation into community learning and resource centers
- Focus on technology training and digital services



- Services for aging and more diverse populations
- Creation of safe, welcoming spaces for immigrants and refugees
- Community directed services
- Educational support, especially for disadvantaged populations
- Balancing traditional and emerging services

Respondents were also asked to identify OLIS resources and services, both current and future, which were important to them and the communities they serve. These priority services aligned with goals successfully executed in the previous LSTA Five-Year State Plan and are services that generally receive high marks of satisfaction:

- Delivery of physical items and interlibrary loan
- AskRI (statewide databases)
- Children and young adult services, including summer reading programs
- Continuing education
- Data collection and statistics

Finally, respondents were asked to identify services that OLIS could improve or provide in the future to strengthen libraries and statewide library services. The following service needs emerged:

- Technical training, for emerging technology, makerspaces, and digital tools
- Continuing education
  - Library management: strategic planning, human resource management, best practices, space utilization
  - Library marketing and public relations
  - New interest groups for librarians serving non-English speakers, homeschoolers, seniors, diverse populations (similar to existing groups for young adult, reference services)
  - More resources for science, business, arts, social services, STEAM, media literacy
  - Fundamental training for staff to meet current digital needs of patrons
  - Programming responsive to the needs of smaller libraries
- Statistical analysis and data, assisting libraries with tools to measure success and demonstrate the value of libraries
- Community services
  - Small business support

- Services for refugees, immigrants, families with incarcerated members, veterans, non-English speakers
- Workforce skills and adult education, especially literacy, digital literacy
- Statewide programming for libraries (more centralized programming like the current summer reading program)
- Inclusive programming that responds to community needs, and more diversity in staffing to reflect and serve the community
- Statewide resources, including databases and e-books
- Leadership and advocacy on behalf of libraries

Respondents also identified the critical role that OLIS plays in creating a single collaborative library system across the state that connects different types of libraries and facilitates the free flow of resources and knowledge among them. OLIS was also called upon to strengthen relationships between state agencies and libraries, especially the Department of Education, the Department of Labor and Training, and the Department of Human Services. Finally, OLIS was praised for its strong leadership and dedicated staff, and further called to lead innovation in library services, strengthen collaboration among different types of libraries and with outside partners, and communicate effectively with and on behalf of all libraries.

As part of the environmental scan, OLIS convened a focus group specifically for users and partners of the Talking Books Library to learn about their specific needs. Through this group OLIS learned of the lack of connection to local libraries felt by Talking Books users and a general perception by this group that libraries are not designed to be user-friendly for people with visual impairments. Recommendations included disability awareness training for library staff and more information about disability aids. Focus group participants were generally satisfied with the service provided by Talking Books, especially customer service, though some wished to see an expansion of books available and community services, such as coordination of member activities. The results echo the high satisfaction ratings received through the biennial user survey conducted by Talking Books, most recently in 2015. The satisfaction survey also revealed the low number of members (33%) who use the online downloading system (BARD) and the difficulty they have using the system. Additionally, the satisfaction survey points to the importance of partner agencies in referring individuals to Talking Books, as 67% of respondents were referred to the service through two partner agencies. The LSTA evaluation revealed that only 38% of library respondents indicated they were aware of Talking Books, and only 45% felt they had the technology resources to serve people with visual impairments. More than half of library respondents (55%) were not aware of whether residents in their community used the Talking Books service.

Following analysis of the demographics of Rhode Island, the needs of its residents and libraries, current trends in library service, and the resources available, OLIS has identified the following service needs:

1. Access to physical and online materials
2. Access to services, especially for those who cannot use standard print materials because of a visual or physical disability
3. Continuing education, to support library staff development
4. Communities of practice to support library practitioners serving specific populations (e.g., children, teens, seniors) and areas of service (e.g., ESL, STEAM, maker spaces)
5. Statewide programs to foster textual and other literacies
6. Partnerships to support adult education and workforce development
7. Programs to foster library development, including library management, public relations, statistical analysis, and data utilization
8. Initiatives to support more culturally diverse programming in libraries and increase diversity in the library profession

The needs identified can be broadly categorized into three main areas that will inform and drive the OLIS Five-Year State Plan for the expenditure of LSTA funds:

