



**Washington County**  
Cooperative Library Services

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# Washington County Cooperative Library Services – Governance and Funding Evaluation

Current State Assessment Report  
Executive Summary

October 22, 2024

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**MERINA+CO**

7624 SW Mohawk Street

Tualatin, OR 97062

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## Executive Summary

Public library service in Washington County is provided by a Partnership between Washington County (County), nine cities, and three nonprofit organizations (together known as the Cooperative). This long-standing Partnership has been in place since 1976. Washington County Cooperative Library Services (WCCLS) is a department of Washington County, and provides funding, core infrastructure, and support services to link sixteen library buildings into one countywide system which benefits all County residents. Library buildings are operated by city and non-profit Partner agencies (Partners), and Partners provide staff, physical collections, programs, and services. The member libraries of the Cooperative include the cities of Banks, Beaverton, Cornelius, Forest Grove, Hillsboro, North Plains, Sherwood, Tigard, Tualatin, as well as the Aloha Community Library Association, Cedar Mill and Bethany Community Libraries Association, and Garden Home Community Library Association.

In February 2024, Merina+Co (MCO), a local consulting firm, was contracted to conduct an evaluation of the existing Cooperative. Under the direction of Washington County and in collaboration with representatives from Cooperative Partners, MCO is facilitating a process for evaluating the current state of the Cooperative and developing mutually agreeable solutions for both and near- and long-term improvements to Cooperative governance, funding, and library service delivery. This process included establishment of a Shared Vision for the ideal state of the Cooperative as well as Shared Criteria that describe the characteristics of the ideal state for governance, funding, and library service delivery. These criteria provide a framework for evaluating key trade-offs and factors in deciding how to make service, funding, and governance improvements in line with the Shared Vision. The Shared Criteria **DO NOT** represent a comprehensive list of what is possible or will be accomplished.

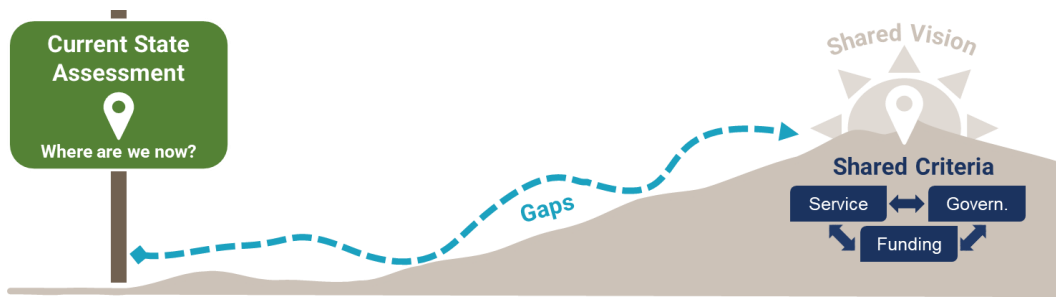
Table 1: WCCLS Funding and Governance Evaluation Shared Criteria

Governance	Funding	Service
<b>G1.</b> Provides Partners a meaningful role in governance and decision-making related to the Cooperative	<b>F1.</b> Allocates funding according to a transparent and objective methodology	<b>S1.</b> Ensures equitable access to materials, information, and resources
<b>G2.</b> Provides a long-term solution for governance and decision-making	<b>F2.</b> Provides reliable and stable funding sources	<b>S2.</b> Is responsive to the needs of our diverse community
<b>G3.</b> Enables Partner libraries to make operational and policy decisions that reflect individual community values	<b>F3.</b> Sustains base service levels	<b>S3.</b> Leverages the use of resources across the Cooperative to create efficiency and economies of scale
<b>G4.</b> Establishes a unified vision and direction for library services	<b>F4.</b> Optimizes the use of Cooperative resources to provide library services at a reasonable cost to the community	<b>S4.</b> Provides a consistent level of base services to all community members
<b>G5.</b> Provides mutual accountability over Cooperative services and funding	<b>F5.</b> Allocates resources to promote system-wide outcomes	<b>S5.</b> Maintains unique library identities
<b>G6.</b> Provides representation for all community members in the County	<b>F6.</b> Continually invests in library services	<b>S6.</b> Addresses differences between Partners in ability to provide services
<b>G7.</b> Facilitates efficient countywide decision-making in response to community needs	<b>F7.</b> Addresses the differences in available funding capacity and constraints across the Cooperative	



## Current State Assessment Results

Assessing the current state of the Cooperative focused on understanding whether the Cooperative is fulfilling the Shared Criteria. To answer these questions, MCO gathered insights and perspectives regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the Cooperative’s current governance, funding, and service delivery models through a series of interviews with Partners as well as various surveys distributed to a range of audiences, including both existing and non-library users throughout the county, community-based organizations, library staff, as well as Partner leadership and advisory boards. Site visits to Partner libraries, service population and demographic analysis, and financial analysis of historic revenues and expenses were also conducted to understand current service levels, communities served, and costs for library services. The results of the Current State Assessment are described within this report and identify where the Cooperative meets the Shared Criteria as well as where there are gaps in achieving the ideal state of the Cooperative.



### Cooperative Strengths

The Cooperative is a long-standing agreement between 13 separate organizations to cooperate in the delivery of library services to the community. The Cooperative has and continues to provide important and valuable services to the community and WCCLS and Partners agree that cooperation and collaboration are essential to providing higher levels of service to the community than can be achieved apart. Within this current model, each Partner can make operational and policy decisions that reflect their individual community’s values and identities while still realizing the benefits of leveraging resources across the Cooperative.

