

Scholarships and Grant Projects

WAPL Conference

WVLS recently awarded scholarships to Katelyn Sobelko (Marathon County Public Library), Amber Brill (Greenwood Area Public Library) and Brandon Hardin (Withee Public Library) to attend the Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries (WAPL) Conference in Stevens Point on May 1-3.

Valued at \$900, this WVLS WAPL Conference scholarship can cover costs associated with conference registration, lodging and mileage.

WVLS Marketing Support Grant

Three libraries are participating in the 2024 WVLS Marketing Support Grant, a pilot project and opportunity for WVLS libraries to evaluate their library's marketing efforts and to work toward a library marketing plan or marketing campaign. Participants include Lorelee Petersen (Owen Public Library), Laurie Ollhoff and Chris Sprague (T.B. Scott Free Library; Merrill), and Brandon Hardin (Withee Public Library). Over the next few months, grant recipients will work on a marketing plan or marketing campaign for their libraries.

2023-2024 LSTA Grant

\$77,087 was awarded in aggregate to the LEANWI Partners under the LSTA Sparsity Aids channel. \$50,400 was designated within the LEANWI 2024 budget plan to support LEANWI tenancy for rack 1, through WiscNet, at the Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) Regional Datacenter (RDC) and for Microsoft Licensing renewals and/or new license procurements due to the uncertainty of vendor support and Microsoft Licensing program changes.

\$10,784.18 was used to renew services with mobile hotspots vendors through June 2024. Libraries utilizing the minimum level continuity of service will have the option to expand service levels or device capacity or extend service subscriptions beyond June 2024 at their own expense.

Continuing Education and Training

Continuing Education

The Wisconsin Public Library Systems created a Spring Webinar Series focusing on neurodiversity among library staff.

- We Are Already Here: The Workplace Experiences of Neurodivergent Library Workers
Thursday, April 18; 12 p.m.
Presented by: Christine Moeller (they/she), PhD Candidate, University of Washington iSchool
- For Managers & Supervisors: Cultivating an Inclusive Workplace for Neurodivergent Staff

Tuesday, May 7; 1 p.m.

Presented by: Renee Grassi, Director, Lake Bluff Public Library

Both webinars will be recorded and worth one contact hour toward public library director certification. Detailed information [can be found here](#).

Training

WVLS continues to produce a monthly *Digital Byte*. Recent trainings were produced on Sticky Notes, Book Resumes, and Repurposing Canva. All current and future *Digital Bytes* can be [viewed on the WVLS webpage](#). Ideas for training topics are always welcome.

Consultant Services

Inclusive Services

Thanks to LSTA funding, the Wisconsin Libraries Talk About Race project will continue for another year. With planning from a group of Wisconsin consultants, including Sherry Anderson, the project offers a series of facilitator-led webinars, workshops, and mini-grants to support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts in libraries and communities.

As part of the project, an in-person workshop, “Navigating the Terrain of Change with Dr. Alonzo Kelly” will be held:

- April 25, 2024, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., at the East Branch, of the Brown County Library (2255 Main St, Green Bay)
- May 9, 2024, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., at the Wintergreen Conference Center (60 Gasser Rd, Wisconsin Dells)

This fully participatory presentation is designed to assist in creating an inter-culturally inclusive work environment and learning environments for all. The key concepts of this session include 1) Creating a sense of urgency, 2) Creating a ‘culture of accountability’, and 3) Crucial Conversations; High Stakes/Strong Emotions/Opposing Opinions. Participants should expect a day of critical thinking, active participation, personal reflection, and group discussions.

Youth & Adult Services

Summer Performer Grants

In its 2024 Plan and Budget, the WVLS Board of Trustees approved a \$300 grant for each of the 25 WVLS public libraries and all MCPL and Antigo branches to apply toward Summer Library Program performers in 2024.

Summer Math Adventure Grant

This new initiative will allow three WVLS member libraries to implement the Wisconsin

Mathematics Council's Summer Math Adventure program during summer 2024. The \$500 grant was awarded to Minocqua Public Library, Rib Lake Public Library, and Thorp Public Library.

YSIE Get-Togethers

YSIE (youth services information exchange) Get-Togethers have returned. Get-togethers are informal grassroots gatherings of library staff who serve youth. These discussions are important to resource- and information-sharing as well as brainstorming. The Listening Session on March 21 at the Minocqua Public Library had six attendees. Upcoming get-togethers are August 12, 1-3 p.m. at Granton Public Library and September 10, 1-2 p.m. virtually which will also include IFLS youth services staff.

Listening Sessions

WVLS is planning to host two listening sessions in 2024. Open to WVLS library directors or a proxy on staff, these listening sessions are unique opportunities for them to share their stories, voice challenges and vet solutions, and brainstorm potential collaborations and opportunities. The first listening session was held April 17 at the Colby Community Library. The second session will be held September 23 at the Frances L. Simek Memorial Library in Medford.

WVLS Circulating Collection and Databases

Makerspace Collection

Several new items are being added to the Makerspace collection. Included are two murder mystery kits, two sets of 10 matching puzzles to host jigsaw puzzle competitions, straw connectors, KEVA building planks, and geoboards. Check out the WVLS website for information on booking makerspace equipment. This collection as well as the IFLS collection of storytime kits and NWLS memory kits are available to all libraries in the WVLS service area.

