



STATE LIBRARY
of LOUISIANA



**A GUIDE TO
SERVICES FOR
THE PUBLIC,
PUBLIC LIBRARIES,
& STATE AGENCIES**



ENTERING OUR SECOND CENTURY OF SERVICE TO LOUISIANA



The State Library of Louisiana opened its doors on Nov. 1, 1925. That's when the Louisiana Library Commission, as we were known at the time, began the work of helping to set up parish libraries around the state. There were just five public libraries back then.

Louisiana now boasts 68 parish and municipal library systems, with 337 locations and 28 bookmobiles, and the State Library's role has changed as the number of libraries grew.

We are still a support system, offering consulting services and training, but there's so much more.

Our reference librarians answer thousands of questions every year from members of the public, state employees, and lawmakers.

For nearly thirty years we have hosted the Louisiana Library Connection, a collection of free electronic databases used millions of times a year.

No single library can have all the materials patrons will want. That's where LoanSHARK, our interlibrary loan system, comes in. It allows borrowing and lending among libraries across the globe. If it's in print, we can likely get it.

More than 6,000 people who can't easily read standard printed material due to a visual impairment or physical disability use our Talking Books and Braille Library.

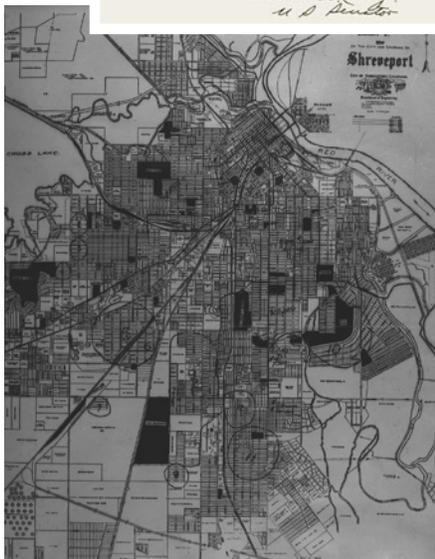
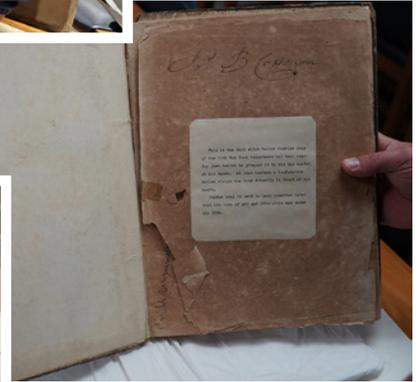
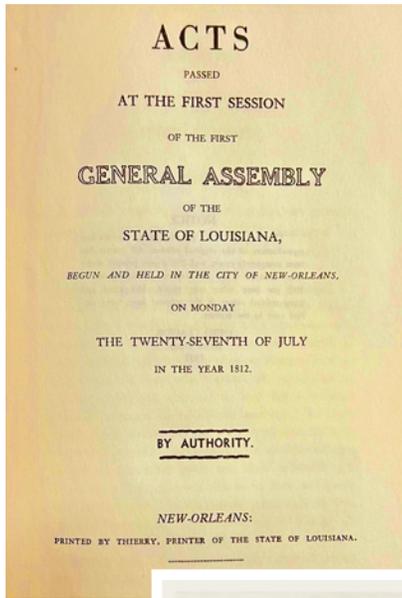
The Louisiana Center for the Book works to improve literacy through the Summer Reading Program and Louisiana Readers' Choice Awards. The Center also organizes the Louisiana Book Festival, held every fall in downtown Baton Rouge.

Those are just a few of the services your State Library provides. We hope you'll explore the following pages to learn more about how we can help meet your information needs.

Meg Placke

Meg Placke
Assistant Secretary/State Librarian

- A. Acts of the state legislature in 1812
- B. Students look at a historic book during a tour of the Louisiana Collection
- C. Civil War-era “gunshot book”
- D. Items from the Johnette Downing archive
- E. An autographed picture of Gov. Huey Long
- F. A 1940s map of Shreveport



SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Some of the most fascinating items at the State Library can be found in the Louisiana Collection

Since it was formed in 1947, the Louisiana Collection has worked to preserve important documents, artwork, photographs, maps, books, author papers, and other ephemera related to the state’s history that cannot be found anywhere else. Today, the Louisiana Collection has grown to more than 2 million items.

For people interested in local history or genealogy, the Louisiana Collection has newspaper clippings from the 1800s to today available in print, microfilm, and/or electronic databases. There is also a collection of genealogy books and journals, and historic city directories and phone books.

Historic maps, including those from colonial times, detail the growth of Louisiana while Works Progress Administration files offer insightful glimpses into the state’s history.

