PLSR Steering Committee Report Draft Version 6
Version of report draft upon adjournment of the in-person committee meeting on November 7, 2018

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Background

At their meeting in August 2012, System and Resource Library Administrators Association of Wisconsin (SRLAAW) conducted a summit and subsequent survey to examine how library systems could continue to most effectively deliver services to their member libraries. This action was largely in response to shrinking governmental budgets and consolidation of public library systems in other states throughout the nation. The subsequent report, *Creating Effective Systems*, recommended a need to conduct further studies on library system services, size, and strategies for implementing optimally configured systems and establishing service and administrative standards for public library systems.[1]

During the development of the 2014-2015 biennial budget, the Joint Finance Committee recommended the Department of Administration analyze library systems to "conduct a study to identify potential savings in public library systems through consolidation, technology, efficiencies, LEAN practices and service sharing" in consultation with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The Governor deemed this recommendation unnecessary and vetoed it and acknowledged DPI as the appropriate agency to conduct such a study without the need for legislative directive.[2]

In response, DPI's Division for Libraries and Technology initiated a Lean System Study Work Group to examine demand for services by member libraries and the resources and capacity of public library systems to provide these services. This work group identified areas of service provided by library systems that could be made more efficient. The major recommendation was that study continue and experts from each topical area be tapped to develop further recommendations and implementation strategies.[3]

While the Lean System Study Work Group finalized their report, the Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND) appointed a workgroup in July of 2014 to develop a strategic vision for library systems in the 21st century. This workgroup presented a series of recommendations to State Superintendent Tony Evers in January of 2015[4]:

- Library Consulting - Leverage distributed expertise to provide specialized consulting, verified by DPI;

- Provide and Support Technology Access through aggregation of software and services including shared platforms and expertise;

- One State, One Collection;

- Resource libraries must redefine their value proposition for the twenty- first century;

- Delivery Service - Transition to multi-hub delivery network;

- Coordinate Electronic Resources - Maximize purchasing power;

- Continuing Education - Maximize impact of continuing education funding

- Eliminate statutory language requiring Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to request 13% for library system aid.

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COLAND included a road map and timeline with their recommendations to further study how public library systems could most efficiently and effectively deliver services in the topic areas identified by the Lean System Study Work group. The intent was to lead change at the local and regional level to maximize organizational resources and state funding in order to deliver the highest quality library services to Wisconsin residents for the tax dollars provided.[5]

Recommendation Development Process

In September 2015, the State Superintendent appointed an 11-member steering committee to oversee a multi-year project to re-envision how Wisconsin Public Library Systems serve Wisconsin's 381 public libraries. Membership was selected based upon library and system size as well as consideration for geographic distribution.

Members of the Steering Committee:

Name	Library	Type of Library	Role
Kent A. Barnard	Patterson Memorial Library, Wild Rose	Very Small Public	Member
Jon M. Bolthouse	Fond du Lac Public Library	Large Public, non-resource	Member
Beth A. Carpenter	Kimberly-Little Chute Public Library[1]	Mid-sized Public	Member
Bridget C. Christenson	Hatch Public Library, Mauston	Small Public	Member
John DeBacher	Department of Public Instruction	State Library Agency	DPI Liaison
Kristie L. Hauer	Shawano City-County Library	County Joint Public (& Rural)	Member
Paula Kiely	Milwaukee Public Library	Large Public & System Resource	Vice-Chair
Jessamyn C. Lee-Jones	Platteville Public Library	Small to Mid Public (Small Resource)	Member
Bryan J. McCormick	Hedberg Public Library,	Public (&	COLAND

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[1] After appointment, Beth accepted a position with the Appleton Public Library.

	Janesville	Resource; & COLAND)	Representative
Stephen R. Ohs	Lakeshores Library System	Small System	Member
John T. Thompson	IFLS Library System	Large System; LEAN team	Chair

[Insert Map of Steering Committee distribution with library system boundaries]

The State Superintendent charged the Steering Committee with providing strategic vision, oversight, and general leadership in the development of recommendations to update and refine the roles and services of Public Library Systems and maximize public investment in library systems and public libraries.[6]

The Steering Committee, as well as all workgroup members, were made up of volunteers who had other full time jobs. Recognizing this, the Steering Committee issued a nationwide Request for Proposal for a project manager to plan, organize, and implement a process focused on eliciting recommendations from the library community. The project manager was also charged with facilitating meetings and structuring the idea generation of the workgroups. Two responses were received. The Steering Committee selected WiLS as the project manager during a meeting held in October during the 2015 Wisconsin Library Association's Annual Conference.[7] The following core principles were adopted by the Steering Committee in December 2015:

- Communication is critical for the success of the process;

- The process relies on openness and trust from all participants;

- Information and data should be the bedrock of the process;

- Outside expertise will add credibility and weight to the outcomes;

- The process will be used to grow skills needed to maintain flexible and community-driven service into the future.

The project manager led the Steering Committee through a process to form topical workgroups in March of 2016. Members of the workgroups were selected from a pool of voluntary applicants. These members were assigned to workgroups based on their subject matter expertise or their status as a user or customer of a service area. Each workgroup was meant to address statutory library system obligations as defined by statute. Ultimately, the following 7 workgroups were formed:

- Chapter 43

- Collections[2]

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[2] Originally called XXXXX

- Continuing Education/Consulting[3]

- Delivery

- ILL/ILS/Discovery[4]

- Resource Libraries

- Technology

These workgroups were instructed to research their service area extensively and meet regularly to develop recommendations to the steering committee for inclusion in their final report. Workgroups were also instructed to identify, illustrate, and contextualize existing inequities in library service throughout the state and focus on maximizing equity of access for the citizens of Wisconsin, not the libraries or library systems.[8] As workgroups developed recommendations, feedback was solicited from the library community in a number of ways, including: an external group of participants tapped to review findings through surveys, presentations made at the 2016 and 2017 Wisconsin Library Association's annual conference, monthly calls scheduled with SRLAAW, and virtual question and answer periods open to the public.[9] The Steering Committee also identified communication liaisons in each system to help disseminate information to member libraries and library boards. Final reports from each workgroup were delivered to the Steering Committee on April 2, 2018.[10]

After the completion of the workgroup phase, WiLS transitioned from an active project manager role to a administrative and logistics coordinator role. The Steering Committee awarded a bid from Russell Consulting to perform the role of facilitating meetings and the decision making process.