Table 2: Strengths of the current cooperative model identified in the Current State Assessment

Governance	Funding	Service
<b>G3.</b> Enables Partner libraries to make operational and policy decisions that reflect individual community values	<b>F4.</b> Optimizes the use of Cooperative resources to provide library services at a reasonable cost to the community	<b>S3.</b> Leverages the use of resources across the Cooperative to create efficiency and economies of scale  <b>S5.</b> Maintains unique library identities

### Cooperative Opportunities

While the current Cooperative model enables Partners to maintain unique identities and operational decision-making while realizing some benefits of cooperation, there are inherent challenges to the current Cooperative model that present barriers to achieving the remaining Shared Criteria. The Cooperative is an agreement between 13 separate organizations to cooperate in the delivery of library services to the community but the Cooperative itself is *not* a distinct entity. This means that each Partner, facing its own unique challenges and contexts, must be responsive to the needs of their communities, as well as the



policies and priorities of their independent governing bodies, while also cooperating with WCCLS and other Partners to deliver services. The result of this model are challenges in establishing a unified vision for library service delivery, facilitating efficient and effective communications, establishing clear roles and responsibilities, and maintaining accountability to shared policies and procedures. In addition to specific governance challenges, past practices for allocating resources across the Cooperative combined with differences in Partner capacity have resulted in inconsistent service levels across the Cooperative.

The results of the Current State Assessment identify which Shared Criteria are not being met within the current Cooperative governance, funding and service delivery model. These criteria represent the gaps in achieving the ideal state of the Cooperative and present key opportunities for the Cooperative moving forward. While some of the challenges described in this report may be temporarily and/or partially addressed with modifications to the Cooperative’s current funding model and governance agreements (Near-term opportunities outlined in Table 3), it is apparent that consideration of alternative governance, funding, and service delivery models is necessary to make significant strides in fulfilling the shared criteria (Long-Term Opportunities in Table 4).

Table 3: Near-Term Opportunities (gaps) identified in the Current State Assessment

Governance	Funding	Service
<b>G1.</b> Provides Partners a meaningful role in governance and decision-making related to the Cooperative	<b>F1.</b> Allocates funding according to a transparent and objective methodology	<b>S3.</b> Leverages the use of resources across the Cooperative to create efficiency and economies of scale
<b>G5.</b> Provides mutual accountability over Cooperative services and funding	<b>F2.</b> Provides reliable and stable funding sources	<b>S4.</b> Provides a consistent level of base services to all community members
	<b>F3.</b> Sustains base service levels	

Table 4: Long-Term Opportunities (gaps) identified in the Current State Assessment

Governance	Funding	Service
<b>G2.</b> Provides a long-term solution for governance and decision-making	<b>F4.</b> Optimizes the use of Cooperative resources to provide library services at a reasonable cost to the community	<b>S1.</b> Ensures equitable access to materials, information, and resources
<b>G4.</b> Establishes a unified vision and direction for library services	<b>F5.</b> Allocates resources to promote system-wide outcomes	<b>S2.</b> Is responsive to the needs of our diverse community
<b>G6.</b> Provides representation for all community members in the County	<b>F6.</b> Continually invests in library services	<b>S6.</b> Addresses differences between Partners in ability to provide services
<b>G7.</b> Facilitates efficient countywide decision-making in response to community needs	<b>F7.</b> Addresses the differences in available funding capacity and constraints across the Cooperative	

### Moving Forward

Moving forward, Cooperative Partners are committed to developing and evaluating alternative solutions to address the gaps identified during the Current State Assessment on both a near-term and long-term timeline. The Funding and Governance Evaluation Project includes a work plan (Table 5) to address both near- and long-term alternatives and Cooperative Partners have committed to evaluating all options for



moving the Cooperative closer towards the Shared Vision and Criteria. The remainder of Phase 1 will focus on identifying near-term recommendations for funding and base service levels in line with Shared Criteria. Phases 2 and 3 will establish alignment on near-term improvements to Cooperative service boundaries, funding formulas, and governance agreements. Phase 4 will build upon the work of implementing near-term improvements by considering long-term opportunities, including more significant changes in governance and funding structures, to move the Cooperative closer to the shared vision and criteria.

Table 5: WCCLS Funding and Governance Evaluation Project Work Plan

<b>Funding and Governance Evaluation Project Work Plan</b>	
<b>Phase 1</b>	
<b>Task 1: Project Management and Engagement/Communications Planning</b>	Ongoing
<b>Task 2: Information Gathering and Benchmarking</b>	Complete
<b>Task 3: Define Success (“Shared Vision and Shared Criteria”)</b>	Complete
<b>Task 4: Assess the Current State</b>	Complete
<b>Task 5: Future State Analysis – Base Service Levels and Near-Term Funding Options</b>	January 2025
<b>Phase 2</b>	
<b>Task 6: Future State Analysis – Service Boundaries Improvements</b>	June 2025
<b>Task 7: Future State Analysis – Funding Formula Improvements</b>	June 2025
<b>Task 8: Future State Analysis – Governance Improvements</b>	September 2025
<b>Phase 3</b>	
<b>Task 9: Revise Intergovernmental Agreements</b>	January 2026
<b>Phase 4</b>	
<b>Task 10: Long-Term Recommendations and Roadmap</b>	December 2026