1. Core services – access to physical and online materials and supporting services (Needs 1 and 2)
2. Education – professional development for library staff and programming for libraries (Needs 3, 4 and 5)
3. Community – development of services to support and strengthen communities, with particular consideration of underserved populations and inclusive programming (Needs 6, 7 and 8)

The state's needs will continue to be monitored regularly between 2018 and 2022. OLIS will seek input from its advisory council, the Library Board of Rhode Island, which represents all types of libraries and users from various groups, including the economically disadvantaged and visually impaired. OLIS will also solicit input and assistance in the identification of changing trends and needs at periodic meetings with stakeholders, including library directors and library organizations. OLIS staff will monitor trends in library and information services at the regional and national level through conference attendance and organizational membership, while continuing to monitor demographic and economic trends within the state that may impact activities or present opportunities throughout the duration of the plan.

## Goals

OLIS has established three goals that encompass the various needs identified and will guide OLIS projects over the next five years. The goals are designed to be flexible and responsive to the changing needs of libraries and Rhode Islanders, while providing a strong framework that enables OLIS to execute its mission. All goals have equal weight.

1. **Access.** Provide access to library materials and information resources through physical and virtual spaces.
2. **Learning.** Support the continuing education of librarians, library staff and trustees and the development of statewide programming for libraries.
3. **Engagement.** Empower libraries to be incubators for economic, educational and cultural development and community discourse.

These goals address the purposes and priorities of LSTA per 20 U.S.C. § 9141:

LSTA Priorities*	Goal 1: Access	Goal 2: Learning	Goal 3: Engagement
1) expand services for learning and access to information	✓	✓	✓
2) enhance linkages and improve coordination among libraries	✓		
3) provide training and development to enhance library workforce; enhance efforts to recruit future professionals		✓	✓
4) develop partnerships with other agencies and community groups	✓	✓	✓
5) target library service to individuals of diverse backgrounds and skills		✓	✓
6) target library services to underserved communities	✓	✓	✓
7) develop services that provide all users access to information through local to global networks	✓		
8) carry out other activities consistent with LSTA purposes			✓

\*LSTA priorities are paraphrased; a complete listing is provided in the plan's Introduction on page 2.

## Projects

### Goal 1: Access

*Provide access to library materials and information resources for all Rhode Islanders through physical and virtual spaces.*

#### 1.1: Library of Rhode Island

**Purpose:** The Library of Rhode Island (LORI) enables Rhode Islanders to obtain materials from over 175 libraries across the state at their local library. LORI is a multi-type library network coordinated by OLIS and governed by resource sharing standards established by the Library Board of Rhode Island. The LORI Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Clearinghouse further enables Rhode Islanders to obtain library materials from beyond the state's borders.

**Activities:** OLIS staff will annually certify libraries for membership, assuring compliance with LORI Standards and Regulations; provide an interlibrary delivery service to facilitate efficient statewide resource sharing; and facilitate sharing of physical materials among libraries outside of their consortium and/or out-of-state.

**Outcomes:** Rhode Islanders can obtain library materials that are not available at their local library quickly and efficiently to support their information needs; library capacity is strengthened and operations improved because libraries can fulfill patron requests for materials.

**Partners:** HELIN, Massachusetts Library System, Ocean State Libraries, RILINK

**Funding:** LSTA funds will support personnel costs, tools for facilitating ILL out-of-consortium, and supplement delivery service. State funds will support some personnel costs and primarily fund interlibrary delivery services.

#### 1.2: AskRI

**Purpose:** AskRI is the online library resource center for Rhode Islanders. It provides access to statewide databases, online resources, and online reference services.

**Activities:** Workforce development resources and learning tools will be made available for workforce skills development, educational and career preparation, and language learning.

**Outcomes:** Rhode Islanders have 24/7 access to resources that enhance their skills for employment or educational attainment.

**Funding:** LSTA funds will support certain database subscriptions and some personnel costs. AskRI databases and personnel are primarily supported with state funds.

### 1.3: Talking Books Library

**Purpose:** The Talking Books Library (TBL), Rhode Island's Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, provides and increases access to public library services for state residents who are unable to use traditional print materials due to visual or physical disability.