Louisiana Collection staff maintain a collection of over 100,000 historic photographs available for patrons to use and research. While they are available to view in person, more than 35,000 of those pictures are also available to the public through the Louisiana Digital Library at LouisianaDigitalLibrary.org.

SERVICES FOR THE PUBLIC

The State Library provides many popular services and programs available to public library patrons.



CHECK OUT LOUISIANA STATE PARKS

This statewide partnership between the State Library and Louisiana State Parks, lets library patrons check out a free day pass to any state park or historic site, as well as a Geaux Explore backpack to experience Louisiana's natural beauty and outdoor recreation. Learn more at CheckOutLouisiana.org.



CHECK OUT LOUISIANA MUSEUMS

Experience Louisiana's rich and colorful history with Check Out Louisiana Museums! Patrons of participating library systems can use their library card to receive a free e-pass to visit the historical and educational resources of Louisiana's museums and cultural attractions. Learn more at CheckOutLouisiana.org.

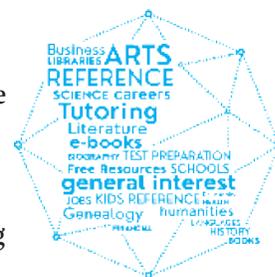
HOMework LOUISIANA

Homework Louisiana provides free live online tutoring in math, science, social studies and English for Louisiana students from kindergarten to college. An adult Skills Center offers help in resume writing and interview practice. Tutoring is available in English, Vietnamese and Spanish. HomeworkLouisiana.org delivered more than 40,000 tutoring sessions in 2024-25.



LOUISIANA LIBRARY CONNECTION

A collection of databases free to use for cardholders of any of the state's library systems, including job prep materials, newspapers, language-learning tools, research and legal resources, and more. Databases were accessed over 12.9 million times at LaLibCon.state.lib.la.us in 2024.



INTERLIBRARY LOAN

No single library can have all the materials patrons will want. The State Library's interlibrary loan system, known as LoanSHARK, lets libraries borrow materials from each other, whether across the state or around the world. Over 140,000 items were shared via LoanSHARK in 2024.



LOUISIANA READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Louisiana students have read more than 1.5 million books and cast over 485,000 votes through the annual Louisiana Readers' Choice Awards. The State Library partners with schools and libraries each year to foster a love of reading by motivating students to participate in the recognition of outstanding books.



SUMMER READING

More than 430,000 children and teenagers attended summer reading programs across Louisiana in 2025. State Library consultants provide annual training and resources to library staff members across the state to support the development of quality programs.



LITERACY LAB

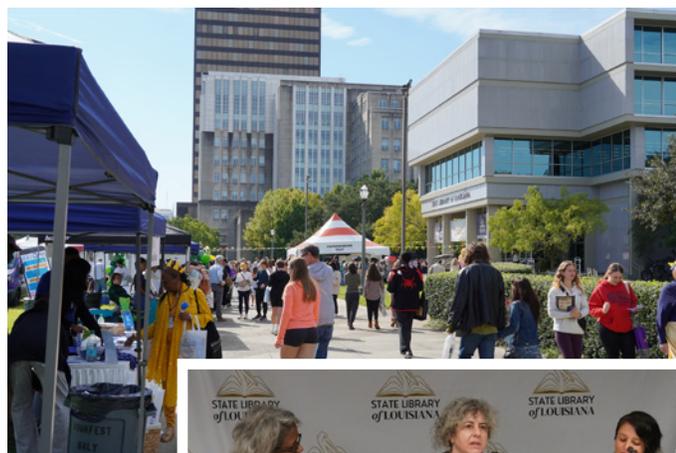
Providing hands-on and technology-based learning resources that support early literacy, our Literacy & Learning Lab engages young visitors with interactive games, puzzles, word-search activities, and more activities that support the start of a lifelong love of reading.

Visit <https://library.la.gov> to learn more about these and many other valuable State Library services.



LOUISIANA BOOK FESTIVAL

THE LOUISIANA BOOK FESTIVAL is the marquee event of the Louisiana Center for the Book and State Library. More than 200 authors and presenters participate in the annual celebration of readers, writers and their books.



LOUISIANA BOOK FESTIVAL

A favorite on the fall calendar, the Louisiana Book Festival has been the state's flagship book festival since 2002

Since its debut nearly 25 years ago, the Louisiana Book Festival has attracted thousands of authors, poets, panelists, chefs, musicians, and storytellers to become the state's signature literary event and one of the top book festivals in the country.

More than 200 authors and presenters take part in the free day-long festival, which is held in downtown Baton Rouge at the State Library, Capitol Park Museum, and the surrounding area.