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## Introduction and Background

Public library service in Washington County is provided by a Partnership between Washington County (County), nine cities, and three nonprofit organizations (together known as the Cooperative). This long-standing Partnership has been in place since 1976. Washington County Cooperative Library Services (WCCLS) is a department of Washington County, and provides funding, core infrastructure, and support services to link sixteen library buildings into one countywide system which benefits all County residents. Library buildings are operated by city and non-profit Partner agencies (Partners), and Partners provide staff, physical collections, programs, and services. The member libraries of the Cooperative include the cities of Banks, Beaverton, Cornelius, Forest Grove, Hillsboro, North Plains, Sherwood, Tigard, Tualatin, as well as the Aloha Community Library Association, Cedar Mill and Bethany Community Libraries Association, and Garden Home Community Library Association.

In February 2024, Merina+Co (MCO), a local consulting firm, was contracted to conduct an evaluation of the existing Cooperative. Under the direction of Washington County and in collaboration with representatives from Cooperative Partners, MCO is facilitating a process for evaluating the current state of the system and developing mutually agreeable solutions for both near- and long-term improvements to Cooperative governance, funding, and library service delivery. The results of this Current State Assessment are intended to identify where there are gaps in achieving the ideal state of the Cooperative and guide the development of solutions to bridge the identified gaps. While some of the challenges described in this report may be temporarily and/or partially addressed with modifications to the Cooperative’s current funding model and governance agreements, it is apparent that consideration of alternative governance, funding, and service delivery models is necessary to make significant strides in fulfilling the shared criteria. Future phases of the Funding and Governance Evaluation Project will seek to evaluate future alternatives to address the gaps identified within the Current State Assessment on both a near-term and long-term timeline.

## Approach and Methodology

The process for developing mutually agreeable solutions for both near- and long-term improvements begins first with the establishment of an agreed-upon vision for the future state of the Cooperative and then a comprehensive assessment of the current strengths and weaknesses of the current Cooperative against this vision (“Current State Assessment”). The following sections describe the approach to evaluating the current state of the Cooperative with respect to governance, funding, and service delivery.

### Establishing a Shared Vision and Criteria

This step is critical for envisioning long-term success and guiding the Cooperative toward near- and long-term improvements. To establish this vision, MCO conducted individual interviews with each Partner to understand individual values, interests, and priorities as they relate to the “ideal” state of the Cooperative. Information gathered during these meetings was used to establish a list of Shared Criteria for the ideal governance, funding, and service model. The Shared Criteria describe the characteristics of this ideal state and provide a basis for evaluating the current state of the Cooperative to identify gaps. The Shared Criteria also provide







a consistent framework for evaluating near- and long-term alternatives and reaching collective agreement regarding proposed future improvements to the Cooperative.

Table 6: WCCLS Funding and Governance Evaluation Shared Criteria

Governance	Funding	Service
<b>G1.</b> Provides Partners a meaningful role in governance and decision-making related to the Cooperative	<b>F1.</b> Allocates funding according to a transparent and objective methodology	<b>S1.</b> Ensures equitable access to materials, information, and resources
<b>G2.</b> Provides a long-term solution for governance and decision-making	<b>F2.</b> Provides reliable and stable funding sources	<b>S2.</b> Is responsive to the needs of our diverse community
<b>G3.</b> Enables Partner libraries to make operational and policy decisions that reflect individual community values	<b>F3.</b> Sustains base service levels	<b>S3.</b> Leverages the use of resources across the Cooperative to create efficiency and economies of scale
<b>G4.</b> Establishes a unified vision and direction for library services	<b>F4.</b> Optimizes the use of Cooperative resources to provide library services at a reasonable cost to the community	<b>S4.</b> Provides a consistent level of base services to all community members
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<b>G6.</b> Provides representation for all community members in the County	<b>F6.</b> Continually invests in library services	<b>S6.</b> Addresses differences between Partners in ability to provide services
<b>G7.</b> Facilitates efficient countywide decision-making in response to community needs	<b>F7.</b> Addresses the differences in available funding capacity and constraints across the Cooperative	

*The Shared Criteria are an aspirational vision for the ideal state of the Cooperative and provides a framework for evaluating key trade-offs and factors in deciding how to make service, funding, and governance improvements in line with the Shared Vision. The Shared Criteria DO NOT represent a comprehensive list of what is possible or will be accomplished.*

### Approach to Assessing the Current State

To assess the current state of the Cooperative against the Shared Criteria, MCO supported WCCLS and Partners in reaching a common understanding of the strengths and opportunities within the current Cooperative model through:

- Information gathering interviews with Partners to gather individual perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of the current governance, funding, and service models;
- A countywide community survey and survey of community-based organizations (CBOs) to collect feedback from existing library users to regarding current service levels and non-library users to understand barriers to accessing services;
- Surveys of WCCLS Partner library staff and key stakeholders (governing bodies, advisory boards, library associations, etc.) to understand a variety of perspectives regarding the strengths and opportunities of the current Cooperative model;
- Site visits to Partner libraries to understand the state of library facilities, amenities, and service offerings across the Cooperative;
- Service population and demographic analysis to understand the communities served by each Partner; and



- Financial analysis of historic revenues and expenses associated with library services at the Partner level, as well as at the Cooperative level.

