



State of Wisconsin Council on Library Network and Development

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

From: Isa Small, Chair, Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND)

Re: COLAND Biennial Report on Wisconsin Libraries, 2021-2023

Date: July 27, 2023

At the Annual Meeting of the Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND) the Council approved the attached Biennial Report on the Value of Library Services, Statistical Report, Challenges, Opportunities, and Recommendations in Wisconsin for 2021-2023. 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

- Wisconsin has: **381 public libraries** providing 466 facilities and bookmobile services that serve 5.94 million state residents, 2.84 million of which currently hold active library cards; **15 regional public library systems** coordinate services among those libraries, providing leadership and training, and promoting resource sharing and technology; and approximately **2,200 public school library** media centers serving about 823,000 students.
- The Wisconsin Public Library Consortium's (WPLC) Digital Library offers a cooperative collection of about 365,000 copies of e-books, downloadable audiobooks, and streaming video available to public library cardholders. **These titles were used over 7.6 million times in 2022** (compared to 7 million times in 2020).
- In 2022 the American Library Association documented the highest number of demands to sensor library books in recorded history.
- 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:

- Support affordable statewide broadband and digital equity.
- Support adequate staffing of all libraries.
- Maintain or increase current staff retention rates for all libraries.
- Encourage youth to consider the field of library science.
- Protect intellectual freedom and the Freedom to Read.
- Reduce barriers to licensing/certification for librarians, especially those which disproportionately affect underrepresented groups.
- Continue to advocate for state aid to libraries at a level that will maintain or increase potential for impact.
- Ensure library facilities and buildings are well maintained, provide sufficient space and are capable of meeting the needs of their customers.

Thank you for your consideration of this report. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at isas@eauclaire.lib.wi.us 715-839-5094.

Wisconsin Libraries, 2021-2023

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

Biennial Report

Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND)

July, 2023

COLAND Biennial Report on Wisconsin Libraries, 2021-2023

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| COLAND Members, 2021-2023 | 3 |
| COLAND Meetings, 2021-2023 | 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 | 8 |
| Community Engagement in Wisconsin | 8 |
| Cybersecurity in Libraries | 8 |
| Wisconsin Library Association | 9 |
| University of Wisconsin Libraries | 9 |
| STATISTICAL REPORT | 10 |
| CHALLENGES: 2021-23 | 11 |
| Public Library Funding | 11 |
| 2021-2023 Biennial Budget proposal | 11 |
| COVID-19 | 11 |
| Broadband | 12 |
| Intellectual Freedom | 12 |
| Defining COLAND's role | 12 |
| OPPORTUNITIES | 13 |
| COLAND GOALS: 2021-23 | 13 |
| Goals and Results | 13 |
| COLAND GOALS: 2023-25 | 14 |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | 15 |

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, 2021-23

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\(6\)](#))

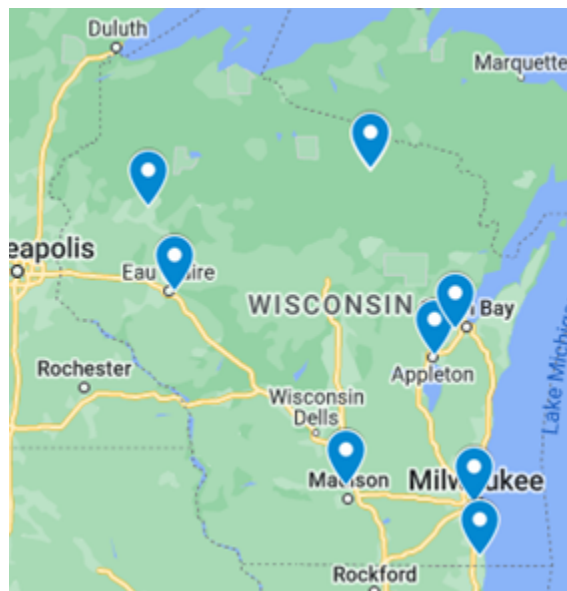
(Current members in bold)

