

# JOINT ILS CONSORTIUM EXPLORATION TEAM MEETING MINUTES

October 25, 2022

Meeting began at 8:00 a.m.

**Team Members Present:** J. Johnson (NWLS), G. Rae (NWLS), K. Zimmermann (WVLS), R. Metzler (WVLS), M. McLimans (WiLS), M. Clark (WiLS), T. Schmidt (Mercer), S. Heskin (Superior), M. Lank-Jones (Hayward), T. Blomberg (Rib Lake), A. Johnson (MCPL), P. O'Connell (Minocqua)

**Others Present:** S. Machones (NWLS), S. Hafemeister (WVLS)

## I. Introductions

Introductions were made by each of the team members, others present and WiLS.

## II. Project Background/Review

Jackee Johnson provided some project background. NWLS and WVLS have a history of looking for ways of partnering with other library systems. One example is our technology partnership. In 2013 NWLS, WVLS and IFLS investigated the possibility of merging into one ILS with Project WIN. NWLS has been focused on improving services, and with that comes increased costs. Both NWLS and WVLS are going through the process of exploring ILS options. NWLS and WVLS staff started talking about the possibility of working together and if a shared ILS could be cost effective and improve services to both libraries and to patrons.

## III. Project Goals

The project deliverables, goals and possible outcomes for the team were discussed with team members sharing suggestions.

Deliverables of the research grant (from the LSTA Grant Application):

- Identify concerns and barriers taking into account lessons learned from past collaboration attempts
- Identify benefits of a merged integrated library system
- Identify conditions that make a merged ILS desirable
- Project fiscal realities of a merged ILS system for initial migration and into the future
- Establish cultural groundwork, address concerns, and establish communication pathways
- Craft policies and governance structure for cohesive membership and management
- Determine joint consortium budget projections and calculation method for membership shares
- Establish timeline for migration including implementation plan, logistics, and steps needed for a unified ILS

Goals of This Process (i.e. how can we work to be successful):

- Clear, open communication
- Transparency throughout the process

- consistent messaging
- no side conversations
- open communication shared with all
- Question base with answers that can be referred to throughout the process
- Communication shared with stakeholders to address concerns and questions
- Review and learn from past successes and trials (ie Project WIN)
  - Work with existing members to determine issues from Project WIN
- Big picture focus - don't get bogged down with details (ie loan periods)
- Establish priorities/outcomes
- Counteract the fear of the unknown
- Established timeline
- Recognition of autonomy of all stakeholders
- Understanding of differences in governance
- Fear of loss of autonomy
- Acknowledgement of needs of small/large libraries

Outcomes of this exploration process (what should be gained by systems, member libraries, and other stakeholders)

- Clear understanding of financial implications
- Clear understanding of benefits for patrons, member libraries, and other stakeholders
  - Tools for directors to share with their boards throughout the process
  - Question base with answers that can be referred to throughout the process
    - Capture at monthly meetings with standing agenda item
- Clear report detailing outcomes, benefits, concerns, etc.(one-pager/summary)
- Examining existing cultures of individual systems/libraries (how they work together- is everyone involved, committees, etc.)
- Overall priorities and values of stakeholders and where they overlap
- Identifying gaps in knowledge (how the systems are already collaborating and awareness of this)
- Governance

## IV. Project Timeline/Process Overview

Melissa McLimans shared a timeline/overview of the project.

### **Phase I: Development of Foundational Principles (November-December)**

October 2022 - December 2022

This phase will focus on the development of a shared understanding of the process, expected outcomes, and the start of information gathering. Work will include:

- The development and approval of a process communication plan
- The development and approval of shared principles for the process
- The start of information gathering, focused on past ILS merger efforts, to inform this process

Phase I will start in October and end in December. The Exploration Team will meet up to three times.

