

# NICE Team Meeting Notes

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

ATTENDEES: Tammie Blomberg (Rib Lake), Sue Heskin (Superior), Alexander Johnson (MCPL), Jackee Johnson (NWLS), Sara Kelmann (Eagle River), Rachel Metzler (WVLS), Laurie Ollhoff (Merrill), Gina Rae (NWLS), Katelyn Sabelko (MCPL), Teresa Schmidt (Mercer), Katie Zimmermann (WVLS)

ABSENT: Molly Lank-Jones (Hayward), Peggy O'Connell (Minocqua), Kelly Wiisanen (Superior)

PROJECT MANAGERS: Melody Clark (WiLS) Melissa McLimans (WiLS)

Meeting started at: 9:02am

## Meeting Agenda

### 1. Formula and Budget Workgroup Update

The group met twice. In the first meeting, they selected scenarios for budget numbers to be run through; at the second meeting, the group was able to take two scenarios off the table but could not yet reach a consensus. At that second meeting, the workgroup tasked system folks, including K. Zimmermann, J. Johnson, R. Metzler, and G. Rae, as well as the two system directors, to form a subgroup to think through alternative scenarios to bring back to the workgroup. At this point, the subcommittee is still working on those alternatives.

The workgroup's timeline has been extended, which should not impact any other workgroup.

K. Zimmerman noted that the system staff will be meeting again the second week of January and feel like they are making progress.

### 2. Delivery Workgroup Update

The Delivery Workgroup met last week. They reviewed information provided by the SHARE Consortium, which has merged three systems into one ILS. The group identified key takeaways from SHARE's experience, which included that the members of the SHARE Consortium maintained their current delivery structures after merging, and they underestimated the volume of materials that would travel between systems after the mergers.

The group reviewed the current delivery structures of both of the systems and identified what is needed for delivery now in order to anticipate any changes needed for increased volume. In addition, the groups reviewed the current delivery routes and connections between the two systems.

Once the current needs and structures were reviewed, the group began to discuss anticipating and estimating needs. The group identified some additional information to obtain, including information from the current delivery vendor, Waltco, obtaining feedback from systems, additional information on volume changes from SHARE and other recent mergers (Monarch Library System), information on current ILLs between the two systems, as well as a comparison of current holds and holdings within each system.

The group agreed that each system should maintain its separate delivery vendors. In addition, a potential recommendation could be to have WVLS libraries have two bins/bags, one for WVLS and one for NWLS. NWLS libraries would maintain status as is but could add a bag for WVLS libraries if the sorting becomes too cumbersome at the system level.

They will be meeting on January 8th to review and discuss additional information and to finalize their recommendations.

### **3. Collaborative Decision-making Workgroup Update**

This workgroup has been formed and meets for the first time on Wednesday, December 20th.

### **4. Standing Item: Communication**

It was asked if any communication needs or questions have come up, and what is the status of the replies.

K. Sabelko shared that MCPL appreciated the 12/11 email about the recommendation from the ILS workgroup. It contained the information that was needed in the email and folks didn't necessarily have to click on an additional link to read the information. The staff appreciated the ease and asked communications to follow that process in the future.

K. Zimmermann asked about the effectiveness of Monday Mentions, which goes out a week or two after the NICE meeting and offers a brief update to staff at member libraries. It was asked if there should be a separate email that should go out instead of relying on the Mentions. It was noted that it could be helpful for staff that are invested and others can ignore.

The FAQ page has been updated on the NICE webpage. J. Johnson has updated the timeline and goals for 2023/24, added a question about the differences and similarities

between the two systems (population, number of libraries, consortia budgets, etc.), and added information about membership changes and impacts on the project.

K. Zimmerman shared responses to the ILS workgroup recommendation. She indicated that the project has received four pieces of feedback. One was in support, one indicated resistance to change, one was from MCPL and wondering if Koha would meet the needs of the larger library, and one asked for more information about Koha.

Within VCat the following questions have come up:

- Will VCat be able to vote on potential migration to Koha - Yes, the VCAT governing body will be able to vote on all recommendations as a whole.
- Who is on the targeted workgroup - J. Johnson has added [workgroup members](#) on the website.
- Who is the resource library for NWLS - Superior Public Library

It was shared that MCPL has had some staff concerns and confusion, and K. Sabelko encouraged staff to share with the project via the form.

It was noted that there has been a recurring question about why the process is moving at a quick pace. It was shared that it feels rushed to some because everyone is at different points in participation and knowledge about the project. Grant time period and vendor contract timelines are driving the NICE project timeline, so the groups need to be aware of the external pressures.

L. Ollhoff indicated that she had staff express concerns, mostly about delivery and impact on patrons, and she, too, has encouraged them to share with the project team. It was noted that MCPL staff are very concerned about operational issues.

It was shared that these are the same questions that have been asked at the start of consortial sharing and generally, these are challenges that can be overcome while focusing on patron service.

The next meeting of the NICE Team is January 16, 2024 at 9:00 am.