



To: State Superintendent Jill Underly, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers, Wisconsin Legislators

From: Jaime Healy-Plotkin, Chair, Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND)

Re: COLAND Biennial Report on Wisconsin Libraries, 2019-2021

Date: July 9, 2021

At the July 9, 2021 meeting of the Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND) approved the attached Biennial Report on the Value of Library Services, Statistical Report, Challenges, Opportunities, and Recommendations in Wisconsin for 2019-2021. Mandated Report [Wisconsin Statutes s. 43.07 \(5\)](#).

COLAND advises the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to ensure that all Wisconsin residents have access to library and information services. The 19 member council, appointed by the Governor, functions as a forum through which librarians and members of the public identify, study, and collect public testimony on issues affecting Wisconsin libraries and other information services. Members serve three year terms. Council findings are communicated as advisory recommendations to the State Superintendent, Governor and Legislature.

Noteworthy in the Biennial Report

- The impact of COVID-19 on libraries and patrons. The pandemic changed how the library community offers its services and collaborates with stakeholders and peer groups, in many ways for the better.
 - Increased access to Wi-Fi at library locations and handing out hotspots and devices
 - Dramatic increase in use of electronic materials through cooperative practices
 - Virtual programming, curbside pick up, and other service innovations
 - Increased communication between regional public library system directors and their staff
 - A demand for improvement in equity and diversity
- Public Library System Redesign (PLSR) moved from project stage to implementation
- COLAND approval of a new committee structure to encourage greater engagement and discussion on library and network development topics
- Statewide need for strong broadband and digital equity

Recommendations for the future

COLAND makes the following recommendations to the new State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly:

1. Support statewide broadband and digital equity
2. Support increased digital access of information in libraries and schools
3. Support adequate staffing of school libraries
4. Support funding for library initiatives including Wisconsin's Digital Library

Thank you for your consideration of this report. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at healyplotkin@gmail.com or the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Division of Libraries and Technology at (608) 266-2205.

Wisconsin Libraries, 2019-2021

Value of Library Services, Statistical Report, Challenges, Opportunities, and
Recommendations

Biennial Report

Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND)

July, 2021

COLAND Biennial Report on Wisconsin Libraries, 2019-2021

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
COLAND Members, 2019-2021	3
COLAND Meetings, 2019-2021	4
VALUE OF LIBRARY SERVICES TO WISCONSIN COMMUNITIES	5
Public Libraries	5
Electronic Resources	6
BadgerLink	6
TEACH Program	7
School Libraries	7
Recollection Wisconsin	7
Rural Public Libraries	8
Department of Corrections Libraries	8
Community Engagement in Wisconsin	8
Cybersecurity in Libraries	9
Wisconsin Library Association	9
University of Wisconsin Libraries	9
Special Libraries	10
STATISTICAL REPORT	11
CHALLENGES: 2019-2021	13
Funding	13
Common School Fund	13
2021-2023 Biennial Budget proposal	13
COVID-19	13
Broadband	15
Public Library System Redesign	16
OPPORTUNITIES	16
COLAND GOALS: 2019-2021	17
Goals and Results	17
COLAND Committees	18
COLAND GOALS: 2021-2023	19
RECOMMENDATIONS	19

INTRODUCTION

The Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND) advises the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to ensure that all Wisconsin residents have access to library and information services. The 19 member council, appointed by the Governor, functions as a forum through which librarians and members of the public identify, study, and collect public testimony on issues affecting Wisconsin libraries and other information services. Members serve three year terms. Council findings are communicated as advisory recommendations to the State Superintendent, Governor and Legislature.

In order to ensure access to library and information services COLAND carries out the following responsibilities:

- Promote free access to knowledge, information and diversity of ideas by all Wisconsin residents
- Facilitate the most effective use of library resources through interlibrary cooperation among all types of libraries
- Promote cooperation and resource sharing among public, school, academic, other types of libraries, and related agencies
- Plan, coordinate, evaluate, and set statewide priorities for the development of networks to enable library cooperation and resource sharing within Wisconsin

This biennial report is mandated by [Wisconsin Statutes § 43.07 \(5\)](#) “On or before July 1 of every odd-numbered year [COLAND will] transmit to the state superintendent a descriptive and statistical report on the condition and progress of library services in the state and recommendations on how library services in the state may be improved.”

[COLAND Members, 2019-2021](#)

Professional members are library science, audiovisual and informational science professionals representative of various types of libraries and information services, including public libraries, public library systems, school libraries, public and private academic libraries, special libraries and library educators. Public members are individuals who have demonstrated an interest in libraries or other types of information services. ([Wis. Stat. § 15.377\(6\)](#))

