



# **2024 WVLS STAFF REPORT**

Final version  
February 2025



February 6, 2025

TO: WVLS Board of Trustees  
FROM: Marla Sepnafski  
RE: WVLS Staff Report

Attached is a summary of WVLS staff members' activities for the period of January-December 2024.

This report is to be considered in the context of the 2024 WVLS Plan, i.e., staff members are reporting on their progress in meeting their assigned responsibilities within the annual plan.

WVLS staff will be present at the WVLS Board of Trustees meeting scheduled for February 15, 2025 to highlight their 2024 accomplishments and respond to any questions you might have about the information presented in the 2024 report.

Note: New language or priority activities to the plan are designated in **bold print**.

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## MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENTS

*(A). Wis. Stats. 43.24(2)(a) Written agreements to provide, to any resident of the system area, the same library services, on the same terms, that are provided to the residents of the municipality or county that established the member library, except for the group programming preference authorized under s. 43.15(4)(c)(4), and to provide for the interloan of materials among all participating public libraries, as evidenced by agreements with those libraries.*

### 2024 ACTIVITY RELATED TO THIS REQUIREMENT

1. Provide a copy of the agreement WVLS has with each public library and its supporting municipality to DLT by January 15, 2024. RESULTS:
  - Copies of the 2013 agreements WVLS has with each member library and supporting municipality were filed with the Division for Libraries and Technology (DLT) in 2012/2013.

## RESOURCE LIBRARY AGREEMENT

*(B). Wis. Stats. 43.24(2)(b) Backup reference, information, and interlibrary loan services from the system resource library, including the development of and access to specialized collections, as evidenced by a written agreement with the library.*

### 2024 ACTIVITY RELATED TO THIS REQUIREMENT

1. Provide a signed copy of the WVLS/MCPL agreement for **2024** to the DLT by January 15, **2024**.

RESULTS:

- The WVLS and Marathon County Public Library Boards of Trustees approved the 2024 Resource Library Agreement in August 2023. The signed document was submitted to DLT shortly thereafter.
- There were no substantive edits or changes made to the 2024 Resource Library Agreement.

**NOTE: There is no "c" in Wis. Stats. 43.34(2).**

## REFERENCE, REFERRAL, AND INTERLIBRARY LOAN (ILL)

*(D). Wis. Stats. 43.24(2)(d) Referral or routing of reference and interlibrary loan requests from libraries within the system to libraries within and outside the system.*

### 2024 ONGOING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THIS REQUIREMENT:

1. Ensure that interlibrary loan participants have access to accurate ILL statistics. RESULTS:

- A circulation report that provided monthly and year-to-date data on each library's interlibrary loan activities, was shared with WVLS member libraries on a monthly basis and made available on the WVLS website.
- The *2023 System Information and Public Library Statistics* booklet, that was shared with member public library directors and made available on the WVLS website, summarized data on libraries' borrowing and loaning activities.

2. Encourage all member libraries to subscribe to appropriate interlibrary loan communication channels.

RESULTS:

- Information on interlibrary loan listservs through WVLS and Resources for Libraries and Lifelong Learning (RL&LL) was provided during orientations for new public library directors.

- Emails to member library ILL staff in 2024 frequently mentioned the RL&LL WISCAT and WVLS ILL listservs.
3. Participate in state level agreement with major book jobber(s) which allow publicly supported WVLS libraries of all types to purchase library materials at maximum discounts. RESULTS:
    - An annual subscription to the WiLS Cooperative Purchasing Service for \$199.00 was renewed for July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025.
  4. Monitor statewide ILL activity and communicate relevant service changes with member libraries. RESULTS:
    - WVLS served as the conduit for ILL support between RL&LL and member libraries and, as such, participated in state-sponsored ILL meetings and training sessions, and ensured that relevant information was forwarded to area ILL staff.
    - A circulation report that provided monthly and year-to-date data on each library's interlibrary loan activities was shared with WVLS member libraries on a monthly basis and made available on the WVLS website.
    - Data provided in the *2023 System Information and Public Library Statistics* booklet summarized resource sharing trends for WVLS member public libraries.
  5. Monitor usage of BadgerLink and WVLS subscription-based electronic resources provided for member libraries and patrons. RESULTS:
    - This activity was ongoing as usage data is required to complete public and system annual reports.
    - 2023 usage data for WVLS subscription-based electronic resources served as a tool to assess database need and relevance as part of the 2025 system plan and budget process.
    - To promote BadgerLink, announcements for webinar opportunities and resources produced by the BadgerLink team were regularly featured in *Monday Mentions*.
  6. Provide authentication services for BadgerLink and WVLS databases offered to the public by fully utilizing vendor authentication processes where possible. RESULTS:
    - WVLS worked closely with partners at RL&LL throughout the year to ensure all links to BadgerLink resources were authenticated properly.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2024).**

1. Provide reference and interlibrary loan referrals for member libraries. RESULTS:
  - This mission critical service was provided throughout 2024.
  - WVLS maintained the catalogs of 25 member libraries aggregated in an online database known as "V-Cat." This resource served as the primary vehicle for interlibrary loan (ILL) between WVLS public libraries.
  - The state's WISCAT product continued to serve as the interlibrary loan vehicle for our public and multitype libraries to fill library users' requests for items not found or available in V-Cat.
2. Encourage all member libraries to participate fully in interlibrary loan as lenders and borrowers. RESULTS:
  - In 2024, 23 of 25 WVLS member public libraries, 26 school/academic libraries, and one special library participated in WISCAT. The Edith Evans Community Library (Laona) and Westboro Public Library were the two public libraries that chose not to participate in 2024.

- Member public library 2023 lending and borrowing data was reported in the *2023 System Information and Public Library Statistics* booklet which was widely shared within the WVLS community.
3. Encourage all participating ILL libraries to follow interlibrary loan procedures and protocols established by the system and WI Department of Public Instruction's Library Services Team. RESULTS:
    - V-Cat-related ILL processes were reviewed during V-Cat Council meetings when necessary.
    - Questions regarding interlibrary loan of materials involving non-V-Cat members were answered by WVLS ILL staff or escalated to the WISCAT team at DPI when appropriate.
    - All WVLS libraries were encouraged to attend WISCAT User Group meetings to stay current on recommended resource sharing procedures and protocols.
  4. Guide libraries as needed through WISCAT system upgrades and changes in statewide resource sharing processes. RESULTS:
    - The *Wisconsin ILL Guidelines*, updated in 2021, was shared with new member library interlibrary loan staff and referenced as needed to keep colleagues current on WISCAT protocols and to maintain member libraries' good standing as lenders and borrowers.
  5. Communicate statewide resource sharing changes and updates, provide training and support when needed, and act as a conduit for troubleshooting on behalf of all libraries (public/multitype) in the system area. RESULTS:
    - A local WVLS group ILL email list and the WISCAT listserv were used to communicate with libraries providing ILL services throughout the system and state.
    - These communication channels were used to share and promote training opportunities as well as alert interlibrary loan staff to urgent information.
  6. **Monitor Public Library System Redesign (PLSR) recommendation to implement a statewide discovery layer and participate in decision-making processes.** RESULTS:
    - WVLS staff participated in the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 LSTA Cooperative Cataloging Grant projects and the Statewide Bibliographic Standards Group to stay up to date and provide feedback on changes being recommended for bibliographic cataloging.
    - Together, these groups are working to achieve more consistent cataloging throughout the state in the hopes of one day being able to have a statewide discovery layer.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2025).**

None indicated.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION & CONSULTATION

*(E) & (H) Wis. Stats. 43.24(2)(e) In-service training for participating public library personnel and trustees and professional consultation services to participating public libraries. Wis. Stats. 43.24(2)(h) Professional consultant services to participating public libraries.*

### Continuing Education

## 2024 ONGOING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THIS REQUIREMENT:

1. Maintain **live and recorded** continuing education events on the WVLS Continuing Education webpage with current WVLS and state-wide offerings. RESULTS:
  - WVLS offerings were routinely posted to the WVLS website, and shared in the WVLS *Digital Lites* blog, *WVLS Monthly Newsletter*, *Monday Mentions* email, WVLS Director's Report, and on the WVLS Facebook page.
  - Statewide offerings were routinely posted in *Monday Mentions*.
  - The WVLS Continuing Education web page featured the Wisconsin Libraries Professional Learning Calendar, a collaboration between the DPI Library Services Team and Wisconsin Public Library Systems. This calendar gathers learning events from Wisconsin library systems, DPI Library Services, library associations and other groups all in one place.
  - LEANWI Website Office Hour opportunities were posted on the WVLS and IFLS website calendars and shared with webmasters from public libraries throughout WVLS, IFLS Library System (IFLS), Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS) and the Winding Rivers Library System (WRLS).
  - In addition to the continuing education opportunities promoted on the WVLS web page, over 270 "Upcoming Webinars" were featured in weekly *Monday Mentions* emails.
2. Partner with Northern Waters Library Service to provide continuing education and training opportunities to its member libraries. RESULTS:
  - Continuing education opportunities offered by WVLS as well as those offered in partnership with other systems and agencies, *Digital Byte* trainings, pre-recorded webinars and other professional development opportunities were promoted to NWLS member public library directors on a weekly basis.
  - WVLS consulted with the NWLS Director about relevant continuing education topics for 2024 and preferred dates for the 2024 spring webinar series.
  - Registration information for Ryan Down webinars was communicated monthly with NWLS member public library directors as well as how to access the archived Ryan Dowd trainings. Ryan Dowd offerings focused on homelessness in public libraries.
3. Plan all continuing education opportunities in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Certification Manual for Wisconsin Public Library Directors published by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). RESULTS:
  - All continuing education opportunities provided by WVLS met the requirements outlined in the *Certification Manual for Wisconsin Public Library Directors* for credited hours for director certification.
  - The *Certification Manual for Wisconsin Public Library Directors* was updated in October of 2024. Key changes were shared with WVLS member public library directors at that time.
4. Sponsor or co-sponsor a minimum of thirty-six (36) contact hours of continuing education opportunities annually for member library staff and trustees, as well as for library system staff and trustees. RESULTS:
  - WVLS offered 61.5 contact hours of continuing education opportunities in 2024. The list of programs WVLS sponsored or co-sponsored includes:

### **Workshops and Webinars**

Librarian's Guide to Homelessness; 3 contact hours

Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference; January 24-25; 14 contact hours

CCBC Choices: Great New Books for Children, Birth - Grade 12; April 11; 1.5 contact

hours

CCBC Choices: Intellectual Freedom Training and Statewide Update; April 11; 1.5 contact hours

We Are Already Here: The Workplace Experiences of Neurodivergent Library Workers  
Thursday, April 18; 1 contact hour

Navigating the Terrain of Change (workshop); April 25; 5 contact hours

For Managers & Supervisors: Cultivating an Inclusive Workplace for Neurodivergent Staff;  
May 7; 1 contact hour

Navigating the Terrain of Change (webinar), June 10, 1 contact hour

Ready for Reentry; Tuesday August 13, 1 contact hour

Wisconsin Trustee Training Week (webinars); August 19-23; 5 contact hours

Website Accessibility Essentials, September 12; 1 contact hour

Tech Days (webinars); Sept. 17-18, 6 contact hours

Giving Great Service (webinar), Sept. 25; 1 contact hour

Annual WVLS Youth Services Workshop; October 2; 4.5 contact hours

**WVLS Recorded Webinars (each worth 1 contact hour)**

Copyright Basics for All Library Staff

Programming: Scaffolding and Ideation

Back to Basics: Creating a Marketing Plan

**Statewide Ryan Dowd Webinars (each worth 1 contact hour)**

Human Trafficking

Autism: A Conversation with Carly Danesh-Jones

Supporting Transgender Individuals: A Conversation with Ben Greene

Migrants: A Conversation with Sheri Laigle About the Current Crisis

Understanding Addiction: A Conversation with Dr. Nicholas Christian

Unattended Children: How to Talk to Parents About Their Children's Behavior

Understanding Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Veterans

Homelessness is a Housing Problem

Social Workers in Libraries: A Conversation with Beth Wahler & Sarah Johnson

How to Coach Your Staff on De-Escalation

Brain Injury

An Interview with Esmé Weijun Wang

Mental Illness Short Course: High Risk and Low Risk Situations

5. Ensure that at least twelve (12) of the thirty-six (36) annual contact hours of continuing education are provided in-person at a location within a reasonable driving distance. For safety, pivot to virtual online continuing education opportunities as the need arises. RESULTS:
  - WVLS offered 21.5 contact hours of in-person continuing education opportunities in 2024. The list of in-person opportunities WVLS sponsored or co-sponsored included:
    - Navigating the Terrain of Change; April 25; 5 contact hours
    - CCBC workshops with IFLS and NWLS; May 13-16; 12 contact hours
    - WVLS Annual Youth Services Workshop; October 2; 4.5 contact hours
  
6. Sponsor a minimum of nine (9) contact hours annually of continuing education opportunities relating to youth and young adult services. RESULTS:



- While many of the continuing education opportunities offered in 2024 could be of benefit to those you serve youth, WVLS sponsored 18.5 contact hours specifically to this audience.
  - The January 2024 Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference featured a session on *Board Games in the Library* for 1 contact hour.
  - WVLS collaborated with IFLS and NWLS to offer two Cooperative Children’s Book Council (CCBC) presentations. Each 2-part presentation offered an overview of youth and teen titles that had been reviewed by the CCBC in 2023 followed by a mini-workshop on intellectual freedom issues. The opportunity offered 3 contact hours for each session for 12 contact hours total.
  - A statewide Ryan Dowd webinar on *Unattended Children: How to Talk to Parents About Their Children’s Behavior* offered 1 contact hour.
  - The WVLS Annual Youth Services Workshop held on October 2, 2024, at the TB Scott Free Library in Merrill offered 4.5 contact hours. The workshop featured sessions on science-based reading initiatives, using artificial intelligence tools in program planning, a puppet workshop, and brainstorming kick-off to summer 2025.
7. Offer a minimum of six (6) contact hours of technology-related continuing education opportunities sponsored or co-sponsored by LEANWI. RESULTS:
- A webinar on *Website Accessibility Essentials* held on September 12 offered 1 contact hour.
  - A Wisconsin public library system partnership continued the annual series of Tech Days webinars. Held on September 17 and 18, the series provided 6 contact hours. Topics included:
    - From Basics to Breakthroughs: AI Strategies for Library Leaders
    - Navigating Artificial Intelligence Through a Public Librarian’s Lens
    - Virtual Reality for Career Readiness
    - Trends in Emerging Tech
8. Coordinate Spring **2024** statewide webinar series. RESULTS:
- In partnership with all Wisconsin’s public library systems, two webinars were offered on April 18 and May 7. The webinars *We Are Already Here: The Workplace Experiences of Neurodivergent Library Workers* and *For Managers & Supervisors: Cultivating an Inclusive Workplace for Neurodivergent Staff* offered 2 contact hours.
9. **Upon request, coordinate, and host a Staff Development Day for Marathon County Public Library.** RESULTS:
- The Marathon County Public Library Staff Development Day was rescheduled from late 2024 to January 2025 due to a scheduling change at the county level for county-wide staff development.
10. Based on a *2019 State Continuing Education Survey* recommendation, continue to provide three pre-recorded/archived webinars throughout the year. RESULTS:
- The following pre-recorded webinars were produced, promoted, and archived by WVLS in 2024:
    - Copyright Basics for All Library Staff
    - Programming: Scaffolding and Ideation
    - Back to Basics: Creating a Marketing Plan
11. Survey member libraries to help WVLS assess continuing education and training needs. Evaluate and refine training opportunities, tools and resources offered to member library staff. RESULTS:

- The 15-member multi-type WVLS Library Advisory Committee was informally surveyed during their meetings in 2024.
  - Ideas were gathered for technology trainings during the two listening sessions WVLS held with member public library directors in 2024.
  - Feedback was also received on technology and data surveys emailed to member library colleagues in the fall.
12. Host bi-annual gathering of public library directors. RESULTS:
- The day-long retreat for public library directors will be held in 2025.
13. Schedule listening sessions for staffs from all types of libraries, and Youth Services Information Exchanges (YSIEs) for all children's and YA staff, virtually or in-person. RESULTS:
- Two in-person listening sessions between WVLS staff and member public library directors were held in 2024.
    - The spring session was held at Colby Community Library and the fall session was held at Francis L Simek Memorial Library in Medford.
    - Some topics of conversation included grants, adult programming, building maintenance, increasing foot traffic at libraries, budget advocacy and summer library programs.
  - Four Youth services Information Exchanges (YSIEs) were held in 2024.
    - In-person get-togethers were held at the Minocqua Public Library in March, and at the Granton Community Library in August.
    - Virtual get-togethers were held in January and September. The meeting in September was held jointly with youth services member library staff from the IFLS Library System.
    - Some topics of conversation included youth programming, collection management, STEAM activities, and self-directed activities.
14. Provide online "Staying Together" discussions on topics relevant to public libraries as needed. (Moved from ELECTRONIC DELIVERY OF INFORMATION section.) In 2024, plan for discussions on technology best practices, security and privacy awareness, and data. RESULTS:
- Three pilot sessions were held in the fourth quarter using a format similar to that used for website trainings. Topics covered included: Passwords and Cybersecurity, Introduction to DeepFreeze and Windows 11 Tips and Tricks.
  - Feedback gathered from member library directors individually and during the December Annual Report Workshop helped to shape the structure and content for discussions planned for 2025.
  - The new WVLS "Keeping it Together" Director discussions will be opportunities for WVLS to share news member library directors can use and for directors to connect on issues they find important.
15. Continue peer-to-peer mentoring program for new public library staff. RESULTS:
- Two public library director mentee/mentor partnerships were developed in 2024:
    - Jill Roth (new director at the Demmer Memorial Library) and Heidi O'Hare (Tomahawk Public Library)
    - Jasmine Hansen (new director at the Wabeno Public Library) and Jill Trochta (Suring Area Library)
    - Discussions relating to using Sierra, collection development, weeding, book challenges, and balancing budgets were among the top areas of need from mentees.
    - Check-ins from WVLS were done in March, June, August and December.

- During a check-in, one mentee noted, *"My mentor is absolutely wonderful. Thank you for such a great match up!"*
  - Four public library director mentee/mentor partnerships were completed in 2024:
    - Leah Giordano (new director at Marathon County Public Library) with Sarah Sugden (Brown County Library)
    - Melissa Highfill (new director at Westboro Public Library) with Carla Huston (Jean M. Thomsen Memorial Library/Stetsonville)
    - Amber Brill (new director at Greenwood Area Library) with Kay Heiting (Granton Community Library)
    - Laurie Ollhoff (new director at the T.B Scott Free Library/Merrill) with Susan Heskin (Superior Public Library)
    - In a post-program survey, one mentee noted: *"I am grateful for the mentorship program. I know that if I have a question that needs an almost-immediate answer, my mentor is here to help me. She has really made me feel more confident and supported - even going as far as to volunteer to come physically help with big projects like weeding."*
    - In a post-program survey, one mentor noted: *"she made some really great improvements over the years we worked together. I think this is a great program."*
  - One public library director's mentee/mentor partnership ended prematurely due to a director resignation.
16. Assign and distribute the 2023-2024 **and 2024-2025** state/LSTA professional development grants. RESULTS:
- Sixteen (16) scholarships were awarded in 2024 using 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 state/LSTA professional development grants:
    - One scholarship; Wisconsin Educational Media and Technology (WEMTA) Conference held March 3-5, 2024 in Wisconsin Dells.
    - Three scholarships; Public Library Association (PLA) Conference held April 3-5, 2024 in Columbus, Ohio.
    - Three scholarships; Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries (WAPL) Conference held May 1-3, 2024 in Stevens Point.
    - One scholarship; Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) National Institute held September 19-21 in Denver, Colorado.
    - Six scholarships; Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Conference held November 5-8, 2024 in Green Bay.
    - Two scholarships; Power Up: A Leadership Conference for Youth Services, held February 14-15, 2025, by the iSchool at UW-Madison (online).
17. Maintain, **promote and evaluate WVLS scholarship opportunities, including but not limited to scholarships through the WVLS Wessler Scholarship, and for the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) Conference, Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Conference, Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries (WAPL) Conference, American Library Association (ALA) Conference and Public Library Association (PLA) Conference.** (WEMTA Conference scholarship is reported under OTHER TYPES OF LIBRARIES on page 12.) RESULTS:
- A scholarship was awarded to Laurie Ollhoff (T.B. Scott Library, Merrill) to attend the Wisconsin Educational Media and Technology Association (WEMTA) Conference held March 3-5, 2024 in Wisconsin Dells.