### **Phase II: Information gathering and informed decision making**

December 2022 through April 2023

This phase will focus on determining the questions, stakeholders, and mechanisms needed to identify benefits and barriers of an ILS merger: Work will include:

- Review of existing documentation, including past efforts of respective systems to merge ILS'
  - Project WIN
  - ALS/LLS ILS merger
  - ILS vendor research
  - Current ILS evaluations
  - Current ILS budgets
- Research into other consortium and shared ILS
- Development and development of a stakeholder survey (goal to deploy survey by the end of January)
- Based on survey results and data gathered to date, focus group protocols will be determined, attendees will be identified, and conversations held.
- Exploration Team will identify key themes from the data and information gathered for the report and review/respond to/craft an implementation plan

Phase II will start in December, overlapping a touch with phase I and end in April. The Exploration Team will meet up to four times.

### **Phase III: Report Creation**

May 2023 through June 2023

This phase will focus on the development of the Exploration Teams' report that will identify concerns and barriers to a merged ILS, benefits of a merged integrated library system, and the conditions that make a merged ILS desirable. The report will contain policy, budget, communication, and implementation recommendations as well. Work will include:

- Drafting of Recommendations
- Stakeholder feedback mechanisms, including up to two focus groups/established meetings
- The completion of the final report

The Exploration Team will meet at least two times.

Melody Clark provided the roles of the team members.

Exploration Team:

- Provide ideas and input for this process and its outcomes (i.e. help generate ideas for focus group attendees, offer feedback on findings, identify big themes and ideas, etc.)
- Attend monthly meeting and do any pre-meeting homework to make sure meetings are efficient and effective
- Respond to emails and requests for feedback/input in a timely fashion
- Be open, honest and transparent.
- Have fun and get to know each other!

System Leads:

- Provide ideas and input for this process and its outcomes (i.e. help generate ideas for focus group attendees, offer feedback on findings, identify big themes and ideas, etc.)
- Supply data and information to the Exploration Team and WiLS as needed.
- Act as liaisons and communication points (between the team and other stakeholders, and between WiLS and the team)
- Coordinating monthly meetings by sending out agendas, taking minutes, and sharing materials as appropriate
- Record meetings
- Attend monthly meeting and do any pre-meeting homework to make sure meetings are efficient and effective
- Respond to emails and requests for feedback/input in a timely fashion
- Be open, honest and transparent
- Have fun and get to know each other!

#### WiLS:

- Project facilitation and providing structure and support
- Process and decision making documentation, for this group and your stakeholders
- Attend meetings, help draft agendas, along with System Leads, and do appropriate information gathering so you have the ability to make informed decisions.
- Provide any pre-meeting homework in a timely, easy to understand manner
- We will draft report findings
- We will help this group stay on target, keep our focus on bigger picture goals, while documenting the details that will inevitably come up
- Attend monthly meeting
- Respond to emails and requests for feedback/input in a timely fashion
- Be open, honest and transparent
- Help the group have fun and get to know each other!

## **V. Process Table Setting**

Melissa McLimans talked about expectations for the exploration process. It was noted that the timeline is aggressive with the grant period ending in June 2023. Meeting attendance and timely email responses are important to stay on schedule. Team members were asked to keep a positive frame of mind throughout the process. As the exploration process continues, changes may be made in outcomes as each phase is completed.

Discussion continued with dates and times of the upcoming meetings. It was decided that the meetings will be held the third Tuesday of each month from 8:30 – 10:30. All meetings will be held via Zoom. The dates of upcoming meetings are **11/15/22, 12/20/22, 1/17/23, 2/21/23, 3/21/23, 4/18/23, 5/16/23, and 6/20/23**. Changes in dates and times will be decided prior to the meeting.

## **VI. Naming of the Process**

The naming of the project was discussed. It was decided that the name of the project will be **NICE (Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration)**.

At the November 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, the NICE Team will address goals and outcomes, a tentative communications plan, generate ideas for the survey, and look at information about past ILS merger attempts.

## **VII. Next Meeting**

Melissa McLimans thanked everyone for the time and effort put forth to complete this process.  
The next meeting will be November 15, 2022 at 8:30 a.m.

Meeting ended at 9:44.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susie Hafemeister, Meeting Recorder