

NICE (Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration) Project Report

August 8, 2024

With the use of 2023-2024 LSTA grant funds WVLS and NWLS will again contract with WiLS to coordinate meetings, facilitate the project's processes and prepare a final report. Four members have been added to the NICE team for the 2023/2024 grant cycle (marked with an *).

NICE Team Members:

Alexander Johnson - Library Support Services Manager, MCPL
 Gina Rae - System Staff, NWLS
 Jackee Johnson - System Staff, NWLS
 Katelyn Sabelko* - Library Services Manager, MCPL
 Katie Zimmermann - System Staff, 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 - System Staff, WVLS
 Sara Klemann* - Library Director, Eagle River
 Sue Heskin - Resource Library Director, Superior
 Tammie Blomberg - Library Director, Rib Lake
 Teresa Schmidt - Library Director, Mercer

The NICE Team met on Tuesday, June 18, 2024 to review and discuss the NICE Final Report Draft and NICE Project one pager. The NICE Team also discussed feedback received during the June Town Hall meeting, the results of a delivery time test, and other communication needs.

WiLS Consultants and NICE Leadership Team made edits and adjustments to the report and documents following the meeting according to suggestions made by NICE Team members.

The following documents were shared with V-Cat and NWLN member libraries, and the NWLN and WVLS Boards of Trustees:

- [NICE Project Phase 2 Key Takeaways June 2024](#)
- [NICE Project Phase 2 Why Merge? June 2024](#)
- [NICE Project Phase 2 Final Report June 2024](#)
- [Updated NICE FAQs page](#)

NWLN and V-Cat provided draft budget estimates to member libraries, and WVLS staff prepared a summary of [NICE Benefits and Common Questions](#) with clear language for library board members.

In Addition, a letter in support of the NICE Project from the Director of Library Services at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Benjamin Miller was sent to Tom Bobrofsky, the WVLS Board President and Jeff Burke, The NWLS Board President. Each board president's letter was shared with respective NWLN and WVLS Boards and NWLN and V-Cat library directors.

On July 18, 2024 the directors of the Northern Waters Library Network (NWLN) discussed the NICE Project Recommendations and Report. The discussion about an ILS merger highlighted benefits to patrons, DPI support of an ILS merger, concerns about the NICE Holds Recommendation, satisfaction within NWLN services and resource sharing, and whether the financial savings were enough of a benefit to justify the change.

The NWLN directors voted against merging the ILS with V-Cat. At their July 20 meeting, the NWLS Board of Trustees voted to uphold the NWLN recommendation against merging the ILS. On Thursday, August 1, V-Cat Council met to discuss the future of the NICE project. V-Cat Council chose to table a vote on an ILS merger until the September 5 meeting.

It will take time to have follow up conversations and process through the information about the NWLN vote. Until we know more, and until V-Cat comes together around a desired path forward, we don't know whether there is room to keep talking about a potential ILS merger in the near future. Regardless of the final outcome, WVLS and NWLS staff will continue to collaborate, and we anticipate future planning will include discussions about potential ILS mergers.

Thank you to all of the V-Cat and NWLN member library staff who have participated in the conversations, town halls, and used the feedback forms to share support, concerns, and questions about the NICE project. Member library participation has had a significant impact on this process. The recommendations, and the report, are greatly improved because of feedback we've received.

A wholehearted thank you goes out to members of the NICE Team, NICE Workgroups, WiLS Project Managers and the NWLN and WVLS Boards. Thank you for your service, leadership, and support throughout this exploration.

ILS Vendor Selection Workgroup Members:

Ann Larson, Sherman & Ruth Weiss Community Library, NWLS
Alexander Johnson, (MCPL), WVLS
Katie Zimmermann, WVLS
Jackee Johnson, NWLS
Maria Pregler, T. B. Scott Public Library, WVLS
Angie Bodzislav, Spooner Public Library, NWLS

Funding Formula and Budget Workgroup Members:

Amber Brill (Greenwood) WVLS
Leah Giordano (MCPL), WVLS
Sue Heskin (SPL), NWLS
Jackee Johnson, NWLS
Sara Klemann, (Eagle River), NWLS
Sherry Machones, NWLS
Virginia Roberts (RDL) WVLS
Cherie Sanderson (Boulder Junction), NWLS
Marla Sepnafski, WVLS

Katie Zimmermann, WVLS

Delivery Workgroup Members:

Jackee Johnson, NWLS ILS Administrator
Sherry Machones, NWLS System Director
Jamie Matczak, WVLS
Sarah May, NWLS
Rachel Metzler, WVLS
Marla Sepnafski, WVLS
Katie Zimmermann, WVLS

Collaborative Decision-making Workgroup Members:

Sue Heskin (SPL), NWLS
Sarah Adams, (Vaughn PL), NWLS
Cherie Sanderson (Boulder Junction PL), NWLS
Leah Giordano (MCPL), WVLS
Janay Ziebell (Neillsville PL), WVLS
Tammie Blomberg (Rib Lake PL), WVLS
Jackee Johnson, NWLS
Katie Zimmermann, WVLS

Holds Fulfillment Workgroup Members:

Tammie Blomberg (Rib Lake PL), WVLS
Olivia Carlson (MCPL), WVLS
Kyle Hawley (SPL), NWLS
Sue Heskin (SPL), NWLS
Jackee Johnson, NWLS
Sara Klemann (Eagle River PL), NWLS
Ann Larson (Hayward PL), NWLS
Peggy O'Connell (Minocqua PL), WVLS
Laurie Ollhoff (T. B. Scott PL - Merrill) WVLS
Teresa Schmidt (Mercer PL) NWLS
Kathryn Sullivan (MCPL), WVLS
Katie Zimmermann, WVLS

Record Standards Workgroup Members:

Angie Bodzislav, Spooner Public Library (NWLS)
Teresa Hall, Loyal Public Library (WVLS)
Kyle Hawley, Superior Public Library (NWLS)
Jackee Johnson (NWLS)
Chris Luebbe, Marathon County Public Library (WVLS)
Jacquie Pooler, Iron River (NWLS)
Maria Pregler, T. B. Scott Library, Merrill (WVLS)

Virginia Roberts, Rhinelander District Library (WVLS)
Cherie Sanderson, Boulder Junction Public Library (NWLS)
Teresa Schmidt, Mercer Public Library (NWLS)
Cindy Wendt, Minocqua Public Library (WVLS)
Katie Zimmermann (WVLS)

Cataloging Workgroup

Gina Rae, NWLS
Kelly Wiisanen, Superior Public Library/NWLS
Mary O'Shaughnessy, Superior Public Library/NWLS
Jacquie Pooler, Iron River/NWLS
Rachel Metzler, WVLS
Cindy Wendt, Minocqua Public Library/WVLS
Jenny Jochimsen, Abbotsford Public Library/WVLS
Chris Luebbe MCPL/WVLS
Jackee Johnson, WVLS
Katie Zimmermann, WVLS