- **Amy Thornton, Wisconsin Dept. of Justice, Professional Member**
- **Amy Beth Bahena-Ettner, Green Bay Area School District (Green Bay), Professional Member**
- **Andi Cloud, Oneida, Public Member**
- **Terrence Berres, Franklin, Public Member**
- **Nick Dimassis, Beloit Public Library (Beloit), Professional Member**
- **Miriam Erickson, Fish Creek, Public Member**
- **Jaime Healy-Plotkin, Wisconsin State Law Library (Madison); Professional Member 2021-2022, Public Member 2022-2023; Chair 2021-2022**
- Svetha Hetzler, Sun Prairie Public Library (Sun Prairie), Professional Member

- **Joshua Klingbeil, Wisconsin Valley Library Service (Wausau), Professional Member**
- **Ellen Kupfer, Kenosha, Public Member**
- Anna Lewis, Madison, Public Member
- **Terri Muraski, UW-Stevens Point Emerita Librarian (Rothschild), Professional Member**
- **Dennis Myers, Germantown, Public Member**
- **Rob Nunez, Kenosha Public Library, Professional Member**
- **Michael Otten, Wausau, Public Member**
- **Joan Schneider, Appleton, Public Member**
- **Charmaine Sprengelmeyer-Podein, Madison, Public Member**
- **Isa Small, L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library (Eau Claire), Professional Member, Chair 2022-2023**
- Jennie Stoltz, Fox Point, Public Member
- **Christinna Swearingen, Rusk County Community Library (Ladysmith), Professional Member**
- **Rachel Thomas, Rice Lake Public Library, Professional 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, 2021-23

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: Waunakee Public Library, L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library in Eau Claire, Appleton East High School, and the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee School of Information Science department. We were also hosted virtually by Rice Lake Public Library, Three Lakes Public Library, Oneida Nation Community Library, and Kenosha Public Library.



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 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 continued to disrupt 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 recovered and the nature of work evolved following the pandemic, libraries adjusted 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 365,000 copies of e-books, downloadable audiobooks, and streaming video available to public library cardholders. These titles were used over 7.6 million times in 2022 (compared to 7 million times in 2020). This project is an example of successful statewide collaboration around collection development. WPLC also added a 3,000 title collection of digital magazines in 2021. Over 30,000 magazines are checked out via WPLC per month.

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 completed a review of asynchronous training materials available on the website, added new resources guides and provided a virtual series of live training sessions based on user feedback, in addition to investigating enhanced user authentication to improve access and reviewing current licensed content. They also began the Request for Proposal process for the three newspaper collections.

The [Wisconsin Statewide Database Inventory & Needs Assessment Study](#), completed in August 2022, was commissioned to develop a statewide public library and K-12 public school library electronic resource database inventory, and identify coverage gaps between BadgerLink and resources provided locally through those libraries. Data collected demonstrated strong support in the foundational collection through BadgerLink; both for the significant number of public libraries with no additional database content, and as a complement to libraries with local offerings. However, there were areas identified for improvement. The report recommended strengthening select subject areas and format types covered by the databases, and exploring options for improved usability. These recommendations will be considered in upcoming procurements. The report also uncovered a need for more awareness around BadgerLink resources and interest in increased collaboration between public library systems, public libraries, and K-12 school districts around electronic resource databases in general. From the

research and other insights, it is clear that digital content continues to be a critical element for our overall library strategic plan.

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. The Common School Fund allocations have continued to grow with distributions in 2022-23 increasing over 20% from 2021-22. In order to best utilize this funding, support of other aspects of the [Wisconsin Administrative Code](#), which call out the need for long-range library program planning and licensed library media specialists in every district, is needed. There has been a focused effort by the DPI since 2019 to increase the number of board approved long-range plans for library services. At this time, data from the Digital Learning Survey indicates that less than 30% of school districts have a complete, approved plan. An effective library plan includes budgeting and best utilizing the Common School Fund for library materials. With the increased focus on school library collections and challenges to intellectual freedom, attention on this element of library programming has been increased, and in some cases, has deterred the completion of full plans. Through working with the UW Madison Cooperative Children's Book Center and other partners, the DPI has provided in-person and virtual learning opportunities and continuous support for school librarians facing these challenges.