Some of the participating authors are homegrown. Others have name recognition on a national level. Among those who have taken part are Rick Bragg, Donna Brazile, Ernest

J. Gaines, David Halberstam, Julie Kane, Wally Lamb, Elmore Leonard, and Cokie Roberts.

LOUISIANA WRITER AWARD

Among the highlights of the festival is the annual presentation of the Louisiana Writer Award, given annually by the Louisiana Center for the Book to recognize extraordinary contributions to the state's literary heritage exemplified by the artist's body of work.

WORDSHOPS

The day before the festival is when the annual WordShops are held. These workshops allow festival

LOUISIANA CENTER FOR THE BOOK

Since 1994, the Center's goal has been to stimulate public interest in reading, books, and libraries for people of all ages

The Louisiana Center for the Book's main program is the Louisiana Book Festival. The Center also takes part in the National Book Festival in Washington, D.C. and selects books to represent Louisiana.

The Center presents the Louisiana Writer Award to a living Louisiana writer whose work represents a distinguished contribution to the state's literary heritage.

It also presents a Black History Month program, Women's History Month program, and a National Poetry Month reading in partnership with the state poet laureate.

The Center supports the Summer Reading Program for children, teens, and adults and the Louisiana Readers' Choice Awards Program. Authors of winning books are honored at the Louisiana Book Festival.



attendees to develop their writing skills one-on-one with authors. In recent years, these WordShops have focused on topics including narrative non-fiction writing, flash fiction, how to craft compelling long-form fiction, and how elements of fiction can be used in poetry.

ONE BOOK, ONE FESTIVAL

Another festival favorite is the One Book, One Festival discussion group. Participants read the same book in advance and join a scholar-led discussion with others at the festival. Each book has a tie to Louisiana.

Among the works that have been featured are Robert Penn Warren's

All the King's Men, Ernest Gaines's *A Gathering of Old Men*, Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, John Kennedy Toole's *A Confederacy of Dunces*, Eudora Welty's *The Optimist's Daughter*, and short stories of renowned 19th Century Louisiana writer Kate Chopin.

FOCUS ON YOUTH

The festival features many authors of books for children and young adults. A Young Readers Pavilion and Teen HQ are set up in and around the State Library for presentations and activities. Some authors appear at events at schools and libraries across the state before the festival.



FORMER STATE POET LAUREATE MONA LISA SALOY reads during the State Library's National Poetry Month celebration.



LEFT: TBBL Specialist Gordon Loyd prepares audio book cartridges for patrons.
RIGHT: TBBL demonstration cartridges and players in our Literacy & Learning Lab.
BELOW: Participants in Project COPE, which helps elderly residents with vision problems live independently, tour TBBL.

TALKING BOOKS & BRAILLE LIBRARY

Our library-within-a-library offers specialized services to Louisiana residents who are visually impaired, legally blind, have reading disabilities, or cannot handle traditional books

An affiliate of the Library of Congress's National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, the Talking Books and Braille Library (TBBL) provides access to more than 164,000 audio and braille books, 25,000 large-print books, and playback machines to anyone with permanent or temporary disabilities.

Reader advisors help patrons select materials. An online catalog is also available. Additionally, TBBL dedicates a staff member to serve children up to age 18, allowing them to participate in statewide summer reading programs. Crib to Crayons is an early-literacy program available through the Talking Books and Braille Library. It helps parents work with their blind or visually-impaired children to develop skills essential for reading success.





LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY STAFF attend a session at Tech Fest, an annual training and information sharing seminar on technology integration in public libraries.

SERVICES FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The State Library provides consultative services, training, and more to public and institutional libraries across the state

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The State Library fosters the ongoing professional development of library staff throughout the state, enabling them to be well-informed and competent to provide superior services to their constituencies. In 2025, the State Library conducted 140 in-person and online training programs with more than 4,400 library professionals attending.

CONSULTING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Consultants from the Library Development Division regularly visit public libraries and advise directors, staff, and trustees on planning, programs, services, and more. The State Library’s consultants also help libraries apply for discounts for internet service and host hundreds of training sessions every year.

The Information Technology staff manages the State Library’s technology and provides that same assistance to libraries. The department also regularly hosts computer training seminars.



EARLY LITERACY PROGRAM TRAININGS help library professionals implement ideas and strategies to boost engagement and skills development for young learners.

SERVICES FOR STATE AGENCIES & EMPLOYEES

While anyone may visit the State Library to read books, conduct research, or use the internet, our main patrons are state employees and lawmakers

RESEARCH SERVICES

The State Library directly assists patrons by providing research assistance and answers to questions, conducting in-depth research for state employees, officials and Louisiana public and institutional libraries.

