

NICE (Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration) Team Report - January 2023

Project Background/Review

Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS) and Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS) are collaborating to engage in a comprehensive joint ILS consortium exploration project to determine value and feasibility of an ILS merger between our two systems and respective ILS consortia. NWLS and WVLS applied for and received LSTA funding for this project and are working with WiLS consultants to guide the process.

Team members selected NICE (Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration) as a project name, and a [new website is now available!](#) The website includes meeting minutes, a listing of team members, documents, timelines, FAQs and more.

Project Goals/Outcomes

This is, in many ways, a feasibility study that will uncover and document potential advantages and disadvantages of an ILS merger and is not a decision-making process. [A full list of project goals and outcomes is available on the NICE project website.](#)

Project Update

The NICE team met monthly in November, December and January. During Phase I, Development of Foundational Principles, the team discussed [communications plan](#), [project goals & outcomes](#), ongoing ILS consortium research, and began work on an upcoming stakeholder survey. The Team also reviewed initial reports about past collaboration efforts in Project WIN and information on similar successful ILS mergers. More details will be shared when the reports are complete.

The NICE Team is actively working on Phase II: Information Gathering:

- Review of past efforts to merge ILS consortia including Project WIN
- Review of ILS budgets
- Research into other consortium and shared ILS mergers
- Stakeholder survey
- Focus group meetings
- Identify key themes from the data and information gathered

The team contributed to survey questions and design, continued to review information on similar successful ILS mergers, and began working on potential focus group questions. A draft report of past efforts to merge ILS consortia including Project WIN is in progress.

The NICE project survey was open from January 16-27 and 117 responses were received. Focus groups are being formed and focus group meetings will take place in late February / early March. Individuals who wish to participate in focus groups are invited to complete an interest form.

More details will be shared on the [NICE Libraries website](#) when the survey and focus group results are compiled and reports are complete.

Questions are Welcome!

V-Cat and NWLN library staff are welcome to share their questions and concerns via an [online form](#). Answers will be shared on the [NICE Libraries FAQ page](#).

NICE Team Members

- Alexander Johnson, Marathon County Public Library Support Services Manager
- Gina Rae, NWLS Database and Support Specialist
- Jackee Johnson, NWLS ILS Administrator
- Katie Zimmermann, WVLS ILS Administrator
- Molly Lank-Jones, Hayward Library Director
- Peggy O'Connell, Minocqua Library Director
- Rachel Metzler, WVLS Database and Support Specialist
- Sue Heskin, Superior Library Director
- Tammie Blomberg, Rib Lake Library Director
- Teresa Schmidt, Mercer Library Director

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