The Steering Committee reviewed workgroup recommendations independently, as well as more formally at two in-person retreats in February and April of 2018. During these retreats, two groups of collaborators outside of the committee were identified to help craft a final report.

Ten library professionals were selected from a pool of applicants to be Core Recommendation Collaborators (CRC). The Steering Committee selected the members of the CRC based on geographic area and type of library to attempt to instill diverse thought into the process. The CRC worked with the Steering Committee on developing and testing overarching models of governance that could accommodate the workgroup report recommendations. This work was facilitated by Russell Consulting and took place during two all day meetings.

The findings of this work was shared with the library community and officially made available for public comment from June 11 to July 20. All public comments were compiled by WiLS and made available to Steering Committee and CRC members.

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[3] Originally two workgroups, merged as overlap was identified.
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A Model Recommendation Summit was held July 30-31 with XX participants joining the Steering Committee and CRC members to further test and discuss the model of governance. At the conclusion of the Summit, XX areas of consensus were identified.

The Steering Committee reconvened in person on August 16, to discuss the outcomes of the Summit and to begin to form concrete recommendations. Steering committee members were individually tasked with drafting concrete recommendations for review by the larger committee. A small writing subcommittee worked to refine the initial drafts and shared their progress with the Steering Committee

Directives Gleaned from the Library Community through the Recommendation Development Process

The process of developing the recommendations contained in this report was robust. A wide range of stakeholder groups were consulted for feedback. Library directors, library staff, system directors, system staff, library and system board trustees, county officials, as well as past and present DPI officials were all involved in the process. Large amounts of project documentation were made available to these stakeholder groups, and feedback was received from individuals and boards at the library, system and county levels. The Recommendation development process culminated in a summit-style meeting, followed by a final public comment period on the content derived from that summit. The amount of feedback received by the Steering Committee was both significant and prescriptive. An effort was therefore made to distill key directives expressed by the community at-large.

Service improvements must benefit library patrons.

Wisconsin public libraries and systems have a strong history of working together to provide excellent services. One of the Principles of the Process is to "ensure all Wisconsin public libraries have the capacity to provide equitable access to excellent library services regardless of the race, ethnicity, income, gender, or employment status of the people they serve, or their location within the state". Any service improvements moving forward must fulfill this principle and ultimately benefit the end-user, the library patron.

Workgroup reports should be used as frameworks for specific service improvements.

The Workgroups consisted of service experts from across the state. The studies they completed of current service areas were thoughtful and in-depth. Inequities were examined, which led to recommendations for improving service. Upon review by the library community, several Workgroup recommendations garnered early support for service improvements in specific areas: delivery, discovery layer, technology, and the creation of a CE portal. The Workgroup reports provide a solid foundation for moving forward in these areas.

Take action now on recommendations with robust support.

The specific areas mentioned above represent areas of greatest need for libraries; areas that would provide immediate, positive impact on service to Wisconsin residents. With the Workgroup reports serving as frameworks for improvements, action must be taken quickly and purposefully. Some of the Workgroup recommendations require more significant changes in order to affect service improvement. For example, state-scale implementation of a service such as technology would require changes to governance structures, funding, administration, and would require widespread support from the library community. It became clear throughout the

Recommendation Development Process that organic, non-mandated change should lead improvements forward.

Service improvements must be soundly-implemented.

Implementation of service improvements must be driven by effective research, planning, execution, and change-management. Implementation should also be supported by adequate resources. The library community expressed concerns about how administration, funding, and governance might change with proposed service improvements. Any service improvement moving forward must have a well-developed plan for how it will be managed, who will govern the service, how it will be implemented, how local relationships will be maintained or developed, as well as evidence of how efficiencies will be gained.

Potential Unintended Consequences Should Be Anticipated and Studied

Tweak and add content later.

Recommendation 1 - Develop System Standards, Best Practices, and Accountability

Recommendation

Establish mandatory system standards to ensure equitable delivery of services to member libraries in all parts of the state.

Create a formal mechanism for library systems to define best practices outside of system standards and make those best practices available to all library systems in the state.

Summary

Library systems are required to provide a full range of services per Wisconsin State Statute 43.24 to qualify and maintain its eligibility to receive state aid. The purpose of standards for Wisconsin public library systems and system staff is to encourage the further development of quality service by providing public library systems with a tool to identify strengths, recognize areas for improvement, and strengthen accountability to member libraries. It could be unlikely that all systems would meet these standards with current state funding. Instead, systems may collaborate and/or consolidate in order to provide the level of service the standards would represent.

Wisconsin State Statute 43.24(3) currently allows the Department to reduce aid to systems if they don't comply with existing standards. Reduction in aid could place additional complications on a system to meet the standards. It is recommended that any system unable to adhere to the standards should be required to develop a 12-month compliance plan approved by the Division to maintain current aid levels. The compliance plan should include resources needed, collaborative and/or consolidation opportunities and a stakeholders' communication plan. . .

It is recommended that the library system standards mirror the design of the public library standards for ease of use. The sections should include:

- Statutory Requirements (Chapter 43.15; 43.16; 43.17; 43.19; 43.24; 43.58)
  - Systems
  - Library Membership
- Tier One, a system must meet all of the Tier 1 standards (base funding?)
- Tier Two, all of Tier 1 and all but two of the Tier 2 standards (performance incentives)

It is also recognized that there are best practices in operating a library system that should not be necessarily addressed through formal standards but would be valuable in standardizing for further study and improvement of library systems in the future. For example:

- Accounting Standards

  The system business managers working with the the Public Library Data, Funding and Compliance Consultant build upon the work of the Funding Subcommittee to develop standardized revenue and expenditure accounts and terminology to provide consistent and uniform reporting of income and expenditures for the System Annual Reports and System Program Budgets and Plans.

- Consulting Services

  It is recommended that a team of system directors/consultants representing the 16 library systems along with Division representation develop a tracking system which uses the broad consulting areas identified in the PLSR Consulting Workgroup report as well as the type (email, phone, in-person, site) and number of interactions per year.

- Governance

  The level of individual board member awareness of library statutes and system operations can vary. A "Trustee Essentials" does not exist for system board members instead they rely on the more general version as their guide.

The creation of a formal mechanism to define best practices and standardization of data collection would better allow Wisconsin library systems to review the impact of the PLSR process on state residents as well as continue to improve system services into the future.