The Teen Internship Pilot Program is an initiative to fund library internships for local high school juniors or seniors to be completed between July 1 and August 31, 2023. There are several goals for this program including:

1. Provide funding for up to five public libraries to offer a paid, mentored internship to high school students from diverse backgrounds, allowing them to experience the work of librarianship firsthand and to explore how to use their talents and perspectives to impact their communities.
2. Provide support for interns to increase their skills working on a [Connected Learning Project](#).
3. Allow participating libraries to better understand how to engage and support students while also creating career pathways to increase diversity in the field of librarianship.

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](#). DPI staff worked with the Recollection WI Governing Board to secure dedicated funding for this project starting in FY24. Funding will start at \$150,000 the first year and increase to \$300,000 in FY25. This will create base level funding that will allow more dependable growth to ensure learners of all ages discover the history and culture of Wisconsin.

Community Engagement in Wisconsin

In early 2022, Wisconsin public library staff interested in learning about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in and outside of their libraries participated in Wisconsin Libraries Talk About Race. The series was planned in response to input from the entire Wisconsin library community and a need for dialog around issues of race, inclusion, and community. Organizers of the series worked to gather input from Libraries Talk About Race participants and it became clear that not only was there a need for Libraries Talk About Race to continue, but that voices of BIPOC, neurodivergent, disabled, LGBTQ+, and other historically marginalized/unheard library staff members needed to be amplified.

An advisory committee consisting of ten Wisconsin library professionals, each with unique perspectives on racial equity reviewed feedback from the previous series and worked with continuing education consultants in the state to determine ways Wisconsin library workers could take action against racism and white supremacy while supporting their BIPOC colleagues. Members discussed the best ways to spend Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding for continuing education purposes.

The group recognized a need for greater support for BIPOC library staff in the state. Professional learning topics for 2023 were identified and discussed; they included allyship, LGBTQ+ topics, supporting BIPOC staff, and creating a sense of safety for all library staff and users. "Active Allyship," or being engaged and prepared to take consistent and meaningful action to ensure communities are safe and inclusive for all, was identified as a focus for this year's Libraries Talk About Race series.

Cybersecurity in Libraries

Libraries' data is the target of cyber security hacking attempts. Libraries need to protect their data and systems in multiple ways: cybersecurity, 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. An additional three years of funding was allocated from LSTA funds in 2023.

Wisconsin Library Association (WLA)

The WLA mission: engages, inspires, and advocates for library workers and supporters to improve and promote library services for the people of Wisconsin. COLAND received an update from the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Executive Director at the March 2022 meeting. 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:

- Hosting two iSchool practicum students, focused on WisCat and interlibrary loan and the other focused on improving data structures of BadgerLink account data.
- Partnering with PLACE and UW-Madison to plan and carry out the [Play Make Learn conference](#) in 2023. The conference promotes high-quality learning opportunities for educators, researchers, developers, designers, foundation leaders, policy makers, museum and library professionals, and school leaders who are dedicated to promoting making, gaming, and playful learning.

- Collaborations with the Children’s Cooperative Book Center to provide public and school library staff information and professional learning about collection development and appropriate response to material reconsideration requests.