- Scholarships were awarded to three colleagues to attend the Public Library Association (PLA) Conference held April 3-5, 2024 in Columbus, Ohio. Recipients were Allison Puestow (Tomahawk Public Library), and Chad Daley and Tara Hornbeak (Marathon County Public Library).
  - Scholarships were awarded to three colleagues to attend the Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries (WAPL) Conference held May 1-3, 2024 in Stevens Point. The recipients were Amber Brill (Greenwood Area Library), Brandon Hardin (Withee Public Library), and Katelyn Sabelko (Marathon County Public Library).
  - A scholarship was offered to one member library youth services staff - Krista Blomberg from Rib Lake Public Library - to attend the Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC) National Institute held September 19-21 in Denver, Colorado.
  - Scholarships were awarded to six colleagues to attend the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Conference held November 5-8, 2024 in Green Bay. Recipients included Alice Sturzl, trustee (Edith Evans Community Library, Laona); Andrea Bennett (T.B. Scott Free Library, Merrill); Laurie Renel-Faledas (Crandon Public Library); Leah Giordano and Murray Johnson (Marathon County Public Library); and Teresa Hall (Loyal Public Library).
  - Scholarships were awarded to two colleagues to attend Power Up: A Leadership Conference for Youth Services, held February 14-15, 2025, by the iSchool at UW-Madison (online). Recipients were Andrea Bennett (T.B. Scott Free Library, Merrill) and Sarah Moscatello (Marathon County Public Library-Mosinee Branch).
  - In 2024, Wessler and Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) Conference scholarships were not awarded.
  - Each scholarship opportunity in the WVLS Scholarship Program included a conference cost analysis and development of scholarship criteria and a scholarship application.
  - Scholarship opportunities were publicized on the WVLS website, the WVLS Facebook page, in *Monday Mentions* and the WVLS monthly newsletter.
  - Once scholarships were evaluated, applicants were notified of their status. Scholarship recipients were presented with conference registration information, lodging options, and travel guidelines.
  - A virtual meeting with scholarship recipients was held prior to each event to review scholarship guidelines, provide peer introductions, share tips to make the conference experience a success, and help with reimbursement paperwork and final post-conference reports.
18. Offer a travel grant to **area library staff and trustees to** attend the Wisconsin Library Association's Library Legislative Day. RESULTS:
- WVLS funded the participation of 10 librarians and 6 trustees from WVLS counties to attend Library Legislative Day in Madison on February 6, 2024.
  - WVLS awarded grants to ten (10) colleagues to attend the 2024 WLA Library Legislative Day in Madison. Grants were awarded to: Ada Demlow (Antigo Public Library), Heidi O'Hare (Tomahawk Public Library), James Mildbrand, trustee (Loyal Public Library), Janay Ziebell (Neillsville Public Library), Leah Giordano (Marathon County Public Library), Maxx Handel (Frances L. Simek Memorial Library, Medford), Peggy O'Connell (Minocqua Public Library), Teresa Hall (Loyal Public Library), Virginia Roberts (Rhineland District Library), and Laurie Renel-Faledas (Crandon Public Library).
19. Provide a robust and responsive menu of training opportunities, tools, and resources for member library staffs through production of *Digital Bytes*. Continue to caption all productions. RESULTS:
- Twelve (12) *Digital Bytes*, recorded and captioned digital trainings of 30 minutes or less, were produced for member colleagues as well as colleagues throughout the state, to view at their convenience. Topics included:

Sticky Notes	Book Résumés
Repurposing Canva	DPI Program Tracker
Analyzing Your Collection (Part 1)	Tips for Packing Delivery Items
Analyzing Your Collection (Part 2)	Evaluating Resources
Scheduling Emails in Gmail	Readers' Advisory
Privacy in Public Libraries	WVLS Email Guideline

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2024).**

1. Coordinate the **12<sup>th</sup>** annual Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference on **January 24-25, 2024** for public libraries in Wisconsin. RESULTS:
  - The 12th annual WWWWC offered 14 sessions with tracks in Library Management, Internal Communications, Marketing, Reference and Programming, as well as Opening and Closing Sessions.
  - Live attendance for the conference was 1,287. Attendees represented all 15 public library systems in Wisconsin, as well as libraries in Illinois, Iowa, and Indiana.
  - All WWWWC sessions were archived for later viewing.
  - A new attendee "Code of Conduct" was developed and posted to the Conference website.
2. **Upon request, coordinate, and host a combined Staff Development Day on behalf of the T.B. Scott Library (Merrill) and the Tomahawk Public Library.** RESULTS:
  - WVLS staff presented at the Staff Development day held at the T.B. Free Scott Library (Merrill) on October 16.
  - WVLS partially subsidized a presenter for the Staff Development Day held at the T.B. Scott Free Library (Merrill) on November 11.
3. Schedule and host two in-person listening sessions for staff from all types of libraries. RESULTS:
  - Two in-person listening sessions were held in 2024.
  - A spring session was held at Colby Community Library and a fall session was held at the Frances L Simek Memorial Library in Medford.
  - Some topics of conversation included the NICE project, grant opportunities, programming, building maintenance, increasing foot traffic at libraries, budget advocacy and summer library programs.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2025).**

1. Coordinate the **13<sup>th</sup>** annual Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference in January **2025** for public libraries in Wisconsin.

## Consultation Services

### **2024 ONGOING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THIS REQUIREMENT:**

1. Attend relevant meetings, webinars, and conferences, and share what is learned. RESULTS:
  - **COLAND** (Council on Library and Network Development) meetings: A WVLS staff member and trustee served on this Council in 2024. COLAND meeting agendas and minutes were included

WVLS Board of Trustees meeting packets and briefs on COLAND's activities were shared during those meetings.

- **Wisconsin Library Association's Library Development and Legislation Committee** (LD&L) meetings: Staff who served on this committee closely monitored any potential modifications to state law that could impact Wisconsin's public libraries and systems. A legislative report was routinely shared at WVLS Board of Trustees meetings and further relayed by email to the WVLS community via the WVLS all-subscribers listserv.
- **DPI State meetings with system directors and consultants:** WVLS participated in DPI-hosted meetings throughout the year and served as the conduit between member libraries and DPI by sharing state and regional news, new resources, service announcements, grant project updates, continuing education opportunities, ideas for collaboration, and more.
- Staff attended meetings of the WVLS Board, WVLS Library Advisory Committee, WVLS / V-Cat Steering Committee, V-Cat Council and associated committees, and all NICE Project Workgroups. Reports from these groups were routinely shared in WVLS Board meeting packets and with area colleagues throughout the year.
- Committees/Workgroups:
  - **Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Conference Planning Committee:** Staff served on the committee in the areas of local arrangements, programming and exhibits for the 2024 Conference held in Green Bay from November 5-8. Announcements about the event that were routinely shared with the WVLS Board of Trustees and member libraries.
  - **DPI Data Workgroup:** Staff and colleagues from public libraries and systems met with the Division for Libraries and Technology Data Analyst throughout the year to review, discuss and guide changes in the public library annual report and other statewide data gathering and reporting initiatives, and to consider professional development on relevant topics.
  - **WPLC (Wisconsin Public Library Consortium) Data Dashboard Workgroup:** WVLS was represented on this workgroup in 2024. Members met in the spring to guide the creation of a data dashboard pilot which then was developed and released for user review in the fall/winter of 2024.
  - **WPLC Tech Talk:** WVLS was represented on this workgroup of statewide system and select library technology staff, which met bi-monthly to discuss current technology issues, support and trends and to seek ways of collaborating on upcoming project.
  - **WPLC Board and Workgroups:** Along with other systems, WVLS was represented on the WPLC Board. Staff participated on the Board's Nominations Committee, as the board liaison to the WPLC Steering Committee, as a board representative on the WPLC Collection Development Committee. Staff also served on the WPLC Technology Steering Committee, Digital Archives Backup Collaboration Steering Committee and Technology Backup Collaboration Committee. WPLC-related activities were shared with the WVLS Board and announcements about Wisconsin's Digital Library and Libby were shared with the WVLS community when appropriate.
  - **Public Library System Marketing Cohort:** Initiated by WVLS several years ago, this group continued to meet in 2024. National Library Card Signup marketing materials that were inspired by this group were shared with member libraries in August and September.
  - **Statewide Bibliographic Standards Group:** Charged to create minimum standards for bibliographic records in the state, this group met frequently in 2024. Its work will continue in 2025.

- **Library Workforce Connection (LWC)** (a group of DPI staff and system representatives that grew out of the LAWDS (Libraries Activating Workforce Development Skills) LSTA grant projects from a few years ago) and **Connecting Wisconsin Libraries: Public & School Library Collaborations Committee**: Staff attended meetings of both groups and forwarded opportunities and helpful tools to member libraries as needed.
  - Staff participated in **Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP) Regional Action Teams** spanning the WVLS area to continue building relationships with educators and organizations whose mission is to support young families.
- Professional Development/Conferences Staff attended:
    - The inaugural WiLS Data Classroom in 2024, a six-session hands-on practical training course on collecting, understanding, interpreting, and communicating about library data. A presentation on the assigned final project was shared with the WVLS Board of Trustees.
    - The Governor’s Cybersecurity Summit, an annual gathering of cybersecurity professionals from business, state/local government, education, military and other areas. The summit featured keynote and breakout speakers from both national/international viewpoints and those focused specifically on technology and security in Wisconsin.
    - State and national conferences including the Disneyland Institute’s “Approach to Quality Service” Training (California); Zingtrain’s (Zingerman’s) “The Art of Giving Great Service” Seminar (Michigan); 2024 WAPL Conference (Stevens Point); Association for Library Service to Children National Institute (Colorado); 2024 WLA Conference (Green Bay); and Library Marketing and Communications Conference (Missouri). Conference Reports were shared with the WVLS Board of Trustees and with area colleagues when appropriate.
  - WVLS completed the following presentations:
    - “Giving Great Service” was presented at Hoot-Con (March), Southwest Wisconsin Library System (June) as a WVLS webinar (September); NicCon (September); T.B Scott Free Library, Merrill (October); 2024 WLA Conference (November) and Sheboygan County Libraries (December).
    - “Analyzing Your Collection: Tools to Diversify Your Children’s Collection” was presented at Hoot-Con (March) and at the 2024 WAPL Conference (May).
    - Staff participated in a WLA Annual Conference session “Between the Stacks and the Statehouse: Libraries and the State Biennial Budget, to promote Library Legislative Day participation and prepare colleagues to advocate for state library aid during the 2025-2027 state budget process.
2. Provide consultant services to WVLS libraries of all types in the areas of public library administration and governance, intellectual freedom and challenges, adult services, building/remodeling, staff development, planning/evaluation/standards, collection development, marketing and graphic design, strategic planning, and legal issues. (See also sections on Youth Services, Inclusive Services and Technology.) RESULTS:
- Consultations by system staff with member library colleagues occurred upon request, during library visits, telephone calls and virtual meetings. Some of the topics covered in 2024 included:
    - **Adult and Youth Services**: collection development, material challenges, library service policies, professional development, programming and readers’ advisory, customer service

- **Building Projects:** fundraising, technology assessment/internet speed, space use assessment, literacy spaces, shelving and furniture ideas
  - **Grant Writing:** impact statements, continuing education opportunities
  - **Marketing:** public speaking and presentations, Canva, and social media trends, continuing education webinars
  - **Public Library Administration:** advocacy (municipal, county), board appointment requirements, budgeting and financial reporting, community partnerships, county funding laws, funding of libraries (municipal and county), ethics (library staff and trustees), HR matters (exempt employee status, staff/director evaluations, hiring practices), Wisconsin Open Meetings law, policies and bylaws, organization models for public libraries, public library laws, public library privacy matters, public library board practices, public library relationships with municipality and county, public records requests, records retention, relationships between public library staff and trustees, and strategic planning.
  - **Websites:** accessibility, design, maintenance, domain services, functionality, plugins, security
3. Enhance consultation services in the areas of **data**, strategic planning and library building, remodeling, layout and design projects. RESULTS:
- Additional tables and charts were created to include in the *2023 System Information and Public Library Statistics* booklet, including: additional charts for 2019-2023 Circulation to Other WVLS Counties, 2004-2023 Local/County Income - 20 Year Funding Patterns, 2004-2023 Local/County Income - Adjusted for Inflation, 2019-2023 Act 420 Payments, 2023 Library Metrics: Collection, Circulation, Income and Expenditures, FTE & Hours.
  - Staff consulted with the TB Scott Free Library to provide a statistical interpretation and analysis on a community survey for a report shared with the board and to support its strategic planning activities.
  - Charts and related analysis were developed on Antigo Public Library funding and performance specific to the library's annual budget appropriation adjusted for inflation over the past 20 years.
  - County-specific infographics were provided to member libraries using statistics from the annual report, *2023 System Information and Public Library Statistics* booklet, and 2023 WVLS Staff Report Appendices. Member libraries used these tools to advocate for budget allocations at local and county level.
  - WVLS launched "Data Dashboard Dissections," a method to explore and test a statewide data dashboard pilot via bite-sized activities. Offered through a partnership between WPLC, WiLS and the WI Department of Public Instruction, the dashboard pilot ran from September – December 2024.
4. Provide grant-writing guidance and support. RESULTS:
- Support and assistance were provided to Owen Public Library on the Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities" grant application process as well as grant implementation.
  - Support and assistance were provided to Rhinelander District Library on the Flexible Facilities Grant application.
  - Member libraries were notified of the following 2024 grant opportunities.
    - AARP Livable Communities Challenge Grant
    - ALA Building Library Capacity Grant
    - ARSL Conference Scholarships
    - Children's Book Project Program Grants



Grant for Life Enhancing Programs for People Living with Dementia  
 Flexible Facilities  
 Jerry Kline Community Impact Grant  
 Maureen Hayes Author/Illustrator Visit Award  
 Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities  
 Pilcrow Foundation  
 PLA Digital Literacy Workshop Incentive  
 Snapdragon  
 Storywalks Initiatives  
 United for Libraries and Penguin Random House  
 Wisconsin Humanities Grant  
 WiLS Ideas to Action Grant  
 WISL Scholarships for WLA Conference  
 WLAFL Diversity Scholarship  
 WLAFL George Bauer Memorial Fund Continuing Education Scholarship  
 WLAFL Gloria Hoegh Memorial Fund Education for Rural Librarians Scholarship  
 WLAFL Library Education Scholarship  
 WLAFL Sally Davis Scholarship  
 WVLS 2024 ALSC National Institute  
 WVLS V-Cat 2024 Back in Circulation Again Conference  
 WLAFL Vida Cummins Stanton Scholarship  
 WVLS 2024 Summer Library Program Performer Grant  
 WVLS 2024 Summer Math Adventure Grant  
 WVLS 2024 Library Legislative Day Scholarship  
 WVLS 2024 WLA Conference Scholarship  
 WVLS 2024 WAPL Conference Scholarship  
 WVLS 2024 PLA Conference Scholarship  
 WVLS 2024 WEMTA Conference Scholarship  
 Youth Literacy Grant from Dollar General  
 2025 Building Equity Based Summers (BEBS) Cohort  
 2025 Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy (CLEL) Mini-Grant

5. Monitor public library directors' progress toward certification and recertification. Provide updates to each director as needed. RESULTS:
  - Certification requirements were shared with new directors as part of the WVLS Orientation for New Directors program.
  - Member public library directors were reminded to submit requisite annual paperwork to the system via an email sent to each of them in December.
  - Consultation was provided to member public library directors and staff regarding certification requirements and requisite paperwork via phone consultation or email as necessary throughout the year.
6. Assist member libraries in the process of filing annual reports. RESULTS:
  - WVLS hosted a 2024 Annual Report Workshop in December 2023. The morning session, offered virtually and in-person, featured a section-by section review and walkthrough of the 2023 public library annual report by the WVLS Annual Report Team and DLT's State Data Coordinator, while the afternoon session offered in-person support on annual report issues important to participants. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation and links to the workshop recording and DPI tools were shared with member libraries shortly after the workshop.

- During the first few weeks in January, public library data was aggregated by the WVLS Annual Report Team and submitted to DPI to download into each member library's online annual report form.
  - The WVLS Annual Report Team recorded data and financial information into a worksheet for each library to reference. making the completion of the annual report process easier for those working on it at the local library level. The information shared was used to answer annual report questions in the areas of library holdings, circulation, library card holders, interlibrary loan activity, use of electronic collections, revenue and expenditures, wireless usage, and resident/nonresident circulations.
  - Member libraries were notified of changes to the 2023 annual report via the December 2023 workshop and through an email sent to them in mid-January.
  - Libraries were routinely encouraged to email/call the WVLS Annual Report Team whenever help was needed.
  - Annual reports from all 25 WVLS member public libraries reached the WI Department of Public Instruction by the statutory deadline.
  - Libraries that did not maintain annual counts for reference transactions, library visits and use of public computers, were reminded to gather statistics during one or more "tally" weeks. Reminders were included in the September *WVLS Newsletter* and October 14 edition of *Monday Mentions*.
  - WVLS hosted a 2024 Annual Report Workshop on December 12. The agenda was similar to the 2023 Annual Report Workshop that WVLS provided in December 2023.
7. Meet with new and current directors in the system to orient them to system services and to provide an overview of library services in Wisconsin. RESULTS:
- Administrative orientations were provided for three new library directors: Jasmine Hansen (Wabeno Public Library), Jill Roth (Edward U Demmer Memorial Library) and Toni Edge (Antigo Public Library).
  - A new LEANWI orientation document and updated webpage ([leanwi.org/about](http://leanwi.org/about)) were developed and shared with them as part of the technology and LEANWI orientation.
  - Public library technology staff received in-person technology orientation/training and support during field visits to the remaining 2 of the 25 member libraries that did not receive visits in 2023.
  - New public library directors were paired with mentors. In 2024, mentors were paired with Jill Roth (Demmer Memorial Library) and Heidi O'Hare (Tomahawk Public Library; Jasmine Hansen (Wabeno Public Library) and Jill Trochta (Suring Area Library) Staff conducted quarterly check-ins with each library director's mentor.
  - A New Public Library Director Boot Camp was not hosted by the Library Services Team in 2024. The next in-person New Directors Training Camp will be held in spring 2025.
8. Encourage orientation and ongoing training for area library board members. RESULTS:
- During orientations with new directors, and during consultations with area library staff and trustees, WVLS encouraged ongoing continuing education of library board members, and often suggested that a review of Trustee Essentials be on library board meeting agendas.
  - Area library board members were invited to participate in the 2024 WLA Library Legislative Day and to attend the 2024 annual Conference in Green Bay.
  - Webinars of interest to library board members were frequently announced in the weekly *Monday Mentions*.

9. Ensure appropriate library system staff meet with newly hired key library staff to provide an orientation on system services related to their positions. RESULTS:
- Orientations on continuing education, WVLS communications, marketing resources, public library certification public library consultant services and delivery were provided to new library directors.
  - Technology orientations were provided to new directors/interim directors that highlighted technology systems support relating to use of DeepFreeze public computer lockdown software, public computer best practices, particularly in the area of patron privacy, and functions of Pharos timing software (where applicable) and offered a general overview of library technology.
  - V-Cat Consortium orientations and specialized trainings were offered for new library directors, circulation leads, and catalogers. Orientations were provided for other staff as requested.
10. Facilitate participation of member library staff, trustees, and supporters in local, regional, and statewide advancement events, e.g., candidate forums, WLA Library Legislative Day. RESULTS:
- Staff was actively involved in Library Legislative day planning and registration management.
  - Schedules and briefing materials for WVLS delegation to 2024 Library Legislative Day were coordinated.
  - Five WVLS trustees, one local library trustee, library staff from ten WVLS member libraries, and four WVLS staff attended meetings with all eleven WVLS area legislators. Staff provided a virtual briefing session for WVLS attendees as well as attendees from neighboring systems that shared WVLS area legislators.
  - Member libraries were kept informed about public listening sessions held by state legislators at local venues, and other advocacy opportunities. Legislators regularly contacted WVLS libraries when looking for listening session venues.
  - The ongoing relationship building with WVLS area legislators was maintained as staff kept member libraries informed of redistricting changes to legislative district boundaries.
  - Following the fall general election, WVLS staff updated a tool listing legislators, legislative districts and libraries located in each district for all 15 Wisconsin library systems.
  - Staff participated in a WLA Annual Conference panel promoting Library Legislative Day participation and preparation to advocate for state library aid during the 2025-2027 state budget process.
11. Maintain WVLS/public library system information packets to share with new member public and county library board members and with new legislators in the WVLS service area. RESULTS:
- A system information packet that includes such documents as a system map, system fact sheet, system organizational chart, system plan, Partners for Excellence document, and statistics booklet are available to library directors upon request when conducting orientations with new trustees and welcoming new members to county library boards. Assist libraries in promoting their value to their communities. RESULTS:
  - Assistance was provided to Clark County Libraries in designing and promoting their passport programing during the summer of 2024. The program was designed to encourage community members to visit each of the 10 libraries in Clark County.
  - WVLS provided web links for member libraries to a state-wide "Get Your Library Card" website, managed by the Bridges Library System.
  - In conjunction with Library Card Sign-Up Month, WVLS offered 3,150 "I Love My Wisconsin Library" high-quality, vinyl, die-cut stickers to member library locations to be placed on water bottles, laptops, phone cases and more. All WVLS member library locations requested stickers.
  - Additional tables and charts were created to include in the *2023 System Information and Public Library Statistics* booklet, including: additional charts for 2019-2023 Circulation to Other WVLS

Counties, 2004-2023 Local/County Income - 20 Year Funding Patterns, 2004-2023 Local/County Income - Adjusted for Inflation, 2019-2023 Act 420 Payments, 2023 Library Metrics: Collection, Circulation, Income and Expenditures, FTE & Hours.

- Staff consulted with the TB Scott Free Library (Merrill) to provide statistical interpretation and analysis in a report on a community survey for the board's strategic planning activities.
- Charts and analysis related to Antigo Public Library funding and performance were created that shared the annual budget appropriation adjusted for inflation over the previous 20 years.
- County-specific infographic templates for seven counties (two versions for five counties, one version includes explanation of how the county funding formula works) were developed and shared with member libraries using statistics from the annual report, *2023 System Information and Public Library Statistics* booklet, and 2023 WVLS Staff Report Appendices. Libraries customized these templates to best communicate their stories to their stakeholders and for advocating for budget allocations at the local and county level.

12. Assist member libraries in working for and securing local and county funding. RESULTS:

- Advocacy assistance was provided through periodic WVLS updates, as well as sharing legislative updates and advocacy initiatives with members of both the Oneida County Library Board and Forest County Library Board.
- Staff consulted with member library directors and county library boards on matters regarding ongoing primary funding support from local sources, as well as initiatives to secure additional county funding.
- As a member of WLA Library Development & Legislation Committee, WVLS staff participated in ongoing discussions regarding intellectual freedom, library standards, local funding, cross-border payments, library board appointments and other issues of interest to librarians statewide, gaining helpful insights for WVLS member library concerns.
- County-specific infographic templates for seven counties (two versions for five counties, one version includes explanation of how the county funding formula works) were developed and shared with member libraries using statistics from the annual report, *2023 System Information and Public Library Statistics* booklet, and 2023 WVLS Staff Report Appendices. Libraries customized these templates to best communicate their stories to their stakeholders and for advocating for budget allocations at the local and county level.
- Staff responded to questions about county library funding and provided one-on-one consulting as appropriate on specific concerns about local and county budget negotiations.
- Staff participated in the Oneida County Budget Hearing to speak to specific questions regarding the history of Oneida County library funding.