Value Proposition

Library services in the state are currently delivered to member libraries on an inequitable basis. Member libraries are often unaware of system standards and often systems use their best judgement in delivering services that may or may not be viewed as standard system services in other parts of the state. In 2013, SRLAAW created a set of voluntary standards to help with this, but service inequity continues. Creating mandatory standards would establish a baseline to ensure every library in the state has consistent expectations of service from their system. This will better enable local libraries to utilize local funding to augment system services in a way that best serves their community.

A substantial amount of time was spent during the PLSR process in gathering disparate data from systems to analyze system services and make recommendations for improvements. Sharing best practices and standard reporting practices between systems will better allow for

the measuring the success of PLSR recommendations as well as making further analysis and improvements possible. In addition, especially with financial data, standardization will reduce the time required for mandatory reporting for all systems. Libraries will also be able to compare system services easily, allowing libraries to easily identify and correct inequities of service delivery that may arise in the future.

Suggested Implementation Process

- DPI Establishes Library System Standards Task Force - *December 31, 2018*
  - Model the process and document after the one used for current edition of the public library standards https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/pld/pdf/wisconsin_public_library_standards_6th_edition_2018_final.pdf
  - Composition 6-7 Members: System Directors; Public Library Directors or Library Staff representing Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3 libraries
  - Task force members should represent a diversity of locations and sizes of systems as service providers and of libraries as service recipients whenever possible. Individuals with experience with different libraries and systems would be a desired characteristic.
  - Public Library Development Team to act as Task Force Resources and Project Lead
- Review current accountability measures, what's working, what isn't
  - Currently there are several measures of accountability for library systems-- Governance; System Plan and Program Budget; System Annual Report; and System Plan and Program Budget.
- Release Draft for Comment - *April 1, 2019*
- Final Draft - *June 1, 2019*
  - Where should the final draft be submitted? Is this something that ultimately needs to go into statutes?
- Implementation - *July 1, 2019*
  - Sorting process: what could be done under ch 43, what are goals, administrative rules, best practices?
- Incorporate into System Planning Document - *August 1, 2019*
- Formalizing sharing of best practices
  - System Accounting Standardization
    - Convene Working Group of System Business Managers - *January 2018*
    - Release draft recommendations - *April 1, 2019*
    - Final Draft and Implementation - *June 1, 2019*
    - Incorporate into System Annual Report, Planning and Program Budget Documents - *July 1, 2019*
  - Consulting Services

- - ■ Convene Working Group of Continuing Education Consultants - *January 2018*
    - ■ Release draft recommendations for tracking - *March 1, 2019*
    - ■ Incorporate any changes from library community - *May 1, 2019*
    - ■ Begin tracking CE/Consulting hours - *July 1, 2019*
  - ○ Trustee Essentials
    - ■ DPI drafts Trustee essentials - *January, 2019*
    - ■ Draft Trustee essentials is presented at WAPL 2019 and shared with the community
    - ■ DPI incorporates suggestions received - *Summer 2019*
    - ■ Trustee Essentials formally adopted and distributed - *Winter 2019*

Suggested Funding Source(s)

- LSTA - reimbursement to task force and working group members for meetings to discuss and establish standards
- WISE - any sort of interoperability to share best practices between software systems or reporting forms, talking about data standardization, creating a best practices repository

Measuring Success

- Standards are drafted and adopted by SRLAAW and COLAND
- Number of systems who are able to comply with tier 1 standards
- Number of systems who can comply with higher standards
- Repository for best practices is created
- Number of objects in best practices repository
- Number of uses of objects in best practices repository
- Measurable equity component

Recommendation 2 - Incentives for Change

Recommendation

The Steering Team recommends the Department of Public Instruction develop and support, with the assistance of an appointed committee, an incentive program that will encourage consolidations of Library System services to local libraries that would include voluntary mergers among the current 16 Wisconsin Public Library Systems and participation in regional or statewide services, for the purpose of reducing administrative costs in order to achieve equity in service delivery to Wisconsin public libraries and to improve and/or expand services to all Wisconsin residents.

Summary

This recommendation aligns with a series of studies documenting and analyzing the cost of providing services by regional library systems, which documented the duplication of services and administrative costs and suggested that opportunities to provide those same services at a reduced cost would lead to improved services throughout the State. Consolidation of services will lead to lower costs and increase equity of service delivery throughout the state. With statewide or regional services and fewer systems, cost savings could be used for to achieve equity or for expanding direct services to local libraries.
Following the PLSR process, consensus was built around these ideas. Consolidation of services and offering services on a regional, or in some cases, a statewide level and a reduction in the number of Systems would offer opportunities for reducing costs and improving services. Reductions in administrative costs would improve equity of service, increase efficiency of operations, and provide greater "protection" against financial downswings.
There is also a strong consensus that any mergers of Library Systems work best when voluntary and not mandated; further, it was agreed that incentives will help motivate systems to undertake the process. Attempts at merging systems or consolidating services can be challenging due to issues of local control, trust, and unclear processes and costs. There is no clearly articulated process, checklist, or step-by-step guide for implementing these types of changes. The DPI is well positioned to develop tools and to provide a level of support and consultation needed by library (and *library system*) administrators and boards.
The experience of individuals involved in both successful and unsuccessful mergers and consolidated services can provide valuable input in the development of these guides and should be asked to assist in their development and in identifying additional incentives, such as financial support for associated costs such as legal consultation and public relations.

Value Proposition

Providing services to local libraries through Wisconsin Public Library Systems is imperative for Wisconsin residents to have equitable access to quality services that meet their needs. The reduction of overhead and administrative costs associated with System operations through System mergers or service consolidation will benefit the equitable delivery of these services. While every merger or move to consolidate will be different, certain elements must be present to ensure success, including trust and commitment. The use of incentives can help fuel the

motivation needed to undertake the challenge of merging systems or moving to regional/statewide service delivery. Financial incentives and professional support provided through DPI will help with the direct costs as well as the personnel costs. A successful merger and/or regionalized service can be a catalyst for encouraging others to consider merging. Incentives to consider include funding for both future and the change process, such as project management, consulting, legal fees, planning, facilitation, legislative support, fiscal analysis, and other related expenses. an action plan that can be followed, authoritative support from DPI, funding for project leadership and support staff. These changes, when supported financially and through expert professional assistance, can be empowering to those directly involved, and inspiring to others.

Suggested implementation process

Upon the adoption of this recommendation, the Department of Public Instruction should support mergers and/or regionalization of services, by appointing a small team consisting of DPI staff and subject experts who have experience with merging or consolidating services, to develop a step-by-step guide to assist systems that wish to voluntarily undertake such changes. DPI will identify resources to fund incentive grants and develop a process and application for awarding grants, that will cover costs related to project management, consulting, legal fees, planning, facilitation, legislative support, fiscal analysis, and other related expenses. At such time that Systems declare their interest in merging, DPI will play a leadership role in advising and guiding the systems. They will develop standards and best practices regarding accounting and bookkeeping practices to smooth future consolidation of services and/or systems.

Measuring success

Measuring the success of this recommendation will be in documentation of several deliverables and in the action taken on the part of library systems to merge with others or to consolidate their services with another system. Deliverable include: 1) A step-by-step guide to System mergers; 2) an incentive package to aid in Systems in these processes; and 3) a grants process and application.

Success will also be measured by at least one successful merger and one successful regionalization of services. Quantitative and qualitative measures will be made using evaluation tools such process surveys, satisfaction surveys, data analytics, interviews, etc., with the results published in local and national publications and presented at relevant conferences.

Recommendation 3 - Reduce the Number of Systems

Recommendation

The PLSR Steering Committee recommends that the current number of regional public library systems be reduced.

Summary

Sixteen regional public library systems provide services to public libraries in Wisconsin. Many of these services -delivered at scale- are now relied-upon and save libraries hundreds of thousands of dollars on an annual basis. Since the passage of the legal framework allowing formation in 1971, systems have each evolved differently. Counties are the basic geographic building blocks for systems, thus systems range in size from ten counties, to single counties. Over a number of recent years, consensus has been growing among the library community that a strategic reduction in the number of regional systems (through consolidation) would help address service capacity issues. Adding to this consensus are a number of key reports by stakeholder groups, each insinuating potential service improvements resulting from a strategic reduction. These reports include:

- "Creating More Effective Public Library Systems" (2013/SRLAAW);
- "Lean System Study Work Group Recommendations" (2014/DPI)
- "Strategic Vision for Library Systems in the 21st Century" (2015/COLAND)

In addition to the above reports, the concept of a strategic reduction in the number of library systems was a key recommendation sent to the PLSR Steering Committee with a highly robust degree of support from the participants in the PLSR Model Development Summit.

Value Proposition

There are some areas of the state where there is great potential value to be gained from a reduction in the number of systems serving those areas. Achieved through consolidation, it is clearly possible that a smaller number of slightly larger multi-county federated library systems would be able to furnish member libraries (therefore also patrons) with a higher quality, more comprehensive set of services than most single-county library systems are able to provide.

In some regions of the state, strategic reductions in the numbers of systems will result in higher quality, more comprehensive set of services than most smaller library systems can provide.

Suggested Implementation Process

In order to achieve the underlying goals of this recommendation, the following process (or some version thereof) is advisable:

- DPI should provide adequate resources and full support for implementation of recommendation #7 "Using Incentives to Drive System Mergers";

- Remove statutory barriers to library system mergers;

- Document and share best practices for library system mergers;

- Staffing changes, changes in leadership, etc. Consider consolidating through attrition;

- Engage DPI consulting when system director position is vacated to explore consolidation opportunities;

- Encourage Library Systems with 3 or fewer counties first;

- Support precursors to mergers, such as: Incentivize ILS mergers.

Measuring Success

- Fewer number of systems exist.

- A comparison of the list of services available to a member library of a single-county system pre-consolidation versus the list of services available to that same library after consolidation;

- A comparison of response times pre and post consolidation from the time a service is requested to the time the service is satisfactorily delivered (examples: resolution of IT help desk tickets, library consulting call-back times);

- A comparison of the net funding available via the system to member libraries pre and post consolidation.

Recommendation 4 - Evaluate Funding Distribution

Recommendation

The Steering Committee recommends the Department of Public Instruction appoint a study group tasked with conducting a thorough analysis of the current funding formula, including practices utilized to apportion state aids for regional library systems.[5] As a component of this investigation, the study group shall explore and propose alternative funding formulas, methods of apportionment, or other solutions with potential to improve equity of access to high-quality library services. The Steering Committee further recommends that any actual funding change be accompanied by an increase in state aid to library systems, in order to assure that no library patron experiences a decrease in service due to adverse impacts upon any library system.

Summary

Each biennium, the Wisconsin legislature approves an amount of state aid intended to fund the operation of regional library systems. This appropriation is further apportioned to the regional systems by the Department of Public Instruction. In general, this process is conducted according to a combination of statutory imperatives and administrative procedures. This formula -- as originally written -- combines aspects of population, geographic area, and municipal, and county expenditures to determine the amount each regional system receives on an annual basis. In the late nineties, legislative events occurred which in effect "froze" the data sets used to calculate funding levels of that time. Therefore, for at least twenty years, apportionment of state aid to library systems has not been based upon up-to-date population demographics or municipal expenditures. This is at odds with the intent of the original formula design as well as the 1999 attempt to replace local expenditures with shared revenue.

Throughout the PLSR process, discourse about the appropriateness (or fairness) of the funding mechanism for regional systems has persisted throughout the library community. At least one alternative funding formula has been proposed, as well as a number of discrete factors that should be explored (such as poverty, unemployment, and infant mortality rates). It is the belief of the Steering Committee that a sufficiently vigorous investigation of possible alternatives to current practice should occur. Such an investigation should culminate in meaningful changes that improve equity of access to high-quality library services across Wisconsin, while ensuring no system sees a decrease in base funding.

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[5] The Department of Public Instruction provides a clear explanation of the formula and changes since it's inception at
https://wilibrariesforeveryone.blogspot.com/2015/05/calculating-state-aid-to-systems.htm)

Value Proposition

System funding has a direct impact on local libraries' ability to provide quality services to patrons. To ensure every Wisconsin resident benefits from library services, funding should adequately support the *system services* that libraries need. By conducting a thorough and objective analysis of the current State funding formula, alternative formula options, and any potentially unintended consequences, a solid foundation will be achieved for further decision-making and consensus building.

Suggested Implementation Process

- Appoint an implementation team.[6]
- Conduct an in-depth analysis of the current funding formula, practices utilized to apportion state aids for regional library systems as described in the recommendation.
- A budget should be established to support the work of the task force including, but not limited to project management, a third party consultant, travel, printing, and other miscellaneous costs.
- The task force should be in place no later than March 2019, with their report due no later than September 2019.

Measuring Success

Success will be measured by 1) the quality of the final recommendation and the rigor used in its development; 2) the ability of funding levels to ensure that each system meet new standards of service; and 3) the level to which equity is achieved while holding systems financially harmless.

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[6] The Steering Committee recommends a small number (3-7) of topical experts. Makeup of the implementation team should minimize potential for conflicts of interest. https://www.google.com/url?q=http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/is-your-team-too-big-too-small-whats-the-right-number-2/&sa=D&ust=1541014342685000&usg=AFQjCNEFA2abTUlOjDIMiMopoNQLiAlPSw

Recommendation 5 - Delivery Pilots

Recommendation

The PLSR Steering committee recommends that the Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction initiate one or more pilot projects relating to library delivery services. Such pilot projects shall have the overarching goals of A) proving concepts relating to the PLSR Delivery Work Group Report, B) decreasing wait times for patrons, C) improving overall resilience of delivery services on a statewide basis, and D) reducing duplicated efforts.

Summary

Physical resource-sharing generates tremendous value for libraries and, therefore, citizens. Sixteen independent regional delivery networks currently provide physical delivery of library materials between Wisconsin libraries. These regional networks are each operated and administered by regional public library systems. Each regional network's hub is, in turn, linked to the delivery service of the South Central Library System (headquartered in the metropolitan area of Madison, WI). The end result is a resource-sharing architecture whereby a library patron in Superior can request a library item from a library branch in Kenosha, and receive it in a number of days.

In their report, the PLSR Delivery Work Group produced a number of recommendations geared toward providing more equitable delivery services to all areas of the State. The end-model originally described by the Work Group features eight larger delivery regions -each with a single "hub" location- that are interlinked. This delivery network was envisioned by the Work Group to be funded and coordinated as a single statewide delivery service. This would be an extremely significant shift in how delivery is provided in Wisconsin: a fact that was confirmed through robust feedback received from the library community throughout the PLSR project.

It is of unique importance to note the role of the South Central Library System in statewide resource sharing. Statewide delivery exists in Wisconsin due to the South Central Library System's work in the early 1990's to establish it. As the service took on a life of its own, it required that SCLS relocate to a larger facility, and develop internal management and logistics structures to support both the statewide service and SCLS's delivery service to its member libraries.
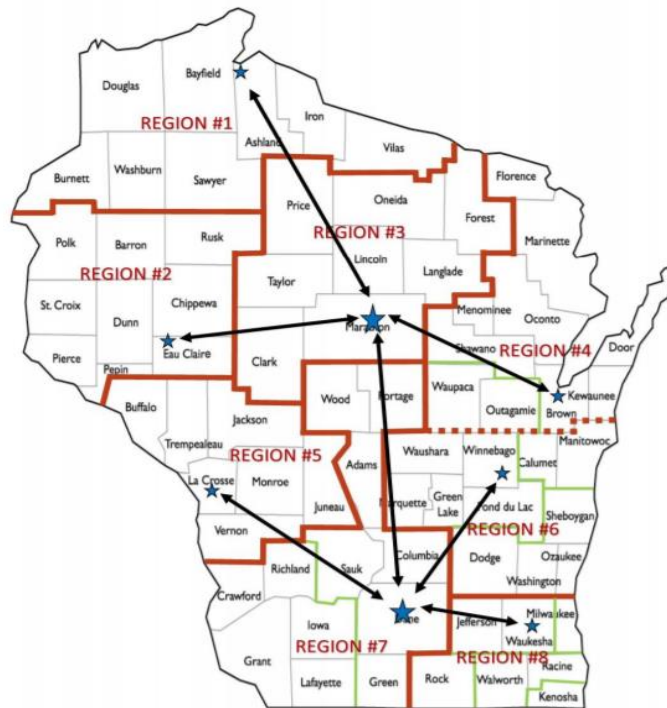
Value Proposition

- Through the pilot project approach, many of the concepts addressed in the Delivery Work Group report may be tested in a gradual fashion without putting the entire statewide infrastructure under stress.
- Equity of access to rapid, efficient delivery services will be increased in areas of the state under stress related to funding levels.
- Should the pilot project approach be successful, a blueprint will thus exist for further stages of transition.
- Should regional consolidations occur, efficiencies will be gained:
    - Transit times - resulting in patrons getting materials faster.
    - Miles travelled - resulting in fuel cost efficiencies.
    - Reduction of duplicated administrative overhead - resulting in economies of scale.
- Should regional consolidations of delivery occur -- either as part of a pilot project or in the latter stages of transition to the end-model proposed by the Work Group -- it is possible that existing regional library systems may see a reduction in delivery-related costs and a net increase in funding available for other services.

Suggested implementation process

One of the most common themes expressed by the library community through feedback during the PLSR process is that change should be rooted in sound empirical research, well-planned, incremental, and voluntary. The Steering Committee understands that, in order to satisfy these imperatives, reinvention of library delivery services may unfold in a manner that differs from the exact path laid out in the Delivery Work Group recommendations. However, for the purpose of laying the first cobblestones of a path toward achievement of the vision laid-out by the Work Group, the following process may be used:

- Hire a project manager and appoint a small task-force to oversee implementation of one or more pilot projects related to delivery service.
- Identify regions of the state where delivery-related pilot projects would create the necessary data to determine if more wide reaching changes to delivery are in the best interest of the state.
- Work with systems in identified regions to coordinate delivery and establish a single hub.
- Further work with systems in identified regions to create a link to South Central Library System, and/or other links to any future additional regional hubs as described in the delivery workgroup report.
- Utilize the Delivery Work Group recommendations to guide further development of regions to establish suggested initial core statewide hub connections between regions in the south and north of the new model:
  - Working with the current Indianhead and Wisconsin Valley library systems to establish a northern hub to provide connection with a southern hub for statewide delivery.
    - This pilot would include most or all of regions #2 and #3 in the map below. It would include nonpublic as well as public library delivery clients.
    - Both of these systems use the same contracted vendor, which should make the transition easier.
    - Northern Waters Library System (region #1 below) could be added later, if this proof of concept is successful.
    - Regions #4 could also be added later, completing the proposed delivery plan for the northern part of the state.
  - Working with the current Winding Rivers, Southwest, and South Central Library systems to improve delivery service in the southwest region while also establishing as southern hub to connect to the north (see above).
    - Delivery in proposed region #5 (see map) would be provided by Winding Rivers.
    - Delivery in proposed region #7 would be provided by South Central.
    - Delivery in Southwest would be increased to 4 or 5 days depending on availability of resources.

- The advantages of these pilots are:
  - They demonstrate the feasibility of the new concept in both a vendor provided and library provided delivery environment.
  - By eliminating the current Western Route of the statewide delivery, those funds would be available for establishing a north/south hub connection. These hubs would replace the current route.
  - Nonpublic participants in the statewide network could be provided with increased frequency of delivery without increased cost.
  - The underserved libraries in the southwest could receive increased frequency of delivery without increased cost.
- Using an incremental implementation process, measure feasibility in an ongoing fashion through data gathering, cost analysis and evaluation of standards.
- A hybrid approach of contracted vendors and in-house delivery operations is needed for a stable delivery service.
- Any competitive bid processes will not make final decisions of service providers based on cost alone. The average per stop costs that currently exist in the state is essentially equal between the systems utilizing a contracted delivery service and those operating an in-house service. A balanced approach to maintain service stability can be done in a way that is also most cost effective.

The map on page XX shows the recommended eight regions model and possible hubs (starred on the map) in each region. While the delivery hubs will likely coincide with existing system or vendor locations in some regions during implementation, delivery hubs in this model are not fixed long-term as the potential for changing vendors through a competitive bid process may impact where a delivery hub is located.

Measuring Success

For the purposes of evaluation, a number of processes and data points could be gathered and analyzed at different times. To be sure, cost data (including "cost-per-stop"), transit metrics and patron wait-times should all be gathered at the beginning, during, and after "go live" of any delivery-related pilot projects and compared in an ongoing analysis. Doing this will ensure that success of the pilot(s) can be evaluated based on hard data. Service levels should also be evaluated throughout the process. For example, the number of delivery days per week should be analyzed across the state in order to demonstrate whether equity of access to high-quality service is increasing. In a more subjective -- yet important -- sense, satisfaction levels among libraries and patrons should also be gathered before, during, and after.

Recommendation 6 - Discovery Layer

Recommendation

The Department of Public Instruction will engage with topical experts, regional public library systems, and the library community at-large to create an effective, well-managed, state-scale library discovery layer.

Summary

A "discovery layer" refers to the visual interface used by library patrons to find, identify, select, and obtain the various types of resources offered by the 21st century public library. These resources include physical books and audiovisual materials, as well as an ever-broadening variety of downloadable and streamable digital resources such as audiobooks, feature films, news and/or scholarly articles, and other digital content.

The PLSR process has resulted in an unprecedented degree of understanding in regard to the commonalities and differences between library management software products. Likewise, it has also produced greater awareness of how library patrons seek resources, how discovery services are provided by the current regional library systems, and how those services are funded and managed.

Also throughout the PLSR process, the concept of a state-scale discovery layer option has maintained a robust degree of support from project participants, the library community, and other stakeholder groups.

Goals of the Recommendation

- Achieve interoperability between the various library management software platforms used in Wisconsin (COLAND Strategic Direction #2);

- Provide a best-in-class search interface option that allows patrons seamless access to library collections (both physical and digital) across the state regardless of where they live (COLAND Strategic Direction #3);

- Reduce procurement, budgeting, training and technical administration efforts that are duplicated by the current sixteen regional systems in maintaining fourteen discrete online discovery platforms, and;

- Embrace the critical need of libraries (and regional systems) to make decisions and tailor services in response to the needs of library patrons where they are.

- Add a bullet here pointing to possibility of opening up a new collaboration space in regard to making digital resources available - Badgerlink content, overdrive content, local collections or other content licensed locally or regionally.

Value Proposition

Wisconsin libraries already lead the nation in regard to sharing resources. However, the set of technologies relied upon to accomplish this are aging (for footnote: z39.50 originates in the 1970s). Successful creation of an effective, well-managed discovery layer at state-scale would improve services to patrons in the following ways:

- Library patrons would be able to search the collections of any public library in the state, obtaining rich, detailed and vibrant results that are optimized to achieve the shortest delivery time based on their geographic location;

- Library systems and/or individual libraries that do not have the resources to purchase or operate top-tier library management software would nonetheless benefit, dramatically increasing the baseline patron experience;

- Discovery-based interoperability between existing library management software would open up a significant new collaboration space - removing a barrier to new partnerships and allowing freer communication between libraries.

Suggested Implementation Process

- Hire or appoint a project manager and/or small task-force vested with the ability to drive the project;

- Conduct a general risk/benefit assessment in order to identify unanticipated consequences;

- Conduct a governance assessment in order to determine how decisions impacting the look, feel and function of the state-scale discovery layer will be made;

- Conduct a needs assessment to identify minimum technical requirements necessary to achieve interoperability between different library management software platforms;

- Identify a communication protocol that meets the above determined requirements for interoperability;

- Identify and use leverage to ensure that all major library software vendors doing business in Wisconsin support the chosen protocol or framework;

- Create, if necessary, an application capable of translating action messages between all major library management systems;

- Explore the current capabilities of library software vendor discovery products, including open-source platforms;

- Conduct a fiscal assessment to determine costs when scaled to the entire state;

- Organize a process to evaluate and select a product that will serve as the state-scale discovery layer;

- Create a structure for ongoing evaluation and improvement.

Measuring success

It is recommended that a statewide "importance/effectiveness" survey be developed, and deployed both before and after implementation. This survey should include an in-depth list of currently available and desired features of library discovery software. By deploying the survey before and after, comparisons may be made and conclusions drawn. For example: if - after implementation - a significantly greater number of libraries report a significantly greater degree of access to features they deem as important, the conclusion may be drawn that the project resulted in better service to more libraries.

Recommendation 7 – Learning Management System for Professional Development

Recommendation

Create and deploy a learning management system capable of A) housing and delivering content related to library professional development, B) managing a paperless system of certification and validation, and C) offering a statewide calendar of professional development opportunities for librarians and trustees.

Summary

Wisconsin is made stronger through a dedicated corps of library professionals. Like many other professions, ongoing professional development opportunities are needed to maintain a sharp edge. Wisconsin requires that library and regional system directors maintain certification through the Department of Public Instruction. This ensures that libraries are managed efficiently and effectively.

Historically, each regional library system has provided local professional development opportunities to its member libraries, and managed the process of certifying local staff. As the availability of new learning technologies has accelerated, many library systems have begun to collaborate, share content, and work together. This area is ripe for further positive change. However, the certification process is still entirely paper-based and requires many "touches" by local, regional, and state individuals.

The learning management system should meet, and exceed, the professional development needs of library professionals and library board trustees throughout Wisconsin. This system would serve as a repository of online professional development content (streaming courses, webinars, etc.) while also providing library staff and trustees with the ability to locate nearby in-person professional development activities through incorporation of an interactive event calendar. It is further envisioned that this portal will include the capability for library professionals to manage their own certification status online, while providing DPI the capability to exercise their statutory oversight obligation in a manner that is both efficient and effective.

Goals of the Recommendation

The goals of this recommendation are to:
- Furnish library professionals with a more effective means of discovering and obtaining content and instruction that is directly applicable to their professional development.

- Eliminate the currently paper-based process of certification, in favor of a user-friendly online system to streamline the process of applying for certification, submitting and tracking contact hours, validating contact hours, and granting of certification (or recertification) status.

- Foster collaboration between agencies that offer professional development opportunities through implementation of a curated calendar of events and opportunities across the entire state.

Value Proposition

Creation of a web-based CE Portal based upon modern technologies and best practices would have a number of positive impacts:
- Public librarian certification requirements in Wisconsin date back to as early as 1921. Modernizing this process would benefit our state by ensuring the presence of highly qualified leaders in the profession, while leveraging technology to reduce general administrative overhead (COLAND Strategic Direction #5).

- A well-curated learning management platform would significantly reduce the valuable time required to locate professional development opportunities. This, in turn, would result in more time spent providing direct service to the public (COLAND Strategic Direction #2).

- Current practice is for each regional library system to provide opportunities for professional development to member libraries. Therefore, quality and frequency vary greatly. Creation of a single online tool geared toward professional development for librarians and library trustees would reduce duplication of effort and spur collaboration while simultaneously improving equity of access to many high-quality professional development opportunities on a statewide basis (COLAND Strategic Direction #5).

Suggested Implementation process

- Appoint a small implementation team of well-qualified individuals.
- Consider hiring a project manager to drive the project, manage the implementation team, and serve as a bridge between stakeholder groups.
- Review any specifications for the platform that have been created to date, and create an authoritative list.
- Compare specifications with existing learning management system vendor capabilities.
- Explore potential cost, quality and feasibility of a tool developed "in house" by DPI or Department of Administration (DOA) personnel.
- Utilize platform specifications document to craft a Request for Pricing (RFP) or Request for Information (RFI). Distribute the request to qualified learning management system vendors and/or software development agencies.

- Create a process to evaluate software options, including:
    - Ability to meet content requirements and goals of this PLSR recommendation
    - User Experience
    - Administration requirements (back-end management)
    - Cost

Note: Any procurement process should emphasize results over cost. For example: selection of a platform simply because it complies with DPI procurement guidelines and is low-cost would not be appropriate and should be avoided through process design.

Measuring Success

- Workflow analysis of certification process
- A general survey should be completed to assess levels of satisfaction among library professionals with respect to access to (and quality of) professional development resources. This survey could also be done "before" and "after" for purposes of comparison.
- An analysis should be conducted by an external party to assess levels of collaboration between regional library systems.

Appendix A: Library Systems in Wisconsin: A Brief History

Wisconsin's library system law, providing funding for coordinated regional library services, officially went into effect in 1971 when Senate Bill 47 was signed into law. The creation of public library systems fostered the establishment of a strong network of resource sharing and mutually beneficial interdependence. The actual creation and development of public library systems in Wisconsin was a voluntary and gradual process. No county or public library is required to be a member of a library system; yet, as of this writing, all of Wisconsin's 72 counties and over 380 public libraries are library system members. Wisconsin's seventeen public library systems developed in distinct ways in response to the needs of their member libraries and area residents. The systems have continued to evolve as changes in society, resources, and technologies create new demands and opportunities.

The seeds for regional library services had been planted years earlier and several regional services had coordinated cooperative services. In 1956, the American Library Association published *Public Library Service: a Guide to Evaluation with Minimum Standards,* which introduced the library system concept. That same year the United States Congress enacted the Library Services Act (LSA) to provide federal funding for extending and improving public library service to rural communities. The Wisconsin Library Association and the Wisconsin Free Library Commission submitted a plan for LSA funding. Also in 1956, twenty-five public libraries joined together to form the Southwest Association of Public Libraries. In 1959 they obtained LSA funding to establish an ordering and processing center serving five counties, the predecessor to the Southwest Wisconsin Library System. Also that year, a regional library system was established in northwest Wisconsin serving five counties, the precursor of the Northern Waters Library Service.

In 1963, the Free Library Commission, WLA and the Wisconsin Library Trustees Association adopted *A Design for Public Library Development in Wisconsin: Standards for Measuring Progress.* The following statement from that document helps to convey the vision
"Simply stated, the library system concept means that only by working together, sharing services and materials, can libraries meet the full needs of their users. Each public library, whatever its size, is an important link in a system of libraries joined together either formally or informally."
That document described a shared vision of public library systems that ultimately led to the development and adoption of 1971 Senate Bill 47 through a series of events:

- In 1965 the Wisconsin Library Commission was folded into DPI and became the Division for Library Services.

- In 1966 WLA approved a legislative study program calling for legislation to "implement the library system concept and interlibrary cooperation in Wisconsin.

- In 1968 the Library Development and Legislative Committee (LD&L) of WLA developed a report for the legislature.

- In 1969 that report was introduced as Senate Bill 363.

- The Senate Education Committee recommended the bill be revised, and

- In 1971 Senate Bill 47 was introduced and, after extensive legislative efforts by WLA, was passed by both houses. The bill included the following declaration:

  "Recognizing the importance of making quality library resources and services readily available to all of the citizens of Wisconsin, the legislature, through this act, seeks to modernize library laws for public and school libraries, to promote development and improvement of public libraries through library systems and to provide maximum opportunities for cooperation among all types of libraries in order to encourage the most effective use of the library resources in this state."

