



MISSISSIPPI LIBRARY COMMISSION

LEADERSHIP

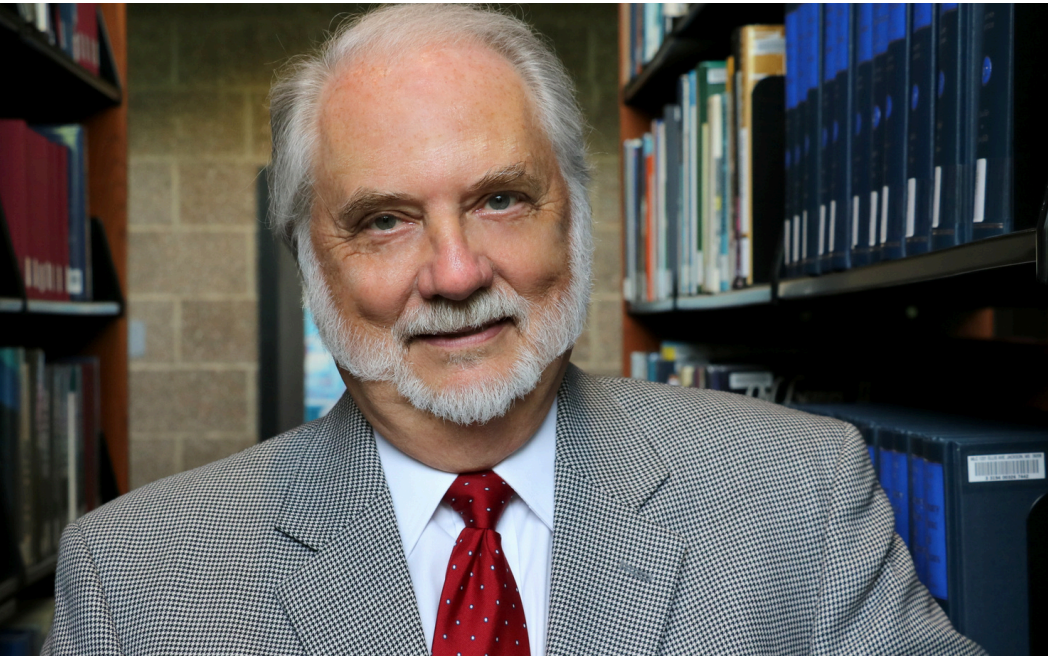
ADVOCACY

SERVICE



2025 Annual Report

Executive Summary



Told countless times is the story about an oncoming beam of light. The story often ends with a cautionary reminder that the oncoming light is not necessarily a train and although the light can be bright and intense, the light may not necessarily be a precursor of trouble or peril. Governments, whether local, statewide, or national have, during the past year, confronted many oncoming bright light challenges. For many, the bright light may have appeared often – indeed, far too often. The Mississippi Library Commission (MLC) during the year past, faced many such challenges. Chief among these bright light challenges faced were the financial changes mandated by the federal government. These financial changes affected the year as MLC dealt with employee turnover, budget constraints, and the maintenance of the public’s trust and creditability.

All such events were deeply connected to one core issue: how well have our governments invested in the people who make everything run. As shown during the year, it was not enough to just have the right systems or the right policies. Without continuous support, learning, and growth opportunities for our MLC staff as provided by political leaders in Washington D.C. and in the state Capitol, even the best plans struggled to come to life. We, at MLC, are thankful for the continued support received as shown in a willingness of supporting entities to offer hope for the future where a “bright light” shall shine on new opportunities and new successes.

About MLC

The Mississippi Library Commission (MLC) was established in 1926 by an Act of the Mississippi Legislature. The agency was charged with giving advice, when asked, to schools and public libraries and to communities desiring to establish libraries. Further, the agency was required to obtain annual reports from all libraries in the state and to make a biennial report to the legislature of its work. The Act also authorized the MLC Board of Commissioners to purchase and operate traveling libraries which might circulate to any library, organization, or group, including charitable and penal institutions. Today, the Mississippi Library Commission offers a wide variety of direct and indirect services to libraries, government agencies, and the citizens of Mississippi.

Mission and Vision

The Mississippi Library Commission is committed – through leadership, advocacy, and service – to strengthening and enhancing libraries and library services for all Mississippians.

The Vision of the Mississippi Library Commission is that all Mississippians have access to quality library services in order to:

- Achieve their greatest potential
- Participate in a global society
- Enrich their daily lives

Board of Commissioners

July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025:

Stephen Cunetto, Starkville

Theresa Bunyton, Decatur

Ann Marsh, Brandon

Lori Barnes, Hernando

Jolee Hussey, Oxford

In accordance with the requirements set forth in the Mississippi Code of 1972, §27-101-1, the Mississippi Library Commission respectfully submits the FY25 Annual Report for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025.

Library Services Bureau



To strengthen library operations and expand MLC staff expertise, the Library Services Bureau provides both direct and indirect support to Mississippi's public libraries. The bureau includes:

- Information Services
- Library Development Services
- Talking Book Services

These services include shared materials, reference assistance, integrated software for cataloging and interlibrary lending, accessible materials for patrons with disabilities, and ongoing guidance, support, and training for library staff across the state.

Information Services



Throughout FY25, this department provided comprehensive reference and research assistance to all Mississippians through telephone, email, chat, and postal mail. Requests ranged from quick factual inquiries to extensive, specialized research queries.

To support the information needs of stakeholders, including public library staff and state employees, MLC offered access to subscription-based databases, such as HeritageQuest, that provided authoritative information not available through the broad resources available in the collection of MAGNOLIA materials or other sources.

MLC also supported an interlibrary loan platform, Beehive Resource Sharing, that enabled libraries across the state to borrow materials from one another. This service expanded the range of available materials for patrons while reducing costs for local libraries by minimizing the need for duplicate purchases.

10,173 Beehive ILL Resource Sharing

12,929 reference requests

64,601 books catalogued



Information Services



Patent and Trademark

MLC offered onsite training and dedicated research space for individuals and businesses conducting patent and trademark searches. These services equipped entrepreneurs and innovators with the knowledge needed to navigate intellectual property tools, assess prior patents and trademarks, evaluate potential risks, and understand fundamental concepts related to intellectual property protection. The designated research area provided access to up-to-date databases, ensuring users had the resources necessary to conduct efficient and accurate searches.

1,126 requests

Special Collections

Special Collections provided access to non-traditional items for public libraries, schools and state agencies. This allowed libraries throughout the state to supplement their programming and outreach efforts, rather than purchasing them for possible limited use.

418 items checked out

21,538 event attendees



Information Services

MAGNOLIA

MLC housed the Mississippi Alliance for Gaining New Opportunities Through Library Information Access (MAGNOLIA), a legislatively funded consortium that expanded access to free, high-quality digital information statewide. Through MAGNOLIA, state-funded colleges and universities integrated additional databases into their campus portals, enhancing students' academic resources.

K-12 teachers and students also benefited from instructional materials, lesson plans, and age-appropriate databases that supported classroom learning. Additionally, all Mississippians could connect to these resources through their local public libraries, strengthening state-wide use of this valuable resource.

48,094,773 searches on MAGNOLIA

Center for the Book

MLC served as the home of Mississippi's Center for the Book, one of 56 affiliate Centers across the U.S. and its territories dedicated to promoting literacy, reading, and libraries. The Center participated during the year in the National Book Festival, the Mississippi Book Festival, and coordinated literacy-focused initiatives. At the Mississippi Book Festival, the Center hosted a Pop-Up Library exhibit featuring Mississippi-themed puppet theatre performances, free books for attendees, and a display of titles by participating authors.



Library Development Services

Consulting

Each Mississippi public library system was supported by a designated library consultant who provided expert guidance to strengthen library services statewide. Consultants worked closely with library systems, Friends groups, and Boards of Trustees to ensure understanding of policies, regulations, and best practices. Services included specialized training on collection development, programming, databases, and other critical areas of library operations. Through this targeted support, consultants helped libraries enhance services, improve operations, and respond effectively to community needs.