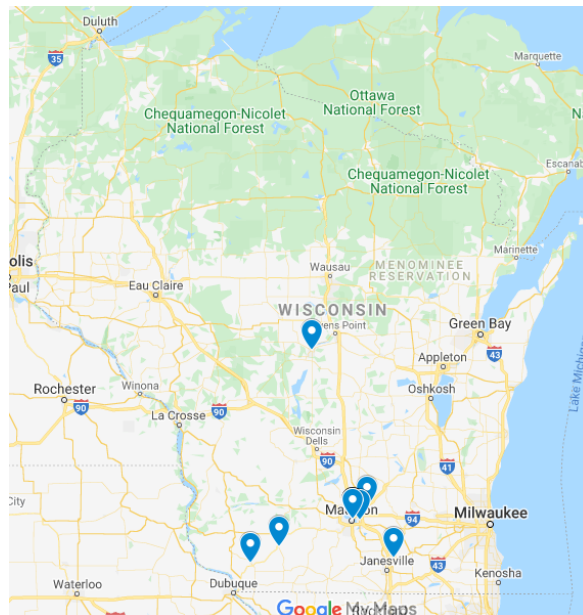
(Current members in bold)

- **Amy Beth Bahena-Ettner, Green Bay Area School District (Green Bay), Professional Member**
- **Terrence Berres, Franklin, Public Member**
- Mary Therese Boyle, Burlington, Public Member
- **Nick Dimassis, Beloit Public Library (Beloit), Professional Member**
- **Miriam Erickson, Fish Creek, Public Member**
- Becki George, Rice Lake Area School District (Birchwood), Professional Member
- **Jaime Healy-Plotkin, Wisconsin State Law Library (Madison), Professional Member, Chair 2020-2021**
- **Svetha Hetzler, Sun Prairie Public Library (Sun Prairie), Professional Member**

- **Joshua Klingbeil, Wisconsin Valley Library Service (Wausau), Professional Member**
- **Ellen Kupfer, Kenosha, Public Member**
- Doug Lay, Suamico, Public Member
- **Anna Lewis, Madison, Public Member**
- Jacqueline Liesch, Kenosha Unified School District (Kenosha), Professional Member
- Bryan McCormick, Hedberg Public Library (Janesville), Professional Member
- **Dennis Myers, Germantown, Public Member**
- James O’Hagan, Racine Unified School District (Racine), Professional Member
- Kathy Pletcher, Denmark, Public Member
- Jess Ripp, Milwaukee, Public Member
- Joan Robb, UW-Green Bay (Green Bay), Professional Member
- **Joan Schneider, Appleton, Public Member**
- **Charmaine Sprengelmeyer-Podein, Madison, Public Member**
- **Jennie Stoltz, Fox Point, Public Member**
- **Cigdem Unal, Monona, Public Member**
- **Martha Van Pelt, South Central Library System (Sun Prairie), Professional Member, Chair 2019-2020**
- **Kristi Williams, Cottage Grove, Public Member**

[COLAND Meetings, 2019-2021](#)

In order to fulfill our mission of advising on library and technology issues throughout the state of Wisconsin, COLAND met in these libraries during the years 2019-2021: McMillan Public Library in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin State Law Library in Madison, Milton Public Library, and virtually hosted by Waunakee Public Library, Mineral Point Public Library, Sun Prairie Public Schools Libraries, and Green Bay Public Schools Libraries.



VALUE OF LIBRARY SERVICES TO WISCONSIN COMMUNITIES

Wisconsin's public, school and academic libraries transform communities by providing:

- Resources for work, school and personal growth;
- Access to broadband technology and technology training;
- Literacy and life-long learning programs and classes;
- Places to access and add to the world's knowledge

Wisconsin residents use and value libraries as a:

- Cost-effective source for books, digital resources and technology;
- Place for independent learning and community gatherings;
- Community anchor for economic growth and a primary contributor to community quality of life

Public Libraries

Public libraries are a gateway to a better life through lifelong learning. The library is the only institution that serves residents in all stages of life. Early literacy programs help young brains develop and prepare them for school. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs encourage young adults to consider careers in science, technology, and engineering - much needed for Wisconsin's economic development. Individuals use the library to apply for jobs, file their taxes, do their banking, order supplies, and stay in touch with family. Public library resources and programs pivoted to meet the community's needs as a global pandemic upended normal procedures and practices in all facets of life including libraries and schools. For many in Wisconsin, the public library is the most reliable, and sometimes their only, source of internet, and they adjusted with [increased internet routers closer to parking lots and handing out of Wi-Fi hotspots to patrons](#). In 2020 and 2021, libraries helped connect individuals to school and work in an online environment as never seen before.

Wisconsin's public libraries have long provided valuable support to residents seeking to improve their career skills, change careers, and apply for jobs. At the start of the pandemic, unemployment peaked as the economy was forced to pause and many sectors, such as retail and hospitality, were shut down. Job seekers continue to rely on public libraries, through online and virtual services, to assist them in not only the job search but also the job application process. As the economy recovers and the nature of work evolves following the pandemic, libraries adjust to the needs of its patrons.

Besides the direct services libraries of all types provide to their constituents and customers, Wisconsin residents and businesses also benefit from cost efficiencies brought through high levels of coordinated interlibrary cooperation. Wisconsin's libraries cooperate through regional library systems and statewide services and organizations. Every year, libraries of all types throughout the state share millions of library items. This statewide sharing means that everyone in Wisconsin has access to over 22 million physical items owned by Wisconsin public libraries.

