

New Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide

By Bradley Shipps, Director
Outagamie Waupaca Library System

In November 2018, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, announced publication of the new **Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide for Wisconsin Public Libraries**. The guide was produced by the Public Library Development Team and released during the October 2018 WLA Conference as part of the Inclusive Services Institute recap session.

The document can be found under the “Inclusive Services” section at this link: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/yss>

What is the Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide?

Participants in the inaugural 2018 Inclusive Services Institute developed this self-assessment tool and guide so that libraries are better able to evaluate the inclusivity of their spaces, programming, services, and administrative operations. This resource was designed to be used by individuals and groups as an ongoing reflection tool. The checklist and supporting resources are meant to help libraries evaluate current services as well as plan for the future.

The checklist is organized by areas of library service identified in the WI Public Library Standards. Each section provides a straightforward checklist that can be answered with Yes, No, In Progress, or Not Applicable. Scoreable responses to each checklist will provide a snapshot of current levels of inclusion. Supporting materials, such as the reflection worksheet (available now) and next-step suggestions (coming later), offer ways for individual libraries to evaluate existing assets and opportunities for growth and change.

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The comprehensive nature of the considerations asked within the Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide is overwhelming. All communities are unique and therefore each library will use this guide differently. This tool might be used as an annual reflection or utilized more often. The tool might be used as a whole, or by prioritizing sections. First and foremost, the Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide is meant to assist the library in better understanding how it considers inclusion as an institution. Each library needs to determine how to connect with the tool and process the reflections it provokes. In addition, each library will determine how to best share its efforts.

Read the entire post on the Wisconsin Libraries for Everyone blog: <https://dpi.wi.gov/wilibrariesforeveryone/announcing-inclusive-services-assessment-and-guide-wisconsin-public-libraries>

Excerpted from a blog post by Tessa Michaelson Schmidt, Public Library Youth and Inclusive Services Consultant, Public Library Development Team, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

New Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide

*By Mark Arend, Assistant Director
Winnefox Library System*

After over three years of meetings the PLSR Steering Committee has submitted their final

report. Literally hundreds of library directors, trustees, and others have participated to a greater or lesser degree, from the dedicated Steering Committee and Workgroup members to those who only filled out surveys and commented on proposals.



Seven recommendations representing areas of consensus within the library community emerged from the workgroup reports, community input, and discussion:

1. Develop Standards, Best Practices and Accountability Structures for Public Library Systems

Develop and implement standards, best practices and accountability measures designed to support equity of access to high quality services by public libraries.

2. Enhance Collaboration by Creating Incentives and Removing Barriers

Accelerate collaboration among Wisconsin's public library systems by establishing incentives and removing barriers.

3. Reduce the Number of Library Systems

Apply the approaches of enhancing collaboration and reducing barriers to support voluntary changes in territory served by public library systems with the ultimate goal of reducing the current number of public library systems.

4. Analyze the Current Funding Formula

Conduct a thorough analysis of the current funding formula for public library systems. Identify and

propose alternative funding formulas or other solutions with potential to improve equity of access to high-quality library services.

5. Initiate Delivery Service Pilot Projects

Stimulate development within the resource-sharing environment by initiating one or more pilot projects relating to library delivery services.

6. Create an Effective, Well-Managed, State-Scale Discovery Layer

Engage with topical experts, public library systems, and the library community at-large to expand access to collections from around the State.

A “discovery layer” refers to the catalog used by library patrons to find, identify, select and obtain the various types of resources offered by the modern public library. This discovery layer would work like our current catalog but would allow access to other library catalogs, 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.

7. Implement a Learning Management System for Professional Development

Oversee the design, deployment and operation of a learning management system capable of meeting the current and future needs of librarians in Wisconsin. This learning management system would give library directors and staff access to a greater range of educational programs and would streamline the certification process for directors.

The Steering Committee also developed five principles to be followed in implementing these recommendations:

1. Service improvements must benefit library users

Any service improvements moving forward must fulfill a principle of the project related to equitable access for all and ultimately benefit the library user.

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

The workgroup reports contain thoughtful and in-depth recommendations from public library system and library service area experts and provide a solid foundation for improving services across the state.

3. Take action on recommendations with robust support

Recommendations 5, 6, and 7 have been identified and are supported as service areas where improvement can provide immediate, positive outcomes through collaborative and organic change.

4. Service improvements must be soundly-implemented

Implementation of service improvements must be driven by effective research, planning, execution, and change-management, and supported by adequate resources.

5. Potential unintended consequences should be anticipated and studied

Any efforts to implement recommendations should be preceded by assessments to identify risk factors that could lead to unintended negative outcomes.

There is a link to the full report and find additional information here: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/system-redesign>. The report has been submitted to State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor and to the Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND). Implementing these recommendations will for the most part not require changes to Statute or Administrative Code but will require support and funding from the DPI. We can expect some lively discussion throughout the Wisconsin library community over the next few years.

FAQ

I'm going to miss several meetings. Can I send someone to represent me while I'm gone?

No. Specific individuals are appointed as library trustees. The law does not allow for substitutes or proxy votes. Your representative could, of course, attend and observe any open sessions of the board.

Have questions?

Contact us and we'll try to help.

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Save the Dates – 2019

Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Annual Conference

October 8 – 11

Kalahari Resort & Convention Center,
Wisconsin Dells

<http://wla.wisconsinlibraries.org/events-conferences/annual-conference/wla-conference-home>

Wisconsin Trustee Training Week webinars

August 12 - 16

More information and registration coming soon!

<https://www.wistrusteetraining.com/>

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If you have questions, comments or suggestions for future articles, send them to:

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