13. Facilitate individual county library service planning processes when requested. RESULTS:

- Staff liaison consultation services were made available to county library boards upon request, as well as to individual library directors.

14. Support member library staff and trustee advocacy efforts at all levels – local, county and state.

RESULTS:

- Staff supported library staff and trustee members of local and county library boards in WVLS member counties by responding to requests for WVLS activity reports, legislative updates, Chapter 43 clarification, and consultant presence as request.
- WVLS offered stipends for area library staff and trustees to participate in WLA's Library Legislative Day in Madison on February 6, 2024.
- The following webinars were shared in 2024 via *Monday Mentions*:

- Cultivating Generative Conversations with Nonprofit Boards
  - Library Boards and Intellectual Freedom: How to Combat Censorship with Your Library Trustees
  - Track Donor Engagement and Boost Your Fundraising Efforts
  - How to Cultivate and Manage Donors Remotely
  - How to Get Your Board to Fundraise
  - Managing Effective Library Boards
  - Introduction to Corporate Giving
15. Encourage members of the WVLS library community to develop a network of citizen library supporters who can be strategically deployed as needed. RESULTS:
- Librarians and library supporters from WVLS counties who did not attend WLA’s Library Legislative Day were encouraged to engage in alternative relationship building activities demonstrating library value including sharing of program and services flyers illustrating adaptability to workforce development, broadband access and economic challenges.
  - Member libraries hosted legislator “office hours” and listening sessions.
  - Relationship building with citizen supporters and elected officials at the local and state level was an ongoing effort encouraged and assisted by WVLS staff at every opportunity. Particular attention to policies and public communications regarding collection development and materials reconsideration policies and procedures continued to be a priority in 2024.
16. Advocate on the state level for system and public library initiatives, as well as other items included in the Wisconsin Library Association’s legislative agenda of significance to the entire library community. RESULTS:
- WVLS staff provided information about and encouraged relationship building with members of the Wisconsin Legislature whose districts include portions of WVLS counties, as well as members of the Wisconsin congressional delegation.
17. Assist member libraries in providing timely reference assistance to those seeking voter registration and election participation information. RESULTS:
- Voter registration and election participation information for member libraries was featured in *Monday Mentions*.
  - Nonpartisan updates from WVLS staff to member libraries provided information to assist reference inquiries regarding 2024 voter registration, as well as spring election and fall general election participation information helpful to voters.
18. Inform member library staff, trustees, and supporters of pending legislation on the state and national levels that may affect libraries and explain how the proposed legislation might affect system and local library service. RESULTS:
- State and congressional bills having potential impact on libraries of all types were monitored.
  - Staff managed legislative updates and action requests for Federal issues including Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funding and related American Library Association concerns.
  - Legislative updates were provided for meetings of the Forest County and Oneida County library boards, and WVLS Board of Trustees meetings.
19. Network with a variety of state, regional and local government agencies on behalf of member libraries. RESULTS:
- Staff served as legislative liaison to the Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) Advisory Board.

- Staff served on the WI Humanities Board Government Relations Committee, pursuing funding for and developing “Community Powered” initiatives pairing young humanities scholars with their hometown librarians.
20. Represent the interests of member libraries to the Legislature and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in the development of statewide library policy or services. RESULTS:
- Staff served on WLA’s Library Development & Legislation Committee (LD&L) and routinely represented WVLS interests to both legislators and the DPI Division for Libraries and Technology, as well as learning about developments elsewhere in the state of interest to WVLS libraries.
  - Through LD&L involvement, staff monitored Wisconsin Educational Media & Technology Association (WEMTA) legislative initiatives and awareness of Common School Fund issues.
  - A WVLS trustee and a staff member were among those appointed by the Governor to serve on the Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND).
21. Cooperate with other agencies or organizations for the benefit of member libraries and area residents. Examples in 2022 include, regional Aging and Disability Resource Centers, CESAs, WI Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP)/regions, Wisconsin Humanities and Workforce Development Boards (WBD)/regions. RESULTS:
- WVLS continued to liaison with the League of Women Voters of the Northwoods (LWVNOW) and to check for periodic updates to voter registration tools developed by LWVNOW and distributed to all WVLS library locations. Collaborative LWVNOW support for library voter registration assistance was ongoing.
  - A WVLS staff member appointed by the Governor to the Wisconsin Humanities Board serves as a resource consultant for statewide collaborative humanities initiatives with public libraries and encourages WI Humanities to disseminate information through library systems.
  - Staff participated in WVLS-area Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP) Regional Action Teams.
  - The Reading League of Wisconsin presented a session at the annual youth services workshop.
22. Support member libraries’ use of the Beanstack web platform and smart device application. RESULTS:
- Support for Beanstack was provided to member libraries upon request.
  - In early 2024, DPI announced the statewide Beanstack contract would end on April 30, 2025.
23. Continue to maintain lists of WVLS area adult services speakers, performers, and programs to encourage the exchange of ideas, resource sharing, and collaborative booking. RESULTS:
- WVLS continued to maintain and enhance three shared spreadsheets: Youth Performer Booking, StoryWalk Exchange, and Adult Performer/Program Idea. These spreadsheets were maintained on a monthly basis, so information was kept current. Member library staff were reminded through various channels to add ideas to the sheets and to consult the sheets for ideas.
  - Another collaborative spreadsheet, a “Book Club Calendar” spreadsheet, was developed in 2024 at the request of member libraries. This resource allows member libraries to share the titles and dates of their upcoming book clubs. This allows libraries to plan their book clubs with less competition of titles, ensuring adequate copies of the selected title are available for each book club.

## MARKETING

24. Attend/Host meetings of the Public Library System marketing cohort to discuss opportunities for collaboration and cooperation. RESULTS:
- WVLS attended three meetings of the public library system marketing cohort in 2024. This year's meetings were hosted by the Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS). They were held on February 27, July 11, and December 6.
25. Upon request, consult with colleagues on presentation and public speaking skills. RESULTS:
- Consultations were provided on presentations for the Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference on January 24-25, 2024.
  - A webinar was provided for breakout session presenters for the WLA Conference on "Top Tips for Presentations." One-on-one consultation was also provided to presenters upon request.
26. Develop tools that can be tailored by local libraries as needed, making it easier to create awareness of their accomplishments, needs, or concerns, e.g., press releases, sample letters to officials, videos, infographics, social media templates, advocacy toolkits. RESULTS:
- A *Digital Byte* on "Repurposing Canva" was created to showcase how to recreate Canva templates for library marketing activities.
  - County-specific infographic templates for seven counties (two versions for five counties, one version includes explanation of how the county funding formula works) were developed and shared with member libraries using statistics from the annual report, *2023 System Information and Public Library Statistics* booklet, and 2023 WVLS Staff Report Appendices. Libraries customized these templates to best communicate their stories to their stakeholders and for advocating for budget allocations at local and county levels.
  - A Clark County Passport webpage was created to promote the Clark County passport program at 10 libraries and posted on library websites summer of 2024.
  - How to use AI to assist with writing for websites was demonstrated via a live and recorded training.
27. **Purchase marketing resources for library-related events such as Library Card Sign-Up Month. Distribute resources to member libraries.** RESULTS:
- In conjunction with Library Card Sign-Up Month, WVLS offered 3,150 "I Love My Wisconsin Library" high-quality, vinyl, die-cut stickers to all member library locations to be placed on water bottles, laptops, phone cases and more.
  - In conjunction with the launch of *Gale Presents:Udemy*, WVLS purchased stickers, bookmarks and flyers for member libraries who completed a survey on promotional materials.
28. Assist member libraries to identify, implement, document, and publicize programs and services that (1) expand technology services for patrons with limited broadband access, (2) enhance workforce development assistance, and (3) provide a gateway to learning in all stages of life. RESULTS:
- LEANWI Website Service created a centrally managed online resource page that improves discoverability of local, system, and statewide/national online resources and databases.
  - Training was offered for library website managers on use of this page on individual library websites. Promoting its use among library staff and public was encouraged.
  - Tracked monthly "click counts" of resources accessed through the page from launch date in August are available at <https://training.librarieswin.org/resources/online-resources-click-totals/>

29. Provide website layout and design consultation services to LEANWI member libraries upon request. Continue to evaluate and refine curriculum and processes while onboarding interested NWLS member libraries. **Evaluate curriculum and processes to enhance training experiences for novice and advanced website staff.** RESULTS:

- Two members of the LEANWI team consulted with many libraries with general advice and enhancements for their websites on a weekly basis with response times typically within a 24-hour timeframe.
- Total website rebuilds were completed for 10 libraries throughout WVLS, Winding Rivers Library System (WRLS), IFLS Library System and Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS).
- Ongoing rebuild consultations at year-end were underway for another 2 library websites.
- Management and consultation services were implemented for 26 WRLS member library websites hosted on a separate hosting service. The LEANWI Website team worked systematically with WRLS staff and individual libraries to address backend website revisions and staff training on website management.
- WRLS underwent an ILS migration to Polaris in 2024. WRLS also purchased "Vega Programs" for their ILS member libraries which integrates online calendars and booking tools into the discovery layer and ILS functions. LEANWI Website Services staff worked with WRLS libraries using Vega Programs to add calendar and room booking links as appropriate to their websites.
- Four online trainings were provided each month for libraries using the LEANWI website services. Trainings featured a variety of website topics depending on interest and relevance. Two of the monthly trainings were "drop in" style in which offered a review of on-demand topics and assistance to library staff on specific projects. Two of the monthly trainings offered pre-announced topics with formal learning objectives that were also recorded and posted for later viewing. Total attendance at 48 trainings offered in 2024 was 404.
- Six of the trainings offered in 2024 covered topics specifically addressed ADA website accessibility, two of which were sanctioned by the WI Department of Public Instruction to count as technology continuing education hours for public library director certification.
- Small group and 1-on-1 new website manager orientation and individual library consultation was offered as requested/needed. Nineteen general consulting/orientation training sessions were provided to 31 library staff in 2024.
- The Website Accessibility Learning Group that was formed in 2023 continued to meet monthly throughout 2024. The group includes website managers from systems and public libraries who have a special interest in learning about and implementing design tools for websites that maximize accessibility mainly for those with low/no vision. The main charge/goal of this group is to establish best practices for website design and management so they can be interpreted by those who don't have a usual visual interaction with a website. Shared learning from this group has become the basis for website training topics presented to the membership at large and for learning about possible services to enhance website accessibility broadly across library websites.
- Website management efficiencies in 2024:
  - Deployed a centralized Online Resources page that is updated in one location by LEANWI website staff and displayed on library websites via an iframe to streamline management of 120 library websites. The same model is being explored for Workforce Development links and possibly IRS tax documents.
  - Purchased a large package of Divi plugins with a one-time, unlimited use license to improve appearance and functionality of websites.
  - Purchased Pro license to online calendar that can be deployed on websites.



- Room booking and event ticketing plugins specifically designed to meet the needs of libraries (and to be shared at no cost to member libraries) are under development by LEANWI website staff. Rollout is anticipated in early 2025.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2024).**

1. Continue evaluation of WVLS orientation for new public library directors (described under no. 7 above). RESULTS:
  - A new LEANWI orientation document and updated webpage ([leanwi.org/about](http://leanwi.org/about)) was developed in 2024 to improve the technology services and LEANWI orientation.
  - A video describing the services and support offered through LEANWI was created and posted to the WVLS YouTube channel. The video will be included in the packet of resources shared with new public library directors starting in 2025.
2. **As part of the WVLS orientation for new trustees and public library directors and staff, create a video that describes the services and support offered through LEANWI.** RESULTS:
  - A video describing the services and support offered through LEANWI was created and posted to the WVLS YouTube channel in late 2024.
3. **Pilot WVLS Marketing Grant program for member libraries to develop/enhance a marketing plan or campaign.** RESULTS:
  - In 2024, WVLS offered a Marketing Support Grant, a pilot project and opportunity for member libraries to evaluate their library's marketing efforts, and to work toward a library marketing plan or marketing campaign.
  - Participating libraries received between \$250-\$500 from WVLS to support their marketing plan or campaign. The marketing campaigns wrapped up in early October and a report was shared with the WVLS Board of Trustees in November.
  - Participants included Lorelee Petersen, Owen Public Library; Laurie Ollhoff and Chris Sprague, T.B. Scott Free Library (Merrill); and Brandon Hardin, Withee Public Library.
4. **Attend the national Library Marketing and Communications Conference and share highlights with WVLS staff, member libraries and Public Library System Marketing Cohort.** RESULTS:
  - The WVLS Education Consultant attended the Library Marketing and Communications Conference held November 13-14 in St. Louis, Missouri. Highlights of the conference were shared with staff, member libraries and the Public Library System Marketing Cohort in a post-conference report.
5. Secure funding for a **2024-2025** WVLS Innovation Grant for a member library to beta test the acquisition and installation of an outdoor Pickup Locker System. RESULTS:
  - While funding was available in the WVLS Special Projects Account for this purpose, this newer trend hasn't generated enough interest across the state for WVLS to warrant further exploration. Feedback from other libraries across the state gathered by WRLS indicated mixed levels of satisfaction on this method of providing library users with the opportunity to pick up materials anytime throughout the day.
  - WVLS will continue to monitor this development in 2025.

6. **Provide area public library directors, as well as municipal and county clerks with data to complete annual processes for county reimbursements to home county libraries and libraries in adjacent counties.** RESULTS:
  - WVLS distributed resources to member libraries that detailed their service to in-county and adjacent county nonresidents. Information included how to calculate the cost/circulation, the timeline for requesting and receiving reimbursements as well as spreadsheets that provided the amounts libraries could request for reimbursement, and a sample invoice.
7. **Offer to complete county funding invoices and submit to county clerks on behalf of public library directors.** RESULTS:
  - WVLS completed county funding invoices for six member libraries and submitted them to county clerks prior to the July 1 deadline.
8. **Provide libraries with LEANWI website support to enhance website usability and accessibility.** RESULTS:
  - Monthly meetings of an accessibility group made up of LEANWI staff and interested website managers were held to discuss ways to enable library websites to be more accessible.
  - With the announcement of new federal ADA (American Disabilities Act) compliance rules that need to be implemented by most of our libraries in 2026, LEANWI formulated a strategy for enabling websites to comply with the federal accessibility laws.
  - Four online trainings, with documentation and video recordings, were provided monthly on a variety of website topics. Two of these monthly trainings were “drop in” style where library staff can ask for assistance with specific projects or for an on-demand review of a topic. Six of the trainings topics specifically addressed ADA website accessibility, two of which were sanctioned by the WI Department of Public Instruction to count as technology continuing education hours for public library director certification.
  - Training documentation and videos were maintained at [trainings.librarieswin.org](https://trainings.librarieswin.org) and via a YouTube playlist of training videos. At the end of 2024, 35 documents (22 published in 2024) and 95 videos (27 published in 2024) were archived.
9. **Use information from DPI’s [March 2023 Data Landscape Report](#) to assess data driven decision making competencies among WVLS member library staff and stakeholders. Formulate training objectives and develop training curricula as appropriate.** RESULTS:
  - Staff completed the inaugural WiLS Data Classroom in 2024, a six-session hands-on practical training course on collecting, understanding, interpreting, and communicating about library data. She used this opportunity to interact with library directors from other systems to test materials for future trainings. A report on the project completed for the WiLS Data Classroom was shared with the WVLS Board of Trustees in November.
  - WVLS was represented on the statewide Data Dashboard development team which resulted in the pilot of a statewide Data Dashboard in the fall/winter of 2024. WVLS created four “Data Dissection” activities to walk library directors and staff through use of the pilot dashboard and provided feedback to WPLC towards future development of this initiative in 2025.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2025).**

1. Continue to implement and refine orientation process for new member library directors in conjunction with WVLS mentoring program, and with new trustees on library and county library boards.
2. Continue administration of the **2024-2025** WVLS Innovation Grant. (Described in no. 5 above.)

## DELIVERY

*(FM). Wis. Stats. 43.24(2)(fm) Electronic delivery of information and physical delivery of library materials to participating libraries.*

### Electronic Delivery of Information

#### 2024 ONGOING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THIS REQUIREMENT:

1. Produce/distribute annual statistical report and listing of system membership benefits. RESULTS:
  - The *2023 System Information and Public Library Statistics* booklet was published in spring 2024. Printed booklets were distributed to member library directors, library board Presidents, county library board Chairs, the WVLS Board of Trustees, municipal and county clerks, and area legislators. It is available for download on the WVLS.org website.
  - This edition kept formatting, layout and design revisions introduced in 2022 and added several new charts and key measures in the areas of county funding, municipal/county inflation trends, and library per capita metrics.
  - Infographics summarizing the annual report statistics in the booklet were produced for WVLS member libraries and counties.
  
2. Use a communications and marketing calendar to guide and coordinate communications methods to/from member library staff and trustees. RESULTS:
  - WVLS used a marketing calendar to guide communications throughout the year.
  - Information on system, state, and national news was shared with member colleagues using the following tools:
    - *Monday Mentions*: a weekly email sent every Monday at 12 p.m. with upcoming news and events
    - WVLS Facebook Page and WVLS YSIE (Youth Services Information Exchange) Facebook Page to encourage the exchange of ideas and resources
    - *Digital Lites*: bi-monthly blog posts on news and events relevant to member library staff and trustees
    - *WVLS Newsletter*: a digital newsletter sent to subscribers during the first week of the month featuring news from member public libraries and system announcements
    - WVLS Email Lists: Information shared among a targeted audience
    - WVLS Website
  
3. Publish monthly newsletter and encourage member libraries to contribute content. RESULTS:
  - A WVLS newsletter was published within the first seven days of each month in 2024.
  - Newsletter topics included system announcements, new staff hires, features on member libraries' services and programs, state news and WVLS scholarships.
  - The newsletter was emailed to area colleagues via MailChimp; posted on the WVLS website; promoted in *Monday Mentions* and on the WVLS Facebook page; and offered via WVLS *Digital Lites* blog posts.
  - The newsletter was shared with Wisconsin's public library community via the state's WISPUBLIB email list.

- The newsletter averaged a 43.8% open rate on MailChimp. Compared to the average email open rate on MailChimp of 35% in 2024, this penetration was a success.
  - Member libraries were encouraged every month to contribute content for the WVLS newsletter. In 2024, articles were featured from 9 WVLS member libraries, representing five counties in the WVLS service area.
  - Four articles were featured from libraries outside of WVLS – two were from Nicolet Federated Library System libraries, one from a library in the South Central Library System, and one from the IFLS Library System.
4. Publish contributions to the WVLS blog *Digital Lites* **twice a month**. RESULTS:
- There were 45 posts to the WVLS blog, *Digital Lites*, in 2024.
  - Topics for the blog ranged from announcements for upcoming continuing education and conference opportunities, to promotions for scholarships and grants, to features on library trends, WVLS staff employment opportunities, and inclusive services updates.
5. Create and share ready-made promotional templates that promote library services and programs. RESULTS:
- To help promote Library Card Sign-Up Month in September and beyond, vinyl, die-cut “I Love My Wisconsin Library” stickers were created and shared with libraries to hand out to new and existing library patrons, board members and other community leaders. WVLS distributed over 3,150 stickers to 35 library locations.
  - The Library Card Sign-Up Month toolkit from the American Library Association was promoted in *Monday Mentions* as well as the *WVLS Monthly Newsletter*.
  - Staff assisted member libraries with their Library Card Sign-Up Month marketing efforts. In addition to website support, staff offered guidance with writing promotional pieces.
  - WVLS provided web links for member libraries to a state-wide “Get Your Library Card” website, managed by the Bridges Library System.
6. Enhance the WVLS website, and management/hosting strategy for internal and LEANWI member library use. **Continue working with LEANWI partners to access current hosting practices and strategies for all websites**. RESULTS:
- Three additional library websites were added to the LEANWI hosting platform.
  - Backend procedures were improved to include regular weekly backups proven to be recoverable. Also, a system for keeping WordPress, themes and plugins up to date was implemented such that the task is not overly onerous and can be completed in a reasonable amount of time.
  - LEANWI hosting mechanisms were continuously evaluated. Upgrades were completed and new policies created.
7. Continue to **assess WVLS website for content, design/content presentation, and accessibility**. RESULTS:
- Revisions and updates to the format and layout of information presented on the WVLS website to address key accessibility concerns with the WVLS website were ongoing. Improvements in 2024 included:
    - applied appropriate contrast of colors, font size, headings organization, and added an accessibility toolbar to improve website accessibility;
    - reorganized the backend added a site map to offer improved navigation to information;
    - organized the media library and worked to remove out-of-date content;
    - new and revised content was added as appropriate.