**Activities:** TBL will provide physical and downloadable reading material and reading support services to individuals qualified for service; promote the service to eligible individuals; partner with public libraries and organizations to increase awareness of and participation in the program; and coordinate programs to increase access to library services for individuals with disabilities.

**Outcomes:** Rhode Islanders with visual and physical disabilities will have free and convenient access to reading materials through TBL and improved access to TBL services through public libraries; public libraries will have access to resources and training that will enable them to make their services more accessible to members of their community with disabilities.

**Partners:** INSIGHT, Providence VA Medical Center, RI State Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, RI Veterans Home

**Funding:** LSTA funds will support collection and equipment maintenance, warehousing and distribution contracts with an external vendor; OLIS personnel costs and training. State funds will support some personnel costs.

### 1.4: Preservation and Digitization

**Purpose:** Preserving and digitizing collections increases access to library and cultural heritage materials both in the present and the future.

**Activities:** OLIS will provide online tools and resource to assist libraries, museums and other cultural heritage organizations with disaster preparedness; lead community-wide disaster preparedness and response through the coordination of regional meetings; increase access to collections through digitization; and explore partnerships to develop a statewide digital library.

**Outcomes:** Library staff will have the tools and knowledge to preserve collections and respond to disasters that endanger collections; Rhode Islanders will have improved access to unique materials through online digital collections.

**Partners:** Providence Public Library, RI Emergency Management Agency

**Funding:** LSTA funds will support personnel costs, trainers and program supplies. State funds will support digitization initiatives and some personnel costs.

## Goal 2: Learning

*Support the continuing education of librarians, library staff and trustees and the development of statewide programming for libraries.*

### 2.1: Continuing Education

**Purpose:** Enhance the skills of the library workforce and library trustees by providing training, workshops and resources to strengthen services in Rhode Island libraries.

**Activities:** Develop a regular schedule of training and workshops aligned with needs identified in the library community, including topics such as emerging technology, library management and public relations; develop programs in partnership with other organizations; provide training through in-person and online sessions; promote training through various traditional and online media; evaluate training outcomes regularly; provide physical and online materials to support learning; and coordinate with other organizations to develop a systematic and coordinated approach to professional development.

**Outcomes:** Librarians, library staff and trustees will have access to training and resources to increase their knowledge and expertise; Rhode Island libraries will be staffed by well-trained, knowledgeable staff who are informed of current trends, issues and library practice.

**Partners:** Rhode Island Library Association, University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Library and Information Studies

**Funding:** LSTA funds will support personnel costs, trainers, program development, and program supplies. State funds will support some personnel costs.

### 2.2: Communities of Practice

**Purpose:** OLIS will facilitate the sharing of specialized knowledge and best practices around specific topics to enhance the skills of both presenters and learners. Networked peer to peer learning will strengthen the library community as a whole by connecting practitioners and enable individuals to share their knowledge with a wider audience.

**Activities:** OLIS staff will coordinate communities of practice for librarians and library staff working in the areas of children's services, young adult services, reference, and adult services; staff will explore the development of communities for specialty areas such as adult education, urban libraries, small libraries, archives and special collections, STEAM and other current topics.

**Outcomes:** Skills of librarians are expanded and strengthened; librarians are supported in their work through a network of peers; library patrons and communities benefit from the sharing of programs and best practices among libraries.

**Funding:** LSTA funds will support personnel costs, outside speakers and trainers, program development, and program supplies. State funds will support some personnel costs.

### 2.3: Reading Programs

**Purpose:** Literacy is the foundation for education, success and an informed democracy. Reading programs for the very young and all following ages teach and advocate the power and pleasure of reading.

**Activities:** OLIS will partner with organizations to promote, support or develop statewide programs focused on early literacy, grade level reading, and statewide reading for adults; coordinate summer reading programs for children, teens and adults at public libraries; provide training to library staff on how to conduct and grow local reading programs for youth of all ages and abilities.

