

## Arizona Library Services Technology Act (LSTA)\* Plan 2008-2012

Growth, by any measure, is the word most often heard from people when asked about Arizona, its communities, or its challenges. Rapid growth is affecting every aspect and every area of the state. The impact touches everything from infrastructure services like roads and utilities, to zoning and quality of life issues like clean air. Libraries, whether urban or rural, are facing dramatic shifts in service areas and customer expectations, along with the challenge of developing and maintaining services that are responsive to ever-changing community needs.

### **Needs Assessment: Building on a Solid Foundation**

This Five-Year LSTA Plan addresses needs identified from stakeholders, public opinion surveys, consultant reports and other data gathering conducted over a six month period in Arizona. National studies about trends in library services, customer perception and the changing role of the library, added to the context for assessment.

### **Capturing and Distilling the Needs**

While the data gathering provided a multitude of viewpoints, the data analysis was relatively clear-cut. Several needs dominated regardless of audience. When considered together these needs, along with the opportunity presented by the 2012 State Centennial, provide a conceptual framework for the goals of this plan. The plan addresses the following areas of need in Arizona:

*Lifespan Learning Continuum* addresses needs from birth to end-of-life to develop, improve and extend skills and interests vital to a productive and rewarding life.

*Virtual Access* addresses needs for all age groups to be aware of, access and successfully use digital resources for school, work, or personal enrichment.

*Training, Education & Consultant Support* addresses professional development, direction and support for librarians and library staff to maintain the knowledge and skills required to serve effectively in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*Centennial Experiences* addresses the need for communities to view historic accomplishments in the context of current achievements, while creating collaborative community relationships for future success.

**Goals: The “5 C’s of Service” for Arizona’s Libraries**

This Five-Year Plan will conclude in 2012, Arizona’s Centennial year. This historic year, along with the plans leading up to it, presents a unique opportunity to position librarians as stewards and leaders in strengthening community relationships.

The goals that follow align around 5 C’s that will prepare Arizona librarians (and through collaboration their colleagues in other cultural institutions) to contribute successfully in shaping the state’s future.

Each goal focuses on meeting the needs identified above and creating the linkages between libraries, communities and other cultural organizations to address those needs. The “5 C’s of Service” encompass community and customers as well as library services. This plan begins to position libraries and the communities they serve for the next 100 years in Arizona.

The 2008-2012 LSTA Plan provides direction and focus, not cookie-cutter models. It is streamlined to five goals that will be achieved via a mix of targeted initiatives and competitive grants, the latter providing seed money for innovation. Its goals are purposely broad in nature and limited in number to provide flexibility for creative community-responsive initiatives.

Predicting the next five years, let alone the next 100 years is impossible. There will be unimaginable technological, societal and environmental changes. Change is the only given. The ability to astutely assess and nimbly respond to community change is critical to success. The broad goals defined by this plan through the “5 C’s of Service” provide a direction to guide librarians and their community partners. More importantly, they provide a context and construct for working with change – for monitoring it, addressing it and using it to extend the library into community planning processes.

There is no one way and no one answer. The best course is to equip librarians with the skills and resources to identify, assess and address the needs of today and tomorrow – to expand their capacity to be responsive leaders in shaping the future of their Arizona communities. That is the primary focus of this LSTA Plan.

These goals apply to libraries and through collaboration and partnerships other cultural and historic organizations. They set the direction for meeting Arizona's needs by "raising the bar" for community responsive services and delivering on the State Library's commitment to "Providing Access and Preserving Arizona.

**The 5 C's of Service:**

**1. Customer Experience**

*Goal Statement: Arizona libraries will offer virtual and physical customer experiences for traditional and alternative library audiences to enhance the user's ability, regardless of literacy level, to find and use information and services available to them.*

**2. Community Responsiveness**

*Goal Statement: Arizona communities will recognize library staff as having the ability to participate in assessing community needs, identifying resources and planning collaboratively to address needs and opportunities via a portfolio of library services and programs that educate, inform, and interest community members.*

**3. Continuous Progress**

*Goal Statement: Arizona librarians will expand and enhance their ability to meet the lifespan learning needs of Arizonans.*

**4. Collaboration**

*Goal Statement: Arizona libraries will use partnerships and collaboration with various types of libraries and cultural institutions to extend services, to reach new audiences, to better serve the information needs of the rapidly growing, culturally and demographically diverse Arizona population.*

**5. Connections**

*Goal Statement: Arizonans will view libraries as trusted, knowledgeable, easy-to-access sources of information whether they connect in person, online or via another organization.*

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\* In Arizona, Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds are fundamental to the community services provided by libraries. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), an independent federal agency, provides LSTA funds to State Library Administrative Agencies using a population-based formula. Eligibility for these funds is dependent on submission and approval of a five-year State Plan. The comprehensive document details services provided by the state library, the basis for those services, and plans for providing and evaluating those services. The plan is needs-based, requires stakeholder involvement, must relate to LSTA purposes and must be evaluated on an ongoing basis.