8. **Maintain updated** web-based *Directory of Libraries and Librarians on WVLS website*. RESULTS:
  - The Public Library and V-Cat Library Staff Directories on the WVLS website were updated when necessary.
  - School library directory was redesigned to group schools by county to improve navigation.
  - Addresses, hours, and contacts were also updated as WVLS was made aware of changes.
9. Enhance professional development section on the WVLS website to include changes to mentorship and new director orientation processes. RESULTS:
  - The Continuing Education and Director Certification pages were updated throughout the year.
  - The Mentorship Program page listed the new mentor/mentee partnerships for 2024.
10. Maintain list of web-based continuing education programs to help area public library directors maintain their state-required certification. RESULTS:
  - Recordings, presentation slides, and activity reports for all WVLS webinars in 2024 were shared to the Continuing Education webpage for area colleagues and trustees to reference.
  - Contact hours for public library certification were included with every announcement of WVLS sponsored workshops or webinars.
  - In the event that a WVLS member librarian participated in a webinar or workshop outside of Wisconsin, WVLS staff determined contact hours for those events.
11. Create web bibliographies and tools on a variety of topics useful to WVLS member library staff and trustees on the WVLS web site. RESULTS:
  - Multiple lists were created in Aspen that focused on books that support the science of reading, the new literacy initiative in the public schools.
12. Update resource packets for public library directors and WVLS trustees located on the WVLS website. RESULTS:
  - Orientation materials and links to resources for new public library directors and WVLS trustees were evaluated, revised and updated throughout the year.
13. Share timely reminders and system, statewide and national library news via “Monday Mentions” email to the WVLS all-subscribers list. RESULTS:
  - Fifty-one *Monday Mentions* emails were drafted and sent to subscribers in 2024.
  - *Monday Mentions* emails were sent to WVLS staff and Board of Trustees, staff at member libraries, and K-12 librarians in the WVLS area.
  - Regular features included: WVLS service announcements and V-Cat project updates, new WVLS staff hires, DPI news, alerts for newsletters, scholarships and grant opportunities, web trainings, continuing education opportunities and *Digital Bytes*.
  - *Monday Mentions* continued to be archived on the WVLS website.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2024).**

1. **Continue to improve the WVLS Statistics booklet to make it more accessible and useful for member libraries and stakeholders by using examples from the DPI [March 2023 Data Landscape Report](#), information gathered from DPI Data Workgroup meetings,**

**collaboration with other library partner services such as WiLS, and general professional development resources.** RESULTS:

- The *2023 System Information and Public Library Statistics* booklet was published in spring 2024. Printed booklets were distributed to member library directors, library board Presidents, county library board Chairs, the WVLS Board of Trustees, municipal and county clerks, and area legislators. It is available for download on the WVLS.org website.
- This edition kept formatting, layout and design revisions introduced in 2023 and added several new charts and key measures in the areas of county funding, municipal/county inflation trends, and library per capita metrics.
- Infographics summarizing annual report statistics in the booklet were produced for WVLS member libraries and counties.
- Staff completed the inaugural WiLS Data Classroom in 2024, a six-session hands-on practical training course on collecting, understanding, interpreting, and communicating about library data. Staff used this opportunity to interact with library directors from other systems to test materials for future trainings. A report on the completed WiLS Data Classroom assignment was presented to the WVLS Board of Trustees in November.
- WVLS was represented on the statewide Data Dashboard development team which resulted in the pilot of a statewide Data Dashboard in the fall/winter of 2024. WVLS created four "Data Dissection" activities to walk library directors and staff through use of the pilot dashboard and provided feedback to WPLC towards future development of this initiative in 2025.
- Staff was a member of the DPI Data workgroup that met with the Division for Libraries and Technology Data Analyst throughout the year to review, discuss and guide changes in the public library annual report and other statewide data gathering and reporting initiatives, and to consider professional development on relevant topics.

2. Continue to **update** Sierra Training website page to improve navigation, searchability **and training materials.** RESULTS:

- The V-Cat Training webpage was routinely updated to share information on the V-Cat Council and as committees pursued ILS projects and improved process.
- Updated procedures and instructional documents include the following:
  - Procedure for holds that cannot be filled
  - Circulation Manual
  - Item Status Definitions
  - Item Record Fields
  - MARC Alert Guidelines for Magazines
  - Item Attachment Requirements
  - Instructions for Cataloging Big Books
  - Instructions for Splitting Blue Ray and DVD sets
  - Keywords for Shoutbomb Text Message Notices
  - Instructions for Linking Patrons in Sierra
  - Library Statistical Groups
  - Sierra Receipt Printer Settings
- The V-Cat Guidelines page was re-structured to make it easier to find desired documents. The following guidelines and documents were updated:
  - Library Card Application

- Paron Linking Form
  - Patron Record Guidelines
  - Cataloging Compliance Recommendation
  - Overrides Recommendation
  - Use of Claims Returned Recommendation
  - Maximum Holds and Checkouts Recommendation
  - Institutional and Teacher Library Card Application
  - Institutional and Teacher Patron Record Guidelines
  - Book Club Recommendation
3. **Explore the creation of a shared opt-in communication/messaging platform for library directors to communicate directly with each other, with and without WVLS staff interaction.** RESULTS:
- Research into a shared platform was performed and options used by other library systems were reviewed. Research and learning about permissions for Microsoft Teams continued.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2025).**

1. Continue to **update** Sierra Training website page to improve navigation, searchability **and training materials**.

## Physical Delivery of Information

### 2024 ONGOING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THIS REQUIREMENT:

1. Subsidize three courier stops per week to each member public library and V-Cat service site and "vendor-sort" process. RESULTS:
  - For most of 2024, WVLS subsidized three courier stops per week to 35 library service sites at 25 public library and 10 branch library locations.
  - Given the high number of bins sent to/received from the MCPL Rothschild Branch and Minocqua Public Library, WVLS subsidized a 4<sup>th</sup> courier stop per week to those locations beginning in late 2024.
  - With the closure of an Antigo Public Library branch, stops to that location were discontinued in fall 2024.
  - WVLS contracted with Waltco to sort materials from January-April. In May, WVLS staff started sorting materials. In June, two part-time sorters were hired for 30 hours per week. In August, WVLS hired two additional part-time sorters for a total of 45 hours per week.
2. Ensure local delivery service is available to member libraries at least five days per week. RESULTS:
  - Member libraries were offered the opportunity for either a 4- or 5-day per week delivery service, Monday through Friday, with the WVLS vendor, Waltco, Inc.



3. Request monthly volume statistics from courier provider and share yearly data with the WVLS Board of Trustees and member libraries. RESULTS:
  - Due to Waltco staffing challenges, volume statistics were not shared in 2024. The number of bins flowing through delivery is maintained. Data is provided in the Appendixes at the end of this report.
4. Review and update delivery schedules, policies and procedures as needed, and post on the WVLS website.
  - The WVLS webpage was updated to report updated delivery schedules and routes when necessary.
  - There were no changes to the WVLS courier operation's policies and procedures for libraries in 2024.
  - WVLS emails to member libraries reminded them to use a designated courier email address for any communications, bin requests and news on delays or closures.
5. Communicate courier schedule changes and instructions for packaging courier items with member libraries and courier vendor when needed. RESULTS:
  - Member libraries received email announcements on library closures and Waltco service news throughout the year when weather-related safety precautions were implemented and when otherwise necessary.
  - Information about library closures – due to such things as weather and road conditions, carpet cleaning, remodeling, staff shortages, etc. - was shared with Waltco as needed.
  - WVLS emails to member libraries reiterated the use of a designated courier email address for any communications, bin requests and news on delays or closures.
  - Information on how to correctly package items for the courier was shared as necessary in *Monday Mentions*, during conversations with member libraries, and as part of the orientation process for new public library directors. A *Digital Byte* was created and shared with members on how to correctly package items.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2024).**

1. **Explore processes that improve efficiencies and/or reduce costs of WVLS delivery services.** RESULTS:
  - In April, WVLS assumed the responsibility of sorting all materials running through the inter- and intra-system delivery at Waltco's Wausau hub on behalf of our member libraries. Since March 2016, Waltco had been doing the central sort of all items in transit, however staffing challenges had made it difficult for them to sustain service efficiently and effectively.
  - Since 2023, WVLS had considered the prospect of taking on this aspect of delivery service, with funds included in the 2024 budget for this purpose. The multi-year ILS merger exploration with the Northern Waters Library System that started in 2022 promoted staff to analyze delivery routes and process, and to investigate mechanisms for improved resource sharing between member libraries in NWLS and WVLS.
  - The WVLS transition to assume the sort of bins from Waltco went smoothly with minimal interruption to member library deliveries.
  - Persistent evaluation of processes with modifications made when needed, improved operational efficiencies in the second half of the year.



Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2025).

None indicated.

## SERVICE AGREEMENTS

*(G). Wis. Stats. 43.24(2)(g) Service Agreements with all adjacent library systems.*

### 2024 ACTIVITY RELATED TO THIS REQUIREMENT:

1. File current copies of agreements WVLS has with all other Wisconsin library systems with DLT.

RESULTS:

- Agreements with all Wisconsin's Public Library Systems were filed with DLT when they were last updated.
- The most recent agreement, a 2017 agreement between WVLS and the Winnefox Library System, was filed with DLT at that time.

## OTHER SERVICE PROGRAMS

*(I). Wis. Stats. 43.24(2)(i) Any other service program/s designed to meet the needs of participating public libraries and the residents of the system area, as determined by the public library system board after consultation with participating public libraries.*

## Collection Development

### 2024 ONGOING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THIS REQUIREMENT:

1. Provide access to electronic resources to meet the needs and demands of area library users and to back up the collections of member libraries. RESULTS:
  - Following months of research and with input from member libraries, *Gale Presents: Udemy* was chosen as a replacement for *Gale Courses*. Virtual training was offered to member libraries in July. The *Gale Courses* product was discontinued in 2023 due to low usage and high cost per use.
  - Subscriptions were continued for *Ancestry*, *Novelist Plus* (fiction, nonfiction, and audio books), and *Novelist Select*.
  - The WVLS OverDrive Advantage account was supported in 2024 through the holds reduction amount in the WPLC budget and by donations from WVLS member library patrons.

2. Provide the resource library a collection development grant to expand the breadth and scope of its fiction and nonfiction collections. RESULTS:
  - A \$11,000 collection development grant was provided to MCPL in accordance with the 2024 MCPL/WVLS Resource Library Agreement.
  - When deciding on a budget for 2025, the WVLS Board of Trustees opted to increase the grant to MCPL to \$12,000.
  
3. Provide area library directors with usage reports for WVLS electronic databases and OverDrive collections. RESULTS:
  - While member libraries were able to access the OverDrive database to aggregate usage statistics, WVLS compiled this data, as well as usage data on WVLS databases, to help member public libraries complete their 2023 annual reports.
  
4. Continue membership in the Wisconsin Public Library Consortium to provide access to the Wisconsin Digital Library, and associated initiatives. RESULTS:
  - Membership in the Wisconsin Public Library Consortium (WPLC) continued in 2024.
  - This membership offered member library patrons access to a significant digital collection of e-titles in book, audio, and magazine forms and provided WVLS with access to collaborative and innovative WPLC projects of potential benefit to members.
  - WVLS was represented at all WPLC board meetings and staff and/or a member library director tasked with representing WVLS attended all WPLC Steering Committee meetings.
  - Staff served on the board's Nominations Committee, as the board liaison to the WPLC Steering Committee, and as a board representative on the WPLC Collection Development Committee.
  - Staff served on the WPLC Technology Steering Committee, Digital Archives Backup Collaboration Steering Committee, Technology Backup Collaboration Committee and WPLC Data Dashboard project.
  
5. Subscribe to professional journals and route to interested member libraries. RESULTS:
  - WVLS subscribed to several professional titles in 2024. Titles were routed to member library colleagues upon request.
  - The opportunity to get on a routing list to receive professional titles WVLS subscribes to was shared with new directors during their orientation. WVLS also sent an email to member library directors that reminded them of this opportunity.
  
6. Monitor usefulness of content available through WPLC membership and share member library feedback with the WPLC Board. RESULTS:
  - In partnership with the WVLS representative to the WPLC Steering Committee, WVLS discussed issues and solicited feedback from member libraries when needed. That feedback was given to the Steering Committee or Board when addressing matters relevant to member libraries.
  - Statistics on digital content usage are reported on one of the appendices at the end of this report.
  
7. Maintain a professional materials collection and make titles available for loan to any library in the state. RESULTS:
  - The WVLS professional materials collection was made available to area library staff upon request via V-Cat, as well as to libraries across the state via WISCAT.
  - New titles added to the collection in 2024 focused on collections maintenance, inclusion, writing grants, advocacy, intellectual freedom, diversity, and marketing.

8. Maintain the shared WVLS/IFLS/NWLS collection of makerspace resources. RESULTS:
- Several new items were added to the makerspace collection in 2024 including two murder mystery experiences, three puzzle competition kits, straw connectors, geoboards, KEVA building planks, four early math kits featuring several items each on a themed topic (addition and subtractions, shapes, counting and numbers, and sorting and patterns).
  - To encourage awareness of the new items, new items in the makerspace collection were featured in the *WVLS Monthly Newsletter* and by email to member library colleagues.
  - A different makerspace item was highlighted in a WVLS Public Services Update emailed monthly to member library staff.
9. **Promote** the WVLS collections of databases, makerspace items and professional resources to members throughout the year. **Use WVLS communications and marketing calendar to guide this effort.** RESULTS:
- As new makerspace items were added to the WVLS collection, promotions were sent to member library staff by email, published in the *WVLS Monthly Newsletter*, and included on WVLS Makerspace Collection webpage.
10. Share reader's advisory information with area libraries. RESULTS:
- Reader's advisory resources were routinely mentioned in the WVLS Public Library Services Update email sent to member library staff each month.
  - Multiple lists were created in Aspen that focused on books that support the science of reading, the new literacy initiative in public schools.
11. Share collection development information and resources with area libraries. RESULTS:
- Through a collaboration with the IFLS Library System, a monthly "Starred Reviews" listing was emailed to member library youth services staff. "Starred Reviews" is a collection development tool that gathers highly recommended titles for youth and teen collections from professional book review resources: *Booklist*, *Horn Book*, *Kirkus*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *School Library Journal*.
  - Collection development resources were routinely mentioned in the WVLS Public Library Services Update email sent to member library staff each month.
  - Multiple communications to member library staff announced the 2024 American Library Association's Youth Media Awards, a prestigious list of books, videos, and other outstanding materials for children and teens.
12. Continue the shared WVLS/IFLS/NWLS Digitization Program (Project IONh) that offers interested member libraries consultation, best practices, and support, and which provides member libraries opportunities to share their digitized collections with Recollection Wisconsin and the Digital Public Library of America. RESULTS:
- Staff consulted with area colleagues on the digitization of materials upon request.
  - Member library digital projects were uploaded into the WPLC Digital Archives Backup storage system so that a copy of the project would be available in case of damage or other deterioration of the original project.
13. Help member libraries with weeding and/or inventory projects. RESULTS:
- Reports on item circulation data and age were provided to libraries upon request to support their collection development processes.
  - WVLS provided general inventory tutorials and support as needed.

- WVLS assisted with updating inventory dates in item records upon request.
  - V-Cat Sierra Tools for Weeding and Collection Development training was offered in February 2024 for member library staff interested in creating their own reports.
  - V-Cat Reports the Easy Way was offered in November 2024 for member library staff interested in using report templates for a variety of tasks, including collection management.
  - In addition, report templates were shared with interested library staff.
14. Explore and pursue alternative funding to support the WVLS OverDrive Advantage account. RESULTS:
- WVLS continued to use the Holds Reduction amount share that is part of the WPLC budget as the primary funding source for the WVLS Advantage account.
  - Donations to the Advantage account were also accepted from an anonymous library patron for \$200 from both the Loyal Public Library and the Granton Community Library.
15. Investigate new digital resources that may be beneficial to member libraries. RESULTS:
- WVLS staff researched and reviewed potential replacements to *Gale Courses* and decided on *Gale Presents: Udemy* as the best option.
16. To inform collection development practices, provide libraries with age and usage reports for physical materials collections in the V-Cat database. RESULTS:
- Reports on item circulation data and age were provided to libraries upon request to support their collection development processes.
  - “V-Cat Sierra Tools for Weeding and Collection Development” training was offered in February 2024 for member library staff interested in creating their own reports.
  - “V-Cat Reports the Easy Way” was offered in November 2024 for member library staff interested in using report templates for a variety of tasks, including collection management.
  - In addition, report templates were shared with interested library staff.
17. Investigate, implement and support opportunities to reduce wait times on high demand items of interest to users of WVLS member libraries. RESULTS:
- V-Cat hold fulfillment practices were reviewed during the Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration (NICE) Project.
  - WVLS staff offered batch updates, completed monthly, to help them comply with the V-Cat High Demand Recommendation.
  - High holds reports were sent to member libraries monthly to advise staff on desired titles.
  - WVLS began investigating process changes to expand the ability of library users to place holds on new high demand titles with limited access.
  - Investigation and implementation will continue in 2025.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2024).**

1. **Investigate an alternative digital educational resource to replace Gale Courses.** RESULTS:
  - WVLS staff researched and reviewed potential replacements to *Gale Courses* and decided on *Gale Presents: Udemy* as the best option.
2. Evaluate contracts and usage for WVLS subscription-based electronic resources provided for member libraries and their patrons. RESULTS:

- Renewals were pursued for *Ancestry*, *NoveList Plus* and *NoveList Select*.
  - *Ancestry* continued to be a well-performing resource for our libraries.
  - *NoveList Plus* and *NoveList Select* are part of the enhancement of the V-Cat Discovery catalog and have been renewed to continue that enhancement.
3. Encourage collaborative collection development by member libraries in selected subject areas.
- RESULTS:
- While less “subject” specific and more popularity-focused, the “High Holds” report from the ILS provided to member libraries was a useful collection development tool.
  - A form to report scheduled book clubs was created. The information shared via the form helped with libraries’ selection/sharing of titles to meet the needs of book clubs at V-Cat member libraries.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2025).**

1. Evaluate contracts and usage for WVLS subscription-based electronic resources provided for member libraries and their patrons.
2. Encourage collaborative collection development by member libraries in selected subject areas.

## Youth Services

### 2024 ONGOING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THIS REQUIREMENT:

1. Provide member libraries with access to expertise and consulting to assist them in planning, developing, and evaluating youth and young adult services. RESULTS:
  - Consultant services in the area of youth services were provided to member library colleagues upon request.
  - WVLS continued its strong partnership with IFLS Youth Services Consultant to draft monthly Starred Reviews for youth materials and provide support and guidance of benefit to member libraries in both systems.
  - In the spring, a 2-part *Digital Byte* series on diversity in children’s collections was released. The first part focused on the importance of offering diverse collections and how to assess materials for diversity. The second part focused on three tools to use to do a diversity audit on library collections for youth.
  - A Performers Showcase Directory produced by the Youth Services Section (YSS) of the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) was shared with member libraries as a resource for program planning and cooperative program scheduling.
  - Several reminders and a *Digital Byte* were developed to encourage member libraries to use the DPI Program and Activity Trackers throughout the year to more accurately account for these areas in the state annual report.
  - Space planning assistance was provided to the Antigo Library to readjust their children’s services space add a dedicated tween space.
  - Assistance was provided to the Abbotsford Public Library with developing social media templates for DNR Park Pass program and with addressing a patron behavior concern.

- Assistance was provided to the Jean M. Thomsen Library (Stetsonville) with summer program brainstorming, resources, and templates.
2. Partially subsidize a performer at member libraries' summer reading programs. RESULTS:
    - WVLS offered a \$300 grant to each member public and branch public library to support a performer during its summer library program (SLP).
    - WVLS SLP grants supported performances at 30 WVLS member library locations throughout the summer months.
    - The total 2024 SLP grant distribution was \$8,792.00.
  3. Meet virtually or in-person with youth services staff from member libraries to determine grants, focus of CE workshops, and directions for future projects. (See also Continuing Education, no. 11., page 3). RESULTS:
    - Four YSIEs (Youth Services Information Exchanges) were held in 2024. Two were held virtually and two were held on-site at Minocqua Public Library and Granton Community Library. One of the virtual YSIE get-togethers was held jointly with IFLS member library youth services staff.
    - The annual youth services workshop was held in the fall at TB Scott Free Library (Merrill).
    - On-site opportunities featured a tour of the library with a focus on youth services areas.
    - A variety of topics were discussed at these events, including upcoming training and grant opportunities.
    - Ideas for projects and grant opportunities were shared weekly through the WVLS YSIE Facebook page.
  4. Assist member libraries in marketing youth and young adult activities. RESULTS:
    - Staff continued the Collaborative Summer Performer Booking worksheet as a tool for booking performers collaboratively to achieve discounted performer rates and to find new performers.
    - CSLP (Collaborative Summer Library Program) materials, including a substantial online manual, were shared with member public libraries. The manual included marketing tools adaptable for year-round use as well as the 2024 summer library program.
    - A variety of children's and teen summer reading log/challenges log were created. The logs were available in English and Spanish.
    - Information was provided on the USDA Forest Service's Smokey Bear Challenge which celebrated Smokey's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2024.
    - Wisconsin Mathematics Council's Summer Math Adventure booklets were reformatted into printable options for member libraries.
  5. Maintain a system-wide movie licensing agreement to enable public performance movie programming for interested libraries. Conduct annual review to assess cost effectiveness and invite additional participation. RESULTS:
    - WVLS negotiated a group discount on movie licenses through Swank Movie Licensing USA on behalf of interested member libraries.
    - The system-wide movie licensing agreement ran from December 2023-December 2024, and 14 libraries participated.
    - Libraries that purchased movie licenses were able to show commercial films at their site without worrying about liability for copyright infringement.
    - The comprehensive license also provided libraries with free access to customizable movie posters, bookmarks, movie tickets, activity sheets and more to help advertise movie programs.
    - Depending on the service population of each participating library, the standard cost for a license ran between \$400 - \$1,135. As a group, the cost to participating libraries dropped to \$320 -

\$908. Those that renewed a license received a deeper discount, some as low as \$235 (normally \$380).

6. Host annual “dine-around gathering” **following the annual Children’s Book Fest hosted by the Rhinelander District Library**. This unique opportunity brings together public library youth services staff and school media specialists to discuss priorities for the WVLS youth services program.

