Westmoreland Library Network

Strategic Plan
2016-2018

Westmoreland County Federated Library System
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Introduction

On behalf of the Westmoreland County Federated Library System (WCFLS), otherwise known publicly as the Westmoreland Library Network, or WLN™, and its 24 Members, this 2016-18 Strategic Plan states a shared understanding of agreed-upon goals and priorities for the next three years. It is also meant to convey that understanding to associates and collaborators. Examples of associates and collaborators, who are in some cases funders, include: (1) the two major funders, the Office of Commonwealth Libraries in the PA Department of Education, and the Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners; (2) the National Science Foundation and various charitable foundations in Western PA; (3) program collaborators, such as the Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra (WSO), the Pittsburgh Ballet Theater (PBT), the AIU3 Math & Science Collaborative (MSC), the Westmoreland Intermediate Unit (WIU), the seventeen School Districts in Westmoreland County, and various universities and colleges.

All the above-named associates and collaborators are represented in the Plan's goals for growth, which are:

- Experiment with ways to engage with library patrons, especially with the use of technology.
- Develop and grow partnerships with community organizations to further the interests of our libraries and communities.
- Enhance programming opportunities for our libraries.
- Provide opportunities to raise the professional knowledge level of our library employees and volunteers, to enable them to meet the constantly evolving demands of libraries.
- Bring all our libraries up to an enhanced technology level, structure, and uniformity so they can better meet evolving technology challenges, and in such a way that the WLN headquarters can better support and maintain their technological needs. Much of this will be accomplished by E-rate.
- Explore ways of empowering and involving Member library employees and volunteers in the future direction of the WLN, such as through the Committee structure and internal staff website powered by SharePoint.
- Explore ways to be more efficient and cost effective.

Cesare Muccari
WLN Executive Director

Executive Summary

The 2016-18 Strategic Plan Committee reviewed two prior WLN Plans, for the 2005-09 and 2013-15 periods, and the current Plan of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh for the period 2013-17. The 2016-18 Committee elected to follow the format of the 2013-15 Plan. The process was enhanced by 124 interviews of key individuals, primarily in Westmoreland County, but also including interviewees from Allegheny, Cambria, and Berks Counties. Interviewees included major decision makers, some elected officials, as well as WLN and Member personnel, major library donors, and Head Start teachers. The interviews were done under an NSF I-CORP L grant (https://www.asee.org/i-corps-l/about) to the AIU3 MSC, as part of its broader STEM collaboration with the WLN during 2015. The collaboration has been in effect since 2014 (http://seceij.net/seceij/winter15/ccss_ngss_pilot.html). Key conclusions include that libraries can become even more effective by working: (1) more closely with formal educators and (2) within the broader, regional economic environment (which values STEM workforce development).

The 2016-18 Strategic Plan is also informed by the Pew Research Center 2016 report *Libraries and Learning* (http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/04/07/libraries-and-learning/). Pew highlights that 76% of survey responders say that "libraries serve the learning and educational needs of their communities" very well or pretty well. At the same time, Pew reports that users are often unfamiliar with specific learning-related programs, as well as recently available materials, such as e-books. Nevertheless, the latter's growing use may be helping to drive downward the use of physical library facilities, a continuing pattern that is also shown in the Pew report.

In the 2013-15 Plan period, the WLN, with its various special programs in the Arts and STEM, sought to build new collaborations for the benefit of its patrons and will continue to do so in the 2016-18 Plan. At the same time, it intended to build a more sustained source of financial support; this has not been realized yet. In fact, since 2004, the State subsidy, by far our main source of funding, has declined 33 percent in unadjusted dollars. Nevertheless, recognizing that we have only just started with this collaborative vision, the 2016-18 Strategic Plan reflects an even deeper commitment to it.

The Plan also reflects a continuing attention to economies of centralized services for Members, and targets shared programs and services as the way to a successful future for the Members and their patrons. Cost-containment, while not always high profile, is essential for providing visionary programs.

Strategic Plan Committee

The Strategic Plan 2016-18 is the product of the Strategic Plan Committee with guidance and direction from WLN Member Library Directors and the WLN Board of Directors.

Members of the Strategic Plan Committee:

Naomi Cross
Children's Librarian
Sewickley Twshp Public Library

Joseph Fee
Technology Resources Coordinator
WLN

Diana Falk
Library Director
Norwin Public Library

Dana Farabaugh
District Consultant
WLN

Denni Grassel
Library Director
Delmont Public Library

Charles B. Greenberg
Board Treasurer/Strategic Plan Committee Chair
WLN (Murrysville Community Library Trustee)

Patti Miller
Library Director
Scottdale Public Library

Cesare Muccari
Executive Director
WLN

Wesley Roberts
Board Vice President
WLN (Peoples Library Trustee)

Mary Stubbs
Board Secretary
WLN

Mission Statement

The Westmoreland County Federated Library System (WCFLS), an alliance of public libraries in Westmoreland County, is dedicated to achieving excellence in providing library and information services for all County residents through the coordination of resources and services, the sharing of information expertise, and the promotion of library staff development for the mutual benefit of all member libraries.