2,034 consulting hours

64 site visits



Library Development Services

Continuing Education

MLC delivered a wide range of continuing education opportunities designed to advance the skills and professional growth of library staff. Virtual and hybrid formats increased accessibility and participation across the state. Training topics included artificial intelligence, community partnerships, genealogy, statistical tools, census data, collection development, and more. The Library Leadership 101 Institute offered tailored support for paraprofessional staff, equipping them with foundational leadership skills and strengthening the library workforce statewide.

89 continuing education opportunities offered
3,621 in attendance



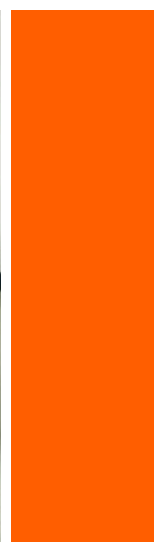
Library Development Services

Summer Library Programs

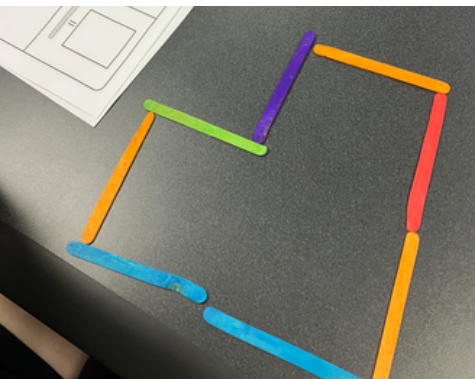
The statewide summer reading initiative—“Color Our World”—brought communities together through a variety of programs for all ages. Libraries offered sessions both in person and virtually, with activities scheduled throughout the summer months.

These programs encouraged children to continue reading during school breaks, helping to prevent summer learning loss. The initiative fostered literacy, supported lifelong learning, and provided meaningful engagement opportunities for families and community members.

4,735 summer programs held
163,981 number of attendees



Library Development Services



Disability Support Services

MLC disability support services provided guidance and support to public libraries by conducting professional development sessions on expanding services to patrons with autism and other disabilities. These services helped library staff and library administration better understand the nuances of autism spectrum disorder, as well as the experiences of patrons with different physical or developmental disabilities.

Customer service, programming, and starting community support groups at one's own library were among the training contents provided. Additionally, disability support services staff held one-to-one and group skills-building sessions directly with partner organizations, parents, caregivers, and patrons with disabilities at libraries across the state. In these sessions, patrons, parents, and caregivers learned about state and local community resources while building literacy, life, and social skills.



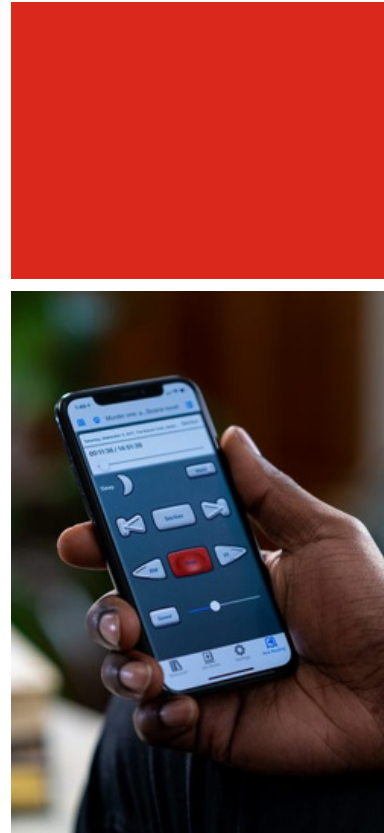
157 public library leaders and staff trained
633 skill-building sessions held by the disability support coordinator with parents, caregivers, and patrons

Talking Book Services

Talking Book Services ensured crucial access to reading and information for adults and children with visual impairments, physical limitations, or reading disabilities. Through accessible formats—including large-print books, audiobook players, braille e-readers, and other specialized materials—the program upheld the mission “That all may read.”