Since the passage of Senate Bill 47, a number of subsequent components of legislation have been passed to supplement and refine the guidelines and processes by which library systems operate. As of this writing, the following map represents the sixteen regional library systems in Wisconsin:
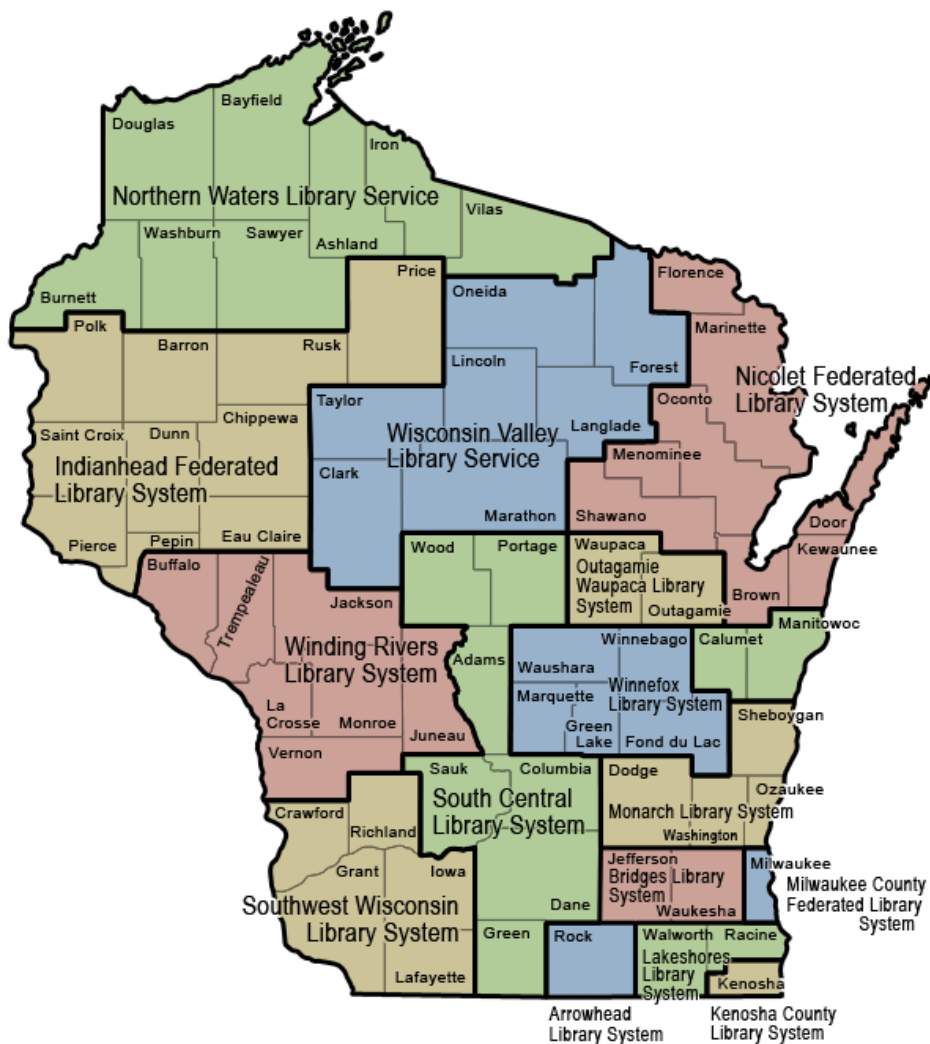
Appendix B: Funding Strategies and Sources

The PLSR project has not only produced the recommendations in this report, but a series of deep dives (in the form of work group reports) into each individual service provided regional library systems. Taken as a whole, it is abundantly clear there are a variety of opportunities to improve access to services, and to improve the effectiveness of the services themselves. In order to move forward without significant disruption to libraries and patrons, new service infrastructure must be put in place in parallel with the old. Realistically, this will require additional sources of funding beyond what is currently available in the form of state aid to regional systems.

Local library contributions - libraries paying into services

Through the process of recommendation development, a number of common themes have emerged in regard to potential sources of additional funding to support implementation:

- In-Kind resources contributed by state agencies. The Department of Public Instruction, Department of Administration and others have significant staff assets, though it is understood that resources are finite and priorities are many. These agencies could incorporate implementation of PLSR recommendations into their planning processes, so as to allow. Examples of in-kind resources might include:

  - User experience (UX) or design consulting expertise in regard to a library staff continuing education portal and validation tracker;

  - Direct development of software or web applications related to a library staff continuing education portal and validation tracker or ILS discovery layer;

  - Web hosting for a library staff continuing education portal and validation tracker;

  - Administrative coordination of ongoing initiatives related to moving the PLSR recommendations forward.

- Library Services and Technology Act funding derived from the "Grants to States" program. Through this program, Wisconsin is allocated roughly 2.8 million dollars. Expenditures of these dollars are prioritized by the Department of Public Instruction. Future planning by the division could incorporate funding to support implementation of PLSR recommendations. Specific examples may include:

  - A grant category to support a regional delivery pilot build-out;

  - A grant category to support development of a state-scale discovery layer;

  - A grant category to incentivize development and implementation of system best-practices.

- Library Services and Technology Act funding derived from other specific grant programs. A number of non-block grant programs exist, including the "Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian" and "National Leadership Grant for Libraries" programs. Other programs may be established in the future. These programs may provide an opportunity to acquire funding for components of the recommendations that require more in-depth work. Examples may include:

  - Grant applications designed to fund additional project management capacity.

- Funding related to the Wisconsin Information System for Education (WISE) program. The WISE program is focused on creating - and coordinating - the services and infrastructure required to improve how we use data to learn and educate. This program has recently been broadened to include libraries. It is possible that WISE-related funding (or other assets) may be allocated to implementing certain recommendations. Examples may include:

  - Funding the development of a uniform set of ILS communication messages;

  - Using the list of ILS communication messages to build a universal ILS communicator tool to aid regional delivery pilots;

  - Working with ILS vendors who do business in Wisconsin to ensure compliance with uniform communication specifications;

  - Funding and coordinating a process of product evaluation.

- Increase in state aids to the regional library systems. Annual state aid funding is allocated according to state statutes and the administrative code. However, the library community could establish future legislative priorities which include requesting a modest increase in state aid which the existing systems would use to collectively fund specific implementation components of PLSR recommendations. Examples may include:

  - Funding for the development of a universal ILS communicator tool to aid in regional delivery pilots;

  - Funding designed to ease transition to any changes to a modified funding allocation formula;

  - Any components of the recommendations or opportunities identified through the PLSR process with strong collaborative potential.

This document should be read as an initial consideration of potential funding sources. It is possible other sources may exist