Electronic Resources

Resource sharing goes beyond the sharing of books and other physical materials. Wisconsin also benefits from electronic databases, e-books, and digital audiobooks that are available to residents and businesses through cost-effective centralized purchasing as well as statewide and regional consortia licensing. The [Wisconsin Public Library Consortium's \(WPLC\) Digital Library](#) offers a cooperative collection of about 350,000 copies of e-books, downloadable audiobooks, and streaming video available to public library cardholders. These titles were used nearly 7 million times in 2020 (compared to 5 million times in 2018). This project is an example of successful statewide collaboration around collection development. WPLC also provides the BiblioBoard platform statewide in an effort to help local libraries connect with authors.

The state of libraries, as did the state of the world, changed when a global pandemic was declared in March 2020 and to research this changed state, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) commissioned a report entitled "[When Closed Doors Aren't Closed: Pandemic OverDrive Digital Collection Research Project](#)." This report serves as preliminary research around usage of the two statewide e-book collections: WPLC's Digital Library and the [Wisconsin Schools Digital Library Consortium \(WSDLC\)](#) school library collection. Initial findings indicate that the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) investment in these collections during the pandemic were highly effective in reducing hold times and making e-books more accessible. Use increased on the whole and survey results indicated that the pandemic was a contributing factor to bring new users to the collection. This report also surfaced additional questions. Of particular interest to DPI is the effect the pandemic has had on the larger ecosystem of electronic resources such as BadgerLink, locally purchased databases, and streaming services like Hoopla or Kanopy. From the research and other insights, it is clear that digital content continues to be a critical element for our overall library strategic plan.

BadgerLink

Established by DPI in 1998, [BadgerLink](#) is Wisconsin's Online Library, providing Wisconsin residents with licensed resources accessible anywhere with internet access. The resources meet the educational needs of residents statewide and augment the physical and electronic collections of other libraries and organizations. Asynchronous training materials including videos and handouts are developed by staff and made available through the website, and throughout the year, live, personalized training is provided to librarians and educators. Resource vendors produce promotional materials that are distributed to libraries and schools at no cost to the state. These outreach efforts lighten the training demands on public, school, and college libraries, freeing their time for other activities. The [BadgerLink Advisory Group](#) was established in 2019, and members meet twice annually to provide feedback and advice on topics such as better representing the content needs of the Wisconsin community, improving the user experience on the BadgerLink website, fulfilling effective training needs of BadgerLink users, and methods for introducing BadgerLink to new and diverse audiences. Staff also began a review of training materials including gathering community input, investigating enhanced user authentication to improve access, developing new website pages and holding user testing, and reviewing current licensed content. They also began the Request for Proposal process for the three newspaper collections.

TEACH Program

Wisconsin libraries of all types have been leaders in the use of technology to increase the information available to library users. [Wisconsin's Technology for Educational Achievement \(TEACH\)](#) program has been instrumental in making high-speed Internet connections available to Wisconsin's schools and libraries. All Wisconsin academic, school, and public libraries now have Internet connections, and almost all now have high-speed Internet access. The fiber project funding came primarily from the federal E-rate program, which the TEACH program applies for to help support broadband and Internet connectivity in schools and public libraries.

School Libraries

School libraries are essential hubs of literacy, research, inquiry, creativity, and exploration in our Wisconsin schools. Since the writing of our state constitution, where the Common School Fund was created, they have been seen as a priority for student growth and development. Today, the Common School Fund is the only funding source for most school library programs, and its continued support is vital. In order to best utilize this funding, support of other aspects of [Wisconsin Administrative Code](#), which call out the need for long-range library program planning and licensed library media specialists in every district, is needed. With nearly 60% of school districts without a long-range library plan in 2019, DPI has made professional development and support surrounding this work a priority. One significant effort was creating the opportunity for at least one library media specialist in each of our 421 districts to participate in a nationally recognized online class funded through the LSTA grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). This connection with individual districts also increased opportunities to problem solve challenges districts have encountered with school library staffing. This included promoting new pathways for licensure, especially the Three-Year District-Sponsored License with Stipulations where library media specialists comprise one of the largest cohorts. Additionally, in spring of 2020 new evaluation tools, developed by practitioners and stakeholders and focused on creating professional and program growth were shared statewide.

Our school librarians have also been encouraged to nurture their collaborative partnerships with public librarians serving youth. Between 2019 and 2021, over \$80,000 was awarded in subawards for collaborative projects focusing on diversity and inquiry. Also, in 2021, 120 public and school librarians participated in [Project READY](#) virtual learning cohorts facilitated by DPI. Project READY, which stands for Project Reimagining Equity and Access for Diverse Youth, was developed by researchers to help library staff serving youth create more inclusive and equitable programming. Finally, the Connecting Wisconsin Libraries group, established in 2018, continues to bring leaders from the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA), the Wisconsin Educational Media and Technology Association (WEMTA), and DPI together to network and develop more ways for our school and public librarians to build relationships.

Recollection Wisconsin

[Recollection Wisconsin](#) is a collaborative effort to collect photographs, maps, letters, diaries, oral histories, artifacts, and other historical resources from more than 200 Wisconsin libraries, museums and other cultural heritage institutions of all sizes and make them available nationwide through the [Digital](#)

[Public Library of America](#). In 2019, in collaboration with the South Central Library System, DPI provided funding for 20 digitization kits to increase the capacity of local libraries in digitizing their local collections. In addition, a large investment was made in 2020 to a digital backup project funded through LSTA that will potentially pave the way for a more robust digital preservation infrastructure. This project helps learners of all ages discover the history and culture of Wisconsin.

