



LSTA 2023 Grant – Improved Discovery Solutions Joint ILS Consortium Exploration Grant (Competitive grant – estimated grant amount \$50,000)

In 2022, Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS) and Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS) collaborated to engage in a comprehensive joint consortium exploration project to determine value and feasibility of a merger between our two Integrated Library Systems implementations and respective ILS consortia. The project became known as the **Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration (NICE)** project.

Funded through state-allocated LSTA funds, the systems hired an outside consultant to manage the process, collect and analyze data, and write a final report. Research completed for this process shows an ILS merger has strong potential to result in an improved patron experience, and there is much to gain from a merger beyond critical financial savings. All data strongly indicate that an ILS merger is feasible between NWLS/NWLN and WVLS/V-Cat. 93% of survey takers supported increased collaboration around the ILS, 53% aligning with a scenario that would see systems purchasing an ILS together, with steps towards sharing practices and policies.

The 2023-2024 grant will take the next steps towards a shared ILS and shared practices and policies.

The goal of the grant is to facilitate next steps toward a merged ILS including the following:

- Develop a mutually agreed upon project timeline
- Determine vendors and products to pursue
- Determine cost of initial migration to a merged ILS
- Determine merged ILS annual budget projections and calculation method for membership shares
- Make decisions on identified issues including delivery, circulation, cataloging, and database standards, and ILS support plan
- Establish timeline for migration including implementation plan, logistics, and steps needed for a merged ILS
- Determine record clean up processes, archiving needs, and contracted technical support necessary for a merged ILS.
- Pursue database and record clean up, and shared ILS adjacent services, such as:
 - Implementation for cataloging utility, re-indexing of records etc.
 - Record clean up and preliminary record matching work for bibliographic and/or patron records
 - Consulting services with ILS vendor to match field names and usage
 - Historical data archiving to minimize data loss with a migration
 - Discovery layer migration implementation
- Establish cultural groundwork, address concerns, and establish communication pathways
- Craft policies and governance structure for cohesive membership and management

Grant funding will enable WVLS and NWLS to hire consultants so the project can be completed in an efficient and timely manner without compromising service to our libraries in the coming year. If WVLS and NWLS do not receive the grant, staff would continue to move through the process, but would not have capacity to move as quickly or be as thorough.

Without grant funds, staff will need to move more slowly through this process. It may result in a significant enough delay to make collaboration no longer feasible due to contract dates and timing. The window of opportunity may close.

General Information

Fill in the contact information below and answer the pre-application questions. When complete, submit the document to LSTAgants@dpi.wi.gov by **June 30, 2023**. Please either submit the pre-application file as an attachment to an email, or ensure the submitted file has appropriate viewing permissions when sharing the link.

Project Director Name:

Katie Zimmermann (WVLS) and Jackee Johnson (NWLS)

Project Director Phone:

715-261-7257, 715-685-1075

Project Director Email:

ils.admin@wvls.org, jjohnson@northernwaters.org

Applicant (Library System/Entity to Receive Grant Funds):

Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS)

Project Budget:

- For standalone ILS joining shared ILS, a maximum of \$25,000 may be requested.
- For Collaborative implementation or feasibility research and planning, a maximum of \$50,000 may be requested for projects involving 2 or more library systems.
- All equipment requests (items that cost \$5,000 or more per-unit) must be pre-approved by the Department of Public Instruction and by IMLS. Contact LSTAgants@dpi.wi.gov to discuss potential equipment costs by **June 30, 2023**.

Budget Category	Requested Amount	Description of Expenses
Salaries/Wages/Benefits	\$	
Consultant Fees	\$25,000	Contract work for meeting and process facilitation
Travel	\$ 3,500	In person planning meetings and training for system staff
Supplies/Materials	\$	
Equipment	\$	
Purchased Services	\$21,500	Database and record clean up, peripheral services implementation fees, training
Indirect	\$	Allowable other operational expenses

Total Grant Request	\$ 50,000	
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Pre-Application Questions

Please answer the questions below, providing no more than a page for each question. Projects will be evaluated by 3 project reviewers and scored based on the rubric provided in the LSTA 2023 Grant Guidelines document.