The Talking Book staff conducted robust outreach across the state, connecting with public libraries, veterans’ homes, schools, and community organizations to increase awareness and ensure eligible individuals received the services and support they needed.

135,035 digital books and magazines checked out
49,378 books and magazines downloaded on BARD
1,506 large print books mailed to patrons
40 outreach events performed



Administrative Services

Administrative Services was a key support to MLC's overall operations by overseeing the agency's financial administration. Responsibilities included preparing and monitoring the agency budget, establishing and tracking performance measures, ensuring compliance with internal controls and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and managing accounts payable. Administrative Services also managed accounts payable, procurement, property, and all required fiscal reporting for the agency—supporting efficient, transparent, and fully compliant financial operations.

Human Resources provided a variety of necessary services to support employees and strengthen organizational effectiveness. These services included employee development programs to encourage professional growth, benefits administration to help staff understand available health and wellness options, and performance evaluations to assess and improve job performance. HR also managed onboarding to ensure new hires were smoothly integrated into the organization and implemented retention strategies to help retain top talent. In addition, the department coordinated agency travel, providing employees with the necessary resources and support for business-related travel.

Operations played a key role in maintaining the cleanliness, safety, and security of the agency's building and grounds, creating a welcoming environment for staff, patrons, and other state agencies using MLC's meeting rooms. The Operations team also maintained the agency vehicle fleet, ensured supplies were available, managed mail services, and oversaw the general maintenance of equipment and facilities to support daily operations.



Administrative Services



Grants Program

MLC's grants program provided critical funding to public libraries through both state and federal sources. State grants, including the legislative mandated Personal Incentive Grant Program (PIGP) and health and life insurance grants, enabled libraries to maintain qualified staff and ensure the delivery of quality library services to their communities.

Federal funding through the Library Services and Technology Act supported the development of new initiatives, including the expansion and enhancement of library collections through the purchase of print materials, eBooks, audiobooks, DVDs, and circulating kits such as home repair toolkits. These funds also supported projects to strengthen programming, develop mobile library services, address technology and security needs, and create or enhance library spaces, including job search areas, teen spaces, and children's areas.

\$3,263,743 in state funding provided to libraries for PIGP

\$4,052,307 in state funding provided to public libraries for Health and Life Insurance

\$404,780 in federal funding provided to libraries for projects and upgrades/scholarships

126 total federal sub-grants awarded

Administrative Services



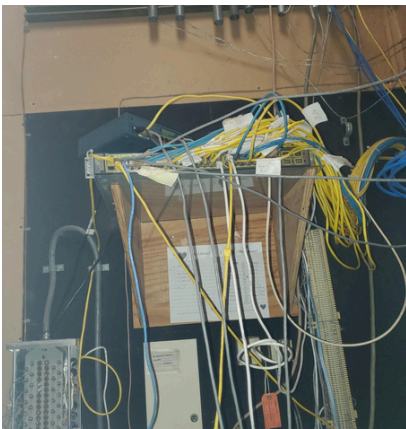
Technology Services

MLC Technology Services provides centralized IT support to public libraries statewide and internally to MLC staff, ensuring access to reliable and secure technology regardless of a library's size or local funding. Many libraries, particularly in rural and underfunded communities, lack dedicated IT staff. MLC bridges this gap by delivering professional technology services that support daily operations and expand digital access.

Through a new centralized help desk system, libraries receive timely assistance with Microsoft 365 account management, hardware and software issues, networking and connectivity, website support, and other technology needs. For libraries on the statewide C Spire network, MLC also provides proactive monitoring and rapid response to outages, helping to reduce downtime and service disruptions.

MLC administers Microsoft 365 for public library staff statewide and provides one-on-one E-Rate support, on-site technology needs assessments, and assistance with IT projects and procurement. In addition, MLC offers no-cost website design, hosting, and maintenance, helping libraries remain secure, compliant, and accessible to their communities.

E-Rate Upgrade Before and After



Administrative Services



Public Relations

MLC's public relations staff supported public libraries by providing creative design assistance, including the production of flyers, bookmarks, and other essential promotional materials. Ready-to-use templates were developed and shared with libraries, offering critical support to those without dedicated public relations staff.