Rural Public Libraries

The director of the Southwest Wisconsin Library System presented information to COLAND in July 2019 regarding a number of the issues their member libraries face. The area does not have high population numbers, and the road system has a lot of hills and valleys, so it presents a number of issues including lower funding and higher costs for delivery. Many of the libraries have staff that serve half-time as directors, and only a few have directors holding an MLIS. Facing those difficulties the libraries still provide good service to their communities, with staff often working extra unpaid hours.

Department of Corrections Libraries

The Department of Corrections and Division of Libraries and Technology staff worked together to provide 18 multi-volume sets of Books in Print to correctional facilities using LSTA funds. This is an effort to provide more equitable access to reading materials to incarcerated persons who do not have access to the internet or other methods of resource discovery. Correctional facilities were able to decide if they could best make use of the title or subject indexed copy of Books in Print.

Community Engagement in Wisconsin

[Libraries Transforming Communities](#) (LTC), an American Library Association (ALA) led initiative, is the model for [Wisconsin Libraries Transforming Communities](#) (WLTC). From February 2020 to August 2021, 12 community “Teams” and seven “Coaches” were trained to implement and support community needs assessments and change. Teams are made up of two to three people with at least one from the library and one from the community. Some Teams have a third person from either the library or the community. There are 29 Team members. Coaches are trained to support their Teams, working with one to two Teams each. These two tracks are raising up leaders within communities and within the library profession.

DPI staff and a council of advisors selected training consultants from Thriving Libraries LLC. They were hired out of a pool of six applicants to provide the WLTC structure, engagement and leadership expertise, and learning content. Originally conceived of as a hybrid model with four to five in-person trainings and regular monthly calls and webinars, the pandemic forced a change to 100% virtual. Regular short surveys helped DPI staff and Thriving Libraries adapt in-person content to a virtual platform, with varying success and much revision. Though virtual learning cannot substitute for in-person learning, participants appreciate seeing changes in response to their suggestions. Mid-term evaluations show growth in participants’ understanding of community engagement and leadership. Final evaluations will be administered at the end of the program.

Cybersecurity in Libraries

Libraries' data is the target of cyber security hacking attempts. Libraries need to protect their data and systems in multiple ways: cyber security, data security, and data privacy. Money that goes to pay hackers for cyberattacks takes away from money spent to support library services. Libraries have a solid basis in the public's trust; attacks breach that trust. Having NextGen firewalls in place is vital as are back-ups that are isolated and in separate locations. Anchor institutions have a responsibility to make sure children are safe and provide training for parents, not only in the physical space, but also the virtual. In the end, everyone is responsible for cyber and data security.

An LSTA grant was made available to allow public library systems to participate in the Wisconsin Library System Cybersecurity Collective. Library systems were eligible to use this grant to cooperatively contract for cybersecurity software that includes training videos and phishing simulations. The phishing simulations were supported by training videos that helped library and system staff recognize and delete phishing messages, and network administrators have control over which videos users must view, and on what schedule. Library staff were notified when they were phished and taken directly to training to help them recognize signs that a phishing message was not legitimate.

Wisconsin Library Association

COLAND received an update from the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Executive Director at the July 2020 meeting. WLA mission: engages, inspires and advocates for library workers and supporters to improve and promote library services for the people of Wisconsin. WLA Board and WLA Staff operationalize by:

- Disseminating best practices and important information to all members
- Providing opportunities to gain additional skills and knowledge
- Collaborating with Library System and DPI partners to increase state and federal financial support for Wisconsin libraries

University of Wisconsin Libraries

The University of Wisconsin (UW) Libraries are committed to advancing teaching, learning and research through access to its world-class collections and exemplary cooperative services. The UW Libraries have a shared collection of more than 15 million volumes to support the research needs of faculty, staff, and students. UW Libraries make these resources available on site to the general public and will loan materials across the state through interlibrary cooperative agreements.

Per The Wisconsin Idea--the idea that education should influence people's lives beyond the boundaries of the classroom-- DPI is partnering with UW to ensure some of that learning occurs within Wisconsin libraries. Current efforts include:

- Advising on the launch of a new UW-Madison iSchool continuing education conference: Lead the Way and the upcoming one-day Lead the Way Summit.

- Advising on the launch of two new grant programs from UW Cultural Centers to public libraries. The grants support the purchase of materials and creation of programming in support of the Center for East Asian Studies Cultural Center and the African Cultural Center.
- Hosting an iSchool practicum student, with an emphasis on WLTC in the Summer of 2021, along with the hope of hosting another practicum student in the Fall of 2021, likely focused on WisCat and interlibrary loan.

Special Libraries

Special libraries are unique locations with niche collections, such as a state agency library, and they collaborate with other libraries and institutions to show their strengths. The Wisconsin State Law Library (WSLL), a special library in Madison as well as the [oldest library in Wisconsin](#), hosted COLAND in November 2019. WSLL serves the Wisconsin Supreme Court, practicing attorneys, and members of the public including [assisting other librarians across the state](#). As legal information needs can change as quickly as the news, the librarians at WSLL help track down the existence of law or legislation, navigate government agencies, or find plain language sources that discuss the law.