Question 1 is to be answered only by those seeking funds for libraries with a stand-alone ILS to join a shared ILS. Question 2 & 3 is to be answered only by those seeking funds for collaborative implementation or feasibility research and planning grants. All grant types should complete question 3.

1. Project Abstract: Standalone to Shared ILS (0-20 points)

Please describe your standalone to shared ILS project in detail. Please be sure to include details on:

- The stand-alone library and shared ILS libraries or system(s) involved in the migration and specific goals of the project
- How the local library will support ongoing participation in the shared ILS, including details about how ongoing expenses will be funded.
- Grant activities and associated expenses. Please illustrate a breakdown of your budget for this project, including Salaries/Wages/Benefits, Consultant Fees, Travel, Supplies/Materials, Services, Equipment*, and other. *See note on equipment in Project Total Request Amount section above.
- Timeline details
- Any other information relevant to your proposed project

2. Project Abstract: Collaborative implementation grants for technical solutions for improved discovery of library collections and resources (0-15 points)

Please describe your collaborative implementation project in detail. Please be sure to include details on:

- Which systems will be involved and the specific goals of the implementation.
- Any additional stakeholders involved outside of system staff (if applicable)
- Grant activities and associated expenses. Please illustrate a breakdown of your budget for this project, including salaries/wages/benefits, consultant fees, travel, supplies/materials, services, equipment*, and other. *See note on equipment in Project Total Request Amount section above.

- Timeline details
- Any other information relevant to your proposed project

3. Project Abstract: Collaborative feasibility research and planning grants for technical solutions for improved discovery of library collections and resources (0-10 points).

Please describe your collaborative planning and/or research project in detail. Please be sure to include details on:

- Which systems will be involved and the specific goals of the planning or research
- Any additional stakeholders involved outside of system staff (if applicable)
- Grant activities and associated expenses. Please illustrate a breakdown of your budget for this project, including Salaries/Wages/Benefits, Consultant Fees, Travel, Supplies/Materials, Services, Equipment*, and other. *See note on equipment in Project Total Request Amount section above.
- Timeline details
- Any other information relevant to your proposed project

In 2022, Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS) and Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS) collaborated to engage in a comprehensive joint consortium exploration project to determine value and feasibility of a merger between our two Integrated Library Systems implementations and respective ILS consortia. The project became known as the **Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration (NICE)** project.

Funded through state-allocated LSTA funds, the systems hired an outside consultant to manage the process, collect and analyze data, and write a final report. Research completed for this process shows an ILS merger has strong potential to result in an improved patron experience, and there is much to gain from a merger beyond critical financial savings. All data strongly indicate that an ILS merger is feasible between NWLS/NWLN and WVLS/V-Cat. 93% of survey takers supported increased collaboration around the ILS, 53% aligning with a scenario that would see systems purchasing an ILS together, with steps towards sharing practices and policies.

This grant will take the next steps towards a shared ILS and shared practices and policies.

Goals of the grant:

Facilitate next steps toward a merged ILS:

- Develop a mutually agreed upon project timeline
- Determine vendors and products to pursue
- Determine cost of initial migration to a merged ILS
- Determine merged ILS annual budget projections and calculation method for membership shares
- Make decisions on identified issues including delivery, circulation, cataloging, and database standards, and ILS support plan
- Establish timeline for migration including implementation plan, logistics, and steps needed for a merged ILS
- Determine record clean up processes, archiving needs, and contracted technical support necessary for a merged ILS.
- Pursue database and record clean up, and shared ILS adjacent services, such as:
 - Implementation for cataloging utility, re-indexing of records etc.
 - Record clean up and preliminary record matching work for bibliographic and/or patron records
 - Consulting services with ILS vendor to match field names and usage
 - Historical data archiving to minimize data loss with a migration
 - Discovery layer migration implementation
- Establish cultural groundwork, address concerns, and establish communication pathways
- Craft policies and governance structure for cohesive membership and management