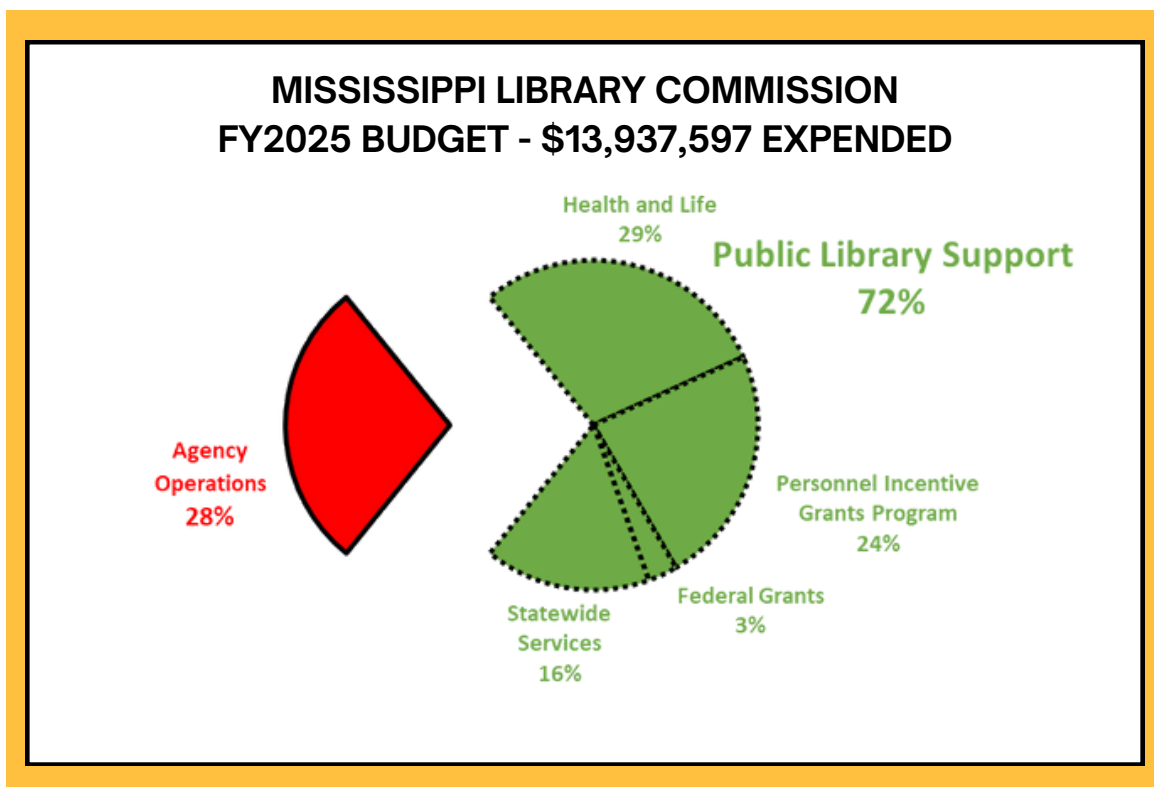
In addition, MLC produced videos that highlighted the importance of libraries and their measurable impact on communities, showcasing the library's vital role in education, access to information, and community development. These videos increased public awareness while also equipping libraries with effective tools for advocacy and outreach.

MLC also promoted both the agency and public libraries through the strategic use of social media, amplifying key messages, sharing success stories, and engaging with communities statewide. By offering professional design services, accessible templates, and targeted digital promotion, MLC empowered libraries—especially those with limited resources—to more effectively promote their services and value.



FY2025 Expenditures

Agency Operation	28.31%	\$3,945,344.44
Health and Life	29.07%	\$4,052,306.95
Personnel Incentive Grants Program	23.42%	\$3,263,743.03
Federal Grants	2.90%	\$404,780.55
Statewide Services	16.30%	\$2,271,422.59
	Total	\$13,937,597.56





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