

Western Library System
Plan of Service
July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2027

Mission Statement: The mission of the Western Library System (WLS) is to provide leadership, training, and support to the member libraries in their roles as essential and valued resources in their communities. In the next biennium, the focus will be:

- informing and increasing member libraries’ knowledge of best practices and effective, targeted services and programs;
- supporting member libraries’ endeavors with responsive planning and collaboration that meets and exceeds the needs and wants of the communities they serve;
- providing information to inform and increase knowledge of current and future technology resources;
- promoting the value of libraries and library workers;
- providing programs and training that support the missions of the member libraries and the WLS.

I. TRAINING, CONSULTING, SUPPORT

Goal 1: To increase the knowledge and skills of the WLS library community by providing continuing education opportunities and technology training.

Objectives:

1. Work with the member libraries to determine their training needs and plan training events that support their missions, goals, and objectives.
2. Work with the Nebraska Library Commission (NLC) and the other Regional Systems to develop, plan, and promote Basic Skills programs and statewide Continuing Education (CE) credits (such as technology training, Trustee/Board education, youth and senior programs, collection management, fundraising, policies, advocacy).
3. Encourage participation of WLS members and Boards in continuing education opportunities.
4. Assist library staff and trustees in meeting accreditation and certification guidelines and participating in educational programs.
5. Assist library staff with the Public Library Statistics to attain Dollars for Data.
6. Work with Educational Service Units (ESU) for training and educational opportunities.
7. Work with other associations, government agencies and trainers to provide a broad range of mutual understanding and training opportunities.

Outcomes:

1. The planned and implemented variety of targeted educational opportunities meet or exceed the members’ needs and requests.
2. Visits, communications, workshops, and networking from the WLS staff align with members collection and services goals and objectives.
3. Member libraries accomplish their accreditation and certification requirements and goals with WLS support when needed.
4. Non-accredited public libraries receive Dollars for Data with WLS support when needed.
5. Coordination with the NLC and the Regional Systems Directors will streamline training and resources for the libraries as a whole and independently.

Goal 2: To provide information and support to individual libraries or Boards to meet specific needs.

Objectives:

1. Respond to requests for assistance through phone, online or in-person consultations and/or materials.
2. Request support from NLC staff as needed.

Outcomes:

1. Solutions to issues and concerns are promptly addressed to satisfaction.

Goal 3: To provide opportunities for members in the System to share ideas.

Objectives:

1. Facilitate informal meeting opportunities.
2. Conduct public librarians' meetings throughout the region using in-person and online resources.
3. Maintain current member directory to encourage communication.
4. Maintain current social media accounts which may include and not limited to Facebook, X, Instagram, Pinterest, WLS website.
5. Work with the ESUs to support and promote their work with the school librarians.

Outcomes:

1. Member libraries will work together to identify specific concerns and solutions.
2. Member libraries will share resources, workshops, and program ideas.
3. Member libraries will lead or participate in the planning and implementation of programs and workshops when appropriate.
4. Member libraries in remote areas will feel connected to other libraries.
5. Member libraries will have increased networking support and opportunities with staff in the WLS, state and nationally.

Goal 4: To make all residents of the Western Library System region aware of resources provided through libraries and encourage their use.

Objectives:

1. Provide training to ensure that all library staff understand the resources and can train their library users.
2. Support community training efforts.
3. Encourage technological collaboration between schools and public libraries.

Outcomes:

1. Increased use of NebraskaAccess, online catalogs, Libby, etc.
2. Library staff will feel comfortable searching the Internet and databases and educating patrons.
3. Staff and patrons will be able to find desired information.

II. PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, COORDINATION

Goal 1: To assist libraries with providing quality library collections.

Objectives:

1. Work with library staff on the selection, evaluation and weeding of collections and assist with the process upon request.
2. Make recommendations for specific needs when requested.
3. Provide guidelines for setting collection goals and priorities.
4. Provide information regarding library automation systems.
5. Provide information on the aesthetics of library buildings and collections.