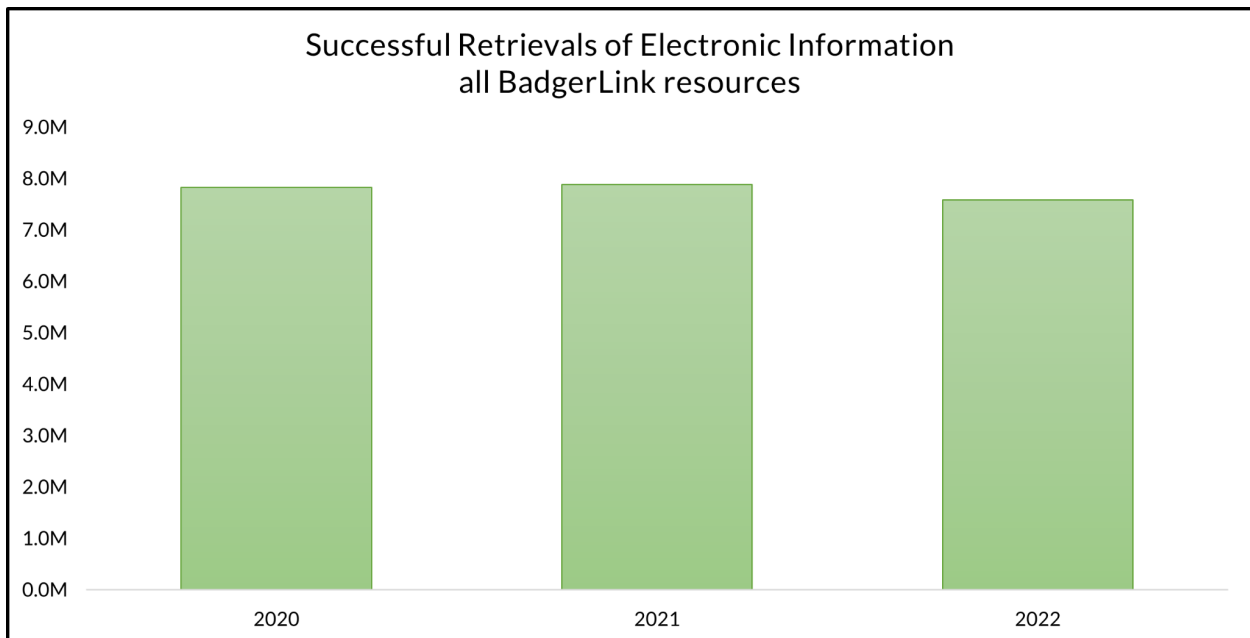
STATISTICAL REPORT

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:

- 381 public libraries providing 466 facilities and bookmobile services that serve 5.94 million state residents, 2.84 million of which currently hold active library cards.
- 15 regional public library systems coordinate services among those libraries, providing leadership and training, and promoting resource sharing and technology.
- Approximately 2,200 public school library media centers serving about 823,000 students.
- Hundreds of academic and special libraries serving students, professionals, businesses, and others.
- Library services at 20 adult institutions, one juvenile facility, 14 male correctional centers, 2 female correctional centers, and 4 facilities operated by the Division of Care and Treatment Services, Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

As of June 2023, BadgerLink provides access to 62 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 has not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, a trend also seen nationwide, Wisconsin residents continue to value and use BadgerLink.



CHALLENGES: 2021-2023

The challenges COLAND was presented with throughout 2019-2021 include: Funding, COVID-19, Broadband access, and Intellectual Freedom.

Public Library Funding

From 1986 to 2017, state aid to public libraries included a consistent increase of 13% per year. However, with the passing of Act 150 in 2017, the indexing requirement was eliminated, and the trend for state aid in the succeeding years has barely reached a mean average of half that amount. This, combined with rising inflation and unexpected costs due to pivoting to meet the needs of communities through a multi-year pandemic has left Wisconsin public libraries in a vulnerable place.

Participation in public library systems is voluntary. The present level of funding jeopardizes the current status of full participation by all libraries in the state. If public libraries do not participate, access to public library service by non-residents is reduced or eliminated. In order to ensure continued participation by all public libraries, public library systems must provide a level of service that makes participation desirable and beneficial to its member libraries. Without adequate funding, public library systems will not be able to provide this level of service.