MEETING SPACES

The State Library provides meeting room space for library events, meetings and programs sponsored by other government agencies, as well as private use. Rental fees are based on the room, requested services, and whether the space will be used by a private or governmental entity.

RECORDER OF DOCUMENTS

The Recorder of Documents oversees the Louisiana Public Document Depository Program.

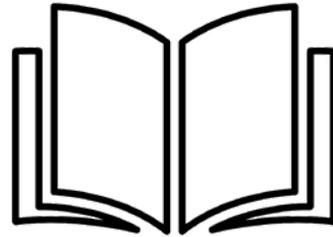
Through this program, state government documents are made available to the public. The program distributes documents to designated depository libraries and compiles the official bibliography of state documents that have been received from state agencies.

Archives of digital-only state publications are available through our online catalog.

LOUISIANA LIBRARIES BY THE NUMBERS . . .



11.3 MILLION
library visits



70.8 MILLION
items borrowed

**68 PUBLIC
LIBRARY SYSTEMS**

337 locations, 28 bookmobiles



Computers used
**1.6 MILLION
TIMES**



2.3 MILLION
library cards
(Nearly 50% of state's
population)



2.6 MILLION
reference
questions
answered



5.6 MILLION
Wi-Fi sessions



Databases accessed
50.8 MILLION TIMES

3 MILLION PEOPLE

attended more than
90,000 live & virtual events



SOURCE: 2024 Public Libraries in Louisiana Statistical Report



STATE LIBRARY of LOUISIANA



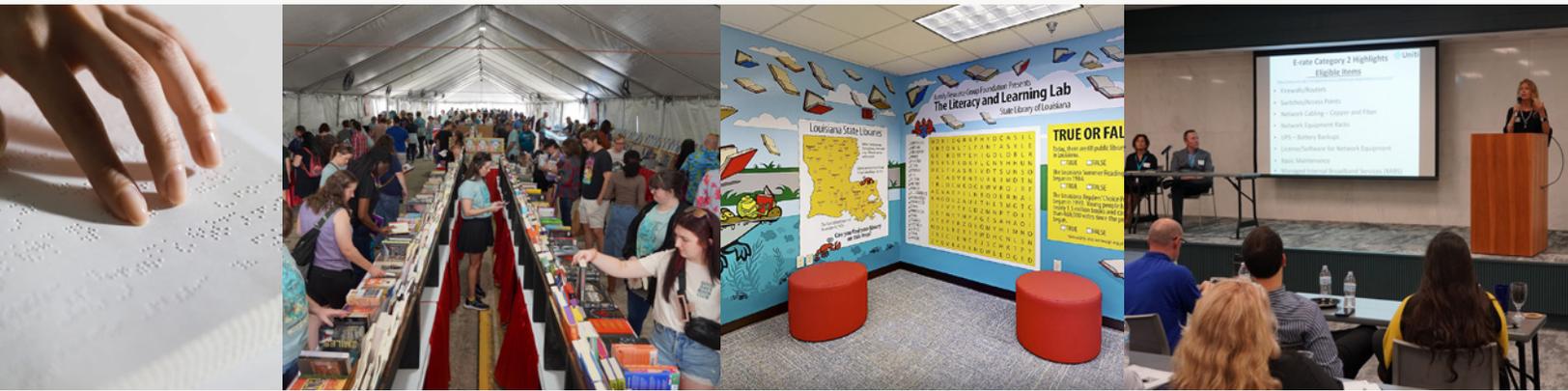
The State Library of Louisiana inspires and supports literacy and lifelong learning for all Louisianans through access to information, strengthening communities, supporting exceptional library services, and preserving Louisiana's heritage.

Visit us in person at **701 North Fourth Street** in downtown **Baton Rouge**.

We are open for public walk-in visits from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

Reach us by **phone** at **225-342-4913** from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Visit us **online** and access our digital catalogs anytime at **<https://library.la.gov>**.



STATE LIBRARY of LOUISIANA

701 NORTH FOURTH ST.
BATON ROUGE, LA. 70802
(225) 342-4913
LIBRARY.LA.GOV

OFFICE OF LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
BILLY NUNGESSER
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION AND TOURISM

This public document was published at a total cost of \$1.35. One-thousand copies of this public document were published in this first printing at a cost of \$1,352.67. The total cost of all printings of this document, including reprints, is \$1,352.67. This document was published by the Office of the State Library, P.O. Box 131, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0131, to disseminate information regarding library programs and projects under authority of public Law 98-840, as amended. This material was printed in accordance with the standards for printing by state agencies established pursuant to LA R.S. 43:31. Printing of this material was purchased in accordance with the provisions of Title 43 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes.