

Creating More Effective Public Library Systems

System and Resource Library Administrators Association of Wisconsin

Adopted August 2, 2013

Introduction

Over forty years ago, to address the limitations of relying solely on municipalities to provide library services, the Legislature created the public library system program¹ “to improve and extend public library services, promote resource sharing among libraries, and increase access to library materials and services by the state’s residents.”² It was the intent of the Legislature that state aid funds be used by systems “to coordinate and supplement library resources and services beyond what could be provided at the local and county levels.”¹

Since their establishment, systems have been undeniably successful in addressing their charge to ensure that all Wisconsin residents have access to the high-quality library services they need to meet personal, work, educational, and community goals. Before the establishment of library systems, many state residents had no legal access to public library service. Now all state residents have access to library service and are able to choose the libraries they’d prefer to use.

When it comes to sharing resources, each year over 9 million items are shared between libraries to fill requests for materials not available locally. Wisconsin ranks 1st nationally in interlibrary loans per capita, and system-coordinated sharing is a model for using public resources efficiently.

Public library service in Wisconsin has developed and improved over the years, in no small part due to the role of systems in providing state-funded services to public libraries and their patrons. Public libraries agree to certain membership requirements in order to participate in library systems, and, in return, systems provide a wide range of services, tailored to meet regional needs, that enhance local library service. Local libraries and their patrons benefit from system membership because state-aid and cooperative funding allows systems to:

- Enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of resource sharing through management of shared, automated integrated library systems
- Provide specialized staff assistance and continuing education opportunities for local library staff and trustees
- Facilitate the rapid and efficient delivery of library materials between and among every public library and public library system in the state
- Guarantee convenient borrowing privileges for library patrons
- Explore and expand and the use of new technologies
- Support other cooperative services and projects in response to member library needs

¹ Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau. 1988. *An evaluation of the public library system program: Department of Public Instruction.*

² Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. 1991. *Long-range plan for library services in Wisconsin.*

While local libraries are appropriately the face of public library service in Wisconsin, the state's public library service is truly a partnership between local libraries, municipalities, counties, systems, and the state. Public libraries excel in providing direct services to their patrons and communities, and public library systems operate in the background, often with little public awareness of their existence. However, whether it's managing a wide area network, negotiating or administering a complex set of cooperative agreements, or providing connections to other types of libraries or organizations, public library systems provide much of the infrastructure that enables Wisconsin's public libraries to provide outstanding library service.

Wisconsin's public library systems are a model for inter-governmental collaboration and cooperation, and it is essential that the roles and standards for library systems be clearly defined and communicated to ensure that systems continue to be effective in meeting member library needs and worthy of continued state support. Consequently, the System and Resource Library Administrators Association of Wisconsin (SRLAAW) has undertaken a multi-part process to determine how public library systems can remain most effective in meeting member library needs into the future. This report describes the process and presents the subcommittee's recommendations.

Process Design

Two concerns originally motivated SRLAAW members to consider the role of public library systems in the future of public library service in Wisconsin. First, much of Chapter 43, *Wisconsin Statutes*, is very old, especially the provisions relating to public library systems. There was concern that outdated statutes limit systems' options and constrain them from being more efficient and effective. Second, the difficult economy has reduced governmental resources and has resulted in many changes in the operations of state and local governments. Budgets and services have been cut, governmental units have been reconfigured or consolidated, and public library systems have been consolidated in many other states.

As a result, SRLAAW members concluded that the library community needed to begin investigating what could be done to ensure a positive future for library systems and library service. At their August 2012 meeting, SRLAAW members passed a motion requesting WiLS to develop a proposal for a summit to examine system size and structure.

In response, WiLS developed the requested proposal, which was adopted by SRLAAW in October of 2012. SRLAAW members agreed that the retreat 1) would discuss best practices for system services, 2) could provide information for system improvements, and 3) might lead to legislative change.

After discussion with the SRLAAW chair and others, WiLS recommended that this summit, or retreat, be part of a larger process that would lead to recommendations and action steps to address concerns about and barriers to system reconfigurations, as well as addressing how systems can best remain effective in meeting member library needs into the future. A

subcommittee was appointed in November of 2012 and charged with working with WiLS to develop and implement the recommended process and make a report, including recommendations, to SRLAAW.

Subcommittee Members

The subcommittee working on this process is comprised of SRLAAW members who volunteered to serve:

Sue Cantrell, MWFLS	Steve Platteter, ALS
Jim Gingery, MCFLS	Krista Ross, SWLS
Rick Krumwiede, OWLS	Marla Sepnafski, WVLS
Jessica MacPhail, Racine PL	John Thompson, IFLS
Rebecca Petersen, MCLS	David Weinhold, ESLS

In addition, WiLS Director, Stef Morrill, served as project manager and facilitator.