RESULTS:

- Rather than the annual visit to Rhinelander to present for Children’s Book Fest, the librarians from the Cooperative Children’s Book Center moved its presentation to other libraries across the state in 2024. As the Rhinelander Children’s Book Fest was not held, a “dine-around gathering” was also not held.
- Launched in 1987, the Rhinelander Children’s Book Fest was a collaboration of the Rhinelander District Library, Headwaters Reading Council, Rhinelander School District and the Northern Waters, Wisconsin Valley and Nicolet systems. The two-day event drew librarians and educators from across Northern Wisconsin and featured presentations by librarians from the Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC), hands-on book examination, and networking with peers. At its peak, the event attracted 300 attendees. 2023 marked the 35<sup>th</sup> year of the event.

7. Partner with the DPI/DLT Public Library Youth and Special Services Consultant and other system youth services consultants to implement and promote early literacy and other statewide initiatives.

RESULTS:

- Staff attended bi-monthly meetings with DPI and system youth and inclusive services consultants to discuss regional and state early literacy initiatives.
- WVLS continued its strong partnership with IFLS Youth Services Consultant to draft monthly Starred Reviews for youth materials, plan and host continuing education opportunities and provide support and guidance of benefit to member libraries in both systems.
- In the spring, a 2-part *Digital Byte* series on diversity in children’s collections was released. The first part focused on the importance of offering diverse collections and how to assess materials for diversity. The second part focused on three tools to use when performing a diversity audit on youth collections.
- In collaboration with colleagues from the Nicolet Federated Library System and Kenosha Public Library, a full presentation on this topic called “Analyzing Your Collection: Tools to Diversify Your Children’s Collection” was offered at Hoot-Con in March and at the 2024 WAPL (Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries) Conference in May.
- Staff participated in quarterly Connecting Wisconsin Libraries workgroup meetings which focused on early literacy collaborations between schools, libraries and other agencies.
- Staff worked with DPI Youth Services Consultant to select two newer member library youth staff to attend the *Foundations of Wisconsin Librarianship: Essential Skills for Skills for Library Media Specialists and Public Library Staff Serving Youth* workshop. This 3-day workshop provided an introduction to essential skills, resources, and strategies for working in school and public libraries.
- The possibility of offering TALK (text and learn kindergarten) and other text support services that promote early literacy were explored.

8. Facilitate collaborations on youth and young adult services. RESULTS:

- Staff maintained the WVLS Youth Services Information Exchange (YSIE) Facebook page and WVLS Youth Services email listserv. Each form of communication provided opportunities for librarians to ask questions of, and share advice with, their peers. These communications also drove conversation topics for virtual youth services discussions.

- Staff continued the Collaborative Summer Performer Booking Worksheet as a tool for booking performers collaboratively to achieve discounted performer rates and to find new performers.
  - In the spring, WVLS collaborated with IFLS and NWLS colleagues to offer two in-person Cooperative Children’s Book Council (CCBC) workshop opportunities.
9. Assist member libraries in the development of coding and STEM/STEAM/STREAM programs for children and teens. RESULTS:
- A YSIE (Youth Services Information Exchange) in January provided an opportunity for youth librarians to brainstorm STEM/STEAM/STREAM programs and activities.
  - The WVLS YSIE Facebook page was maintained and updated with accessible, relevant online and offline STEM/STEAM/STREAM ideas for collections, programs, and services.
  - Grants to support STEM/STEAM/STREAM programming were announced through *Monday Mentions*, youth services communication channels, WVS Public Library Services Update monthly email, and the WVLS YSIE Facebook page.
  - Additional items were added to the Makerspace collection that support STEM/STEAM/STREAM skills such as geoboards, KEVA building planks, and jigsaw puzzle kits, and promoted via several WVLS communication channels.
10. Maintain the WVLS Youth Services Information Exchange (YSIE) Facebook page to encourage the exchange of ideas and resource sharing. RESULTS:
- Staff posted on the WVLS YSIE Facebook page throughout the year. This site frequently announced upcoming workshops and youth services virtual and in-person discussions and webinars; shared WVLS and DPI youth services announcements, programming ideas, WVLS and member library program features; and articles and professional resources from the Wisconsin Library Association Youth Services Section (YSS), Association of Library Services to Children (ALSC), American Library Association (ALA), Public Library Association (PLA) and other professional association youth resources/experts.
  - Area youth services colleagues were reminded of this resource and encouraged to also post their ideas, experiences, questions, resources, and service announcements.
  - Informal peer-to-peer question and answer posts to jump-start broader virtual youth services discussions were frequently posted to this site.
11. Feature member library youth services spaces during virtual or in-person YSIE gatherings. RESULTS:
- In-person tours of youth spaces were held at Minocqua Public Library, Colby Community Library, Granton Community Library, Francis L. Simek Memorial Library (Medford), and TB Scott Free Library (Merrill).
12. Include Youth Services Librarians in WVLS Scholarship opportunities. RESULTS:
- Member library youth services librarians were invited to apply for scholarships to attend the 2024 WAPL Conference in Stevens Point and 2024 WLA Conference held in Green Bay.
  - A scholarship was awarded to Krista Blomberg (Rib Lake Public Library) to attend the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) National Institute, held September 19-21, 2024, in Denver, Colorado. Her conference report was shared with the WVLS Board of Trustees in November.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2024).**



1. Attend the National ALSC (Association for Library Services to Children) Institute and share what is learned with youth services colleagues. **If funding is available**, offer a scholarship for a youth services colleague to attend this event as well. RESULTS:
  - WVLS staff attended this national conference for the first time and came away inspired and impressed.
  - WVLS colleague Krista Blomberg (Rib Lake Public Library) also attended the Institute on a WVLS scholarship. Highlights of her experience were shared in a report provided to the WVLS Board of Trustees in November.
  - The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) National Institute was held from September 19-21, 2024 in Denver, Colorado. The next ALSC National Institute will be held in 2026.
2. **Support and partially subsidize member libraries' activities in the Summer Math Adventure program, a coordinated effort between the WI Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Mathematics Council.** RESULTS:
  - A new WVLS Summer Math Adventure grant was offered in March 2024 for up to three member libraries to offer the Wisconsin Mathematic Council's program throughout the summer.
  - Libraries in Minocqua, Rib Lake and Thorp elected to participate
  - Each library was awarded a \$500 grant to offset costs associated with implementing the program - printing and promotional costs, and/or awards for completing the program. An additional \$300 collection development grant was also awarded for libraries to add math-related items to their circulation collections.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2025).**

None indicated.

## INCLUSIVE SERVICES

*(K). Wis. Stats. 43.24(2)(k) Promotion and facilitation of library service to users with special needs.*

### 2024 ONGOING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THIS REQUIREMENT

1. Through a partnership with Northern Waters Library Service, provide member libraries with access to expertise and consulting to assist them in planning, developing, and evaluating inclusive services, guided by *What Does it Mean to Be Inclusive? A Statement from the Division of Libraries and Technology* and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's *Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide* and the American Library Association's *Accessible Communication Styles* and *Virtual Accessibility* toolkits. RESULTS:
  - The *Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide* was introduced to libraries during orientations for new staff at member libraries.
  - Assistance in using this resource was made available to member libraries upon request.
2. Maintain collection of professional materials on inclusive services. RESULTS:
  - Titles on inclusivity were added to the NWLS and WVLS Professional Collections as appropriate.

- Titles were made available to share with Wisconsin's libraries through each system's integrated library catalogs and through WISCAT.
3. Share Inclusive Services information and resources via WVLS communications channels (blog, email, newsletter). RESULTS:
- *Monday Mentions* emails promoted 2024 continuing education events.
  - *Public Library Services Update*, published monthly by WVLS staff with content contributions from IFLS Library System staff, frequently featured resources and checklists from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's *Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide*. These resources were shared with member library staff to encourage their awareness and possible implementation of inclusive actions at their libraries.
  - Monthly *Inclusive Services Updates*, published by Northern Waters Library Service staff, were shared as *Digital Lites* blog posts and archived on the WVLS website. Links to the Updates were shared in *Monday Mentions* and in weekly NWLS Continuing Education Updates, and in the WVLS Director's Report shared with the WVLS Board of Trustees and member libraries.
  - Sample topics of resources and tools reported through the channels mentioned above include:
    - autism-ready toolkit
    - Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
    - bibliography of sources on topics of neurodiversity and disability
    - recommended books on serving vulnerable populations in the library
    - legal information on service animals in the library
    - best e-readers for seniors
    - ALSC Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee toolkit on trauma
    - Juneteenth Resources
    - books for the incarcerated
    - Think Ability Wisconsin
    - Wisconsin sign language interpreters
    - compliance guide for making web content and mobile apps of state and local entities accessible
    - National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Newsline services
4. Maintain current and relevant Inclusive Services resources and tools on the WVLS website. RESULTS:
- The Inclusive Services webpage was overhauled and updated throughout the year. Outdated links and information were removed, and new resources were added.
5. Participate in regional Inclusive Services collaborations with member libraries, appropriate agencies, and other systems. RESULTS:
- WVLS was represented at monthly meetings of system inclusive services consultants and the DPI Library Services team, and on the DPI IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity and Equity in Action) Team by the NWLS Director.
  - Staff promoted DPI-sponsored DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) projects, resources and opportunities available to libraries with funding from LSTA.
6. Support member library outreach efforts to extend services to underserved populations. RESULTS:
- Member libraries were encouraged to apply for a 2024 DEI Consultant Funding Opportunity available through Wisconsin Libraries Talk About Race and the DPI IDEA Team. Funding was available to bring a specialized DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) Consultant to a library to help its team reach a goal of extending services to underserved populations.

- Staff promoted a Teen Internship pilot opportunity to member libraries. The pilot offered up to \$3,000 to participating libraries to recruit and hire teens who reflect the diversity in the libraries' communities. A webinar on creating a Teen Inclusive Internship was also promoted.
  - Formed in 2023, the LEANWI Website Accessibility Learning Group continued to meet in 2024. Comprised of website managers from systems and public libraries, the goal of the group's monthly meetings was to establish best practices for website design and management to maximize accessibility.
7. Provide Inclusive Services continuing education opportunities for member libraries. RESULTS:
- The webinar "Identity, Burnout, and Vocational Awe" was offered in February.
  - In April, the webinar "We Are Already Here" was offered.
  - Ryan Dowd's *Homelessness and Libraries*, a self-paced training opportunity for public libraries, provided staff with tools to effectively work with library users struggling with homelessness, mental illness, or substance abuse, and to provide an inclusive environment that is able to serve everyone. In addition, recordings of monthly hour-long webinars on a variety of relevant topics were archived and made available for library staff to view at times convenient to them. Thanks to a statewide subscription, the *Homeless and Libraries* training and hour-long webinars were made available through December 2024.
  - Announcements for upcoming inclusive service continuing education opportunities were frequently shared in the monthly *Inclusive Services Update* and *Monday Mentions*. Examples of webinars offered include:
    - Building Belonging, The Key to Creating Connection with Your DEI Efforts
    - Building Inclusive Online Tutorials
    - Building Authentic Relationships with Underserved Communities
    - Transforming Librarianship to Model Neuro-Inclusion in Libraries
    - Making Accessible Educational Materials Available to Students Who Need Them
    - Designing an Accessible Website Your Patrons Will Love
    - How to Embed Indigenous Knowledge into Library Collections and Why it Matters
    - Inclusive Survey Design: Crafting Questions for Community Representation
    - How Trauma and Stress Impacts the Well-Being of BIPOC Library Workers
    - Exploring Social Justice Through Young Adult Books
    - Celebrating LGBTQ+ Stories
    - Beyond the Binary: Understanding LGBTQIA+ Health
    - Proving Multilingual Health Information
    - LGBTQ History through Federal Government Document
    - The Dementia Friendly Library: Increasing belonging in Virginia Libraries
    - "Toxic," Traumatized, or Neurodivergent? Setting Appropriate Boundaries Without Writing Anyone Off
    - Breaking the Silence: Exploring Mental Health Challenges Among BIPOC Library Workers
    - Pride In Practice: LGBTQ+ Library Workers Perspectives on Mental Health -
    - Teenagers with Dyslexia: Empowering Adolescent Learners
    - Indigenous Stories for the Classroom and Library
    - A Thoughtful Approach to EDI Family Programming
    - Providing Mental Health Resources at Your Library
8. Create 1-3 *Digital Bytes* training videos related to Inclusive Services. RESULTS:

- A two-part *Digital Byte* series was offered on Diversity in Children’s Collections. Part one focused on the importance of diversity and diverse elements to look for in children’s books. Part two focused on automated and manual tools that can be used to complete a diversity audit on a children’s collection.
9. Attend the annual Toward One Wisconsin Conference and share highlights with member libraries and WVLS Board of Trustees. RESULTS:
- The 2024 Toward One Wisconsin Conference was held May 7-8 in Eau Claire. This conference was promoted in the March and April monthly *Inclusive Services Updates* that were emailed to WVLS public library directors and archived on the WVLS website.
  - In 2024, the WVLS Director attended this event on behalf of WVLS.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2024).**

1. Incorporate EDI (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) topics in member library discussions held throughout the year. RESULTS:
- Staff referenced the resources and checklist in the DPI document during field visits to libraries and staff orientations, and when consulting with directors and public library services staff at member libraries.
2. Target consulting and support on topics outlined in the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction’s *Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide*. In 2023, target member libraries’ awareness of resources and checklists in “Chapter 4: What the Library Has to Offer” relating to library collections, programming, and services. RESULTS:
- The monthly *Public Services Updates* that WVLS emailed to libraries included mention of the resources and checklists in the *Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide*.
  - The monthly *Inclusive Services Update* emailed to libraries and archived on the WVLS website often shared information that affirmed recommended practices in the *Guide’s* checklists.
  - Staff referenced the resources and checklist in the DPI document during field visits to libraries and staff orientations, and when consulting with directors and public library services staff at member libraries.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2025).**

1. Target consulting and support on topics outlined in the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction’s *Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide*. In 2024, continue to target member libraries’ awareness of resources and checklists in “Chapter 4: What the Library Has to Offer” relating to collections, programming, and services.

## OTHER TYPES OF LIBRARIES

*(L). Wis. Stats. 43.24(2)(I) Cooperation and continuous planning with other types of libraries in the system area which results in agreements with those libraries for the appropriate sharing of library resources to benefit the clientele of all libraries in the system area.*

## 2024 ONGOING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THIS REQUIREMENT:

1. Sponsor the WVLS Library Advisory Committee (LAC) and schedule at least two meetings annually. Plan a discussion at each LAC meeting around broad library-related challenge or need and encourage feedback from members. RESULTS:
  - LAC meetings were held in-person on April 25 and August 15 at the WVLS office.
  - Meetings featured group discussions on topics relevant to members. 2024 discussion topics included materials challenges at libraries and using data to guide decisions.
  - In preparation for discussions, LAC members were sent questionnaires to complete and questions to think about prior to the meetings.
  - Agendas and minutes of LAC meetings were shared with the WVLS Board of Trustees and archived on the WVLS website.
  - The WVLS Board of Trustees approved 2025 appointments to the 15-member LAC at its November meeting.
  
2. Consider all types of libraries whenever proposals for grants and other special system projects are developed. RESULTS:
  - The "WVLS ALL" and "WVLS K-12" email lists were used to share grant information and service trends having a school library focus.
  - WVLS offered scholarships for school library media specialists to attend the 2024 WEMTA (Wisconsin Educational Media and Technology Association) Conference in Wisconsin Dells.
  - A list of grants WVLS promoted in 2024 is shared under CONSULTATION, no. 4.
  
3. Provide consultant services to all types of libraries in the WVLS area - reported under requirement S43.24(2)(e). RESULTS:
  - The "WVLS ALL" and "WVLS K-12" email lists were used to share grant opportunities, continuing education events, WVLS WEMTA Conference Scholarships, ideas for collaboration and partnerships and service trends having a school library focus.
  - Requests to add additional school media specialists to the *Monday Mentions* distribution list throughout the year were granted.
  
4. Provide reference and interloan services to all types of libraries in the WVLS area. RESULTS:
  - This mission critical service was provided throughout 2024. WVLS acted as the interlibrary loan clearinghouse on behalf of all libraries using WISCAT in the system area to facilitate the sharing of materials.
  - WVLS maintained the catalogs of 25 member public libraries aggregated in an online database known as "V-Cat." Available to view by any library and to fully use by anyone with a V-Cat member library card, this resource served as the primary vehicle for interlibrary loan (ILL) between WVLS public libraries.
  - The State's WISCAT product continued to serve as the interlibrary loan vehicle for our public and multitype libraries to fill patrons' requests for items not found locally or available in the V-Cat database.
  - In 2024, 23 of 25 WVLS member public libraries, 26 school/academic libraries, and one special library participated in WISCAT. The Edith Evan Community Library (Laona) and Westboro Public Library were the two libraries that chose not to participate in 2024.
  - Libraries of all types were encouraged to contact WVLS for assistance with reference questions and WISCAT/Interlibrary loan.

5. Invite libraries of various types to attend and host WVLS continuing education events. RESULTS:
- Staff from multitype libraries were invited to attend WVLS continuing education and training opportunities and provided access to archived recordings throughout the year. Examples include:
    - Webinars such as the 2024 Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference, 2024 Spring Webinar Series, and 2024 Tech Days. All of these sessions were recorded and archived for later viewing by those unable to attend the live events.
    - The three recorded webinars provided by WVLS in 2024 were shared with school librarians.
    - School librarians were invited to attend two *CCBC Choices* workshops held throughout the state in early 2024.
    - Continuing education events hosted and co-hosted by WVLS were promoted via the WVLS *Digital Lites* blog, *Monday Mentions* email, *WVLS Monthly Newsletter*, monthly *Inclusive Services Update*, WISPUBLIC (the state's public library listserv), Facebook and direct email to public and school librarians.
    - Events were shared with other public library system continuing education consultants who were encouraged to forward announcements to libraries of all types located in their respective service area.
6. Encourage libraries of all types in the WVLS area to join WVLS' listservs as appropriate for their positions, to subscribe to the WVLS newsletter, and to browse the WVLS blog *Digital Lites*. RESULTS:
- Staff requested library directors to provide emails of new staff members and recommendations for appropriate placement on WVLS listservs.
  - WVLS communication tools were discussed and promoted during youth and adult services virtual gatherings, during new library director orientations, meetings of the WVLS Board, Library Advisory Committee and V-Cat Council, and when consulting and/or networking with member colleagues.
7. Announce available grants for area libraries of all types to consider. RESULTS:
- The "WVLS ALL" and "WVLS K-12" email lists, WVLS *Digital Lites* blog, *Monday Mentions* emails, WVLS and WVLS Youth Services Facebook pages, monthly *Inclusive Services Update*, and direct emails to school and public librarians were used to announce grant opportunities available throughout the year.
  - The following is a sample of grant opportunities available to libraries of all types that were announced in 2024:
    - 2024 DPI STEAM Education Fellows
    - 2024 WVLS WEMTA Conference Scholarship
    - 2024 WiLS Ideas to Action Funds
    - 2024-2025 National Endowment of the Arts
    - 2024 PolarVR Research and Experiences
8. Initiate discussions with other types of libraries to determine if/how collaborative efforts might improve services to patrons/library staff/trustees in the WVLS library community. RESULTS:
- Discussions held at both LAC meetings in 2024 encouraged all library types to collaborate, share and partner to improve services to patrons and staff.
  - Meetings of the "Connecting Wisconsin Libraries: Public & School Library Collaborations Committee" were announced in *Monday Mentions*.

9. Partner with all types of libraries in the WVLS area to provide workshop, training, **discussion** and resource sharing opportunities for area libraries. RESULTS:
- Workshops and trainings, and collaborative and resource sharing opportunities for area libraries, were routinely suggested during LAC meeting discussions, and through WVLS listservs, website, Facebook and blog posts, and monthly *Inclusive Services Update*.
  - The following opportunities were shared in *Monday Mentions* in 2024.
    - Trauma Sensitive Schools Spring Webinar
    - BadgerLink Updated K-12 Subject Area Resources Guides
    - BadgerLink Planning Public Library Programs with TeachingBooks
10. Build on existing collaborative efforts by participating in statewide committees, workgroups and organizations. Continue representation on the informal Connecting Wisconsin Libraries – School and Public Libraries Committee. RESULTS:
- Staff participated in Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP) Regional Action Teams spanning the WVLS area to continue building relationships with educators and organizations whose mission is to support young families.
  - Staff maintained membership on the Connecting Wisconsin Libraries: Public & School Library Collaborations Committee.
  - A board member from The Reading League of Wisconsin was a featured speaker at the annual youth services workshop.
  - Two member library youth services staffed attended DPI's workshop "Foundations of Wisconsin Librarianship: Essential Skills for Library Media Specialists and Public Library Staff Serving Youth."

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2024).**

1. Offer scholarships to attend the Wisconsin Educational Media & Technology Association (WEMTA) Conference to public or school library staff who have not previously attended. RESULTS:
- WVLS offered scholarships for school library media specialists to attend the 2024 WEMTA (Wisconsin Educational Media and Technology Association) Conference in Wisconsin Dells.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2025).**

None indicated.

## LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY AND RESOURCE SHARING

*(M). Wis. Stats. 43.24(2)(m) Planning with the division and with participating public libraries and other types of libraries in the area in regard to library technology and the sharing of resources. By January 1, 2000 and every 5<sup>th</sup> January 1 thereafter, the public library system shall submit to the division a written plan for library technology and the sharing of resources.*

### Technology / Network

**Note for all subtopics in 2024:** The TEACH Network migration project consumed significantly more time than expected during 2024 by LEANWI technology team members in all three partner systems, sometimes accounting for more than 50% of a business week. WVLS estimates approximately 10%-15% of technology team staff time was directed to monitor and support this – still ongoing – project. That we were able to do more than just maintain existing services is a testament to the strength and value of the LEANWI partnership and the dedication of everyone on our joint team, operating at an above-and-beyond level persistently throughout most of the year.