COLAND meeting at the Wisconsin State Law Library in November 2019.

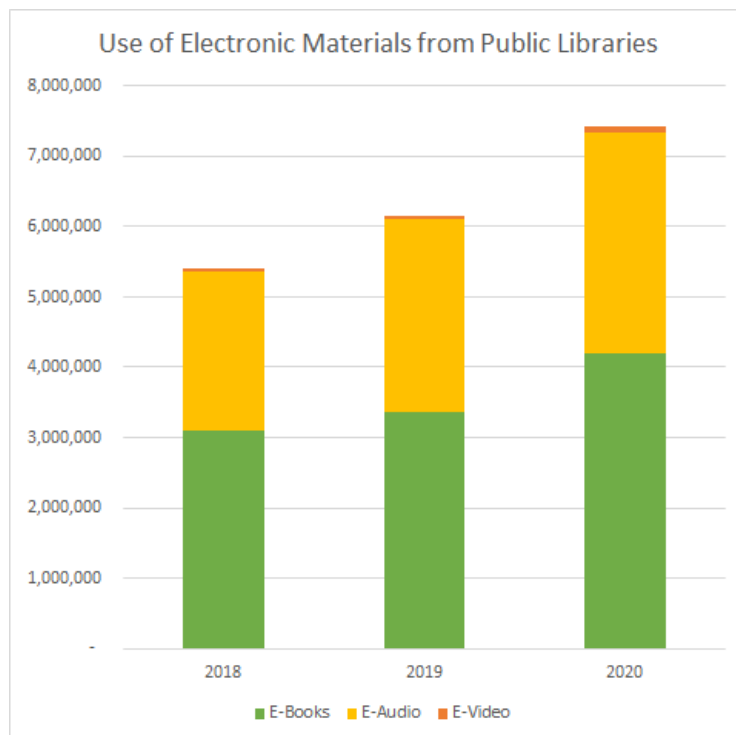
STATISTICAL REPORT

Wisconsin's libraries of all types provide a connection to the world of information, opportunities, and knowledge. Because the economy of the future is information-based, good libraries are critical to restore and maintain a healthy state economy, and to enrich the lives of Wisconsin residents.

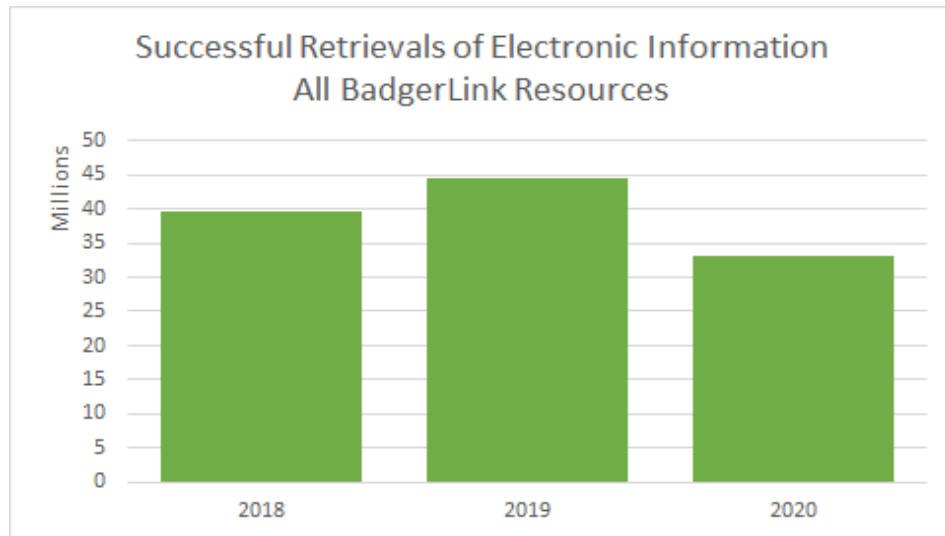
Wisconsin has:

- 382 public libraries providing 474 facilities and bookmobile services that serve 5.82 million state residents, 2.99 million of which currently hold active library cards.
- 16 regional public library systems coordinating services among those libraries, providing leadership and training, and promoting resource sharing and technology.
- Approximately 2,000 public school library media centers serving about 830,000 students.
- Hundreds of academic and special libraries serving students, professionals, businesses, and others.
- Library services at 19 adult institutions, one juvenile facility, 14 male correctional centers, three female correctional centers, and four facilities operated by the Division of Care and Treatment Services, Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