Table 7: Count of responses received by audience for the 2024 WCCLS Funding and Governance Evaluation Project surveys

Survey	Total Responses
<b>Community Survey</b>	18,290
<b>Community Based Organizations</b>	41
<b>WCCLS Library Staff</b>	344
<b>WCCLS Library Governing Bodies, Advisory Boards, Friends Associations</b>	75

### Financial Analysis

To establish a consistent understanding of the total costs of providing library services across the Cooperative, MCO requested financial information from each Partner, including actual revenue and expense data for fiscal years’ (FY) 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. From that data, a complete history of revenues and expenses was compiled to categorize revenues and expenses into the following high-level categories:

- Revenues:
  - WCCLS funding allocation,
  - Partner contributions,
  - Fundraising and donations,
  - Fines and fees,
  - Charges for services, and
  - Grants/other revenues.
- Expenses:
  - “Direct” library services costs (excluding capital costs and debt service) , and
  - “Indirect” administrative costs.

Due to differences in how city Partners cover indirect administrative costs, these “indirect” costs were estimated by identifying all indirect administrative charges within each library’s budget and estimating the library’s share of other indirect administrative costs that are being covered outside of the library’s budget. The figures presented within the Current State Assessment are for the sole purpose of understanding the estimated total cost of providing library services across the Cooperative and do not reflect the results of detailed cost allocations for all Partners.

### Service Population Considerations

In order to reasonably compare funding levels across the Cooperative, it was necessary to develop a methodology for normalizing financial data across each of the Partners. Many of the analyses conducted as part of the Current State Assessment considered funding relative to the size of the population being served. Funding per capita calculations can vary significantly depending on how the service population of each library is defined. To provide additional data points for comparison with current service boundary populations, MCO developed two additional methodologies for defining service population based on proximity and travel-time. Both of these factors were identified in the community survey as key considerations for community members deciding which library to frequent.



The following methodologies were used to estimate service populations for each Partner library (Library X)<sup>1</sup>:

**Closest Library:** The population of each census block within Washington County for which Library X is their closest library by straight line distance.

**Current Service Area Boundaries:** The population of each census block within Washington County that falls within the current service boundary of Library X.

**15-Minute Travel time:** The population of the proportion of each census block within Washington County that falls within a 15-minute travel time<sup>2</sup> from Library X.

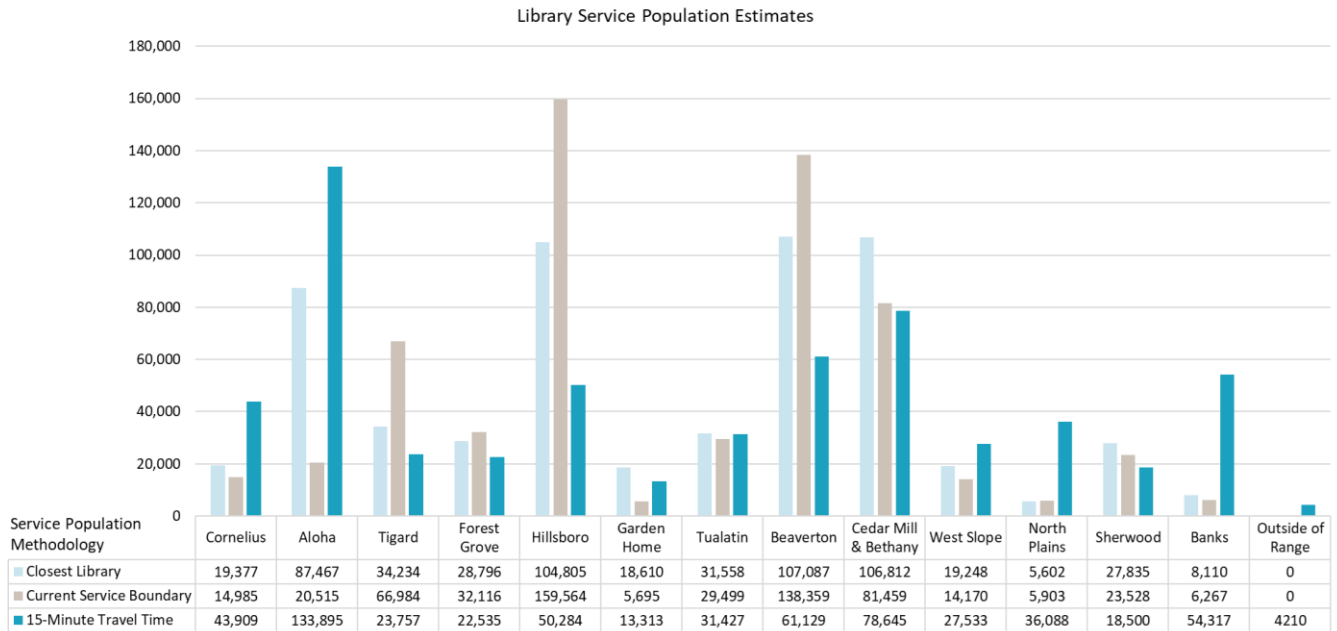


Figure 1: Service populations for each Partner library estimated using methodologies described in Service Population Considerations (page 10)

While the methodologies outlined above were used to estimate the population served by each Partner library for the current state analysis, it's important to note that these estimates may not fully reflect the actual populations that are or should be served by each Partner library. Phase 2 of the Funding and Governance Evaluation Project will include a focus on developing a transparent and objective methodology for determining service boundaries.