**Partners:** Reach Out and Read, RI Center for the Book, RI Children’s Cabinet, RI Department of Education, School Librarians of Rhode Island, United Way of Rhode Island

**Outcomes:** Rhode Islanders of all ages and abilities will have access to a variety of reading programs across the state to develop, maintain or strengthen reading skills and critical understanding; libraries will increase their capacity to develop, strengthen or expand reading programs to meet the needs of their communities.

**Funding:** LSTA funds will support personnel costs, outside speakers and trainers, program development, and program supplies. State funds will support some personnel costs.

### 2.4: Digital and Other Literacies

**Purpose:** In addition to textual literacy, Rhode Islanders need skills to participate and succeed in an increasingly digital and online world. To that end, OLIS will develop programming to address 21<sup>st</sup> century literacies such as digital, media, financial, health and information literacy.

**Activities:** Partner with organizations engaged in various literacy trainings to expand the reach of successful programs; identify and affiliate with successful national programs on established and emerging topics such as financial literacy and coding.

**Partners:** Providence Public Library, RI Library Association, School Librarians of RI, United Way of RI 211, University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Library and Information Studies

**Outcomes:** Librarians and library staff will have access to training and resources to expand their knowledge and expertise; libraries will have access to established resources and programs to host at their library.

**Funding:** LSTA funds will support personnel costs, outside speakers, program development, and program supplies. State funds will support some personnel costs.



### Goal 3: Engagement

*Empower libraries to be incubators for economic, educational and cultural development and community discourse.*

#### 3.1: Inclusion and Diversity

**Purpose:** Rhode Island is an increasingly diverse state; library collections, programming and staffing should welcome and engage the entire community with the goal of reflecting the local community and being responsive to its needs.

**Activities:** OLIS will work with partnering organizations to lead programs and identify resources to create welcoming environments in libraries that enhance the experience of various user communities and minimize linguistic and cultural barriers; work with the graduate school to expand diversity in the profession; and identify resources, programs and partners to better meet the needs of underserved groups such as veterans, senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, minorities, immigrants and refugees, the LGBTQ community and individuals who are institutionalized along with family members who are impacted by that institutionalization.

**Outcomes:** Libraries will have the tools and knowledge to recruit staff more widely; libraries will have access to resources and organizations that will enable them to expand services and programming to underserved groups in their communities; Rhode Islanders will have safe places that are inclusive and welcoming.

**Partners:** Cornucopia of Rhode Island, Dorcas International Institute of RI, Governor's Commission on Disabilities, RI Department of Corrections, RI Office of Diversity, Equity and Opportunity, RI Department of Elderly Affairs, RI Department of Veterans Affairs, University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Library and Information Studies

**Funding:** LSTA funds will support personnel costs, outside speakers, and program supplies. State funds will support some personnel costs.

#### 3.2: Adult Education, Workforce Development and Small Business Support

**Purpose:** Rhode Island has the highest number of working age adults in New England without a high school degree as well as the highest number of adults who have started but not completed a college degree. Working with adult education providers, libraries will support adults in learning skills to gain employment or enter into formal educational programs. Working with business support organizations, libraries will support entrepreneurs and small business owners.

**Activities:** OLIS will work with partnering organizations to expand library programs, increase awareness of formal programs, and identify and promote online resources, training, business support, and credentialing programs, such as high school equivalency programs and the NorthStar Digital Literacy Assessment.

**Outcomes:** Libraries will have the support to host outside programs or start their own programs to meet the needs of residents seeking to improve their skills, educational attainment or business goals, and more knowledge of available services, tools and referrals; Rhode Islanders will have more access points to adult education, credentialing services and small business support.

**Partners:** RI Adult Education Professional Development Center, RI Commerce Corporation, RI Department of Education, RI Department of Labor & Training, RI Family Literacy Initiative, Small Business Administration – RI District Office

**Funding:** LSTA funds will support personnel costs, outside speakers, and program supplies. State funds will support some personnel costs.

### 3.3: Data and Research

**Purpose:** OLIS collects data and statistics from libraries on a regular basis for state and national reporting and data collection initiatives. Libraries need tools and knowledge to gather meaningful data and assistance to interpret data to measure success and demonstrate the value of libraries.