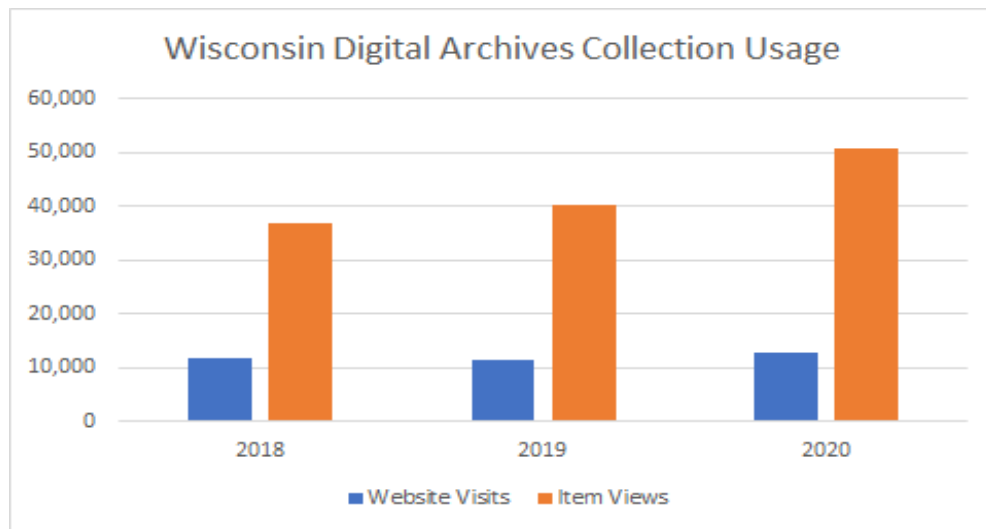
Due to the pandemic, widespread closures of the physical library locations and the inability to share physical copies of library materials and provide access to browsing led libraries to work collaboratively to increase access to electronic materials of all kinds. The following graph demonstrates the continuing upward trend of use of electronic materials offered by Wisconsin public libraries by the residents of Wisconsin.



As of June 2021, BadgerLink provides access to 64 unique resources containing historic and current newspapers, articles from scholarly journals and popular magazines, encyclopedias, multimedia literacy content, images, and test and career prep materials. While usage dipped in 2020, Wisconsin residents continue to value and use BadgerLink.



On average, about 4,250 state documents in the [Wisconsin Digital Archives](#) are viewed monthly. Top usage locations are consistent with where existing depository libraries are located; however, with more outreach and providing access to content in the Wisconsin Digital Archives through the Digital Public Library of America since 2017, usage has even increased to locations outside of Wisconsin.



CHALLENGES: 2019-2021

The challenges COLAND was presented with throughout 2019-2021 includes: Funding, COVID-19, Broadband and the Public Library System Redesign Project.

Funding

Common School Fund

A special fund allocation of \$5.25 million was added to the 2019-20 Common School Fund distribution. The Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL) approved the special distribution to support families with the continuation of learning because of the ongoing public health emergency. Popular items for Common School Fund (CSF) spending include joining the Wisconsin Schools Digital Library Consortium, online magazine and video subscriptions, and devices such as Chromebooks and iPads. There have been over three times as many inquiries about CSF spending this month as compared to average months.

Our school libraries are extremely fortunate to be supported by CSF and distributions for the 2020-21 school year will be \$33.35 (rounded) per census student. This figure is based upon BCPL's estimate of \$39 million being available for payment, which is an \$800,000 increase from last year's allocation. In 2020 there was an additional \$5.25 million special supplemental appropriation made by BCPL due to the pandemic. This year's funds are scheduled to be distributed to school districts on April 26, 2021. Details about the amounts allocated to each district for current and past years are available on the [Wisconsin Common School Fund](#) web page.

2021-2023 Biennial Budget proposal

Agency budgets requests on the library side are available in the [Libraries Link Communities](#) proposal flyer and the DPI 2021-2023 (FY22-FY23) Biennial Budget Request. Highlights emphasize Wisconsin libraries are the cornerstone of our communities by supplying equitable and inclusive services across the state. DPI requests increases of \$2,500,000 in FY22 and \$4,000,000 in FY23 for public library systems to support the operations and maintenance of public library services in response to the rising needs of our communities. DPI requests \$150,000 in FY22 and \$300,000 in FY23 and beyond to maintain state support for Recollection Wisconsin.

COVID-19

[A novel coronavirus became a global pandemic in March 2020](#). In-person events and meetings were cancelled and shifted to an online environment. Libraries across the state and country shut their doors to patrons to serve the best interests of public safety. For historical reference to the State of Wisconsin's reaction to the pandemic, see [Wisconsin Response to COVID-19, collected by Wisconsin Historical Society](#) and [Wisconsin Digital Archives COVID-19 Collection](#).

COLAND transitioned quickly and easily to holding its meeting entirely virtually. Once it became apparent that meetings would continue for some time in a virtual environment, Wisconsin libraries were invited to
COLAND Biennial Report on Wisconsin Libraries, 2019-2021

host selected meetings and offer a virtual tour of its space; Waunakee Public Library, Mineral Point Public Library, Sun Prairie Public Schools Libraries, and Green Bay Public Schools Libraries participated in this fashion in 2020 and 2021.

[Wisconsin Public Libraries Reopening Guide At-A-Glance](#) and [Addendum for Reopening](#)

The Wisconsin Public Libraries Reopening Guide, a collaborative effort between DPI and the Wisconsin public library community, provides a process to help libraries develop their own reopening plans. The information in the guide focuses on the safety of staff and the community and is specific to the needs and issues of libraries and library services during this COVID-19 public health event. How and when to reopen a library is a local decision.