## **2024 ONGOING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THIS REQUIREMENT:**

1. Facilitate continued development and expansion of “LEAN Wisconsin” (LEANWI), a technology resource sharing partnership between multiple systems, and “Libraries Win”, the joint technology services platform it hosts and maintains. Maintain joint LEANWI Library System Long Range Strategy and Operational Technology Plan. RESULTS:
  - Partnership-wide consolidation and unified utilization of software licensing and services continued.
    - LEANWI partners renewed the extensive suite of Microsoft Datacenter licensing required for the servers and services at the core of shared technology operations for another three-year term.
  - LEANWI partners leveraged an opportunity to update and upgrade (at a significant discount) the storage appliance used by host servers at the LEANWI datacenter in Eau Claire, improving performance and reliability, and extending that infrastructure role’s lifecycle.
  - LEANWI partners leveraged federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) support to continue mobile hotspot services through 2024 for all member libraries lending Kajeet devices.
2. Facilitate strategic growth within the LEANWI partnership and lead efforts of technology collaboration with other library systems and organizations. RESULTS:
  - Continued internal and external efforts to provide leadership, guidance and support for the Statewide Collaborative Backup and Archive project.
  - LEANWI maintained leadership roles in the Wisconsin Public Library Consortium (WPLC) Statewide Backup and Digital Archiving working groups.
  - LEANWI Website Services and Support:
    - January 1: Winding Rivers Library System joined the LEANWI Website Service, adding 34 libraries to LEANWI websites. Support from the LEANWI Website Team vastly improved the performance, function, security, and library staff competence in managing these library websites, although there is still a long way to go before all WRLS library sites are fully redesigned to LEANWI standards.
    - First joint “LEANWI” hire began work January 8, 2024. This position – LEANWI Website Support and Development – subsidized by WVLS, IFLS, NWLS and WRLS, provided website development and design services to all libraries in the LEANWI website partnership.
3. Maintain strategic and operational awareness of federal, state, and regional programs and efforts intended to support and empower library technology services, including Universal Service Administrative Company School and Library Program (USAC SLP – erate), TEACH Wisconsin,



BadgerNet, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Public Library Consortium (WPLC), and others. RESULTS:

- LEANWI partners continued the practice of consolidating our respective LSTA “Sparsity Award” allocations to be managed as one award primarily for joint use licensing, services, and equipment. This shared project management allows for greater efficiency in overall grant management and for broader, more holistic awareness of our needs, to best utilize the support.
  - The federal Cybersecurity Pilot Program (CPP) – implemented via the erate program by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) – was researched, but firm requirements to adhere to the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) for eligibility made utilization infeasible by LEANWI partners at this time. This program will continue to be monitored and assessed for potential feasibility in the future.
  - LEANWI partner leads outlined and committed to a plan to coordinate and manage an erate consortium profile on behalf of member libraries. This profile will be used for managing erate processes to receive support for mobile hotspot lending programs initially and will then be an available platform for helping to manage any new grouped, erate supportable services in the future.
4. Lead vendor relationship management and strategic procurement efforts for LEANWI partners, member libraries and other interested library systems. RESULTS:
- Continued efforts within multi-system joint computer procurement relationship with Dell.
  - Continued recently developed service relationships with Princh (public computer and BYOD print management) and Kajeet (mobile hotspot devices, data service plans, and centralized management services).
  - LEANWI partners maintained its strategy of proactive engagement with AT&T’s (and secondary vendors’) project management teams mitigating the number of AT&T-led “BadgerNet” to “TEACH Network” data transport network service migrations failing due to missed steps prior to events, unexpected issues arising during events, and post-migration issues arising days or weeks after a given site’s migration event.
5. Assist member libraries within the LEANWI footprint with technology consultation, long range strategic planning, and operation planning. **In 2024, revise network equipment asset inventory and mapping information for each library.** RESULTS:
- Site visits were completed to 25 of 34 member library locations to install new computer equipment, review current equipment status, and begin network inventories.
  - A recommended 5-year replacement plan for staff and public computers for member libraries was maintained and updated. As of December 31, 2024, 100 computers were replaced at 22 member libraries. Currently just over 1/3 of computers are more than 5 years old, down from 42% at the end of 2023.
  - Staff began network inventory and router upgrades at member libraries.
  - A technology project tracking list was created for monitoring and reporting on progress on asset inventory, network inventory, router updates, DeepFreeze updates, implementation/upgrades to Pharos, implementation of Princh, tracking TEACH internet service migration, and TEACH circuit speed increase.
  - Staff made nominal progress incorporating the new Taylor County Fiber Network connections with public libraries in Taylor County. The TEACH Network Migration project proved more time-consuming than anticipated, and not all Taylor County libraries were migrated at the end of 2024. Tests with Gilman and Medford libraries will carry forward into more dedicated project efforts in 2025.

6. Coordinate in-person and remote meetings with public library directors and technology managers of LEANWI member libraries to establish and maintain working relationships, engage in technology assessment projects with their respective libraries, and facilitate collaborative efforts between libraries. RESULTS:
- Site visits to 25 of 34 member library locations were completed to install new computer equipment, review current equipment status, and begin network inventories.
  - Staff met with TB Scott Free Library (Merrill) staff to review the library's locally managed technology administration and provide support as needed. Currently the library handles most of its technology needs independently.
  - WVLS provided timely communications to area library technology staff on urgent, emerging, or critical technology issues.
  - WVLS offered three live online trainings on technology-specific topics that were later recorded and posted for later viewing. This practice will continue in 2025.
  - Direct interaction and support with MCPL technology staff increased significantly during 2024, in large part to support the onboarding and maintenance of MCPL's adoption of timing software and computer state security software hosted by the LEANWI partnership.
7. Strengthen Libraries Win integrated services:
- Lifecycle Procurement utilization and Capital Procurement Assistance support. RESULTS:
    - Online procurement form was created and process developed to streamline procurement requests and tracking orders, staging, shipping, deployment, follow-up, and invoicing libraries.
    - WVLS currently supports end user 259 devices (laptops, PCs) at 23 locations (average of 10.9 per location). Additional computers were managed by staff at MCPL and TB Scott Free Library (Merrill) and were not included in the WVLS asset management list. 73% are within their warranty coverage period; 73% are operating Windows 11 operating system. 220 were purchased through the WVLS procurement system, 82 purchased and replaced in 2024 at 21/25 libraries.
  - Printer device and print management services coordination and support. RESULTS:
    - Prinix print management services were deployed at libraries in Medford, Neillsville, and Thorp, and at Marathon County Public Library.
  - **Mobile Hotspot hardware and data plan management services coordination and support.** RESULTS:
    - LEANWI partners continued mobile hotspot services and support management for all member libraries lending Kajeet devices throughout 2024.
  - **Website platform, development, and maintenance support.** RESULTS:
    - First joint "LEANWI" hire began work January 8, 2024. This position – LEANWI Website Support and Development – subsidized by WVLS, IFLS, NWLS and WRLS, provided website development and design services to all libraries in the LEANWI website partnership.
    - In 2024, ten new websites were designed and deployed with an additional four more in progress (waiting for library response).
  - **Statistical data aggregation, warehousing, analytics, presentation, and preservation support.** RESULTS:

- LEANWI partners continued to maintain historical data collection and warehousing for member libraries utilizing partners' respective integrated library systems (ILS') and LEANWI hosted computer session management software, networking services, and website services platform.
- WVLS utilized a LEANWI hosted data dashboard application for presentation and reporting.
- Efforts to produce a next generation of dashboard data collection, warehousing and presentation service were ongoing with improvements made during 2024 being used for automated monthly reporting and to help accelerate 2024 annual reporting and statistics booklet production.
- **Operational data storage, backup, and preservation support. RESULTS:**
  - LEANWI partners continued to host, maintain, and directly utilize one of two colocation sites for Statewide Backup and Digital Archiving collaborations.
  - WVLS continued leveraging LEANWI resources to provide direct access to and utilization of file server resources to all member libraries, which are protected by the Statewide Backup resources.
  - WVLS began leveraging LEANWI resources to provide managed access to the Statewide Digital Archive resources.
- **Improve member library awareness of, and documentation and process support for, existing and new system technology service offerings: currently Princh, Pharos, hot spots, videoconferencing. Identify new services that address library technology needs for internal functioning and public services. RESULTS:**
  - Updates to <https://www.wvls.org/technology-faqs/> included information on procurement, Princh, Pharos, hot spots, as well as FAQs and Technology Tips and recordings of technology-specific webinars. Updates were ongoing. Online live training was offered on CyberSecurity, DeepFreeze, and Windows 11. Additional trainings will be offered in 2025.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2024).**

1. Priority (annual) - Assess LEANWI and Libraries Win service stacks, evaluating and reporting on service take rates, prioritization for continuity, depth of staffing, etc., and work with administration of LEANWI partners to inform long range technology strategy, operational technology planning, and annual system planning. RESULTS:
  - Information gathered and assessments made during 2022 and 2023 informed the drafting of the *2025-2029 LEANWI Information Technology Strategic Plan* (System Technology Plan shared jointly by IFLS, NWLS, and WVLS).
  - The *2025-2029 LEANWI Information Technology Strategic Plan* was approved by the WVLS Board of Trustees in November and submitted to the WI Department of Public Instruction in December.
2. Priority (annual) - Explore and develop new service opportunities to benefit member libraries. Continue aggregation, realignment, and consolidation (ARC) project evolution.
  - Enhance processes for coordinating service-level and system-level planning requiring technology resources and support. RESULTS:
    - Formal "processes" were not developed in 2024. Acquiring three new members since spring 2023, the LEANWI technology team worked on developing and solidifying

channels of communication and understanding cross-system workflows. This ongoing familiarity will create opportunities for formalizing processes and improving understanding of resources and support across systems down the road.

- Coordinate with administration and service area teams across LEANWI partners to broaden awareness of technology resources currently utilized and identify common long-term goals and technology resource needs. RESULTS:
    - Increased and improved communication across system partner lines created awareness of tools used and desired projects/outcomes among LEANWI partners.
    - Often conversations about day-to-day work and needs of specific libraries or circumstances lead to better awareness and, as team members become more familiar with the scope of programs, long-term goals were identified and opens conversations were held about which shared resources could be used to achieve them.
  - Expand long term efforts to consolidate common technology resources with broader scope across service areas. RESULTS:
    - Specific services that went through cross-system alignment in 2024:
      - Pharos (server upgrade and client setup, continuation from 2023)
      - Deep Freeze (upgrade to 9.0 and configuration alignment to include matched update times/processes and the addition of additional updates through System Center Configuration Manager, SCCM, with IFLS)
      - SCCM GPO configuration for non-Deep Freeze computer updates
      - ongoing preparation for migrating asset inventory to SNIPE-IT managed my NWLS
      - all team members participating in and communicating about TEACH network migration process and related concerns, troubleshooting, suffering, etc.
  - Develop and promulgate unified guidance with consistency across LEANWI partners. RESULTS:
    - As services became increasingly aligned, guidance and consistent implementation continued to evolve among LEANWI members.
  - **Develop documentation for procedures and best practices shared across LEANWI partners for both internal and library-site-specific processes.** RESULTS:
    - In progress/ongoing – creating shared resource files on SharePoint for Technology and Website documentation.
    - Some shared documentation was developed for specific services and programs (Pharos, Deep Freeze, SNIPE-IT).
    - Development of shared documentation and document management will be an ongoing project for 2025 and beyond.
3. **Provide proactive support with libraries' technology asset management until process become routine.** RESULTS:
- WVLS supported 259 public and staff computers across 23 libraries/branches. These totals do not include MCPL or the T.B. Scott Free Library (Merrill) as these libraries manage their own procurements and installations.
  - In 2024, 82 computers were replaced at 21 of 25 libraries, with an average of 38 days from order placed to fully installed on site (including weekends and holidays).

- The goal was to replace/upgrade all Windows 10 computers by the end of 2025. At the end of 2024, 26.6% of the devices at 23 libraries were running Windows 10, down from 55.4% at the end of 2023.
4. **Provide timely acquisition, deployment and support of equipment procured through WVLS.** RESULTS:
- Staff ordered equipment within one week of the request being submitted. This time period allowed for an evaluation of the order to make sure the correct equipment was purchased.
  - In 2024 the turnaround from initial order to full deployment of equipment at 22 libraries locations was an average 38 days (including weekends/holidays).
5. **Create distinct IP ranges for each library location to improve Aspen functionality and accuracy of database usage statistics.** RESULTS:
- The initial planning for this across LEANWI partnership began in 2023 with some core IP address block changes implemented in 2023 and early 2024.
  - Full implementation was placed on hold until the BadgerNet migration to the TEACH Network is completed and subsequent additional core updates finished.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2025).**

1. Priority (annual) - Assess LEANWI and Libraries Win service stacks, evaluating and reporting on service stack rates, prioritization for continuity, depth of staffing, etc., and work with administration of LEANWI partners to inform long range technology strategy, operational technology planning, and annual system planning.
2. Priority (annual) - Explore and develop new service opportunities to benefit member libraries. Continue aggregation, realignment, and consolidation (ARC) project evolution.
  - Enhance processes for coordinating service-level and system-level planning requiring technology resources and support.
  - Coordinate with administration and service area teams across LEANWI partners to broaden awareness of technology resources currently utilized and identify common long-term goals and technology resource needs.
  - Expand long term efforts to consolidate common technology resources with broader scope across service areas.
  - Develop and promulgate unified guidance with consistency across LEANWI partners.

## ILS Administration

### 2024 ONGOING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THIS REQUIREMENT:

1. Host V-Cat council meetings and V-Cat committee meetings. RESULTS:
  - V-Cat Council met six times in 2024, in February, April, May, June, August, September, and November. Along with regular business and financial approvals, the Council passed new and updated recommendations for the following:
    - Updated V-Cat Library Card Application and Patron Record Guidelines
    - Added an Aspen test server/sites
    - Updated Maximum Holds and Checkouts Recommendation
    - Updated Use of Claims Returned Recommendation

- Passed a draft 2025 V-Cat budget
- Book Club Recommendation
- Institutional and Teacher Cards Recommendation and Application
- Proposed negotiation of an ILS contract with Innovative Interfaces
- In addition, V-Cat Council received updates and discussed the following recommendations from Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration (NICE) Team:
  - NICE Delivery Recommendation
  - NICE ILS Vendor Selection Recommendation
  - NICE Funding Formula Recommendation
  - NICE Collaborative Decision-Making Recommendation
  - Revised NICE Project ILS Vendor Selection Recommendation
  - NICE Cataloging Recommendation
  - NICE Holds Fulfillment Recommendation
  - NICE Record Standards Recommendation
- V-Cat Bibliographic/Interface Committee met 5 times in 2024, in March, May, August, October and December. During 2024, the Committee worked on the following projects: Big Books cataloging procedure, removal of duplicate subject headings, a procedure for attaching items record to existing bibliographic records, an update to the procedure for splitting DVD/Blu-ray Combo packs, a procedure for cataloging individual Tonie figurines, and more.
- V-Cat Cooperative Circulation Committee met 4 times in 2024, in March, May, July, and October, and worked on the following projects:
  - Updated V-Cat Library Card Application and Patron Record Guidelines
  - Updated Maximum Holds and Checkouts Recommendation
  - Reviewed High Demand Holds
  - Reviewed Patron Blocks Table and limitations on item checkouts
  - Reviewed Extended Checkout periods offered by libraries
  - Reviewed NICE Project recommendations as applicable
  - Updated Use of Claims Returned Recommendation
  - Book Club Recommendation
  - Institutional and Teacher Cards Recommendation and Application
  - Discussed guidelines for short term/temporary library cards and patron records
  - Discussed guidelines for student cards at school/public libraries
- V-Cat ILS Evaluation and Review Committee did not meet in 2024.

## 2. Develop and monitor V-Cat budget. RESULTS:

- The V-Cat budget was monitored as invoices were received and new expenditures considered.
- In 2024, monthly V-Cat budget reports and expenditures were presented to the V-Cat Council and WVLS Board of Trustees for approval.
- A draft 2025 V-Cat budget and appropriations plan was presented to the WVLS V-Cat Steering Committee in March. The draft recommended by the Committee was then submitted to the V-Cat Council and WVLS Board of Trustees for further review.
- The 2025 V-Cat Budget was approved by the V-Cat Council in June 2024 and WVLS Board of Trustees in August 2024.

3. Review V-Cat By-laws, participation agreements, and contracts. RESULTS:
  - New directors at V-Cat libraries were made aware of existing Participation Agreements and V-Cat Bylaws during their orientations.
  - An LSTA grant funded joint ILS Exploration project with Northern Waters Library System, named Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration (NICE), began in 2022 and continued in 2024. The exploration included a review of both V-Cat and Northern Waters Library Network (NWLN) by-laws agreements and governance structures.
  - V-Cat considered the current ILS contract alongside information the V-Cat ILS Evaluation and Review Committee gathered in 2022-2023 from other vendors, and a Report of Product Changes since August 2023.
  - An Aspen test server/sites was added to the contract with Bywater Solutions to allow staff to test changes without negatively affecting the user experience.
  
4. Maintain awareness of the organizational structure and funding mechanisms of other ILS consortia in the state for best practices and optimized governance. RESULTS:
  - The Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration (NICE) with Northern Waters Library Service includes a review of both V-Cat and NWLN governance and funding structures. The exploration project began in 2022 and continued in 2024.
  
5. Convene the V-Cat Steering Committee to assist staff in developing the annual V-Cat budget and reviewing V-Cat bylaws. RESULTS:
  - The WVLS V-Cat Steering Committee met in March 2024 to review a draft 2025 V-Cat Budget and provide a budget recommendation to present to the V-Cat Council.
  
6. Work to encourage cooperative and participatory V-Cat membership that adheres to the set V-Cat guidelines and procedures. RESULTS:
  - V-Cat Council and V-Cat Committee meetings provided opportunities for members to report issues and for the consortium to draft/recommend/adopt new guidelines and procedures when necessary.
  - When made aware of libraries not adhering to V-Cat guidelines and procedures, staff followed up with libraries to encourage compliance and to offer additional training and support.
  - Reports were provided to V-Cat libraries to encourage compliance with V-Cat guidelines related to item, patron, and bibliographic records.
  - Training was offered and provided to library staff on item record attachment, and creating MARC alerts Trainings on saving bibliographic records from OCLC using z39.50 were offered in the spring and fall and by request.
  
7. Remain alert to the impact of V-Cat as it relates to members' collection related policies and practices. RESULTS:
  - V-Cat Council and V-Cat Cooperative Circulation Committee meetings provided opportunities for members to report issues related to libraries' collection development policies and practices and for the consortium to draft/recommend/adopt new guidelines and procedures when necessary.
  - Staff responded to requests for assistance with issues related to collection development policies and practices.
  - WVLS encouraged communication and collaboration among member library staff responsible for collection development tasks.

8. Monitor unmediated interloan between V-Cat participants. RESULTS:
- Data for this activity was monitored monthly as V-Cat statistical reports were generated.
  - Monthly circulation reports that included data on interlibrary loan activities were provided to member libraries participating in V-Cat.
  - Yearly statistics are provided in an appendix at the end of this document and shared in the annual *System Information and Public Library Statistics* booklet.
  - When made aware of libraries not adhering to V-Cat resource sharing guidelines and procedures, staff followed up with them to encourage compliance and communication between libraries, and to offer additional training.
  - Reports were provided to V-Cat libraries to encourage compliance with V-Cat guidelines related to item and patron records.
9. Seek opportunities to expand V-Cat Membership. RESULTS:
- With assistance from a competitive LSTA grant, a collaborative ILS exploration project with the Northern Waters Library Service launched in 2022. The project, known as NICE (Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration) continued in 2024.
  - In July, the Northern Waters Library Network voted against merging its ILS with V-Cat. Fifteen member libraries voted not to merge, 5 voted to merge, 3 abstained and 6 did not attend the meeting when the vote was held nor designate a proxy. Following the vote, the NWLS Board voted to uphold the NWLN recommendation against a merge.
  - At its September meeting, the V-Cat Council voted on a merger by non-anonymous ballot. The results were:
    - 79.19% yes to pursue a merger by representative vote (16 yea/5 nay)
    - 50.5% yes to pursue a merger by weighted vote (51 yea / 50 nay)
    - The motion did not pass (V-Cat Bylaws require a 2/3 majority in both representative and weighted votes to pass a motion.
  - A total of 20 of 25 library representatives were present. One library was absent and designated a proxy, 4 were absent without designating a proxy.
  - Additional votes from absent representatives would not have impacted the final vote, even if all had voted in favor of a merger.
  - During its meeting in September, the WVLS Board of Trustees unanimously approved a motion to “go on record in continuing support of the NICE Project, while recognizing the validity of the V-Cat bylaws and decision and recommends keeping the door open to revisiting the project within two years.” (WVLS BOT Meeting Minutes; 9/21/2024)
10. Assess and evaluate member libraries’ satisfaction with the effectiveness of V-Cat to support continuous improvement of V-Cat. **(Practice and Collaboration)** RESULTS:
- Input from V-Cat Council meeting discussions, questions and feedback via the Help Desk ticketing system, and conversations with area colleagues continued to inform service priorities and identify areas where increased collaboration or training are needed.
  - WVLS staff met individually with library directors to discuss the NICE project and gained insights about member libraries’ satisfaction with V-Cat practices and collaboration.
  - A V-Cat Training Survey was conducted in August to identify V-Cat, Sierra, and Aspen training topics of interest to member library staff.



11. Provide qualified, trained staff devoted to the management and support of the shared Integrated Library System (ILS). RESULTS:

- The ILS Administrator and ILS Support Specialist attended training and continuing education opportunities to enhance management and support of the shared ILS including direct training with Innovative Interfaces and Aspen.
- Staff attended online webinars offered through the 2024 Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference, Wisconsin Illinois Innovative Users Group (WILUIG), and Wisconsin Library Association's Technical Services Section.
- Staff attended relevant in-person sessions at the Innovative User Group, Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries (WAPL) and Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) conferences.
- The ILS Administrator participated in the Research Institute for Public Libraries (RIPL) "12 Months to Better Library Data" webinars.