**Activities:** OLIS will annually collect data from libraries of all types through established data collection tools; participate in national data collection efforts; publish data analysis reports and issue briefs; evaluate and streamline data collection, analysis and reporting through research and outside collaboration; and explore tools and techniques to improve data collection and data utilization by libraries.

**Outcomes:** Library statistics and data analysis will be available to libraries for data-based decision-making; libraries will have access to tools and resources that empower them to increase their use and understanding of data and statistics; OLIS will contribute meaningful data to national data collection initiatives and utilize data collected for program development.

**Partner:** Ocean State Libraries

**Funding:** LSTA funds will support personnel costs and program supplies. State funds will support subscriptions to data collection tools and some personnel costs.

### 3.4: Library Development

**Purpose:** OLIS is responsible for building and enhancing the capacity of libraries statewide. Strong libraries can better support education, lifelong learning, community and cultural engagement, and civic engagement.

**Activities:** OLIS will support libraries with statewide programming for children and young adults; seek to establish and strengthen partnerships between public, school and academic

libraries; explore programming partnerships with cultural and civic organizations; develop programs to highlight innovative use of library space; and conduct a systematic program of outreach to libraries and library organizations to better understand their unique needs, provide advisory services, and align project objectives and services as warranted.

**Outcomes:** Libraries will be better equipped with the resources necessary to support educational, cultural and community programming; OLIS will better understand the needs of local libraries and library organizations; communities will have access to expanded services and resources to meet their learning, cultural and community needs.

**Partners:** RI Council on the Humanities, RI Department of Education, RI State Council on the Arts

**Funding:** LSTA funds will support personnel costs and program supplies. State funds will support some personnel costs.

### 3.5: Leadership

**Purpose:** OLIS is responsible for developing and coordinating a statewide plan for library and information services. Libraries depend on OLIS to inform them of innovations in library service, connect libraries statewide, strengthen partnerships and collaborations to advance library services, and promote the value of libraries. OLIS will provide strategic leadership to strengthen library services statewide and foster innovation in library service.

**Activities:** OLIS will communicate regularly with the library community through various channels to share information and opportunities; convene regular meetings of library directors to share practices, expertise and opportunities for collaboration; foster leadership development through annual seminars on leadership and management; develop resources and focused trainings for public library trustees; and seek partnerships to expand opportunities for libraries.

**Outcomes:** The library workforce will be informed of developments in library services and opportunities for innovation and growth; public library trustees will be equipped with knowledge and resources to better govern libraries; libraries will have access to partners who can expand and support services needed in their communities; communities will have an informed and connected network of librarians prepared to lead libraries into the future.

**Partners:** Coalition of Library Advocates, RI Library Association, RI Office of Innovation, School Librarians of RI, University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Library and Information Studies

**Funding:** LSTA funds will support personnel costs, outside speakers, and program supplies. State funds will support some personnel costs.

## Project Timelines

Most projects and activities will be conducted over the course of the plan on an ongoing basis (2018-2022). Certain project activities may have specific timelines and finite durations. All projects will be executed in accordance with annual work plans developed by OLIS and subject to availability of resources and funds.

## Coordination Efforts

State Goal	IMLS Focal Area(s)	Associated Project	IMLS Intent
<b>Access:</b> Provide access to library materials and information resources for all Rhode Islanders through physical and virtual spaces.	Institutional Capacity; Information Access	Resource Sharing	Improve library operations.
		Talking Books Plus Library	Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources.
		Reference Center	Improve users' ability to discover information resources.
		Preservation and Digitization	Improve library operations
<b>Learning.</b> Support the continuing education of librarians, library staff and trustees and the development of statewide programming for libraries.	Institutional Capacity	Continuing Education for Library Staff and Trustees	Improve the library workforce.
		Communities of Practice	Improve the library workforce.
		Reading Programs	Improve the library workforce.
		Literacies	Improve the library workforce.
<b>Engagement.</b> Empower libraries to be incubators for economic, educational and cultural development and community discourse.	Civic Engagement; Employment and Economic Development; Institutional Capacity	Inclusion and Diversity	Improve users' ability to participate in their community.
		Adult Education, Workforce Development & Small Business Support	Improve users' ability to use resources and apply information for employment support.
		Data and Research	Improve library operations.
		Library Development	Improve library operations.
		Leadership	Improve the library workforce.