Initial Steps

The subcommittee engaged in a number of activities aimed at collecting information from the Wisconsin library community, and beyond, that culminated in a retreat in February. These activities are summarized below:

1. *Identify specific services and other areas of concern to be addressed through the process*

In order to narrow the scope for discussion purposes, the subcommittee identified six areas of focus: awareness of library system and library services, funding, library law, resource sharing, service implications of technology, and technology infrastructure.

2. *Survey Wisconsin libraries about the identified areas*

In January, Wisconsin public libraries completed surveys related to the six areas. Between 150 and 200 respondents completed each of the six surveys.

3. *Hold 2-3 webinars with states that have undergone system consolidation*

Library and system staff from Massachusetts and Illinois presented webinars to discuss how system consolidation happened and the impact of the change on public libraries in their states. A report detailing the experiences of five other states was also created.

4. *Hold a SRLAAW retreat*

A retreat was held on February 4, 2013 to consider the survey results and obtain additional input in the process. The attendees – system directors, resource library directors, and one additional attendee from each system – considered best practices and potential future visions of library service in the six areas identified in #1, and made recommendations for next steps.

The subcommittee then used information collected from Wisconsin public libraries, retreat attendees, and the experiences of other states to create a progress report with preliminary recommendations and action steps. Detailed information about these steps and the report can be found on the SRLAAW website: <http://www.srlaaw.org/2013Process/process.asp>.

The *Progress Report and Preliminary Recommendations* report was shared with SRLAAW at its May 1, 2013 meeting, and it was presented to the public library community on May 2, 2013 at the Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries spring conference.

Vetting Preliminary Recommendations

After the preliminary recommendations were shared with the community, the process of vetting the recommendations in the library community began. The subcommittee gathered feedback about the proposed recommendations through many methods:

- **Focus Groups**
Three focus groups were held to gather feedback from the resource library directors and system directors not serving on the subcommittee.
- **Individual Library Interviews**
Thirty-one (31) libraries were selected for individual telephone interviews. The list of libraries was randomly selected, then adjusted for geographic representation through another round of random selection. The distribution of library size in the sample reflected the distribution of library size in the state, as determined by the required certification level of the director. Of those 31 library directors invited to interview, 23 interviews were completed.
- **Solicitation of Feedback via Online Form and Email**
Libraries were encouraged through the public library email list and through public library systems to provide feedback, either through an anonymous form available on the SRLAAW website or by emailing the subcommittee. In addition, a number of library systems held sessions for member library staff and trustees to present the recommendations and encourage attendees to offer their comments via these feedback mechanisms.
- **Solicitation of Expert Feedback**
Feedback, particularly on the service standards (Appendix A), was solicited from known experts in particular areas of system services, including continuing education, delivery, youth services, and technology.

All feedback gathered through the above methods is compiled and available at <http://www.srlaaw.org/2013Process/process.asp>.

In addition to the feedback gathered above, subcommittee members met with various stakeholder groups to present and/or discuss the preliminary recommendations, including the

Wisconsin Library Association Board and Library Development & Legislation Committee (LD&L), the Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND), the Department of Public Instruction's Public Library Development team, and a group of long-time leaders in the Wisconsin library community.

Subcommittee members reviewed all of the feedback received by mid-July, held several meetings to discuss the feedback, and modified their recommendations accordingly. What follows are the subcommittee's revised recommendations for consideration by the SRLAAW membership at its August 2, 2013 meeting.

Recommendations

1. Modernize the statutory requirement for system resource libraries by eliminating the current statutory language (s. 43.16 and s. 43.24(2)(b)) and replacing it with language that conveys the following concepts:
 - System resource libraries are libraries that develop their resources (e.g., collection, staff, services, etc.) to serve the needs of the entire system area as mutually agreed upon by the system and the resource library.
 - Systems provide financial consideration to resource libraries because they agree to develop their resources to serve the entire system area.
 - Any mutually agreed upon services provided by resource libraries are articulated in written agreements executed between systems and resource libraries.
 - Such agreements between systems and resource libraries shall contain mechanisms for evaluation and mutual accountability.
 - Each system shall have at least one resource library.

Rationale: One of the surveys of public libraries asked if the existing provision for system resource libraries should be changed. The results showed significant interest in change. Conversation about this provision continued at the retreat, and one of the recommended next steps from the retreat was to "modernize the resource library statutes."

The subcommittee believes that, while the current statutory roles of resource libraries may be outdated, there are new opportunities for systems and resource libraries to work together to improve library service in Wisconsin.

Resource libraries can take a leadership role in developing library services with the system through innovation, sharing, and by providing expertise that the system may not have. Because they are engaged in providing significant levels of public library service, resource libraries have experience that can make them valuable partners to the systems.

Historically, all residents of the state have relied upon the significant collections of resource libraries, and this continues to be a valuable role for resource libraries. Resource libraries tend to have a depth of collection that is not typical for other system member libraries.

The current resource library law is also viewed as a significant barrier to consolidation and reconfiguration of systems. Modernizing this requirement would eliminate the barrier, fostering more productive reconfiguration discussions among systems.

It is also clear from the feedback obtained during this process that there is misunderstanding about the role of the resource libraries and the services that they provide. Clearly articulating the relationship between systems and resource libraries will increase the understanding of the roles of resource libraries by other system member libraries.

Action: SRLAAW refers recommendation to DPI Public Library Development Team and WLA Library Development and Legislation (LD&L) Committee to initiate legislative action.

Systems and resource libraries cooperate to actively communicate the roles of resource libraries to other system member libraries.

Outcome: Modernization of the statutory requirement for public library systems to designate and contract with resource libraries.

Elimination of the statutory requirement for public library systems to provide backup reference, information and interlibrary loan services from the system resource library (s. 43.24(2)(b)).

Better understanding of the important roles played by system resource libraries.

2. Eliminate the requirement for public library systems to engage in cooperation and continuous planning with other types of libraries in the system area as specified in s. 43.24(2)(L).

Rationale: This requirement is redundant in today's environment as public library systems are already required to plan with "other types of libraries in the area in regard to library technology and the sharing of resources" (s. 43.24(2)(m)) and systems will continue to collaborate with all types of libraries in their system area as appropriate.

Action: SRLAAW refers recommendation to DPI Public Library Development Team and WLA LD&L Committee to initiate legislative action to eliminate s.43.24(2)(L).

Outcome: Elimination of s. 43.24(2)(L) that requires public library systems to engage in cooperation and continuous planning with other types of libraries in the system area.

3. Add sections on state-required public library system plans and annual reports for reporting and documenting collaborative activities with other libraries, systems, and organizations.

Rationale: The success of public library systems has shown that collaboration among libraries yields opportunities that libraries could not experience working on their own. This principle can also be applied to collaboration among systems and between systems and other organizations. Collaboration, when appropriate, can result in economies of scale and significant reduction in costs. It can eliminate redundancy and provide the opportunity for library systems to continue to sustain and expand services, even while budgets are flat or decreasing. It can also support innovation, mitigating risk to any one organization and providing funds for experimentation.

While systems regularly collaborate with other systems and organizations and while the potential benefits of collaboration are generally understood, currently very little data exists about system collaborations. Collecting information and stories about collaborative activities will provide a tool for documenting how well developed cooperation is among Wisconsin libraries and systems.

A formal reporting mechanism will provide valuable information about collaborative activities, which could be further enhanced by including information about the cost-effectiveness or service improvements created through collaboration. In addition to collecting information from systems, the subcommittee believes that systems should also be collecting stories about collaboration by system member libraries.

Action: SRLAAW refers recommendation to DPI Public Library Development Team for modification of the state-required public library system annual plan form and annual report form.

Outcome: Public library system annual plans and annual reports require systems to report on collaborative activities with other libraries, systems, and organizations.

4. Conduct a study aimed at determining optimal system size and strategies for implementing optimally configured systems. The recommended study would be completed before July 1, 2014. The recommended study would contain four distinct elements:

- The study would identify potential savings in systems through consolidation, technology, efficiencies, LEAN practices, and service sharing.
- The library community would be involved in studying the relationship between system effectiveness and system size in order to determine the factors that define optimal system size.
- Outside experts (e.g., regional planners) would be asked to suggest strategies for implementing optimal system configurations given the optimal system size, the current configuration of systems, and demographic patterns in the state.
- The system funding formula would be examined in light of optimal system size and configuration to determine how it could be altered to incentivize change.

Rationale: Information and feedback gathered throughout this process suggests that the library community believes that having fewer public library systems in Wisconsin is inevitable. Regardless of whether a reduction in the number of systems results from voluntary consolidations or edict, it is generally agreed that any change should improve or, at least, maintain services provided by systems, not diminish them.

Furthermore, the feedback indicates that there is little agreement about what constitutes an optimal size or configuration for a library system, and it's also clear that a "one size fits all" model will not work. The subcommittee wants to encourage system consolidations that make sense and improve services, but we believe there is more to learn before we have clarity about what constitutes optimal systems for service improvements, cost-effectiveness, or service preservation.

Action: SRLAAW refers recommendation to DPI Public Library Development Team to conduct a study to determine optimal system size and configuration.

Outcome: Agreement by the library community on what constitutes optimal system size and configuration.

Recommended strategies for achieving optimal system configurations.
Alteration of the system funding formula to incentivize creating optimal system configurations.

Replacement of the existing population standards for public library systems with new standards determined through this study.

5. Conduct a study of regional integrated library system (ILS) consortia to investigate the advantages, efficiencies, disadvantages, and potential barriers to larger ILS consortia.

Rationale: Information and feedback gathered throughout this process suggests a belief in the library community that there may be opportunities to achieve efficiencies and cost savings in the consolidation of key system services, without consolidating systems. Regional ILS consortia were most often cited as providing an opportunity for service consolidation. However, as is the case with system consolidation, the optimal size for an ILS consortium and the potential for savings or efficiencies are not clear.

Action: SRLAAW refers recommendation to DPI Public Library Development Team to conduct a study to determine advantages, disadvantages, and potential barriers to larger ILS consortia.

Outcome: Reliable information on the advantages, efficiencies, disadvantages, and barriers to forming larger ILS consortia, including what constitutes optimal size for an ILS consortium.

Consolidations of ILS consortia that result in improved service or cost-savings without diminishing services.

6. Establish service standards for public library systems, as proposed in Appendix A, that are used to modify the current statutory system service requirements (s. 43.24(2)).

Rationale: One of the charges of this subcommittee was to identify best practices for public library systems to stay relevant as the needs of their member libraries change. The subcommittee has created a set of standards for public library system services as a form of best practices.

However, unlike best practices, which are intended to be used individually when relevant, these standards are intended to be adopted as a whole. It is highly unlikely that any system alone could meet these standards with current state funding. Instead, systems will need to collaborate or consolidate in order to provide the level of service the standards represent.

It is the intent of the subcommittee that the proposed service standards become a replacement for the current system service requirements, and it is assumed that, at some level, the service standards will become mandatory. The subcommittee also believes that the DPI Public Library Development Team is responsible for determining exactly how the recommended standards should replace the current service requirements.

Action: SRLAAW adopts the proposed service standards and encourages public library systems to voluntarily begin implementing them immediately, with the goal of all systems meeting the standards by 2017.

Library systems and their member libraries use the adopted service standards in evaluating current system services.

Library systems and their member libraries use the adopted service standards in evaluating the merits of proposed system mergers or service consolidations.

SRLAAW refers recommendation to DPI Public Library Development Team to initiate legislative or other appropriate action to implement required service standards for public library systems.

Outcome: Service standards are established for Wisconsin public library systems and are incorporated into statutory system requirements.

7. Establish administrative standards for public library systems, as proposed in Appendix B, that are used to modify the current statutory provisions in s. 43.17, as appropriate.

Rationale: In s. 43.19(2)(b), library system boards are given “the powers of a public library board under s. 43.58 with respect to system-wide functions and services.” Including more specific language about board responsibilities in s. 43.17 would clarify the role of the system board.

Like the service standards above, these administrative standards are also intended as best practices for library systems and system boards, and will ideally be voluntarily adopted by library systems.

Action: SRLAAW adopts the proposed administrative standards and encourages public library systems to voluntarily begin implementing them immediately, with the goal of all systems meeting the standards by 2014.

Library systems and their member libraries use the adopted administrative standards in evaluating current system administrative practices.

Library systems and their member libraries use the adopted administrative standards in evaluating the merits of proposed system mergers or consolidations.

SRLAAW refers recommendation to DPI Public Library Development Team to initiate legislative or other appropriate action to implement administrative standards for public library systems.

Outcome: Administrative standards are established for Wisconsin public library systems and are incorporated in to statutory system requirements.

8. SRLAAW convene a task force, including representation from systems, resource libraries, and other member libraries, to investigate how systems are governed in other states and to make recommendations for changes in the governance of Wisconsin public library systems. This task force will provide a report, including recommendations, to SRLAAW by May 2014.

Rationale: Feedback gathered during this process suggested that some members of the library community are concerned about the governance and accountability of systems. In particular, the makeup of system boards and the integration of input from member libraries came up frequently in the feedback. Many suggestions were made, but no specific themes emerged regarding recommended changes.

The intent of this recommendation is to investigate other governance models to determine if any of them offer elements which could provide improvements in Wisconsin. For example, Wisconsin's current model of county appointed citizen system board members is only one possibility. Further investigation of other models might suggest potential governance improvements.

Action: SRLAAW convenes a task force to investigate system governance options that makes recommendations to SRLAAW by its May 2014 meeting.

SRLAAW adopts, or modifies and adopts, task force recommendations.

SRLAAW refers recommendations to DPI Public Library Development Team and to WLA LD&L Committee to initiate legislative or other appropriate action to implement governance changes for public library systems.

Outcome: Improved governance and accountability of Wisconsin's public library systems.

Appendix A

Wisconsin Public Library System Service Standards

**Adopted by SRLAAW
August 2, 2013**

Library Advancement and Awareness Standards

The library system has a responsibility to provide its member libraries with services and training related to library advancement and awareness. The library system may provide these services directly to its member libraries with its own staff, or it may contract or collaborate with other library systems or vendors to assist it in meeting these service standards. The library system is encouraged to experiment with innovative methods for meeting these service standards.

Library Advancement

- The library system provides continuing education to member library staff and trustees in advancing the library's mission via workshops, newsletters, and webinars. The library system will offer a minimum of six (6) contact hours of such continuing education annually.
- The library system develops tools that can be tailored by local libraries and that make it easier for member libraries to create awareness of their accomplishments, needs, or concerns, e.g., press releases, sample letters to officials, etc.
- The library system works with member libraries to develop a database of area library supporters and a program for regularly informing them of local and area advancement needs.
- The library system informs member library staff, trustees, and supporters of pending legislation on the state and national levels that may affect libraries and explains how the proposed legislation might affect system and local library service.
- The library system facilitates participation of member library staff, trustees, and supporters in local, regional, and statewide library advancement events, e.g., candidate forums, WLA Library Legislative Day.
- The library system works with a variety of state, regional, and local government agencies on behalf of member libraries.
- The library system is readily available to assist member libraries in working for and securing local and county funding.
- The library system facilitates individual county library service planning processes when requested.
- The library system represents the interests of its member libraries to the Legislature and the Department of Public Instruction in the development of statewide library policy or services.
- The library system cooperates with other agencies or organizations for the benefit of member libraries and area residents.
- The library system has expertise to coordinate the collection, interpretation, and presentation of data at the systemwide level and local level.
- The library system works to establish library funding models that consider measures of library use in addition to circulation (e.g., digital checkouts, program attendance, etc.)

- The library system collects stories from member libraries that demonstrate successful collaborations with other libraries or organizations resulting in improved services, increased efficiencies, or cost savings.

Awareness

- The library system is responsible for the marketing and promotion of systemwide services.
- The library system coordinates systemwide efforts to promote member library services.
- The library system coordinates public relations activities within the library system and between member libraries and other agencies.
- The library system provides professional-level assistance in marketing and promoting local programs and services.
- The library system works with individual local libraries to develop customized professional-quality promotional pieces, including providing text editing, graphic layout, and reproduction services.
- The library system works with individual local libraries to develop customized professional-quality digital graphics for use with websites and social media tools.
- The library system works with individual local libraries to develop customized professional-quality websites, including providing design services and training in website maintenance.
- The library system has expertise in social media tools and the ability to provide training and assistance to member libraries in the effective use of these tools.

Collaborative Services Standards

The library system optimizes the services that it provides to its member libraries by collaborating with others. Collaborative services within, between, and/or among systems can result in more and better services at less financial cost and less duplication of effort. The library system is encouraged to experiment with innovative methods for meeting these service standards.

- The library system actively pursues opportunities to collaborate within, between, and/or among systems in order to maximize efficiencies.
- The library system facilitates meetings within, between, and/or among like-minded staff from multiple systems in order to discuss and implement collaborative services.
- The library system facilitates group purchasing (e.g., library applications, supplies, equipment, downloadable e-resources) within, between, and/or among library systems.
- The library system plans for continuing education opportunities with other systems in the region or within the state.
- The library system encourages and promotes collaborative exchanges with other systems in the same region or within the state that use the same ILS vendor.
- The library system gives high priority to collaborative service developments on its state-required annual plan and report.

Continuing Education Standards

The library system has a responsibility to provide continuing education opportunities to its member libraries. The library system may provide these services directly to its member libraries with its own staff, or it may contract or collaborate with other library systems or vendors to assist it in meeting these service standards. The library system is encouraged to experiment with innovative methods for meeting these service standards.

- The library system surveys member libraries on an annual basis to determine the continuing education areas that are of greatest interest to, or most needed by, member libraries.
- The library system plans 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, Division for Libraries and Technology.
- The library system sponsors or co-sponsors 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.
- The library system ensures 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.
- The library system, with input from member libraries, evaluates each CE opportunity and conducts an annual outcome-based evaluation of its continuing education program. Results from evaluations are shared with member libraries.
- The library system opens all continuing education opportunities to staff from all types of libraries in the system area.
- The library system director and appropriate staff meets with all new library directors to provide an orientation on system services and an overview of library services in Wisconsin.
- The appropriate library system staff meets with newly hired key library staff to provide an orientation on system services relating to their positions.
- The appropriate library system staff attends meetings with member library trustees and staff and provides consultation and/or continuing education related to local library issues, as requested.

Delivery Standards

Because the physical delivery of library materials is an essential element for effective resource sharing, the library system has a responsibility to provide a delivery service that connects libraries within the system and around the state. The library system may provide these services directly to its member libraries with its own staff, or it may contract or collaborate with other library systems or vendors to assist it in meeting these service standards. How delivery services are funded may differ from library system to library system. The library system is encouraged to experiment with innovative methods for meeting these service standards.

- The library system makes local delivery service available to member libraries at least five days per week.
- The delivery service schedule, operational functions, and procedures will be based upon the needs of the member libraries; the cost-effectiveness for the library system; the proper handling and protection of materials being transported; and the safety of system, library and contracted staff handling delivery.
- The library system ensures that, within the system, material placed in delivery by a library shall be delivered to its destination library by the third business day, excluding weekends.
- The library system connects its local delivery service with the statewide library delivery network.
- The library system trains member library staff in effective and efficient methods for labeling and packing materials.
- The library system configures its Integrated Library System, whenever possible, to expedite delivery of materials requested by patrons.
- The library system encourages nonpublic libraries to participate in delivery networks offered through the system and the state.
- The library system will minimally perform two delivery volume studies per year. These studies will count either tote or item volume dropped off and picked up at each member library during the course of one full week.

Integrated Library System (ILS)

The library system has a responsibility to provide its member libraries with access to an affordable, shared integrated library system (ILS). Participation in a shared ILS is an essential element in each Wisconsin's public library's ability to provide modern and effective library service to its patrons, and the library system plays a key role in ensuring that its member libraries can participate in a shared ILS. The library system may provide an ILS and related services directly to its member libraries with its own staff, or it may contract or collaborate with other library systems or vendors to assist it in meeting these service standards. How a shared ILS is funded may differ from library system to library system. The library system is encouraged to experiment with innovative methods for meeting these service standards.

Administration and Funding

- The library system facilitates access to a shared integrated library system (ILS) that meets the needs of the member libraries and their patrons.
- The library system supports an online catalog for the public that allows for the discovery of library resources in all formats.
- The library system will dedicate staff and fiscal resources in support of and to maintain access to a shared ILS.
- The library system and its members create a plan and budget to upgrade and replace ILS equipment and software on a regular schedule.
- The library system prepares an annual program budget that accurately reflects the costs and needs for the ILS.
- Each ILS consortium utilizes a decision-making process that meets the needs of member libraries and the system.
- The library system, with input from the member libraries, develops a formula for cost-sharing among member libraries that is clear and equitable.
- The library system works with member libraries to produce and maintain standards for ILS use in a shared environment.
- The library system encourages the standardization of rules and procedures among ILS participants.
- With input from member libraries, the library system board and staff develop an ILS plan to ensure that the ILS continues to meet the needs of member libraries and their patrons.

Database Management

- The library system provides an effective and efficient way for member libraries' holdings to be added to the database.

- The library system works with member libraries to establish standards and procedures for entering bibliographic and item holding records in accordance with currently accepted library cataloging and classification practices.
- The library system ensures access to reports to assist member libraries in managing ILS data.
- The library system ensures that bibliographic records, item records, and item status for materials in its database are searchable through standard protocols.
- The library system ensures access to reports to assist member libraries in managing patron, bibliographic, and holdings data.

Training and Support

- The library system ensures that member library staff are properly oriented and trained on ILS procedures and protocols.
- The library system supports training of the public in the use of the online catalog.
- The library system provides statistical data as required for the DLT Public Library Annual Report, using the standard definitions supplied by the Division.
- The library system ensures access to statistical reports and provides assistance to member libraries in interpretation of data.
- The library system provides qualified, trained staff devoted to the management and support of the shared ILS.

Resource Sharing

- The library system encourages all member libraries to share individual library collections with as few restrictions as possible.
- The library system works with member libraries to provide a method for ensuring that lending between members is equitable.
- The library system works with member libraries to evaluate the shared library collection and develop methods to support consortium-wide collection development.

Interlibrary Loan Standards

Wisconsin's public library systems recognize that the sharing of material between libraries is an integral and vital element in the provision of library service and believe it to be in the public interest to encourage such exchanges. Interlibrary loan (ILL) is intended to complement local collections, and should not be used as a substitute for good library collections which meet the routine needs of users. **While ILL can be defined as any exchange of materials between libraries, this standard is intended to address only those exchanges that occur outside of a shared ILS.**

The effectiveness of the state's interlibrary loan system depends upon participation of public library systems, and libraries of all types and sizes, and rests on the belief that no library, no matter how large or well supported, is self-sufficient in today's world. While it is evident that some libraries are net borrowers (borrow more than they lend) and others are net lenders (lend more than they borrow), the system also rests on the belief that all libraries should be willing to lend if they are willing to borrow. *(Adapted from the Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States.)*

The library system has a responsibility to provide its member libraries with access to an effective ILL service that facilitates resource sharing with other libraries. The library system may provide ILL services directly to its member libraries with its own staff, or it may contract or collaborate with other library systems or vendors to assist it in meeting these service standards. The library system is encouraged to experiment with innovative methods for meeting these service standards.