12. Manage the shared ILS database. RESULTS:

- Staff continued to efficiently manage and support the V-Cat Consortium's ILS.
- Database changes were made to streamline staff and patron experiences.
- Libraries were encouraged to participate in database cleanup including follow up on item and patron record reports.
- A procedure for Potentially Counterfeit Materials was updated and implemented.
- Staff purged patron records with no fines that were expired and inactive for five years or more.
- Staff completed monthly deleted item record purges and monthly empty bibliographic record purges.

13. Offer library profile customization services for V-Cat members. RESULTS:

- Support was provided to MCPL during its implementation of new self-check units and RFID pads.
- A staffing change form was provided to libraries to assist with managing Sierra and Aspen user changes when they occurred
- Item Record templates created or edited upon request
- Changes were made for the closing of Antigo Public Library's Elcho Branch.
- Changes were made for the addition of remote outreach / bookmobile service for Antigo Public Library.
- Upon request from member libraries:
  - Aspen Discovery sites were adjusted. Each library has the ability to customize specific settings and featured collections.
  - Loan rules were created and modified
  - Additional location codes were created
  - Additional print templates were created or modified
  - Adjustments were made to logins and print templates
  - Item Record templates created or edited

14. Offer training opportunities and resources using a variety of delivery methods. RESULTS:

- Online and in-person training opportunities were offered on the following topics:
  - Z39.50 Training with Rib Lake staff member; January
  - V-Cat Sierra Tools for Weeding and Collection Development; Thursday, February
  - V-Cat Aspen Record Grouping; March

- V-Cat Sierra Attaching Item Records to Existing Bibliographic Records; April
  - V-Cat Sierra MARC Alert Cataloging; April
  - V-Cat Sierra Z39.50 Cataloging; April
  - In person Sierra Circulation training for Antigo Public Library interim director; June
  - Cataloging training with Antigo Public Library interim director; June
  - Cataloging refresher with staff at the T.B. Scott Free Library (Merrill); July
  - Sierra interlibrary loan training with staff from Wabeno and Antigo public libraries; July
  - Web Management Reports with Antigo Public Library interim director; August
  - V-Cat Sierra Attaching Item Records to Existing Bibliographic Records; September
  - V-Cat Sierra MARC Alert Cataloging; September
  - A scholarship was offered for the Back in Circulation Conference for managers and staff in access in circulation service, hosted by the Information School at UW-Madison from October 7-8.
  - In Person Aspen Patron Experience Training at T. B. Scott Free Library (Merrill); October
  - In Person Circulation and Create Lists training for new circulation staff at T. B. Scott Free Library (Merrill); October
  - Aspen Patron Experience & Collection Showcase; October
  - Web Management Reports and OverDrive reporting training with T.B. Scott Free Library (Merrill) staff member, October
  - V-Cat Reports the Easy Way; November
  - In-person training at Antigo Public Library on circulation, patron records, item records and bibliographic records; December 2, 20 and 23
- Training on Sierra Interlibrary Loan and V-Cat Consortium Basics for New Directors was provided as needed.
  - Additional individualized trainings were provided upon request.
  - Any training opportunities that were recorded were shared with V-Cat Consortium members upon request.
  - The V-Cat Training webpage was routinely updated to share information on the V-Cat Council and committees pursued ILS projects and improved process.
  - Short trainings were offered during V-Cat Council meetings to highlight V-Cat Guidelines, Sierra functions, and Aspen features.
  - A V-Cat Training Survey was conducted in August to identify V-Cat, Sierra, and Aspen training topics of interest to member library staff.

15. Work with V-Cat committees to normalize V-Cat policies, procedures, and practices among member libraries. RESULTS:

- Staff worked with individual libraries to streamline offline circulation procedures and acquisitions.
- Two V-Cat libraries reduced fines or went fine free in 2024 (Rhineland, Stetsonville).
- The V-Cat Cooperative Circulation Committee developed a standardized library card application and patron record guidelines for teachers and institutions. Updated V-Cat Library Card Application and Patron Record Guidelines were passed by the V-Cat Council in November.
- The V-Cat Maximum Holds and Checkouts Recommendation was updated for clarity.
- The V-Cat Use of Claims Returned Recommendation was updated.
- A V-Cat Book Club Recommendation was approved by the V-Cat Council in November to help with selecting titles and sharing materials to meet the needs of book clubs.
- An Institutional and Teacher Cards Recommendation and Application were developed by the V-Cat Cooperative Circulation Committee and approved by the V-Cat Council in November.

- Negotiation of an ILS contract with Innovative Interfaces was proposed.
- The V-Cat Bibliographic/Interface Committee shared a procedure with member libraries to help with attaching items to existing bibliographic records as well as adding consistent information to bibliographic records for big books, splitting Blu-Ray/DVD combo packs, and adding individual Tonie figurines.

16. Provide an effective and efficient way for member libraries' holdings to be added to the database.

RESULTS:

- Many member libraries continued the use of Z39.50 cataloging, which reduces time on cataloging tasks and improves bibliographic records in the database.
- Staff responded to cataloging questions and provided training and support upon request.
- WVLS partnered with one V-Cat library to assist with MarcAlert review in 2024.
- Staff provided item record attachment training when needed.

17. Work with member libraries to establish preferred practices and procedures for entering bibliographic and item holding records in the V-Cat database in accordance with currently accepted library cataloging and classification practices. RESULTS:

- Cataloging training was provided in Spring and Fall 2024, and training documentation was made available on the WVLS website.
- Staff addressed any concerns or questions raised by member libraries.
- The V-Cat Bibliographic/Interface Committee met several times throughout 2024 to address new cataloging procedures and needs.
- A new Procedure for Potentially Counterfeit Materials was developed and implemented by WVLS staff.

18. Ensure that bibliographic records, item records, and item status for materials in the V-Cat database are searchable through standard protocols. RESULTS:

- This was an ongoing activity and integral to standard operations.
- Ongoing maintenance and routine monitoring were helpful for checking consistency and accuracy of database records throughout the year.
- Staff checked the database monthly for new bibliographic records added to the database without subject headings. Follow-up occurred with the library staff cataloger for correction and additional training opportunities were offered.
- Bibliographic records were searchable by patrons by title, author, keyword, subject heading, and more. This searchability was ensured by saving and updating records to include the most accurate information possible. Training was offered twice in 2024 to assist library staff in this effort. In addition, documentation was made available on the WVLS website.
- Improvements were made to the Aspen Discovery catalog, and to database records to enhance discovery of new materials.
  - Staff worked with interested library staff to identify and correct record grouping errors in the Aspen Discovery Catalog.
  - Staff worked to decrease duplication of subject headings and increase accuracy of the "More Like This" suggestion in Aspen.
  - An Aspen test server was implemented with sites for each library
  - The Aspen test server was configured to test alternative Aspen format order and tab and screen reader accessible browse categories.

- As part of the Aspen catalogers' group, WVLS staffs were active participants in the creation of a "Tonies" format label, led a discussion on the usefulness of the literary form facet, and discussed the need for a "big book" format label among other projects.

19. Ensure access to reports to assist member libraries in managing ILS data. RESULTS:

- All V-Cat libraries had access to Web Management Reports reporting tools for Sierra.
- All V-Cat libraries had access to Sierra "Create Lists" and training was provided upon request.
- V-Cat report documents were maintained/archived on the WVLS website.
- Additional reports were emailed to V-Cat libraries on a monthly basis to assist them with regular record clean up.
- Statistical reports for patron and holdings information were generated for each V-Cat library to complete their 2023 annual public library report.
- Additional reports were provided upon request
- A project was initiated to review and correct patron code 4 residency codes in patron records using US Census Geocoder tools. Reports were shared with libraries for record review and correction as needed. An intern from UW Madison Information School assisted with this project.
- Adult patron records expired and inactive over 5 years with no fines or fees as of July 1 2024 were deleted. Reports were provided to libraries prior to deletions, with additional information available on request.

20. Provide V-Cat consortium members with statistical data generated by the ILS as required for the DLT Public Library Annual Report, using standard definitions supplied by DLT. RESULTS:

- Spreadsheets for collection data (number of books owned/added, number of videos owned/added, number of audios owned/added), annual circulation totals and children's circulations totals, total number of resident and nonresident registered borrowers, digital library collection data (holdings and total number of downloads for each collection), and resident/nonresident circulation totals were generated for each V-Cat consortium library in preparation for the 2023 public library annual report project.
- Statistics were entered into the state's online 2023 annual report form on behalf of V-Cat consortium members.
- Statistical data was shared with libraries in January, in sufficient time for libraries to complete their annual reports by the statutory deadline.
- V-Cat report documents were maintained/archived on the WVLS website.

21. Assess and evaluate member libraries' satisfaction with ILS support, the online catalog, discovery products, and training needs. **(Vendor Products and WVLS Support)** RESULTS:

- Input from member libraries was fundamental to the WVLS team's evaluation of ILS support, service response, and training opportunities.
- Input from V-Cat Council meeting discussions, questions and feedback via the Help Desk ticketing system, and conversations with area colleagues continued to inform service priorities and guide allocation of resources.
- Feedback was gathered from library staff to determine needs and priorities for ILS product acquisition.
- WVLS staff met individually with library directors to discuss the NICE project and gained insights about member libraries' satisfaction with V-Cat products and WVLS support.

22. Explore enhancements to the ILS, including peripheral ILS-related products and technologies, to improve V-Cat experience for consortium members and library patrons. RESULTS:
- Staff read relevant articles, attended webinars, and connected with other ILS Administrators to remain current on new features available from vendors and investigate enhancements to the system.
  - Staff participated in Innovative User Group (IUG) and Aspen communication channels to collaborate and learn best practices for Sierra, Aspen, and related products.
  - Staff met with other Aspen catalogers to learn about best practices, assist with changing the Aspen Discovery code that affects grouping and title display, and to improve discoverability for patrons in Aspen
  - Staff participated in the Aspen community by regularly attending open source community meetings including special interest groups, Aspen cataloging, Aspen for Sierra, and Aspen for consortiums.
  - As part of the Aspen catalogers' group, WVLS staff were active participants in the creation of a "Tonies" format label, led a discussion on the usefulness of the literary form facet, and discussed the need for a "big book" format label among other projects. A procedure for "big book" cataloging was created to better assist patrons.
  - WVLS investigated the benefits of Aspen test server/sites, and encouraged V-Cat to add a test server/sites to allow staff to test setting changes without causing issues or disruptions for patrons or staff
  - WVLS and V-Cat considered the costs and benefits of continuing to self-host the Sierra ILS, requiring a server upgrade and migration, or pursue cloud hosting with Innovative. In November, V-Cat Council voted to move to cloud hosting with Innovative.
23. Encourage libraries to consider new ILS enhancements, including peripheral ILS-related products and technologies, investigate group pricing options, and assist with implementation and training as needed. RESULTS:
- WVLS provided support for a member library's implementation of new self-checkout and RFID pad units that involved working with multiple vendors.
24. Work with the V-Cat Council and its committees to implement enhancements to the ILS, including peripheral ILS-related products and technologies. RESULTS:
- Staff modified and customized the Aspen discovery catalog with input from V-Cat Committees and member libraries to improve the search and discovery of library resources for staff and patrons.
  - Aspen formats were edited to display in a more intuitive order. They now present by physical items first, then digital copies instead of mostly alphabetically.
25. Explore collaborative options with other library systems in Wisconsin to improve ILS services and support.
- Staff frequently communicated with colleagues from other Wisconsin public library systems whose ILS consortiums use Sierra, a product of Innovative Interfaces, Inc. These constructive interactions helped inform V-Cat recommended practices, procedures, upgrades, and new features.
  - Staff participated in meetings with ILS Administrators to discuss Wisconsin public library consortia projects in progress and topics of interest.

- With help from a 2023/2024 LSTA Improved Discovery Solutions grant, staff met with Northern Waters Library System staff to explore opportunities for a shared ILS.
- The Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration (NICE) Team and workgroups met to address matters that have potential to impact an ILS merger and prepared a suite of recommendations and final report. See no. 6 below for more details.
- Staff participated in a statewide Cooperative Cataloging Grant and on a Statewide Bibliographic Standards Group. See no. 7 below for more details.

26. Assess and evaluate V-Cat from the user's perspective to support continuous improvement of V-Cat. **(User Experience) RESULTS:**

- The results of a survey of library users WVLS conducted in 2020 was referenced to determine priorities for processes related to search and discovery of library materials, database content and e-books/digital audiobooks.
- Ongoing feedback from member library staff and library users continued to inform product development requests, record improvements, and adjustments to Sierra, and Aspen discovery.

27. Participate in Innovative Users Group (IUG) and other professional organizations. RESULTS:

- Staff participated in IUG, Wisconsin Illinois Innovative User Group (WILIUG), Aspen Community, Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries (WAPL), and Wisconsin Library Association (WLA).

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2024).**

1. Continue to **develop** sufficient local funding of V-Cat to ensure the stability of its operation and to alleviate the risk in the event of changes to regional library systems in Wisconsin. (Relates to ILS Administration no. 2 above.) RESULTS:

- This was an ongoing effort in 2024. WVLS worked with the WVLS/V-Cat Steering Committee and the V-Cat Council to develop the 2025 budget,
- The 2025 V-Cat Budget, approved by the V-Cat Council and WVLS Board of Trustees included increases in the library appropriation and a decrease in the amount subsidized by WVLS.

2. Continue database clean-up project to strive toward standardization of records and record fields. (Relates to ILS Administration nos. 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 20 above.) RESULTS:

- The database underwent routine maintenance and monitoring throughout the year to check for consistency and accuracy of database records.
- Monthly queries of the database identified bibliographic records that needed improvement. When inaccuracies were identified, staff connected with area library catalogers to correct the records.
- Library staff were sent patron records having multiple, incorrect, or missing barcodes for cleanup.
- Staff and V-Cat Cooperative Circulation Committee members continued their review of patron record fields to promote consistent use of fields and data entry. The committee developed a standardized library card application and patron record guidelines for teachers and institutions which were approved by the V-Cat Council in November.

- A project began to review and correct patron code 4 residency codes in patron records using US Census Geocoder tools.
3. Refine current processes used to generate reports from ILS data, including those required for the DLT Public Library Annual Report. Continue to further automate report generation and data visualizations. (Relates to ILS Administration nos. 8, 19, 20, 22, 24 and 25 above.) RESULTS:
    - Building on the work done in 2023, additional queries of the ILS database were developed, and data results were tested against current reports to validate data accuracy.
    - Staff and member libraries worked together to test changes and resolve any unexpected results.
    - Staff continued efforts to automate data aggregation and report generation processes for monthly and annual report preparation to reduce staff time needed to process data processes for more efficient reporting.
    - Further automation of report generation and data visualizations will be conducted in 2025.
  4. Develop and promote training using a variety of delivery methods, published in an academic year schedule to allow our librarians plenty of time to plan to attend. (Relates to ILS Administration nos. 6, 14, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23 above.) RESULTS:
    - Online and in-person training opportunities were offered throughout the year (see 14 above).
  5. If applicable, continue ILS migration process. Re-negotiate current ILS contract or negotiate a new service contract with another ILS/Next Gen ILS and/or **continue** migration process. (Relates to ILS Administration points 12, 21-26 above.) RESULTS:
    - Initiated in March 2022, a comprehensive evaluation and review of vendor product information and support was completed by the V-Cat ILS Evaluation and Review Committee in August 2023.
    - A final report that summarized the Committee's findings and recommended the V-Cat consortium stay with its current vendor (Sierra from Innovative Interfaces, Inc.) was presented to the V-Cat Council in September 2023. A formal decision was placed on hold pending decisions made within the NICE project.
    - V-Cat Council reviewed the recommendation and report alongside updated information in September and November.
    - At its November meeting, the V-Cat Council voted to uphold the recommendation of the ILS Evaluation and Review Committee and begin negotiating a contract with Innovative with conditions, and the addition of Innovative cloud hosting and a test instance of Sierra.
  6. Investigate cataloging practices of other consortia and compare with WVLS practices. Develop a plan to implement best practices, **including automated tools to assist with record creation and review**, as appropriate. (Relates to ILS Administration nos. 6, 12, 14-18.) RESULTS:
    - WVLS participated in the LSTA 2022/2023, 2023/2024, 2024/2025 improved Discovery Solutions Grants awarded to the Northern Waters Library System to support the Cooperative Cataloging Exploration Project initiated in 2022.
    - What began as a collaboration of 7 public library systems in late 2022, ended in 2024 as a collaboration of all 15 systems.
    - As a part of these grant projects, staff joined a newly developed Statewide Bibliographic Standards Group. The goal of this group is to create minimum standards for bibliographic records in the state.
    - 2024 saw the continuation of this work with the LSTA Cooperative Cataloging Grant partners and the Statewide Bibliographic Standards Committee. This group has discussed a set of

recommendations for the following formats: print books, graphic novels, large print, audio formats, and video formats. The group will continue this work in 2025.

- Using funds available through a 2023-2024 LSTA Grant, WVLS hired short term project-based staff to enhance bibliographic records in the V-Cat database for record matching in the event of an ILS merger. Funds were also used to send records to Backstage to improve them for matching in the event of an ILS merger.
- A UW Madison Information School intern assisted with inserting local subject headings to enhance records similar to subject heading work being done at other library systems across Wisconsin. Subjects included behavior disorders in children, homeless persons, and child abuse.
- WVLS initiated work with a consultant to automate brief record review and overlay with improved MARC records from OCLC. This project will continue in 2025.
- WVLS investigated options for vendor contracted cataloging assistance.

7. If applicable, continue to take steps to merge the WVLS/V-Cat and Northern Waters Library **System/NWLN library system** databases and respective **ILS** consortia. RESULTS:

- With help from 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 LSTA Improved Discovery Solutions grants, WVLS, NWVLS and member libraries from each system, completed the second year of an ILS Consortium Exploration project.
- The project, named NICE (Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration) was a comprehensive joint project to determine the value and feasibility of a merger between the two Integrated Library Systems implementations and respective ILS consortia.
- Based on the data and information gathered in 2022-2023, the NICE team determined that an ILS merger of the two integrated library systems was a valuable and feasible endeavor. The NICE team recommended that NWLS and WVLS pursue a joint ILS and move towards shared practices and policies.
- With help from a 2023/2024 LSTA Improved Discovery Solutions grant, NICE activities continued. In mid-2023, the NICE team formed workgroups to address matters that have potential to impact an ILS merger. Workgroups assisted prepare a suite of recommendations in the following areas:
  - ILS Vendor Selection
  - Delivery
  - Funding Formula and Budget
  - Collaborative Decision Making
  - Hold Fulfillment
  - Record Standards
  - Cataloging Practices
- The NICE project prioritized existing processes at the local level to ease the transition toward a shared ILS. Many workgroups found a consensus around recommendations that, as much as possible, allowed the two systems to maintain existing practices. Examples include:
  - Keep the current enhanced public library catalog in place to maintain a consistent experience for library users.
  - Continue to fill requests for materials in a way similar to current practices within each consortia
  - Continue use of the familiar Sierra ILS software interface by member library staff.
  - Retain V-Cat and Northern Waters Library Network (NWLN) funding models with shared NICE costs split at the consortium level



- NICE Recommendations and Final report from the NICE Team were made available on the [NICE Project website's Documents page](#).
- Opportunities were provided for library staff and directors to share feedback and ask questions about the NICE project. A NICE Questions form and Recommendation Feedback form were available. Two Town Halls were hosted to provide an opportunity for the NWLN and V-Cat member libraries to ask questions and provide feedback about NICE Recommendations. In addition, WVLS staff spoke with V-Cat library directors on two different occasions during the year to answer questions and receive feedback about the NICE Project.
- On July 18, NWLN libraries met to discuss the NICE Project Recommendations and Report and voted against merging its ILS with V-Cat. Fifteen member libraries voted not to merge, 5 voted to merge, 3 abstained, 6 did not attend nor send a proxy to the meeting. The NWLS Board of Trustees voted to uphold the NWLN recommendation against merging the ILS at their meeting on July 20.
- An additional V-Cat Council meeting was hosted in August to provide V-Cat member libraries an opportunity to discuss the NICE project and potential ILS merger. As part of the discussion Council members reviewed [NICE Key Takeaways](#) and [Report](#) (June 2024), [NICE Why Merge?](#) (June 2024), [NICE Benefits and Common Questions](#), [V-Cat NICE 2025 DRAFT Budget Estimates](#) and [Letter from Wisconsin Department of Instruction](#).
- At its September 5 meeting, the V-Cat Council voted by non-anonymous ballot, and the results were
  - 79.19% yes to pursue a merger by representative vote (16 yea/5 nay)
  - 50.5% yes to pursue a merger by weighted vote (51 yea / 50 nay)
  - The motion did not pass (V-Cat Bylaws require a 2/3 majority in both representative and weighted votes to pass a motion.)

A total of 20 of 25 library representatives were present. One library was absent and designated a proxy, 4 were absent without designating a proxy (Antigo, Laona, Thorp, Withee). Additional votes from absent representatives would not have impacted the final vote, even if all had voted in favor of a merger.
- At its September meeting, the WVLS Board of Trustees voted to go on record with continuing its support of the NICE project, while recognizing the validity of the V-CAT bylaws and V-Cat Consortium decision and recommended keeping the door open to revisiting the project within two years. The motion was unanimously approved.
- Revisiting the project was paused due to staffing changes at NWLS. A report of lessons learned and next steps for V-Cat will be developed. WVLS will be in touch with the new NWLS director and ILS Administrator and explore opportunities for collaboration in the future.

