

NICE Team Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 19, 2023 | 9:00 am - 11:00 am

[Meeting Recording](#)

ATTENDEES: Sue Heskin (Superior), Alexander Johnson (MCPL), Jackee Johnson (NWLS), Sara Kelmann (Eagle River), Molly Lank-Jones (Hayward), Rachel Metzler (WVLS), Peggy O'Connell (Minocqua), Laurie Ollhoff (Merrill), Gina Rae (NWLS), Katelyn Sabelko (MCPL), Teresa Schmidt (Mercer), Katie Zimmermann (WVLS)

ABSENT: Tammie Blomberg (Rib Lake), Kelly Wiisanen (Superior)

PROJECT MANAGERS: Melissa McLimans (WILS)

Meeting started at: 9:03am

Meeting Agenda

1. Report and Team Purpose

The group was welcomed and everyone introduced themselves, their role and connection to ILS work.

The team reviewed the findings and recommendations of the [ILS Merger Feasibility Report](#). It was noted that there are some new team members, and it has been several months since the group last met, so the team took time to review the ILS Merger Feasibility Report, the process that was completed, and the key findings.

The group was reminded that the information gathering process included a look at past merger efforts, both successful and unsuccessful, a survey, focus groups, and other research.

The group reviewed the [one-pager](#) that was created along with the report, including that the NICE team had determined an ILS merger was feasible and that the preferred scenario was to pursue a shared ILS and collection and make moves toward shared policies and procedures.

There were no questions or comments from the group about this process.

The group reviewed their role in this process and a [roles document](#) was shared. There were no questions or comments from the group about their roles, the process, or the timelines.

The group discussed what process it might use for this phase to settle on the final recommendations. The project manager shared that the targeted workgroups are where decisions will be made; the hope is that the workgroups will be able to come to a consensus and bring their recommendation to the larger NICE group. If the NICE group has questions, concerns, etc, the workgroup will go back and work to address these points.

It was noted that the final decision will be made by the Board of Trustees for each system, who generally take into account the feedback from member libraries and consortia.

It was discussed that the WVLS ILS Evaluation Committee had hoped to come to a consensus by the end, but were never able to get there. This led to confusion on how they should issue a recommendation to their council. In retrospect, it seems like it would be easier to establish ahead of time the process the team will use for deciding what to recommend.

It was clarified that the targeted workgroups will have a finite number of options to choose from, which should help the workgroups come to a consensus. Additionally, by following the rubric for the decision making process on what is most equitable, what is most patron-centered/focused should also make it easier for workgroups to come to a consensus. The project managers are envisioning the decision making rubric as a worksheet tool for workgroup members to use to assess options and recommendations and will be a tool to help get to consensus.

2. Communication Plan

The team reviewed the [communication plan](#) and were asked if they had any feedback and suggested changes.

The group discussed considerations for internal, interteam communications. In the past phase, there was no documentation explicitly for internal communication, but relied on and making sure all communication issues were brought to the group so the entire team operated with the same information. One of the things the team really wants to avoid is side conversations. If there are concerns about this process, and they don't get communicated, we can't address them and find a way through them; or communicate clearly the correct information to address those concerns. This did come into play with ILS Merger Explorations in the past.

This group has been successful with using email for communications, monthly meetings, and a shared Google Drive. Getting documents out ahead of time was very helpful for making sure everyone comes to the conversation during the meeting more-or-less on the same page.

The systems have a shared Slack channel where they can send direct messages to people and talk pretty openly about questions and if it might be helpful, this group could also set up a Slack channel to use similarly.

Project managers will work with the Leadership Team to create a document to clarify internal communication.

A change was noted from the last communication plan. The Leadership Team decided to shift newsletters to make them more equitable. Emails will go out weekly on Mondays (WVLS) and monthly on Wednesday (NWLS).

3. Project Timeline

The team reviewed the [timeline](#), including the targeted workgroup formation process. The team was asked if they had any feedback. It was noted that this is a flexible process and timeline and that we expect to change things as information is learned and potential questions arise.

The group discussed the timeline for the LSTA funding in June which is an important consideration. The Leadership Team will add this to their next agenda and determine if there needs to make any adjustments to the timeline.

4. Decision-Making Principles

The team reviewed the [decision-making principles and matrix](#). There were no additions and approval was expressed.

[There were some comments in the document related to the decision making timeline.](#)

Directors were asked their opinions about the June deadline for final recommendations and how this might fit in with their own libraries' budget timelines and deadlines. Multiple libraries within NWLS, and NWLS themselves, typically submit their budgets in June. At WVLS, they have a preliminary budget meeting with their steering committee in March, the budget is presented as a draft at the April budget council meeting, then it's presented in June for approval.

There were also questions related to the LSTA timeline for completing the project and applying for another grant. It was noted that there isn't a clear idea on that yet; the Leadership Team will reach out to DPI to determine what DPI's preferences are and what they'd be willing to consider in regards to funding before or after a final decision has been made by this group.

5. Appoint a Targeted Workgroup

The group brainstormed ideas for workgroup membership. The Leadership Team will work with project managers to finalize.

In response to a question, it was clarified that NWLS had begun an ILS exploration process prior to NICE's formation that was paused at the start of NICE, but has now restarted as a backup-plan to NICE.

The NICE Team felt that targeted a workgroup should have equal membership from both systems, but understood that there may be a one- or two- person difference, based on availability and expertise.

It was noted that the next NICE team meeting is the week ahead of the WLA Conference and suggested that since many folks may be busy getting ready for that, requested that the October meeting be moved to the week of October 9th. Project managers will look at dates and determine if an earlier meeting date can be set.

The NICE Team discussed and drafted a charge for the workgroup, preliminarily as, "Choose an ILS, from a provided list of options, that will work for both consortia, including cost considerations and functionality, using information gathered from recent processes."

The workgroup will consider existing price quotes for WVLS-alone and joint WVLS/NWLS from June for Sierra from Innovative, KOHA from Bywater Solutions., and Carl from The Library Corporation. The Leadership Team will reach out to these vendors to make certain they have permission to share this information with the NICE team and the workgroup, especially since there are new members to this group that weren't involved in Phase 1.

The workgroup will also review the report that the WVLS ILS Eval Committee put together and NWLS information gathered.

The group also brainstormed and discussed the priority of questions/topics for the group to address.

6. Standing Item: Communication

The Leadership Team received a handful of questions after the feasibility report was shared, and now the Leadership Team is compiling those for the [FAQ page](#). The Leadership Team is currently planning to update the FAQ page so that it is easier for users to find the answers to their questions, and welcome ideas from this group on how to do that. It was suggested that a reviewed/updated date be added as the page is changed. The group was encouraged to share additional ideas with K. Zimmermann.

There was a clarifying question before the meeting was ended about the target date for

the when ILS Vendor Selection Targeted Workgroup will meet and/or when the team will know when that workgroup is ready to begin. That group can likely expect the meeting to happen the week of October 9th. Once the workgroup members are determined, the precise date will be set, and everyone can expect a pretty rapid turnaround.

Meeting Ended: 10:53 am