### Evaluation of the Current State

The compilation of perspectives and analysis results were presented to the Partners during a series of work sessions. Following the presentation of these results, Partners were asked to evaluate the extent to which they agree or disagree that the current Cooperative model meets the Shared Criteria. MCO completed the same exercise to provide an independent perspective on where the Cooperative is/is not meeting the Shared Criteria for all Partners and community members across the County. The following sections of this report summarize the results of this evaluation.

<sup>1</sup> Compiled by MCO using [2020 U.S. Census](#) data and current service boundaries provided by WCCLS.

<sup>2</sup> Travel time zone estimated using [Openrouteservice](#) in July 2024.



## Current State Assessment Results

The following sections review the outcomes of the Current State Assessment along with feedback from Partners on the extent to which they agree that the current model for governance, funding, and service are achieving the Shared Criteria.

### Governance

Evaluating the extent to which the Cooperative's current model achieves the Shared Criteria for governance is largely based on the unique views and perspectives held by each Partner. In addition to gathering these perspectives, the current state of governance includes a high-level evaluation of the underlying systems in place, or not, to allow the governance model to achieve the Shared Criteria.

### Cooperative Model

While all Partners are doing their best to deliver high levels of service to the community, there are inherent governance challenges in the current Cooperative model. The Cooperative is an agreement between 13 separate organizations to cooperate in the delivery of library services to the community but the Cooperative itself is *not* a distinct entity. Each organization, facing its own unique challenges and contexts, must be responsive to the needs of their communities, as well as the policies and priorities of their independent governing bodies, while also cooperating with WCCLS and other Partners to deliver services.

This cooperation is dependent on the mechanisms in place for facilitating collaboration and accountability, as well as the strength of ongoing communication and trust between Partners. Furthermore, the nature of the Cooperative as an agreement between individual organizations creates challenges in upholding and maintaining what systems of communication and collaboration are in place. Navigating these systems often requires significant effort and resources from Partners that could otherwise be allocated to providing direct service to the community. Themes regarding limited trust and communication underly many of the concerns about the current Cooperative model's ability to achieve the Shared Criteria.

### Governance Structure

The structure of the current governance model includes three primary levels: the WCCLS Policy Group, WCCLS Executive Board, and the Washington County Board of County Commissioners (BCC). The Policy Group is made up of library directors from each Partner and serves in an advisory capacity to WCCLS and the Executive Board, weighing in on issues related to service delivery and policy-setting. The Executive Board, made up of a representative from each organization's executive leadership (City Managers, Assistant City Managers, or Board Presidents), serves as an advisory body to the BCC, which is the official decision-making body and governing board for the Cooperative.

In addition to these groups, there are several other layers of advisory/governing bodies (Library Advisory Boards, City Councils, Non-Profit Governing Boards, etc.) that have varying degrees of authority and influence over the delivery of library services at Partner level. Representation for community members in Cooperative matters ultimately comes down to the participation of Policy Group and Executive Board members in Cooperative conversations, as well as each Partner's efforts to serve as a conduit for sharing information and gathering input from their stakeholders. The result of this is that some communities do not have direct representation, such as unincorporated areas without a Partner library and incorporated cities that do not have libraries within the Cooperative. While Partner libraries have some responsibility for representing these communities if they fall within their current service boundaries, there are not always mechanisms for gathering input from these community members. Similarly, the Cooperative as a



whole does not currently have a mechanism for considering underserved populations in Cooperative-level decision-making.

### Alignment on Cooperative Vision and Direction

One of the shared understandings throughout this process is the recognition by Partners that there is value and importance in cooperation. The Partners are stronger together when it comes to providing library services. This is evidenced by the fact that the Cooperative has been in place since 1976. Since then, the Cooperative has undergone multiple assessments to understand and address key challenges, including questions over roles and responsibilities, governance, and funding. While Partners agree that challenges exist, so far, the Partners have not reached consensus that the Cooperative model is in need of significant changes. Uncertainties related to these ongoing challenges have posed challenges to long-term planning at the Cooperative and Partner level, and there is no unified vision and direction for library services moving forward. Within the current governance model, it is unclear who is ultimately responsible for establishing a unified vision and direction. The BCC serves as ultimate decision-making authority for Cooperative matters, but each Partner's individual governing bodies have responsibility for providing policy direction and priority setting that affect individual library operations.

### Decision-Making Authority and Accountability

Related to the Partners' role in Cooperative-level governance and decision-making, the current intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) have limited clarity around the roles and responsibilities for the Executive Board, the Policy Group, and WCCLS. In addition, the Cooperative is in the process of re-building a framework for Cooperative-wide collaboration on service delivery issues and policy review, which has resulted in some questions and concerns around how decision-making will happen in the future.

One of the strengths of the current model is that Partners have autonomy to make operational and policy decisions at the local level. Decisions regarding collection development, staffing models, facilities design and operations, etc. are made at the Partner level leaving room for individual organizations to make decisions that reflect their individual community needs and desires. One of the challenges associated with this, however, is that coordinated service delivery decisions at the Cooperative level can be difficult to achieve and enforce, as there is currently no established framework for facilitating communication and collaboration among Partners. Similarly, the scope is unclear for which service decisions should be made centrally by WCCLS and with what level of input from Partners. This is complicated by the fact that some Partners have limited staff capacity to participate in discussions on Cooperative level matters and the potential operational impacts of Cooperative-level policies on each library can vary dramatically depending on library size, location, community demographics, etc.