History

In 1993, the WCFLS of 24 public libraries was formed to take advantage of an opportunity for increased funding from both Westmoreland County government and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. As a further result, resources began to be shared more readily, Library Directors and their Board Trustees became involved in decision-making for the WCFLS, and the quality of library service in Westmoreland County rose dramatically.

The WCFLS and its Members started to envision a new future for library service throughout the County. In January 2005, the WCFLS embarked upon the Westmoreland Information Network (WIN™) project. The goal of this project was to unite the libraries in a shared catalog with one integrated library system (ILS). The WIN Committee was formed to seek funding for the project and to select an ILS vendor.

Through hard work and diligence by the WIN Committee and WCFLS Board Directors, the WIN project was funded by a generous lead grant from the R.K. Mellon Foundation and a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Westmoreland County Commissioners also provided an annual funding increase for ongoing technical support for the ILS. Polaris Library Systems was chosen as the ILS vendor.

On December 18, 2007, the vision of the WIN project became a reality. Twenty Westmoreland County libraries merged into a unified catalog on the Polaris ILS. Now patrons had access to over 765,000 items belonging to the WIN libraries. They were able to go to any of the libraries to borrow and return items. They were able to place holds 24/7 and have their materials delivered to the library of choice, and they were able to access their patron accounts on-line. These services were immediately embraced by the residents of Westmoreland County. By December 2011, the WIN vision was fully realized when public library participation in WIN reached 100%. Early in this transition, the trademarked public name Westmoreland Library Network (WLN) was adopted.

In January 2011, the WCFLS/WLN started down a path of significant administrative changes. The Office of Commonwealth Libraries had made the determination to merge the WLN with the then Westmoreland/Fayette Counties District Center. At that point, the WLN assumed responsibility for the Westmoreland portion, and the Washington County District Center assumed responsibility for the Fayette portion. The WLN established a new headquarters at its present GreenForge site. The transition was challenging; however, it quickly became clear that Westmoreland County libraries were benefiting from the now unified and streamlined services and from centralization at GreenForge.

In the past few years, the Polaris ILS has been significantly upgraded periodically, keeping abreast of much enhanced services and efficiencies, and the HUB has been relocated from its previous home at Adams Memorial Library to its present secure site at GreenForge. All of these things collectively have brought a sea change to Westmoreland County, including access to the over 900,000-item catalog via mobile devices of various kinds. This is the progressive path that we have travelled, and we intend to make our future "history" even more progressive by what we have put into the 2016-18 Strategic Plan.

Member Libraries

Adams Memorial Library
1112 Ligonier Street Latrobe, PA 15650
724-539-1972
www.adamslib.org

Caldwell Memorial Library
988 N Chestnut Ext Derry, PA 15627
724-694-5765
www.adamslib.org/libraries/caldwell

Belle Vernon Public Library
505 Speer Street North Belle Vernon, PA 15012
724-929-6642
www.bellevernonlibrary.org

Delmont Public Library
77 Greensburg Street Delmont, PA 15626
724-468-5329
www.delmontlibrary.org

Greensburg Hempfield Area Library
237 S. Pennsylvania Ave Greensburg, PA 15601
724-837-5620
www.ghal.org

Jeannette Public Library
500 Magee Avenue Jeannette, PA 15644
724-523-5702
www.jeannettepubliclibrary.org

Ligonier Valley Library
120 W. Main Street Ligonier, PA 15658
724-238-6451

Manor Public Library
44 Main Street Suite 500 Manor, PA 15665
724-864-6850
www.manorpubliclibrary.org

Monessen Public Library
326 Donner Avenue Monessen, PA 15062
724-684-4750
www.monessenlibrary.org

Mount Pleasant Public Library
120 S. Church Street Mount Pleasant, PA 15666
724-547-3850
www.mountpleasantlibrary.org

Murrysville Community Library
4130 Sardis Road Murrysville, PA 15668
724-327-1102
www.murrysvillelibrary.org

New Alexandria Public Library
Keystone Plaza New Alexandria, PA 15944
724-668-7747
www.newalexlibrary.org

New Florence Community Library
122 Ligonier Street New Florence, PA 15944
724-235-2249
www.newflorencelibrary.org

Norwin Public Library
100 Caruthers Lane Irwin, PA 15642
724-863-4700
www.nowinpubliclibrary.org

Penn Area Library
2001 Municipal Court Harrison City, PA 15636
724-744-4414
www.pennlib.org

Peoples Library New Kensington
880 Barnes Street New Kensington, PA 15068
724-339-1021
www.peopleslibrary.org

Peoples Library Lower Burrell
3052 Wachter Avenue Lower Burrell, PA 15068
724-339-1565

Rostraver Public Library
700 Plaza Drive Belle Vernon, PA 15102
724-379-5511
www.rostraverlibrary.org

Scottdale Public Library
106 Spring Street Scottdale, PA 15683
724-887-6140
www.scottdalelibrary.org