The pandemic changed how the library community offers its services and collaborates with stakeholders and peer groups, in many ways for the better. Communication between DPI Library Services staff and stakeholders has greatly improved, particularly with the 16 regional public library system directors and their staff. Prior to the pandemic, DPI and the system directors held a maximum of two meetings per year, which were held in-person and consisted primarily of updates. The onset of the pandemic initially necessitated frequent virtual meetings, as the library community scrambled to adapt their service offerings to the rapidly changing conditions. Even after the rate of change became manageable, participants determined that the meetings should continue weekly, and doing so has strengthened collaboration efforts both between the public library systems, and between the systems and DPI.

The pandemic also forced the development of a more robust offering of virtual professional learning opportunities. The library community will move beyond the pandemic with proven leadership in both in-person and virtual methods. The duration of the pandemic has been long enough to change habits and assumptions, improve processes, and it promises to improve equity and diversity, because geographic location and timing may no longer be limiting factors.

The pandemic has presented significant challenges as well. The library community responded rapidly to the demands of the pandemic. They now face such mental health challenges as burnout, strained municipal relations, and staff attrition. This situation should continue to be monitored and recovery support should be offered where appropriate.

COVID-19 Specific Wisconsin Public Library Statistics (based on 2020 Annual Report Data)

- **100%** provided outside service to their communities while their doors were closed
- **100%** added electronic materials to their collections during the pandemic
- **75%** offered live virtual programs, like story times, during the pandemic
- **48%** increased their external access to Wi-Fi during COVID-19
- **45%** issued electronic library cards prior to the pandemic
- **79%** now offer electronic library cards

Examples of Services Offered by Public Libraries During COVID-19* *not an exhaustive list	Number of WI Public Libraries Offering this Service (Out of 381 Public Libraries in WI)	Total Instances of This Service in 2020
Answered general information requests	380	272,191
Provided reference service	371	438,828
Hosted virtual programming or recorded content	322	291,386
Offered curbside pick-up of library materials	358	543,009
Offered drive-thru pick-up of library materials	47	123,174
Offered vestibule/porch pick-up	198	67,481
Offered mail or drop-off delivery of library materials	199	18,147
Offered external Wi-Fi access	292	316,286

Broadband

COLAND received an update in May 2020 about a collaboration between the Wisconsin Public Service Commission and DPI to create a map of public Wi-Fi locations along with the estimate that 40,000-50,000 kids do not have at home access to the internet. The [map](#) is updated daily and gives access to those who would not otherwise have access to the internet. The increased demand for high speed internet for people who do not have access at home will continue to be a challenge. It is important that the State continue to invest in broadband access so that it is affordable and available to all Wisconsin residents.

Even before the pandemic, closing the digital equity gap was important, but the public health crisis really shined a spotlight on broadband access statewide, and DPI worked to help narrow the digital equity gap by orchestrating a statewide assessment of broadband speeds in the form of a broadly promoted speed test, providing districts ways to better visualize digital equity data in their area, working with CESAs to provide districts with tools and resources to better visualize broadband service options, and improving internet survey tools for districts to provide broadband access data back to DPI. With the quick and dramatic shift in how patrons access library materials, the WPLC’s OverDrive collections saw significant increases in checkouts and user signups. DPI was able to provide \$250,000 of LSTA funding to increase the statewide collection of digital resources available through OverDrive.

DPI also distributed 2020 Federal CARES funds from IMLS to all library systems, some working cooperatively. Much of this funding went to technology and broadband related projects, including Wi-Fi

extensions for increased range, improving bandwidth, and mobile hotspots. DPI also worked to identify funding sources that can be used for broadband access and expansion in Wisconsin, including CARES, ESSER II, E-rate, and additional IMLS funding from the 2021 Federal ARPA stimulus bill.

Public Library System Redesign

COLAND worked in conjunction with the Lean System Workgroup to create the roadmap that guided the Wisconsin Public Library System Redesign (PLSR) project, which was a multi-year process to consider new models for how services are provided by public library systems to their member libraries. A main goal of the project was to ensure all Wisconsin public libraries have the capacity to provide equitable access to excellent library services regardless of the race, ethnicity, income, gender, or employment status of the people they serve, or their location within the state.

The [Final Report of the PLSR Steering Committee](#) was delivered to the State Superintendent's Office on March 8, 2019, summarizing three-and-a-half years of work by the Steering Committee, Workgroups, and sub-committees. DPI staff within the Division for Libraries and Technology have been charged with implementing the recommendations of the Steering Committee and COLAND is actively monitoring the progress of the implementation process. The work of DPI staff will be guided by the information, data, and feedback gathered from the library community.

Since the delivery of the Final Report, an initial implementation strategy was released to the library community in Fall of 2019 that was prioritized by support expressed during public listening sessions conducted in the Spring of 2019. Implementation activities we planned to begin in April of 2020 when a full time Project Coordinator was hired. However, in June 2020, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting impact on libraries and library systems, DPI staff worked in partnership with the sixteen Public Library System Directors to reprioritize implementation activities.

The DPI Library Services Team has included various stakeholders in user advisory groups and other ways during the course of its work to implement the seven recommendations. Through the weekly meetings that have been held with the public library system directors since the pandemic began, they have leveraged their input and collaboration to move each recommendation into an implementation path. While the implementation frameworks for each recommendation has been established, the work on the different recommendation areas will continue, for the most part, into the future. Moving forward, the work to increase equity in system administration and services across the state as envisioned in the recommendations will be based on the Library Services Team ongoing efforts and new 2023-2027 LSTA plan.