WVLS Professional Collection

WVLS has a collection of professional topical materials available for borrowing with a V-Cat library card. New titles were recently purchased in the areas of inclusion, library marketing, and collaboration. These materials will be cataloged and added to V-Cat shortly.

ILS/V-Cat Projects

V-Cat Update

A draft V-Cat budget for 2024 has been reviewed by the V-Cat Steering Committee and the V-Cat Council. The draft will be presented for approval at the June V-Cat Council meeting.

Libraries are beginning to roll out updated library card application forms to align with V-Cat Library Card Application and Patron Record guidelines. A standard application was created by the V-Cat Cooperative Circulation Committee with input from legal counsel.

In April, the V-Cat Council approved the use of special project funds to set up and maintain an Aspen test server. This will allow V-Cat members to test and evaluate changes to Aspen settings without disrupting the patron experience.

NICE Project Update

The Northern Wisconsin Integrated Library System Consortium Exploration, known as NICE, continues to engage in a comprehensive joint ILS consortium exploration project to determine value and feasibility of an ILS merger between the Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS) Network consortium and Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS)V-Cat Consortium. With the use of 2023-2024 LSTA grant funds, WVLS and NWLS have contracted with WiLS to coordinate meetings, facilitate the project's processes and prepare a final report. The project continues building on the [NICE Project's key findings from 2022-2023](#).

NICE Team Members:

Alexander Johnson - Library Support Services Manager, MCPL

Gina Rae - ILS Administration, NWLS

Jackee Johnson – ILS Administration, NWLS

*Katelyn Sabelko - Library Services Manager, MCPL

Katie Zimmermann - ILS Administration, WVLS

*Kelly Wiisanen - Youth and Family Resources Manager, Superior

*Laurie Ollhoff - Library Director, Merrill

Molly Lank-Jones - Library Director, Hayward

Peggy O'Connell- Library Director/ Consortium chairperson, Minocqua

Rachel Metzler - ILS Administration, WVLS

*Sara Klemann - Library Director, Eagle River

Sue Heskin - Resource Library Director, Superior

Tammie Blomberg - Library Director, Rib Lake

Teresa Schmidt - Library Director, Mercer

(*Additional members added to the NICE Team for the 2023/2024 grant cycle.)

The NICE Team has formed targeted workgroups in key areas. Each group meets to consider information and decisions necessary to share an ILS and makes a recommendation using the [NICE Decision Making Principles](#).

The following recommendations have been presented to, and reviewed by, the NICE Team:

- [ILS Vendor Selection](#)
- [Delivery](#)
- [Collaborative Decision-Making](#)
- [Funding Formula](#)

A full suite of recommendations will be shared in June. Library directors and staff are encouraged to provide feedback and ask questions via a [NICE Recommendation Feedback Form](#).

More information can be found on the [Documents page](#) of the [NICE Project website](#).

Websites, Data and Technology

Websites

- There is a new email address for website assistance at websitehelp@librarieswin.org.
- Training resources are regularly added to training.librarieswin.org and the [YouTube playlist](#).
- The Website Accessibility Learning Group meets monthly, integrating accessibility principles into new website designs.
- A Centralized Online Resources page is coming soon, which will reduce website maintenance time and enhance access to BadgerLink resources from library webpages.

Data

- A preliminary 2023 Statistics Booklet copy is available on the [WVLS website](#).
- Assistance on 2023 Annual Report infographics is available upon request at ebrewster@wvls.org.

Technology

- Over half of the WVLS inventoried computers owned by public libraries are over 5 years old, thus ineligible for Windows 11 updates. For budgeting and planning purposes, these computers should be replaced before October 2025.
- [Online procurement form](#): The turnaround time is approximately three weeks from the order to a full install.
- There is a [Technology tips and FAQs page](#).
- [Princh print management](#) is available at no extra cost to interested libraries.
- Kajeet Hotspot support ends on December 31, 2024. WVLS can provide suggestions (Kajeet direct contract, Tech Soup, etc.) for libraries wishing to continue a hotspot program.
- TEACH internet migration for libraries continues to happen, and 5 of 27 WVLS sites have been fully migrated. The current completion date is now June 2024. Libraries will receive “welcome” letters and contracts that need to be signed and returned.
- WVLS will be renewing efforts to work with Taylor County libraries to complete network config updates to support use of the new Taylor County Fiber Network (TCFN) services available at each library. The goal is to segregate internet traffic from the libraries’ public wifi networks.

Technology Support

- The TEACH division of the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) has a new contract for statewide networking. The previous network and services, labeled

“BadgerNet Service,” is still in the process of being replaced by a new network, labeled “TEACH Network Service.” AT&T will continue to be the Managed Service Provider (MSP) for the statewide networking fabric for schools and libraries and is still in the process of completing the migration of service connections. The end of the “current” BadgerNet contract was originally January 31, 2024, but after AT&T struggled to meet that deadline, an extension of contract through June 2024 was affected.

- Last fall, LEAN WI partners began exploring a relationship with a new Microsoft Licensing vendor and continues working with its team of licensing experts to better understand program renewal and new procurement options. There are two major tracks of licensing management: maintenance of current licensing and procurement of new licensing. Current licensing maintenance supporting core infrastructure and core services for member libraries is active through June 2024. Because current licensing is not an option after June 2024, WVLS will work with its current MS licensing vendor during late April and May to affect the necessary program change and a renewal of existing licensing.