Participation

- The library system encourages all member libraries to participate fully in interlibrary loan as lenders and borrowers.
- The library system encourages all participating ILL libraries to follow interlibrary loan procedures and protocols established by the system, RL&LL and/or OCLC.
- The library system ensures that patron-initiated interlibrary loan requests are mediated.
- The library system ensures and advocates for the confidentiality of the user.
- The library system supports efficient two-way communication/linking between and among local (system) consortia, state, and national ILL networks.

Training

- The library system provides training on creating and managing interlibrary loan requests.
- The library system provides an annual workshop on interlibrary library loan to clarify and review best/current practices, protocols, and procedures.

- The library system participates in/attends all DPI-sponsored meetings for systems and shares what is learned with area ILL colleagues.
- The library system promotes educational opportunities related to interlibrary loan and encourages participation.
- The library system promotes webinars which provide training on resources available through BadgerLink and encourages participation.

Communication

- The library system encourages all member libraries to subscribe to appropriate interlibrary loan communication channels.
- The library system ensures that area libraries receive promotional materials about resources/information available about interlibrary loan best practices, standards, etc.
- The library system ensures that participants have access to accurate ILL statistics.

Innovation / Future

- The library system explores nontraditional ILL practices, such as direct-to-user-delivery and purchase/print-on-demand options to ensure maximum and efficient accessibility and convenience.

Service Standards for Special Populations

The library system has a responsibility to assist its member libraries with the services they provide to special populations.* The library system may provide these services directly to its member libraries with its own staff, or it may contract or collaborate with other library systems or vendors to assist it in meeting these service standards. The library system is encouraged to experiment with innovative methods for meeting these service standards.

- The library system assists its member libraries in identifying special populations.
- The library system provides its member libraries with access to expertise and consulting to assist them in planning, developing, and evaluating services for special populations.
- The library system facilitates its member libraries' use of the Department of Public Instruction's website, *Serving Special Populations* (http://pld.dpi.wi./pld_ssp), an online resource which follows up *Youth with Special Needs: A Resource and Planning Guide for Wisconsin's Public Libraries* (http://pld.dpi.wi.gov/pld_ysnpl) and *Adults with Special Needs: A Resource and Planning Guide for Wisconsin's Public Libraries* (http://pld.dpi.wi.gov/pld_specialasn) in the planning, development, and evaluation of services.
- The library system sponsors a minimum of six (6) contact hours annually of continuing education opportunities relating to, or showcasing, services to special populations.
- The library system collaborates with member libraries or other systems to obtain grants which provide funding to serve special populations.
- The library system assists member libraries in marketing services to special populations.
- The library system facilitates regional collaborations with member libraries, appropriate agencies, and other systems on services to special populations.

*Special populations, or non-traditional library users, refer to people of all ages who often face barriers to their use of public library services, or need specific resources or accommodations to make the most of their time at the library. This includes, but is not limited to:

- People living in alternative family and home situations (including foster care, nursing homes, detention facilities or other institutions, or who are displaced, living in poverty, and/or homeless)
- People with mobility and orthopedic disabilities, people with cognitive disabilities, autism, or traumatic brain injuries; people with emotional behavior disabilities; people with learning disabilities; people with hearing or vision disabilities; and people with varying speech and language abilities
- People in underserved areas and/or with diverse backgrounds
- People with limited literacy or information skills who do not use print, read well, or speak English; people whose native language is not English
- Specific age groups, such as aging populations

Technology Standards

The library system has a significant role in leadership and training in discovering and implementing new technology, in facilitating technology infrastructure, and in providing local technology support. The library system may provide these services directly to its member libraries with its own staff, or it may contract or collaborate with other library systems or vendors to assist it in meeting these service standards. How technology services are funded may differ from library system to library system. The library system is encouraged to experiment with innovative methods for meeting these service standards.

- The library system provides its member libraries with access to technology expertise and technology consulting.
- The library system sponsors or co-sponsors a minimum of six (6) contact hours of technology-related continuing education per year.
- The library system provides a secure Wide Area Network (WAN), with adequate bandwidth, for data communication between member libraries, the system headquarters, and appropriate application servers. The library system will work with member libraries to determine the most appropriate method of data communication.
- The library system continually monitors bandwidth usage by member libraries.
- The library system assists member libraries in acquiring supplemental bandwidth when needed.
- The library system promotes effective cost-sharing by facilitating the hosting and licensing of shared applications and databases used by member libraries.
- The library system provides assistance with and support for essential member library technology services during all hours of library operation.
- The library system technology staff meets with member library technology staff at least once per year to consult and advise on the member libraries' technology infrastructure and technology-related workflow practices.
- The library system establishes competency guidelines for member library staff needed to use system-provided technology services. The library system develops and provides training based upon the assessment of library staff competency levels.
- The library system facilitates group purchases of computers, network devices, and other technology-related devices for member libraries in order to promote ownership of state of the art equipment and cost savings.