When Cooperative-wide decisions are made, there are challenges in maintaining accountability for implementation of policy decisions as there are no mechanisms in place for holding Partners accountable to Cooperative policies nor WCCLS accountable for central service levels to Partners. Funds provided by the County to Partners do not currently have specific requirements or expected outcomes and there is limited transparency into how those funds are being utilized across Partners. Regarding WCCLS' operational decisions, there is a perception among Partners that there is limited transparency into how decisions are made and why, as well as limited accountability channels for centralized services being provided.

### Shared Criteria Evaluation - Governance

Partners were asked to evaluate the extent to which they agree or disagree that the current Cooperative model meets the Shared Criteria. The results, along with MCO perspectives, are shown in Table 8. While



the current Cooperative governance model enables Partners to make operational and policy decisions that reflect individual and community values, the model presents challenges in establishing a unified vision and direction, as well as establishing a long-term, equitable, and efficient solution for governance and decision-making related to library services across the County.

Table 8: Current State of the Cooperative with Respect to Governance

Does the current Cooperative model...			MCO	Count of Partners	
GOVERNANCE	G1	Provide Partners a meaningful role in governance and decision-making related to the Cooperative?	Strongly Agree		0
			Agree		1
			Neither		1
			Disagree	X	6
			Strongly Disagree		4
	G2	Provide a long-term solution for governance and decision-making?	Strongly Agree		0
			Agree		1
			Neither		1
			Disagree	X	6
			Strongly Disagree		4
	G3	Enable Partner libraries to make operational and policy decisions that reflect individual community values?	Strongly Agree		4
			Agree	X	8
			Neither		0
			Disagree		0
			Strongly Disagree		0
	G4	Establish a unified vision and direction for library services?	Strongly Agree		0
			Agree		1
			Neither		3
			Disagree	X	6
			Strongly Disagree		2
	G5	Provide mutual accountability over Cooperative services and funding?	Strongly Agree		0
			Agree		2
			Neither		0
			Disagree	X	7
			Strongly Disagree		3



Does the current Cooperative model...			MCO	Count of Partners	
GOVERNANCE	G6	Provide representation for all community members in the County?	Strongly Agree		0
			Agree		1
			Neither		4
			Disagree	X	4
			Strongly Disagree		3
	G7	Facilitate efficient countywide decision-making in response to community needs?	Strongly Agree		0
			Agree		4
			Neither		0
			Disagree	X	4
			Strongly Disagree		4

### Funding

One of the primary outcomes desired for the Current State Assessment was to understand the total cost for providing current service levels across the Cooperative. Based on information provided by Partners and the financial analysis methodology described in Financial Analysis (page 10), it's estimated that the cost for providing services across the Cooperative in FY2023 was \$57.4 million. Of this \$57.4 million, \$9 million was spent on centralized support and services through WCCLS operations, \$36 million was spent by Partners on providing direct library services, and \$12.2 million was spent on indirect administrative costs supporting the delivery of library services (Figure 2).

Total Cooperative Revenues vs. Expenses  
(FY2023)

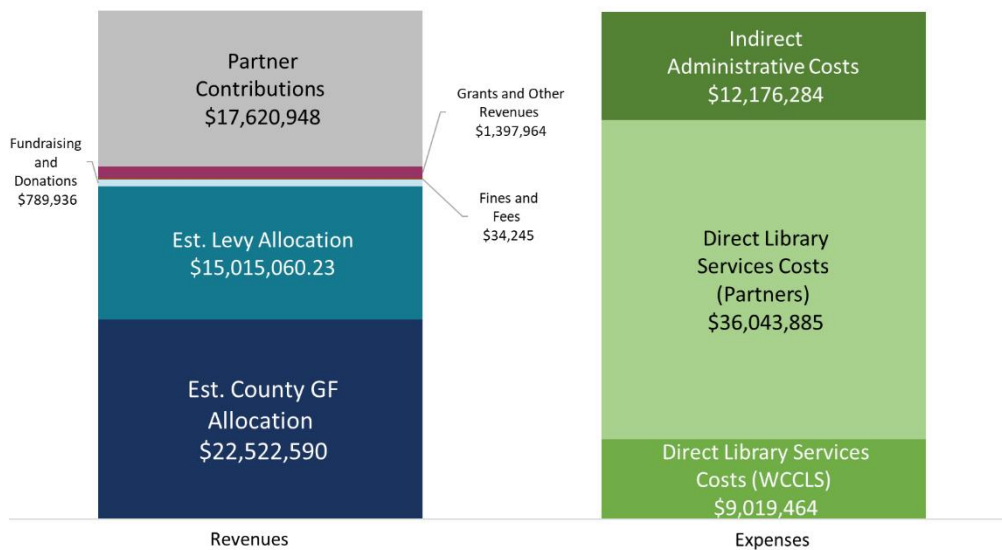


Figure 2: Total Resources vs. Expenses for the Cooperative (FY2023)



When looking at the costs for providing services across the Cooperative, Partners recognize that the centralization of some services with WCCLS has helped to create economies of scale. Many acknowledged that there are opportunities to further leverage central services to optimize resources and reduce cost, although the structure of the Cooperative presents some barriers and there are varying opinions among Partners regarding which services could and should be centralized. At \$95 per capita, the Cooperative total cost of library services per capita ranks near the top compared to peer organizations and libraries nationwide that serve populations greater than 300,000. Additional centralization of WCCLS library services can help to optimize the use of these funds. Neighboring library systems vary in their costs per capita from \$46 per capita for Fort Vancouver (FY2022) to \$99 per capita for Multnomah County Library District (FY2022).

