



NICE Project: ILS Recommendation

[updated May 2024]

ILS Vendor Selection Targeted Workgroup Recommendations

After a thorough review of the feedback received from member libraries, the ILS Vendor Selection Targeted Workgroup recommends Sierra from Innovative/Clarivate. In addition, the workgroup recommends that the consortium conduct an ILS exploration in three to five years.

Decision Highlights

- The workgroup recommends both systems migrate to a new instance of Sierra. This promotes equity and the opportunity to reconfigure ILS options that are suitable for both systems.
- Member libraries recognize that a merger between the two systems will produce change. Moving to a combined Sierra platform, as opposed to switching to Koha, will mitigate some of the change, as member library staff are familiar with Sierra.
- There is a potential for lower costs with a new shared Sierra compared to the two consortia's current Sierra costs.

Workgroup Process and Context

The ILS Vendor Selection Workgroup met three times in the Fall of 2023, reviewing several documents, including the V-CAT ILS evaluation and Review Committee Final Report, NWLN ILS Exploration Takeaways, ILS Vendor Cost Proposals, and NICE Focus Group and Survey takeaways. The vendors and products identified by the NICE Team were ByWater and Koha, Innovative and Sierra, and TLC and CARL. During the process additional information was identified and gathered from the identified vendors. TLC's CARL was not chosen by any members, so the group removed it from the list of options.

The group initially recommended Koha with Bywater, but after receiving significant feedback expressing concern about the ILS recommendation, the NICE Team decided to reactivate the ILS workgroup to consider the feedback.

In May of 2024, the ILS Vendor Selection Workgroup met once more to examine the feedback from member libraries. They reviewed concerns about Koha as the ILS choice, including, but not limited to, concerns that Koha does not yet have all the desired features currently used by the two systems, the amount and cost of staff training that comes with a new ILS, and the overall timeline of the project. For many, merging the two ILS consortiums and changing vendors felt like too much change and work at once. It was noted that Koha does have many positive features, but considering the feedback, the Workgroup made a new recommendation to stay with the existing ILS of both systems, Innovative/Clarivate's Sierra.

Process Background

Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS) and Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS) are collaborating to engage in a comprehensive joint ILS consortium exploration project. Last year, system and member library staff formed the NICE team to determine the value and feasibility of an ILS merger between the two systems and respective ILS consortia. Based on that information, the team determined that an ILS merger is feasible. LSTA funds are being used to facilitate this second phase of work in which targeted workgroups are being formed around critical decision points. The workgroups are made up of system and member library staff who have insights, expertise, or perspectives that will help craft recommendations.

Each workgroup uses the NICE Project's [Decision Making Principles and rubric](#). During the feasibility process of the project, the team created a core set of values to apply to future ILS decisions to ensure those shared decisions conform, as much as reasonably possible, to core values. These core values reflect what the NICE project team heard from stakeholders throughout the initial stage of work. Those values were translated into the rubric that is used to guide decision-making.

Next Steps

The ILS recommendation will be used as the basis for making other NICE Project related decisions such as funding formulas, policy and procedure recommendations and so forth.

This recommendation, along with all others from the project will be included in a final report which the NICE team, the respective ILS consortia, and ultimately the system boards will carefully consider in their decision-making.

Can I Offer Feedback?

Yes! Feedback is welcomed, encouraged, and necessary. Submit your questions or comments using this [form](#) which goes to the NICE Leadership Team. Please indicate that your feedback is related to the ILS selection workgroup recommendation.