OPPORTUNITIES

In the last two years, COLAND learned about the following opportunities:

1. COVID-19 pandemic adjustments to business as usual
2. Collaboration among public library system services to share resources, expertise, and funding and continuation of public library system director communication and collaboration

COLAND Biennial Report on Wisconsin Libraries, 2019-2021

3. PLSR implementation to ensure all Wisconsin public libraries have the capacity to provide equitable access to excellent library services
4. Collaboration on broadband and digital equity

COLAND GOALS: 2019-2021

COLAND members develop and implement goals and objectives that are important to all Wisconsin libraries and information services. The following narrative identifies the recommendation areas and the results for COLAND Goals of 2019-2021.

Goals and Results

1. Continue to support and fund pilot programs and collaborative projects among systems to achieve the Vision for 21st century library systems.
Results: Created and continued partnerships and collaborations for increased statewide funding through: WPLC, UW Libraries, IMLS, and public library systems
2. Advocate for sustainable funding for libraries at the federal, state, and local level.
Results: DPI distributed CARES funds from IMLS to all library systems, some working cooperatively. Much of this funding went to technology and broadband related projects, including WiFi extensions for increased range, improving bandwidth, and mobile hotspots. DPI also promoted use of the Blue Jeans platform for web conferencing, available to libraries through TEACH.
3. Support increased use of technology to provide equitable access to learning resources for all Wisconsin residents.
Results: Increased funding for enhanced use and access for technology. With the quick and dramatic shift in how patrons access library materials, the WPLC's OverDrive collections saw significant increases in checkouts and user signups. DPI was able to provide \$250,000 of LSTA funding to increase the statewide collection of digital resources available through OverDrive.
4. Support the value of library education and development of library staff.
Results: Virtual educational opportunities became widespread during the pandemic. DPI offered professional development access to such program topics as equity, diversity and inclusion and managing stress and building resilience and also opened the webinars up to a wide audience.
5. Support the value and continued need of the Common School Fund to fund school libraries and support increased staffing for school libraries.
Results: A special fund allocation was added to the 2019-20 Common School Fund distribution.

In 2020, COLAND approved a new committee structure to tackle its goals and to focus on pressing issues related to libraries and network development.

COLAND Committees

In November 2020, COLAND voted to approve a committee structure.

- Each committee would be chaired by a COLAND member
- Committee make up would include
 - Two to three COLAND members
 - In the future: Two to three outside members
- Committee members outside of COLAND can be recruited from the profession, such as school librarians, library trustees, and librarians and could open up the pool of applicants to COLAND in the future.
- Each committee would have a DPI staff point person to help with gathering information and providing logistics.
- The committees would meet regularly to receive reports on its topic area from professionals in the field, discuss further action, and then report to COLAND at the bi-monthly meeting with recommendations.
- The committees' focus can be adjusted as goals and objectives change.

Library Development

COLAND members: Terrence Berres (Chair), Amy Beth Bahena-Ettner, Martha Van Pelt, Svetha Hetzler

- Focus: Existing library structures and seeking improvements

Library Cooperation

COLAND members: Jennie Stoltz (Chair), Charmaine Sprengelmeyer-Podein, Kristi Williams

- Focus: Encourage alliances between different library types and demonstrate its value
- Mission Statement: "The COLAND Library Cooperation Committee will advocate, enhance, and support the collaborative efforts between Wisconsin libraries and other libraries, community partners, government agencies, and /or private businesses to improve services, remove barriers, address funding issues, and increase literacy."

Network Development

COLAND members: Anna Lewis (Chair), Josh Klingbeil (Co-Chair), James O'Hagan, Dennis Myers

- Focus: Internet and broadband access

COLAND GOALS: 2021-2023

COLAND acts in an advisory role to the State Superintendent, Government, and State Legislature. The Council and its members advocate on library and network development policies. Our relationship with statewide library associations and governing boards requires strong communication for mutually beneficial outcomes. With the collaboration of the newly approved committee structure, COLAND offers the following future goals of 2021-2023:

1. To encourage the conversations related to increased broadband equity statewide.
2. To encourage the conversations and provide advocacy related to digital equity ebooks, cooperative contracts, access to digital information, and other information technology development.
3. Examine services and practices adapted during the pandemic to continue enhancing access and inclusivity.
4. Examine non-traditional and underrepresented services, resources, and partners to create spaces, programs, and collections that include all dimensions of identity.
5. To support revisions to ongoing issues for school librarian licensing and professional standards, and advocate for adequate staffing of school libraries.
6. To recruit new members and help grow an organizational structure that encourages more active involvement by council members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As DPI transitions in July 2021 to a new State Superintendent along with a new Assistant State Superintendent of the Division of Libraries and Technology and the state comes out of a global pandemic that will impact our libraries, students, and citizens for an uncertain amount of time, COLAND makes the following recommendations to the State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly:

1. Support statewide broadband and digital equity
2. Support increased digital access of information in libraries and schools
3. Support adequate staffing of school libraries
4. Support funding for library initiatives including Wisconsin's Digital Library