## 8. **Pursue mechanisms to reduce member library staff time spent on routine tasks.**

### **Examples include:**

- **Schedule and coordinate centralized batch record update changes.** RESULTS:
  - Batch updates were offered to all member libraries upon request.
  - Batch updates were completed monthly by WVLS for the following new materials at Abbotsford Public Library and Antigo White Lake branch: books, audiobooks, video materials, board games, and kits.
  - The same materials were updated at Antigo Public Library from Spring – Fall of this year during staffing transitions.
- **Schedule and automate circulation notice delivery.** RESULTS:

- Staff considered the nuances of notice delivery and Sierra settings for automation. Member library consensus for delivery schedules and handling print notices was not decided.
- Sierra paging list notices were automated per library request.

9. **Simplify procedures for resource sharing among member libraries. (Relates to ILS Administration no. 15.)** RESULTS:

- Batch updates were completed monthly by WVLS for new materials at Abbotsford Public Library, Antigo Public Library and White Lake branch to help them comply with the V-Cat High Demand Recommendation.
- Automatic updates were offered to all member libraries.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2025).**

1. Continue to **develop** sufficient local funding of V-Cat to ensure the stability of its operation and to alleviate the risk in the event of changes to regional library systems in Wisconsin. (Relates to ILS Administration point 2 above.)
2. Continue database clean-up project to strive toward standardization of records and record fields. (Relates to ILS Administration nos. 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 20 above.)
3. Refine current processes used to generate reports from ILS data, including those required for the DLT Public Library Annual Report. Continue to further automate report generation and data visualizations. (Relates to ILS Administration nos. 8, 19, 20, 22, 24 and 25 above.)
4. If applicable, continue ILS migration process. (Relates to ILS Administration points 12, 21-26.)
5. **Continue to** investigate cataloging practices of other consortia and compare with WVLS practices.
6. If applicable, continue to take steps to merge the WVLS/V-Cat and Northern Waters Library **System/NWLN library system** databases and respective **ILS** consortia.

## ADMINISTRATION

### 2024 ONGOING ACTIVITIES

1. Ensure the library system operates in accordance with Chapter 43 of the *Wisconsin Statutes*. RESULTS:
  - Monitored by the WVLS staff and Board of Trustees, along with oversight by the WI Department of Public Instruction Library Services Team, the system's operations remained in compliance with Chapter 43 throughout 2024.
  - WVLS had one member library that has been in a noncompliance state since 2021. At that time the person the library board hired to be the director did not have the requisite 54 college credits for temporary certification. A plan to get the library into compliance was approved by the WI Department of Public Instruction in 2021. The director of the library attained the college credits needed for certification in the spring, meaning the library was no longer in a state of noncompliance.
2. Ensure the library system operates in compliance with other Wisconsin laws, such as laws relating to open meetings, ethics, and public records. RESULTS:

- The WVLS Board of Trustees affected policies, and staff implemented procedures, to ensure continued compliance with Wisconsin's open meetings, ethics, and public records laws.
  - No issues of noncompliance were discovered or reported in 2024.
3. Ensure the library system operates in compliance with federal laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act. RESULTS:
- Subscriptions to legal and human resource-related listservs and review of the *League of Wisconsin Municipalities* newsletter kept staff abreast of any changes to state and federal employment laws.
  - Compliance with policies outlined in the *WVLS Employee Handbook* was routinely monitored, and potential conflicts were addressed in a timely manner when necessary.
  - When policies needed to be revised, they were researched and brought to the attention of the WVLS Board of Trustees for review and approval.
4. Ensure that all meeting announcements, agendas and minutes are publicly available to all member libraries. RESULTS:
- Agendas for all meetings of the WVLS Board of Trustees, Library Advisory and WVLS/V-Cat Steering Committees, and the V-Cat Council and its subcommittees, were emailed to all newspapers in the WVLS seven-county area and posted to the WVLS website. Links to this information were also shared with the WI Department of Public Instruction's Public Library Services Team.
  - All WVLS Board of Trustee meeting agendas and minutes were emailed to member public library directors and board Presidents, county library board chairs, and WVLS Library Advisory Committee members.
  - The Director's Report, a report that highlights staff members' progress on WVLS projects and regional and state news, was included in the information packet that was shared with the WVLS Board prior to their meetings. This report was further shared with public library directors and area colleagues via email and posted to the WVLS website.
5. Ensure the library system board has written bylaws that outline its purpose and its operational procedures and address conflict-of-interest issues. The bylaws are reviewed at least every three years. RESULTS:
- Draft Bylaws were presented to the WVLS Board of Trustees in November 2021 and approved in February 2022.
  - The WVLS Board of Trustees Bylaws will be up for review in 2025.
6. Ensure the system does not expend more than 20% of the state aid projected to be received in the plan year for administration. RESULTS:
- Expenditures were monitored with each bill run, and monthly expenditure reports were reviewed and approved by the WVLS Board of Trustees during regularly scheduled meetings.
  - End of year expenditure totals for 2023 revealed that WVLS expended less than 14% of its state aid on administrative costs.
  - While end of the year totals were not complete when drafting this report, the exact percentage of state aid used for administration was not known. Financial reports through November 2024 indicate funds used for administration will fall well below 20%.
7. Monitor statutory changes and court decisions related to library and system operations and recommend policy changes needed to maintain legal library and/or system operations to the board. RESULTS:

- WVLS had representation on the Wisconsin Library Association's Library Development and Legislation Committee which closely monitored any potential modifications to state law that could impact Wisconsin's public libraries and systems.
  - Editions of the *WLA Newsletter* were relayed to the WLA membership to keep colleagues informed of relevant state and federal legislative news.
  - A legislative report was routinely shared at WVLS Board of Trustees meetings.
8. Create a long-range plan that addresses the needs of member libraries. RESULTS:
- WVLS maintained long-range plans for two major service programs – ILS (V-Cat) Administration and Technology.
  - The *2025-2029 LEANWI Information Technology Strategic Plan* was approved by the WVLS Board of Trustees in November and submitted to the WI Department of Public Instruction in December.
  - An update to the 2021-2023 V-Cat Strategic Plan, approved by the WVLS Board of Trustees and V-Cat Council in late 2021, was not updated in 2024. As recommendations and outcomes from the NICE project had potential to significantly influence a strategic plan, drafting a new plan was delayed until 2025.
  - The annual WVLS Plan of Service continued to include goals and priorities for several years beyond the current plan year where necessary.
9. Offer each WVLS trustee access to a supported computer or tablet. Provide end user support on the use of this technology to access board information in digital form. RESULTS:
- 2022 was the final year for iPad provisioning to WVLS trustees.
  - WVLS shifted to the provisioning and support of laptops for trustees who expressed need during 2023.
  - Trustees were offered the use of a WVLS-supported computer or tablet during the onboarding process.
10. Provide current financial and statistical reports for review at each library system board meeting. RESULTS:
- Monthly financial reports were included in information packets for all WVLS Board of Trustee meetings in 2024.
  - The 2023 WVLS Staff Report, which included year-end statistical data for 2023, was shared with the WVLS Board of Trustees in February 2024.
  - The January-December 2023 Treasurer's Report, a report that aggregates income and expenses from monthly financial statements, was shared with the WVLS Board of Trustees in February 2024.
  - The 2023 WVLS Annual Report, an aggregate of its financial statements and accomplishments for the year, was shared with the WVLS Board in February 2024.
  - The *2023 System Information and Public Library Statistics* booklet, a compilation of service and financial data from member public library annual reports, was shared with the WVLS Board in March 2024.
  - Year-end statistical data for 2024 will be shared with the WVLS Board in February 2025.
11. Ensure that the library system board reviews and approves bills at each library system board meeting, in accordance with applicable laws and policies. RESULTS:
- The WVLS Board Treasurer reviewed invoices and expenditures and co-signed checks for bi-weekly check runs.

- The WVLS Board Treasurer reviewed and signed off on monthly bank reconciliations and general journal entries.
- The monthly “Bills for Approval” and budget reports for WVLS state aid and non-state aid accounts, V-Cat and LEAN WI were reviewed and approved by the WVLS Board of Trustees during regularly scheduled meetings.
- All financial records were made available to the auditor to complete the 2023 WVLS Audit Report and shared on the WVLS website.

12. Maintain awareness of available grants and other outside funding sources. RESULTS:

- WVLS learned of available grants through staffs’ professional networks – memberships in the Wisconsin Library Association and American Library Association, and system consultant and director meetings with the WI Department of Public Instruction Library Services Team – and through social media, newsletters, professional journals.
- Information about grants and links to grant opportunities was shared on the WVLS website.
- Staff monitored a spreadsheet maintained by the WI Department of Public Instruction Library Services Team on available grants.

13. Apply for and implement grants from LSTA and other grant sources that benefit the system and its member libraries. RESULTS:

- **A 2023/2024 LSTA Improved Discovery Solutions Grant** (\$50,000) was awarded to WVLS to facilitate next steps of the Joint ILS Consortium Exploration Project collaboration between WVLS and the Northern Waters Library System toward a merged ILS.
  - Based on the data and information gathered in 2022-2023, the NICE team determined that an ILS merger of the two integrated library systems was a valuable and feasible endeavor. Funds were used to hire consultants to coordinate meetings, facilitate discussion, and prepare a final report.
  - NICE Recommendations and Final Report from the NICE Team were made available on the [NICE Project website’s Documents page](#). See ILS Administration Priority activities for 2024 number 7 for additional details.
  - Grant funds were also used to hire short term project-based staff to enhance bibliographic records in the V-Cat database for record matching in the event of an ILS merger. Funds were also used to send records to Backstage to improve them for matching in the event of an ILS merger.
- **A 2023/2024 LSTA Improved Discovery Solutions Grant** (\$50,000) awarded to NWLS was used to continue the foundational work completed during the 2022/2023 LSTA grant project. The project established a Statewide Bibliographic Standards group, provided statewide training on the use of Marc Edit, began a shared repository for participating public library systems to share documentation, and continued work to complete a comparison and analysis of each system’s bibliographic records to identify differences. This grant project increased the number of participating systems from eight to 10.
- **A 2024/2025 LSTA Improved Discovery Solutions Grant** (\$50,000) awarded to NWLS continued the foundational work completed during the previous 2 LSTA grant cycles. The Statewide Bibliographic Standards Group, developed in the first grant, met monthly to work through bibliographic standards for a variety of formats and a document repository found at [wicatalog.org](#). The project will provide training on Authority Control for 26 library and system staff across the state. Additionally, the project will support ILFS, OWLS and NOWLS migration to

Backstage, work towards a database of local subjects and genres, and work towards series clean up. This grant cycle has nine systems participating.

- A **2024-2025 ILS Merger Implementation Grant** (\$75,000) was offered to WVLS and NWLS. to cover migration preparation and implementation costs to merge the shared catalogs of each system’s ILS consortium. The grant was contingent on approval of an ILS merger with migration beginning in 2025.
    - When put to a vote to merge to a shared ILS by each system’s consortium in fall 2024, it did not have sufficient support in either system to more the project forward at this time. As such, the grant was rescinded.
  - The **2023/24 LSTA Professional Development Grant** (\$12,375.56) supported the 2024 Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference and 2024 Spring Webinar series. It also funded the following scholarships:
    - 2023 Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Conference (8)
    - 2024 WI Educational Media and Technology Association (WEMTA) Conference (1)
    - 2024 Public Library Association (PLA) Conference (3)
    - 2024 Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries (3)
  - A **2024/25 LSTA Professional Development Grant** expended \$8,457.84 in 2024 on the following scholarships:
    - 2024 ALSC Institute (1)
    - 2024 WLA Conference (6)
    - 2025 Power Up Conference (2)
14. A **2024/2025 LSTA Core Services Grant** (\$77,028) was awarded in aggregate to LEANWI Partners.
- \$10,784 of the grant was committed to the continued support for Kajeet Hotspots through the end of 2024.
  - \$49,200 was expressly designated within the LEANWI 2025 proposed budget plan to support LEANWI tenancy for rack 1, through WiscNet, at the Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) Regional Datacenter (RDC), to support a potentially significant increase above planned 5-year Faronics licensing renewal expenses, and to help offset Pharos and Splashtop licensing/subscription expenses.
  - Approximately \$17,044 remained undesignated in the budget.
15. Maintain required statistics for system planning and reports to WVLS Board and DLT. RESULTS:
- This activity was ongoing as evidenced by the information shared in the WVLS Board of Trustees’ information packets for meetings, completion of system annual report, data aggregated in the appendices of this document, and annual publication of the *WVLS Statistics* booklet.
  - The *2023 System Information and Public Library Statistics* booklet was updated to provide additional relevant data elements and charts. The printing of the booklets was again outsourced to a local business rather than being done in-house using office printers.
16. Provide for staff and trustee participation in appropriate continuing education activities. RESULTS:
- The 2024 WVLS budget supported staff and trustee participation in a variety of continuing education opportunities held throughout the year.

- Staff members were invited to attend WLA-sponsored activities including the Library Legislative Day in Madison, the 2024 Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries (WAPL) Conference held in Stevens and 2024 WLA Conference in Middleton.
  - Staff were also permitted to attend the following in-person national trainings/conferences:
    - “Disney’s Approach to Quality Service” Disney Institute; Anaheim, California in February
    - ZingTrain’s “The Art of Giving Great Service;” Ann Arbor, Michigan in April
    - ALSC (American Library Association Services to Children) Institute; Denver, Colorado in September
    - Library Marketing and Communications Conference; St. Louis, Missouri in November
  - WVLS Board members were welcomed to attend WLA-sponsored activities including the 2024 Library Legislative Day in Madison, 2024 WAPL Conference in Stevens Point, and 2024 WLA Conference in Green Bay; and WVLS co-sponsored workshops and webinars including the 2024 Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference in January and Trustee Training Week in August.
17. Adopts a set of personnel policies outlining the conditions and requirements for employment of system staff, which are consistent with state and federal regulations and relevant court decisions. Ensure the library system board reviews personnel policies on a regular schedule, including after any significant change in employment law. RESULTS:
- Personnel policies are reviewed on a regular basis and updated as necessary. Policies that need to be updated are researched and then brought to the Board of Trustees for final approval.
  - The WVLS Board of Trustees approved a WVLS Credit Card Policy at its meeting in May.
18. Monitor system property, liability and health insurance needs. RESULTS:
- Insurance needs/costs were monitored monthly and reviewed during the July-September budget development process.
  - Property and liability insurance policies were reviewed during the 2023 audit of WVLS financial records.
  - Renewals for system property and liability insurance policies were reviewed and submitted to the insurance carrier in December.
19. Provide for independent audit of WVLS’ financial statements and file copy with DPI **by June 1**. RESULTS:
- KerberRose completed the 2023 audit of WVLS financial records in May.
  - The WVLS Board of Trustees accepted the audit report as presented at its May meeting.
  - An electronic version of the audit was forward to the WI Department of Public Instruction as requested.
20. Participate in SRLAAW and SOMBAW. RESULTS:
- WVLS was represented at all SRLAAW (System and Resource Library Administrators Association of Wisconsin) and SOMBAW (System Office Managers and Business Administrators of Wisconsin) meetings in 2024.
  - Most SOMBAW meetings were held virtually, while SRLAAW meetings offered in-person and virtual options.
  - WVLS hosted a virtual/in-person SOMBAW meeting in May and co-hosted a virtual/in-person SRLAAW meeting with MCPL in August.

## 21. Maintain and monitor use of reserve funds. RESULTS:

- In March, the Board of Trustees approved Reserve Account balances of \$205,000 for the Resource Development Fund and \$190,000 for the Reserve Fund.
- Funds in reserve accounts may not be used without prior approval of the WVLS Board of Trustees. There were no special requests to withdraw funds from these accounts in 2024.
- A \$100 transfer from the 2024 Resource Development Account to the WVLS Wessler Scholarship Fund was made September. According to WVLS policy, transfers of \$100 to the Wessler Scholarship Fund from the WVLS Resource Development Fund may be done automatically and without prior approval from the WVLS Board in memory of a deceased current or former trustee or staff member.

## 22. Review status/storage of 'old' records in context of the WVLS records retention policy and/or as mandated by applicable legislation. RESULTS:

- 2024 WVLS records were saved (filed, digitized, and archived) in accordance with the updated *WVLS Records Retention Schedule*.
- Approved by the WVLS Board of Trustees in 2019 and subsequently approved by the Wisconsin Public Records Board, the WVLS Retention Schedule aligns with the state's *2017 General Records Retention Schedule*.

## 23. Maintain WVLS inventory of office equipment and supplies. RESULTS:

- A list of fixed assets was updated to include outlay items purchased for the new sort area.
- A detailed list of technology assets was updated with items that were disposed of.
- Both inventory lists were shared with KerberRose in early 2024 to complete the 2023 audit of WVLS financial records.

## 24. Investigate and implement opportunities for reducing costs/staff time needed for materials handling, resource sharing, technology support and office functions. RESULTS:

- WVLS maintained its role in the LEAN WI partnership. This partnership, which included the three northern public library systems – IFLS, NWLS and WVLS – provided significant cost savings in capital maintenance and replacement, and staff resources needed for technology support.
- A collaboration of the Northern Waters Library Service, IFLS Library system and WVLS maintained a unique collection of programming materials for member library use. Available, through an online booking system, Lend Items, the collection featured memory kits from NWLS, programming and literacy kits from IFLS, and makerspace items from WVLS.
- To reduce staff time and printing costs, WVLS again outsourced the printing of the *2022 System Information and Public Library Statistics* booklet to a local vendor.
- Efforts continued to further automate data aggregation and report generation processes for monthly and annual report preparation to reduce staff time needed to process data aggregation activities for more efficient reporting.
- In April, WVLS assumed the responsibility of sorting all materials running through the inter- and intra-system delivery at Waltco's Wausau hub on behalf of our member libraries. Since March 2016, Waltco had been doing the central sort of all items in transit, however staffing challenges had made it difficult for them to sustain service efficiently and effectively.

## 25. Pursue opportunities to collaborate with libraries and public library systems to improve services and maximize efficiencies. RESULTS:



- In February, several member libraries participated in a bulk group supply order initiated annually by the IFLS Library System. WVLS libraries that participated this year included Abbotsford, Gilman, Medford, Minocqua, Rhinelander, Three Lakes and Tomahawk. IFLS staff negotiated pricing, did the ordering, sorted orders once they arrived at the system, and repackaged orders to send to libraries. This opportunity saves our libraries on per-item and shipping costs.
- New trustee training materials were made available to public library board members in late 2024. The materials included a series of short videos for each chapter in Trustee Essentials: A Handbook for Wisconsin Public Library Trustees, which can be found here. Additionally, Trustee Tale, an online newsletter, began publication. The videos and newsletter were a collaboration of several systems: Manitowoc Calumet Library System, Nicolet Federated Library System, Outagamie Waupaca Library System, Winnefox Library System, and WVLS.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2024).**

1. **Participate** in DPI-sponsored Public Library System Redesign initiatives. Share updates with WVLS member libraries and trustees as necessary. RESULTS:
  - The statewide Public Library System Redesign Report, completed in 2019 following a two-year study, “envision[ed] larger regions of service for Integrated Library Systems throughout the state.” Details about the report are available here: <https://dpi.wi.gov/coland/plsr-update>.
  - With the help of 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 LSTA grant funding and support from the WI Department of Public Instruction, NWLS and WVLS collaborated to engage in a comprehensive joint ILS consortium exploration project to determine the value and feasibility of a merger to a shared Integrated Library System (ILS).
  - Following an extensive study known as NICE (Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration), it was determined when put to a vote that the merger did not have sufficient support amount consortium members in either system to move forward in 2024.
2. **Implement data aggregation processes helpful to WVLS staff and member libraries. Continue participation on DPI Data Workgroup, which began in mid-2023, to learn about and collaborate in state-wide data initiatives. Use information from DPI’s March 2023 Data Landscape Report to assess data driven decision making competencies among WVLS member library staff and library stakeholders.** RESULTS:
  - Staff participated in bi-monthly meetings of the DPI Data Services Workgroup.
  - WVLS was represented on the statewide Data Dashboard development team which resulted in the pilot of a statewide Data Dashboard in the fall/winter of 2024. WVLS created four “Data Dissection” activities to walk library directors and staff through use of the pilot dashboard and provided feedback to WPLC (Wisconsin Public Library Consortium) towards future development of this initiative in 2025.
3. Develop WVLS Planning Survey and share with member libraries in the first half of **2024**. RESULTS:
  - Surveys on training and continuing education needs were conducted throughout the year. A comprehensive planning survey that covered all areas of service was not conducted.
4. **Continue to update** WVLS Disaster Plan. **Present draft 2024 WVLS Disaster Plan to the WVLS Board in September.** RESULTS:
  - An outline for a WVLS Disaster Plan was drafted.
  - Time constraints unforeseeable at the time this activity was included in the 2024 WVLS Plan – i.e., staff shortages, adding the sort of delivery materials to WVLS operations, TEACH Network

migrations, and ILS exploration with member libraries and NWLS – made it challenging to get this document completed.

- Work on the WVLS Disaster Plan will continue in 2025 as staff capacity allows.

5. **To mitigate service disruptions, ensure documentation and assigned backups for routine office and service functions.** RESULTS:

- A spreadsheet was developed that includes some areas where backup is needed for day to day functions with staff designated for backups.
- The spreadsheet will be enhanced in 2025 to include additional areas/assignments where backups are needed.

**Indicate new or priority activities relating to this requirement for the plan year (2025).**

1. **Participate** in DPI-sponsored Public Library System Redesign initiatives. Share updates with WVLS member libraries and trustees as necessary.
2. **Implement data aggregation processes helpful to WVLS staff and member libraries. Continue participation in DPI Data Workgroup, which began in mid-2023, to learn about and collaborate in state-wide data initiatives. Use information from DPI's [March 2023 Data Landscape Report](#) to assess data driven decision making competencies among WVLS member library staff and library stakeholders.**
3. **With LEANWI partner ILS consortia leadership, explore RFID options at scale and develop pilot or full implementation models for grant supported project proposals.**