Youth and Young Adult Services Standards

The library system has a responsibility to assist its member libraries in meeting the literacy and learning needs of youth and young adults. Specifically, the library system provides education, information, and assistance to member libraries so they have the means to encourage youth, and their parents or caregivers, to use the library and increase their literacy skills. The library system may provide these services directly to its member libraries with its own staff, or it may contract or collaborate with other library systems or vendors to assist it in meeting these service standards. The library system is encouraged to experiment with innovative methods for meeting these service standards.

- The library system sponsors a minimum of nine (9) contact hours annually of continuing education opportunities relating to youth and young adult services.
- The library system provides its member libraries with access to expertise and consulting to assist them in planning, developing, and evaluating youth and young adult services.
- The library system assists member libraries in marketing youth and young adult activities.
- The library system assists member libraries in implementing best practices and meeting appropriate standards related to early literacy.
- The library system facilitates regional collaborations on youth and young adult services.

Appendix B

Wisconsin Public Library System Administrative Standards

**Adopted by SRLAAW
August 2, 2013**

Governance

Public library system trustees are public officers and as such are legally responsible for the governance of the library system and the conducting of its operations in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. The library system has a responsibility to meet the following standards relating to governance.

- The library system is established and operates in accordance with Chapter 43 of the *Wisconsin Statutes*.
- The library system operates in compliance with other Wisconsin laws, such as laws relating to open meetings, ethics, and public records.
- The library system publically makes available all meeting announcements, agendas, and minutes to all member libraries.
- The library system operates in compliance with federal laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- 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.
- The library system board adopts written policies for operating the library system and reviews them on a regular cycle, ensuring that all policies are reviewed at least every three years.
- The library system board meets a minimum of six times per year at a time and in a physically accessible location convenient for the board and in accordance with the state law on open meetings and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Management

The library system's administrators and staff use sound library management practices to apply the policies and statutory obligations of the governing board to the daily operations of the

library system. The library system has a responsibility to meet the following standards relating to management and administration.

- The library system director is responsible for developing operating procedures based on board policies and long range plan.
- The library system director monitors statutory changes and court decisions related to library and system operations and recommends policy changes needed to maintain legal library and/or system operations.
- The library system director keeps the library system board informed of all important issues facing the member libraries.
- The library system provides current financial and statistical reports for review at each library system board meeting.
- The library system director provides every new board member with a copy of the Trustee Essentials and participates in an orientation program with each new board member.

Planning and Evaluation

Library system trustees and staff have a continuing obligation to assess the changing service needs of member libraries. Conscientious planning will help the library system in its efforts to anticipate and respond to the member library's needs. The library system has a responsibility to meet the following standards relating to planning and evaluation.

- With input from member libraries, the library system board and staff create a long-range or strategic plan that meets the needs of member libraries.
- The library system's plan is reviewed and updated annually by the library system board.
- With input from member libraries, the library system board and staff evaluate the effectiveness of the long-range or strategic plan.

Finance

Library system trustees and staff have a continuing obligation to operate the library system in a fiscally sound, efficient, and prudent manner. The library system has a responsibility to meet the following standards relating to finance.

- The library system follows fiscal procedures consistent with state and federal requirements, system policy, and audit requirements in preparing, presenting, and administering its budget.
- The library system director prepares and the library system board reviews and adopts an annual budget proposal that accurately reflects the needs of the library system and the members it serves.

- The library system board reviews and approves bills at each library system board meeting, in accordance with applicable laws and policies.
- The library system director and staff maintain awareness of available grant and other outside funding sources.
- The library system staff applies for and implements grants from LSTA and other grant sources that benefit the system and its member libraries.

Personnel

Library system trustees and the library system director have a continuing obligation to ensure that the library system has the appropriate staff in place to provide the services needed by member libraries. The library system has a responsibility to meet the following standards relating to personnel.

- The library system board determines the system staff table of organization and sets compensation for system staff positions.
- The library system director is qualified for and maintains the appropriate level of certification under the provisions of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.
- The library system director is paid to perform system-board-designated duties for no fewer than 40 (37.5) hours per week.
- The library system board conducts an annual performance evaluation of the director.
- The library system director is responsible for personnel administration, including hiring, supervising, evaluating, and dismissing library system employees.
- The library system board adopts a set of personnel policies outlining the conditions and requirements for employment of system staff, and these policies are consistent with state and federal regulations and relevant court decisions. The board reviews personnel policies on a regular schedule, including after any significant change in employment law.