Outcomes:

1. Collections will be current, relevant, and aesthetically displayed.
2. Interest and circulation will increase.
3. Funds will be spent to meet identified needs.
4. Collections will be cost-effectively balanced and targeted.
5. Automation systems will match libraries' needs and budget.

Goal 2: To assist libraries with their strategic planning process.

Objectives:

1. Provide support and direction to libraries for the planning process when requested.
2. Provide tools for community information gathering.
3. Promote Board and community involvement in library planning.
4. Promote Board and library involvement in community planning.
4. Publicize information about grant funding opportunities and provide training.
5. Encourage local support for sustaining library technology.

Outcomes:

1. Libraries will develop useful planning documents for their accreditation, mission, vision, values, and goal planning.
2. Community Needs and Response Plans align with community action plans
3. Community Needs and Response Plans will be responsive to community needs.
4. Libraries will be knowledgeable and trained on funding sources.
5. Community partnerships will be established and sustained when beneficial.
6. Technology resources and broadband connections will be current and/or progressive.
7. Disaster plans are included in the library documentation.

Goal 3: To provide resources for member libraries to use in administration, planning, collection development, public services, and professional enrichment.

Objectives:

1. Maintain bibliography or obtain and make available books, resources and journals and equipment to meet the needs and budget allowances of the member libraries.
2. Ensure member libraries are aware of the books, videos, and journals available from the WLS office.
3. Promote the services and materials available from the NLC.
4. Promote resources from library associations or other professional organizations.

Outcomes:

1. Increased use of the WLS resources.
2. Increased use of NLC materials and services by WLS members.
3. Resources available from the WLS are current and useful to member libraries.
4. Increased use of resources from library associations, listservs and other professional organizations.

Goal 4: To collaborate within and outside the System on regional, state regional and national programs.

Objectives:

1. Provide workshops and resources in conjunction with summer reading programs within the WLS and with the other Regional Systems.
2. Assist with and promote author visits, literary events, Humanities Council programs, and other similar activities.
3. Promote Nebraska authors and books.
4. Encourage participation in the Golden Sower, Letters for Literature and One Book One Nebraska programs.
5. Support reading/writing groups and activities.
6. Work with regional library systems and the NLC to develop and implement programs and services that meet or exceed the needs of our member libraries.
7. Participate in and encourage members to attend the Joint Youth Services retreat, the NLA and NLSA conferences.
8. Participate in and encourage awareness of national library organizations, ARSL, ALA, AASL, and listservs that will be of value.
8. Offer funding for association membership and conferences.

Outcomes:

1. WLS members will have opportunities to share information and training with the other library staff regionally, statewide, and nationally.
2. WLS members will be supported through communication and promotion of local programs, reading groups and services.
3. Statewide program participation will increase.
4. Nebraskans will appreciate the accomplishments of local writers.
5. Funding requests will increase to allow library staff to expand their knowledge personally and professionally.

Goal 5: To maintain current successful WLS service and efficiently and cost effectively operate the WLS office.

Objectives:

1. Provide requested WLS materials, equipment, information, and support.
2. Respond promptly to consulting needs by phone, e-mail, virtual and in person visits.
3. Maintain regular contact with all system members.
4. Encourage professional development through funding.
5. Promote participation in professional association activities.
6. Provide information about issues impacting library services.
7. Maintain, evaluate, and upgrade office equipment.
8. Prepare all required reports.
9. Organize files and financial records using standard procedures and records retention

schedule.

10. Hold five or more System Board meetings per year to ensure governance of overall operations and programming as stipulated in the By-laws and Policies and Procedures.

11. Review By-Laws, Policies and Procedures.

Outcomes:

1. WLS members will receive timely and successful assistance from the WLS office
2. WLS members will be empowered and supported in their professional duties.
3. WLS members will be informed about issues affecting them.
4. The WLS office will meet all requirements for financial, legal, and program standards.
5. The WLS office will operate efficiently and effectively.
6. By-laws, Policies and Procedures will be current, effective, and efficient.