### Differences in Funding Across Partners

Service levels and costs for providing those services ranges widely among Partners, a result of a variety of factors including level of funding allocated by WCCLS, level of funding capacity from each Partner, as well as varying priorities around library services. Partners spent from less than \$20 per capita to nearly \$350 per capita to provide service in fiscal year 2023.<sup>3</sup>

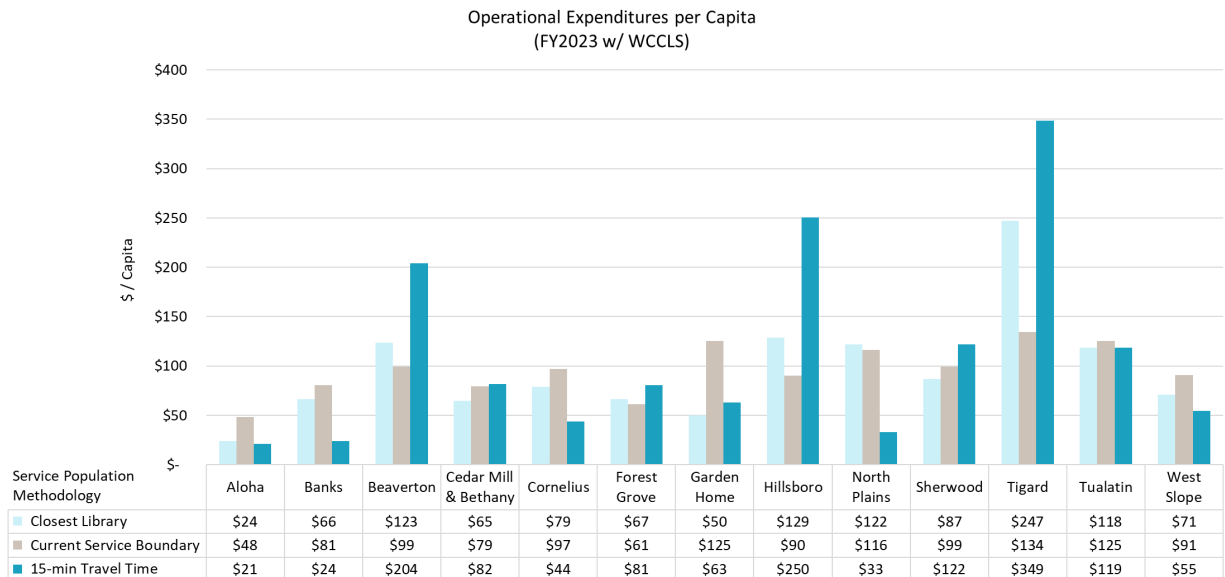


Figure 3: Partner expenditures associated with provision of library services in 2023 shown as dollars per capita based on three methodologies used to define service population<sup>4</sup>

As shown in Figure 2, the resources to provide service across the Cooperative come from three primary sources: the WCCLS local operating levy, the County’s General Fund contribution, and Partner contributions. In FY2023 the levy revenues contributed approximately \$15 million, the County’s General Fund contributed \$22.5 million, and Partners contributed \$17.6 million. Other revenues, including grants, fundraising and donations, charges for services, fines and fees, and other miscellaneous revenues totaled nearly \$2.3 million.

<sup>3</sup> Cost per capita calculations for each Partner are dependent on how each Partner’s service population is defined. See Service Population Considerations (page 10) for additional information regarding the how service populations were defined for this analysis.

<sup>4</sup> Compiled by MCO using financial data provided by WCCLS and Partner libraries and service populations as determined using the methodology outlined in Service Population Considerations (page 10).





Over the last four years, total expenditures have grown over \$7 million since FY2020. Funding from the WCCLS levy and County General Fund has increased by an average of 3% year over year and Partner contributions have increased an average of 9% year over year.