2021-2023 Biennial Budget proposal

Agency budgets requests on the library side are available in the DPI 2021-2023 (FY22-FY23) Biennial Budget Request. Highlights emphasize that Wisconsin public libraries have adapted and provided curbside service so that library users could continue to access physical educational and entertainment materials while also adhering to strict and diligent sanitizing procedures to ensure the health and safety of their patrons and their communities. They have remained essential pillars of their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing reliable health information; workforce development and information for job seekers during times of economic downturn; government information; public-use computers; access to the internet; library materials; library programs; and many more services. DPI requested an increase in funding aid to public library systems of \$5,000,000 SEG in FY24 and \$5,000,000 SEG in FY25, to provide consistent state support for operations and maintenance of public library services in Wisconsin in a way that is sustainable for member libraries and the state's residents.

COVID-19

While the Centers for Disease Control officially ended the Public Health Emergency status of the COVID-19 pandemic, the long-term effects of the pandemic on library services, customer expectations, and staff retention are still unknown. The vast majority of libraries have resumed normal checkout procedures and in-person programming, but are hearing from community members that they expect the temporary measures such as curbside pick-up, virtual programs, and increased access to digital materials to continue.

The pandemic has presented significant staff challenges as well. The library community responded rapidly and repeatedly to meet the demands of the pandemic through a variety of safety and funding issues. 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.

Broadband

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 ebook and e-audiobook collections saw significant increases in checkouts and user signups.

A COLAND subcommittee was created in 2021 to examine the issue of broadband access in Wisconsin from the perspective of libraries, who are often the stop-gaps for those without home internet access. An Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Outreach Grant was submitted by DPI which would establish assistance for enrollment in the ACP through libraries and community organizations. COLAND also received a presentation on the 2022 Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access Report.

Intellectual Freedom

Almost exactly 70 years ago, on June 25, 1953, the American Library Association (ALA) issued a statement on [The Freedom to Read](#) (further clarifying the ALA's preexisting [Library Bill of Rights](#)) which has since become a guiding principle for libraries and librarians. Book challenges and bans are not novel concepts, but there has been a sharp upward trend in the frequency of challenges, and the number of materials being challenged by a single individual or group. Nationwide, in 2022 ALA documented [1,269 demands to censor library books and resources](#) – the highest number of attempted book bans since ALA began compiling data about censorship in libraries more than 20 years ago. Ninety percent of the overall number of books challenged were part of attempts to censor multiple titles. Wisconsin has not been an exception to the increased challenges to intellectual freedom. In Wisconsin public schools, six school districts banned 29 books in the 2021-2022 school year.

Defining COLAND's role

Over the past year, COLAND members have had several questions and discussions regarding the role and scope of COLAND as an advisory council, specifically as it relates to advising on matters of a political or legislative nature. Through several fruitful discussions with WLA and their Library Development and Legislation Committee (LD&L), along with DPI staff, members have defined their role as two-fold: to actively monitor and understand current legislative and political issues regarding Wisconsin's variety of

libraries, but to limit action items to voicing support or opposition for the current efforts of groups specifically working on legislative issues, such as the WLA LD&L committee. This will present a united message rather than duplicating or factioning efforts of those groups.

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.
3. Collaboration on broadband and digital equity.
4. The importance of policies regarding challenges to library materials.

COLAND GOALS: 2021-2023

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 2021-2023.