III. PROMOTION, ADVOCACY, COMMUNICATION

Goal 1: To increase the visibility and value of libraries and library services to the school and community.

Objectives:

1. Provide information and materials to help library staff market their programs in their schools and communities.
2. Participate in Legislative Day and other activities that will promote libraries in the broader community.
3. Be a library information resource for school administrators, city council members, economic development and others indirectly connected to libraries.
4. Assist library staff with tools to generate and sustain community engagement.
5. Provide information and training on community resources to outside agencies and government entities.
6. Present information and/or programs on how libraries are essential to the community.
7. Promote the joy of reading and learning.
8. During legislature session communicate status and content of bills with impact on libraries or librarians.

Outcomes:

1. Western Nebraskans who are not regular library users will attend special events and become more interested in the library and its services.
2. Residents and community and government agencies will view the library as a cultural gathering place.
3. Residents and community and government agencies will view the library as a value to the community.

Goal 2: To provide means for WLS members to be informed about library activities and to communicate with each other.

Objectives:

1. Keep the System web page current and relevant.
2. Provide web page links based on member needs and requests.
3. Encourage all members to use e-mail.
4. Support the use of library social media.
5. Use the WLS member email to distribute time-sensitive information.
6. Maintain an updated member directory.

Outcomes:

1. Members will have access to current WLS news and related library information.
2. Members will correspond and network with each other.
3. Members will participate in the library world beyond their location.
4. Members will know community resources and participate in local, regional, and state organizations as is relevant to their libraries.

Goal 3: To provide a consistent conduit for communication, promotion, education, support, identity, and unity for WLS members; a record of System activities; and a sharing of WLS information in a wider community.

Objectives:

1. Publish a bi-monthly newsletter electronically with the ability to print.
2. Distribute the newsletter to all members and other interested parties.
3. The WLS listserv and social media will provide a source of information sharing.

Outcomes:

1. All members and those associated with WLS will share a common base of information about the library system.
2. Ongoing documentation of the activities and members of the Western Library System will connect the members with each other, the NLC, State and national best practices and trends.
3. Ongoing advocacy for libraries and librarians.

Goal 4: To encourage people to pursue a career in the library profession.

Objectives:

1. Provide information to those considering career choices.
2. Publicize educational programs that prepare library workers.
3. Promote a positive image of the library profession.
4. Encourage Friends groups and Board members to promote the library profession within their networks.
5. Make available promotional materials and programs to distribute and present to schools, Board meetings, and public forums.
6. Meet with schools and students informally and formally to provide information on librarianship as a profession.

Outcomes:

1. Increased interest in and knowledge of library training and educational programs.
2. Larger pool of qualified applicants for job openings.
3. Greater value placed on those currently in library positions.

Goal 5: To promote the library in the community and the school.

Objectives:

1. Assist Library Boards with advocating for the library.
2. Recognize involvement of school and community leaders in library programs.
3. Encourage library partnerships.
4. Promote the American Library Association/Association for Rural and Small Libraries Initiative on Libraries Transforming Communities
5. Assist library staff with tools to generate and sustain community engagement.

Outcomes:

1. Community members will understand the economic benefit of having a library.
2. Non-library users will view the library as a valuable community asset.
3. Communities will be stronger due to the library participating in or leading initiatives along with governmental or non-profit agencies.
4. School and public libraries will support each other's programs and services, and students, parents and residents will make the connection.

Goal 6: To understand and adhere to all Federal, State and local statutes, laws and/or ordinances.

Objectives:

1. Western Library System office will be able to understand governmental regulations.
2. Members in the WLS receive quality consultations services with federal, state and local statutes, laws or ordinances.

Outcomes:

1. WLS Office is ethical and is managed with integrity.
2. Member libraries understand the regulations imposed by federal, state and local government agencies.
3. Members can address local laws and ordinances if updates are needed.