## Evaluation Plan

Evaluation of plan goals, projects and activities will be conducted throughout implementation of the Five-Year State Plan through the annual State Program Report to IMLS and by routinely monitoring progress toward project achievement and goal fulfillment. Evaluation will be based on quantitative and qualitative measurements. Outcomes-based assessment will be incorporated to evaluate projects that include public and library staff instruction, content creation, preservation, description, or lending. If OLIS awards sub-grants, grantees will be required as appropriate to incorporate outcome-based assessment.

In 2022, OLIS will perform a formal, independent evaluation to measure progress made in meeting the goals set forth in the plan. The evaluation will follow the Guidelines for IMLS Grants to States Five-Year Evaluation and LSTA legislation.

## Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholders were critical contributors to the development of the Five-Year State Plan and will continue to be involved throughout its implementation. The plan was developed with substantial input from the library community through focus groups, surveys and one-on-one interviews conducted by an independent consultant engaged to perform an environmental scan of the community. OLIS observation and interaction with the library community and library organizations provided additional stakeholder input. OLIS staff also actively participated in the development of the plan. Community and OLIS staff feedback were solicited on the draft plan and shaped the final product. The environmental scan, plan framework and draft plan were reviewed and discussed by the Library Board of Rhode Island at meetings in April and May of 2017; the final version was approved by the Board on June 12, 2017.

The Library Board of Rhode Island is broadly representative of library stakeholders, including public, academic, school and special libraries and library advocates, and the general public, including members of the blind and visually impaired community and library users who are economically disadvantaged. The Board sets policy and priorities for library services in Rhode Island and approves all state plans governing library services. The Board, which meets ten times a year, will provide ongoing oversight of the plan. OLIS reports on federal and state funded program activities at each meeting; the Board provides feedback and makes recommendations.

OLIS will continue to involve other stakeholders in its ongoing assessment of plan progress and responsiveness to library needs. Feedback will be gathered regularly through formal meetings convened by OLIS and through informal channels. OLIS staff are actively involved in the library community; the agency holds seats on various boards and steering committees including the public library consortium, the state library association, the state school library association, the Consortium of RI Academic and Research Libraries, and the Coalition of Library Advocates, and participates in meetings of other library and related organizations. OLIS also has a systematic

program of visiting public libraries, and staff members communicate regularly with all types of libraries about activities and projects. The Talking Books Library gathers community feedback on its services by collaborating with community agencies that serve the blind and visually impaired and conducting regular customer surveys. Rhode Island is a small state with a strong and interconnected library community; OLIS staff are accessible to and present in the library community and people communicate with the agency regularly and freely.

## **Communication and Public Availability**

The Five-Year State Plan will be published on the OLIS website and publicly available at [www.olis.ri.gov](http://www.olis.ri.gov) throughout its implementation; stakeholders will be informed of its availability through email, listservs and social media. The plan will be provided in alternate physical formats on request. Programs and projects supported with LSTA funds will be clearly identified as such in all publications. Plan progress and achievements will be reported on the OLIS website and communicated through standard OLIS distribution channels. OLIS will annually report on plan activities to the State of Rhode Island and the library community.

## **Monitoring**

The Office of Library and Information Services will monitor the progress and outcomes of the Five-Year State Plan on an ongoing basis. The plan will also be monitored through submittal of annual state program and financial reports to IMLS. Any sub-grants awarded will be monitored by OLIS staff in full compliance with LSTA requirements for sub-awards. LSTA program funds will be audited annually in accordance with state accounting procedures by the State of Rhode Island Department of Administration, OLIS' parent organization. OLIS will fully comply with the Code of Federal Regulations 2 C.F.R. 200.327-332.

## **Conclusion**

Rhode Island's libraries stand on the forefront of change as the state struggles to emerge from the great recession and a long period of economic downturn. The Office of Library and Information Services will continue to support and lead the library community as Rhode Islanders embrace a rapidly changing and increasingly digital world. Through collaboration, innovative partnerships and a strong vision of libraries as transformative agents, the Office of Library and Information Services will leverage LSTA funds to achieve the objectives of its Five-Year State Plan.