Goals and Results

- 1. To encourage the conversations related to increased broadband equity statewide.**
Results: Formed subcommittee focused on broadband access services and issues. ACP outreach grant was submitted that would establish assistance for enrollment in the ACP through libraries and community organizations. Presentation to COLAND on 2022 Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access Report.
- 2. To encourage the conversations and provide advocacy related to digital equity ebooks, cooperative contracts, access to digital information, and other information technology development.**
Results: Letters written in support of funding for Wisconsin Digital Library and Recollection Wisconsin. A subscription to the Beanstack reading program was purchased with LSTA funds and has been expanded throughout state libraries. Collaborative outreach via WEMTA, LD&L, WLA, WILS and CESA annual updates.
- 3. Examine services and practices adapted during the pandemic to continue enhancing access and inclusivity.**
Results: Libraries Activating Workforce Development Skills had positive results and will be continued by participating libraries. The pandemic showed the increased need for electronic resources. A consultant, hired through ARPA funding completed a Statewide Electronic Resource Database Inventory & Needs Assessment to gather information on existing individual library database subscriptions, to identify gaps and inform future planning for Badgerlink.
- 4. Examine non-traditional and underrepresented services, resources, and partners to create spaces, programs, and collections that include all dimensions of identity.**

Results: Intellectual freedom presentation to COLAND. Facilitating the development of public library standards in partnership with system directors.

5. To support revisions to ongoing issues for school librarian licensing and professional standards, and advocate for adequate staffing of school libraries.

Results: DPI sent a letter to all school district administrators stressing the importance of school library policies and procedures, especially in the event of a book challenge. The school library workgroup reconvened and discussed issues related to school librarians, including professional development. Intellectual Freedom & Diversity workshop was held for school libraries. Ongoing communication from DPI to school libraries through newsletters, workshops and virtual meetings.

6. To recruit new members and help grow an organizational structure that encourages more active involvement by council members.

Results: The COLAND bylaws were reviewed and revised to ensure they were clear, concise, and provided proper direction for executive committee members. The Council also collaboratively discussed the appropriate advocacy roles in relation to other state advocacy groups. Trustee training resources were shared to serve as a base foundation of knowledge. Standing committees were established in 2021 but dissolved in 2022.

COLAND GOALS: 2023-2025

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. COLAND offers the following future goals for 2023-2025:

1. Human Resources:
 - a. RECRUITMENT: Support efforts inspiring middle school, high school, and college students to consider a career in library science.
 - b. EDUCATION: Evaluate and support educational pipelines, continuing education, professional standards, inclusive practices, and licensing/certification for both school and public librarians.
 - c. RETENTION: Increase the retention of professional librarians and help advocate for competitive salaries, benefits, and recognition for service in the field.
2. Broadband Access:
 - a. ADVOCACY: Advocate with stakeholders in achieving statewide broadband service that is accessible and affordable for all Wisconsinites—a foundational element of digital equity.
3. Innovation:
 - a. OBSERVATION: Actively and thoughtfully monitor trends, developments, and challenges in modern library services.

- b. ENCOURAGEMENT: Support the Department of Public Instruction, library districts and systems, individual libraries, and professional groups as they implement and experiment with new programs—especially those which serve marginalized populations.
- 4. Outreach & Engagement:
 - a. AWARENESS: Increase awareness of COLAND through outreach to libraries, library systems, and professional groups.
 - b. NETWORKING: Develop and support active relationships with—and between—libraries, librarians, and vital organizations aligned with COLAND goals.
- 5. Intellectual Freedom:
 - a. PROTECTION: Vigorously defend intellectual freedom and the Right to Read.
 - b. PERSEVERANCE: Support libraries and their staff as they face a recent surge in book challenges; carefully monitor state and national trends in book challenges, as well as the groups and opinions fueling them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In consideration of the challenges and opportunities shared above, COLAND makes the following recommendations to State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly:

1. Support affordable statewide broadband and digital equity.
2. Support adequate staffing of all libraries.
3. Maintain or increase current staff retention rates for all libraries.
4. Encourage youth to consider the field of library science.
5. Protect intellectual freedom and the Freedom to Read.
6. Reduce barriers to licensing/certification for librarians, especially those which disproportionately affect underrepresented groups.
7. Continue to advocate for state aid to libraries at a level that will maintain or increase potential for impact.
8. Ensure library facilities and buildings are well maintained, provide sufficient space and are capable of meeting the needs of their customers.