Sewickley Township Public Library
201 Highland Avenue Herminie, PA 15637
724-446-9940
www.sewickleytownshippubliclibrary.org

Smithton Public Library
615 Center Street Smithton, PA 15479
724-872-0701

Trafford Community Library
416 Brinton Avenue Trafford, PA 15085
412-372-5115
www.traffordlibrary.org

Vandergrift Public Library
128 C Washington Ave. Vandergrift, PA 15690
724-568-2212
www.vandergriftpubliclibrary.org

West Newton Public Library
124 N. Water Street West Newton, PA 15089
724-972-3229

Youngwood Area Public Library
17 South 6th Street Youngwood, PA 15697
724-925-9350
www.youngwoodapl.org

Strategic Goals for 2016-2018

Goal One: Maintain and improve WLN governance and leadership to build stronger bonds between the WLN headquarters and Member Libraries and foster a culture of trust and mutual respect.

Objective One: Operate on a balanced WLN budget with new sustained sources of funding.
Target Date: Ongoing

Objective Two: Maintain Board-approved cash reserves for scheduled HUB upgrades and van replacements.
Target Date: 2017

Objective Three: Develop and approve a WLN policy on fundraising.
Target Date: 4th quarter 2016

Objective Four: Evaluate and address issues of equity of access to basic library services for all County residents.
Target Date: 2018

Objective Five: Promote the 2016 Pew Research Center Report *Libraries and Learning* to stakeholders.
Target Date: Ongoing

Goal Two: Help equip Member libraries to better meet the demands of evolving technology challenges through education, WLN-wide uniformity, and enhanced technology structures.

Objective One: Update the WLN Technology Policy annually, as needed.
Target Date: 4th quarter 2016

Objective Two: Update and upgrade all hardware and software per Polaris recommendations. Participate in IUG conferences.
Target Date: Ongoing

Objective Three: Engage in ongoing research and review of electronic resource developments and opportunities, with a focus on being in the forefront of changing technology options.
Target Date: Ongoing

Objective Four: Streamline each library's technological infrastructure through E-rate.
Target Date: 2017-2018

Goal Three: Maintain an open communication environment to build productive relationships with Member libraries and patrons.

>**Objective One:** Set up a WLN Intranet using Microsoft SharePoint software that will provide all Library Directors, staff and Board members with access to WLN documents, policies and information, in addition to instant messaging capabilities.
>**Target Date:** 2017
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>**Objective Two:** Continue to convey information in a timely and consistent manner to all WLN Member libraries via open communication at all WLN Board, Library Director, and Committee meetings.
>**Target Date:** Ongoing
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>**Objective Three:** Maintain a high level of informal communication.
>**Target Date:** Ongoing
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>**Objective Four:** Continue to involve Library Directors and other library staff in the management of WLN business via the Committee structure.
>**Target Date:** Ongoing

Goal Four: Develop and grow partnerships with community organizations to further the interests of our libraries and communities.

>**Objective One:** Pursue new grants to grow the Math and Science Collaborative and Westmoreland Intermediate Unit (WIU) collaborations, which are based in part on the Eden Hall Foundation initiative from 2016, teacher and library staff Early Learner Networks in 2015, and STORYTIME STEM-PACKS™ of 2014-16.
>**Target Date:** 2017-2018
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>**Objective Two:** Promote the Arts through special programming in partnership with Seton Hill, the Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre; build new partnerships with arts organizations.
>**Target Date:** Ongoing
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>**Objective Three:** Participate in workforce development in partnership with the WIU, Westmoreland Development Council, Economic Growth Connection, and Westmoreland County Community College.
>**Target Date:** 2018

Goal Five: Promote Member service excellence by raising the professional knowledge of Member library employees, volunteers, and board members to meet the constantly evolving demands of libraries.

> **Objective One:** WLN will offer and promote consistent and regularly scheduled staff training, including process sessions related to Polaris, cataloging, and other topics.
> **Target Date:** Ongoing
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> **Objective Two:** WLN staff will encourage participation in meetings, webinars, and conferences to increase the knowledge of emerging library trends and technologies so Member libraries can better serve patrons and meet or exceed Continuing Education Requirements.
> **Target Date:** Ongoing
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> **Objective Three:** WLN staff will offer training directed to higher levels of library services and marketing, such as desktop publishing, crowdfunding, social media, trustee training, using creative technology in libraries, and coding
> **Target Date:** Ongoing
>
> **Objective Four:** Train Member library staffs to build and maintain relevant collections.
> **Target Date:** 2017

Goal Six: Explore ways to be more efficient and cost effective via the consolidation of services and resources.

> **Objective One:** Sustain and expand standardization of computer hardware, software, and peripherals critical for ILS stability and streamlined workflow.
> **Target Date:** 2017-2018
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> **Objective Two:** Maintain professional WLN-wide van service.
> **Target Date:** Ongoing
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> **Objective Three:** Explore and implement opportunities for simplification and consolidation of services for cost savings and improvements in efficiency, such as direct invoice payments, insurance buys and others.
> **Target Date:** 2016-2017