Proposed Timeline:

July - September 2023

- Develop Communication Plan:
 - Create a clear and agreed upon project purpose and goals (include the “why” of the project).
 - Identify clear communication channels
 - Develop opportunities for relationship building within the process
 - Develop agreed upon decision making and process guidelines.
- Develop work groups around identified issues
- Develop a project timeline
- Identify which policies and standards in circulation, cataloging and database settings must be agreed upon before merging ILS’s
- Determine record clean up processes, archiving needs, and contracted technical support necessary for a merged ILS

October - December 2023

- Analyze current products, services, needs and system support for a merged ILS
- Continue work groups of experts for work on specific, identified issues to research and make recommendations to the NICE leadership team
- Pursue database and record clean up, and shared ILS adjacent services

January - March 2024

- Continue work groups of experts for work on specific, identified issues to research and make recommendations to the NICE leadership team
- Continue analysis of current products, services, needs and system support for a merged ILS
- Development of overall budget and membership shares calculations

- Continue database and record clean up, and shared ILS adjacent services

April - June 2024

- Formal report on recommendations for best practices and policies
- Formal report on overall budget and calculation of membership shares
- Formal report on recommended implementation plan including:
 - Suite of products and services to support a merged ILS
 - System ILS support plan
 - Selecting an ILS product
 - Migrating to a single ILS
 - Possibility of a joint consortium
- NWLS and WVLS consider application for 2024-2025 LSTA grant funds

Additional stakeholders include:

- NWLS and WVLS directors and staff
- NWLN and V-Cat member library directors and staff
- NWLS and WVLS boards
- County library boards
- NWLN and V-Cat member library boards
- Library volunteers
- Library users

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Total Request: \$50,000

Consultant fees: \$25,000

Grant funds would be used to cover the cost to hire a consultant to coordinate the following activities:

- Develop a mutually agreed upon project timeline
- Develop a communication plan
- Manage the scope of the project within the given timeline
- Prepare agendas and send out to team / workgroup members and stakeholders
- Facilitate meeting discussion
- Prepare report of workgroup recommendations to the NICE Team
- Prepare meeting minutes and share with team / workgroup members and stakeholders
- Prepare Final Report of Recommendations from the NICE Team

Travel: \$3,500

Grant funds would be used to cover the cost of travel for in person planning meetings and training for system

staff.

Purchased Services: \$21,500

Database and record clean up, peripheral services implementation fees, training such as:

- Implementation for cataloging utility, re-indexing of records, etc.
- Record clean up and preliminary record matching work for bibliographic and/or patron records
- Consulting services with ILS vendor to match field names and usage
- Historical data archiving to minimize data loss with a migration
- Discovery layer migration implementation

4. Equity: (0-5 points)

How will your project help to improve discovery of library resources for historically underserved populations?

A joint ILS consortium would provide a broader range of access to all patrons.

The project will help us identify potential inequities in service to historically underserved populations and opportunities to improve discovery of library resources for these populations.

Examples:

- The expansion of Mail-A-Book service to WVLS patrons living in rural areas without a local public library, or who cannot use a public library because of disability or travel limitation.
- Community members along the border of NWLS and WVLS - for example, residents of the Lac du Flambeau reservation - will benefit from increased access to more libraries within a short geographical distance.
- People in the WVLS service area would gain access to the collections of the tribal libraries within NWLS.
- Staff at NWLS would be able to update the combined catalog through their Inclusive Subject Heading Project which is focused on adding context and discovery points while removing offensive or dehumanizing terms from the catalog. The goal of this project is for all patrons to find themselves reflected and respected within the catalog.
- Expanding the breadth and depth of access to materials in languages other than English and additional formats for all patrons.