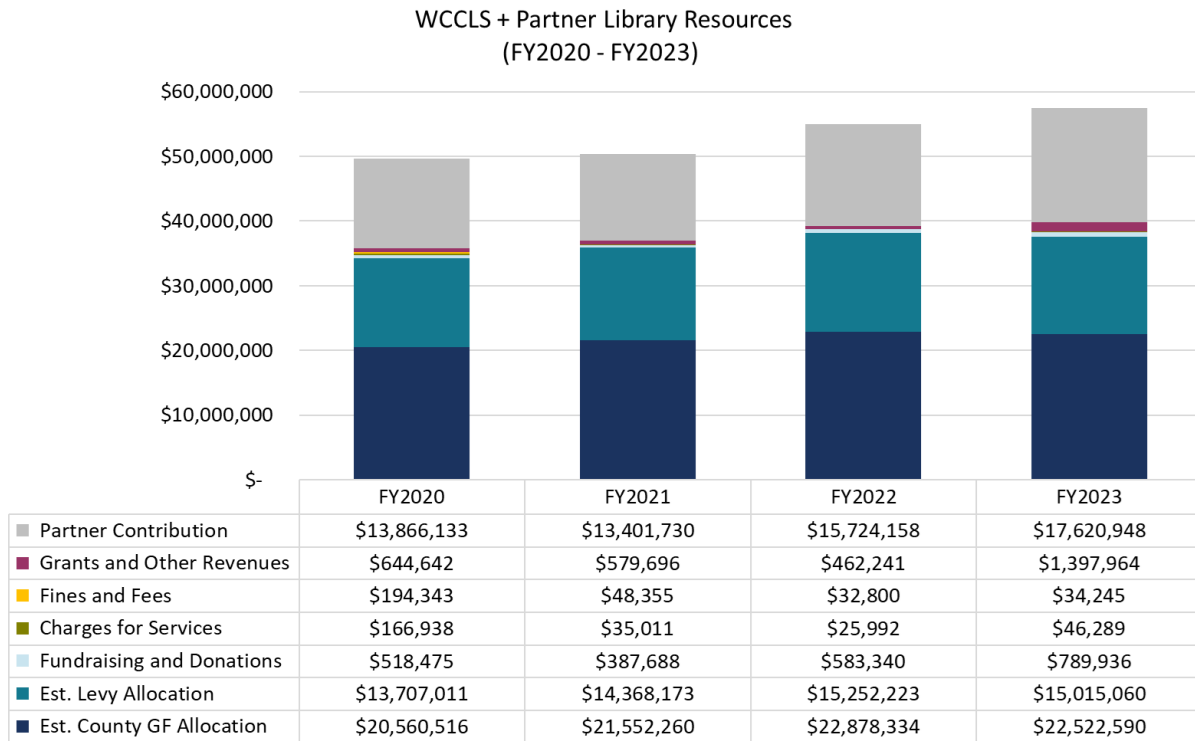


Figure 4: WCCLS and Partner Resources for Cooperative Library Services (FY2020 - 2023)<sup>5</sup>

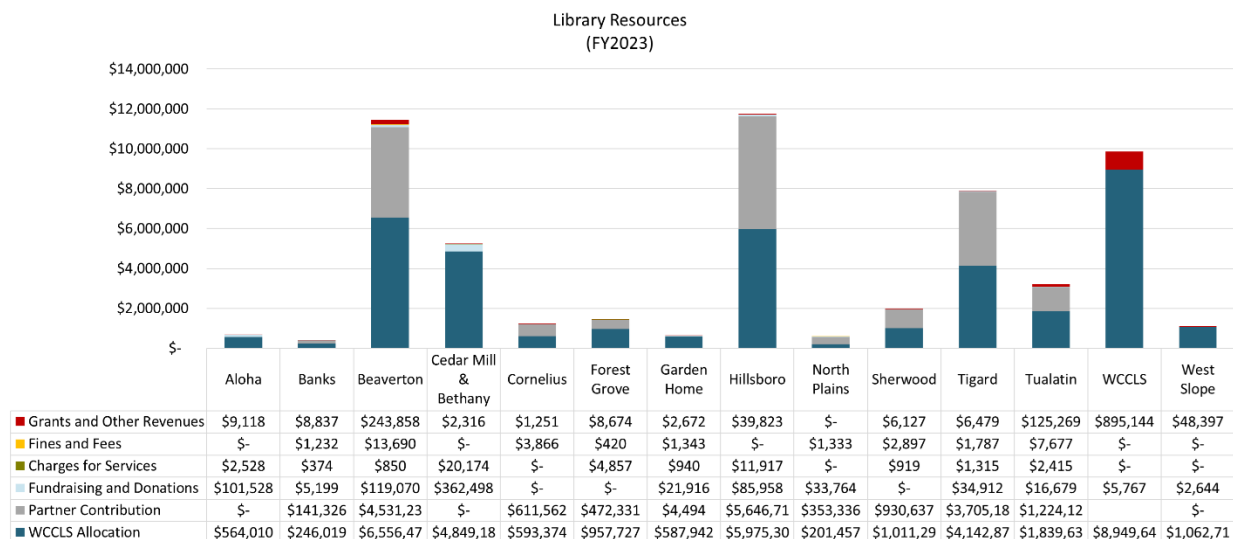


Figure 5: WCCLS and Partner Resources for Cooperative Library Services (FY2023)<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Compiled by MCO using financial data provided by WCCLS and Partners.



With current resources, many Partners described struggles in maintaining current service levels, let alone the ability to invest in future services. For some, this struggle has been consistent since joining the Cooperative and for others these challenges have arisen recently due to increasing financial pressures and costs. In response to these challenges, some Partners have had to reduce staffing levels, open hours, and services.

### Funding Reliability and Stability

There are significant concerns among Partners around the reliability and stability of the three primary funding sources that make up over 96 percent of Cooperative resources (WCCLS levy, County General Fund, and Partner contributions). Although the Cooperative has been successful in passing the WCCLS levy, this revenue requires renewal by voters. While General Fund resources, especially property taxes, are mostly stable, they are subject to statutory limits in Oregon and have not kept pace with increasing costs for services and are subject to competing demands. Since the amount of county and city General Fund contributions are not formalized in the current model, these funding levels are subject to change. For non-profit Partners without access to their own property tax revenues, funding is primarily dependent on the WCCLS allocation, and grants and fundraising can require a significant level of resources to be pulled away from direct service delivery.

### Allocation Methodology

Since WCCLS funding accounted for 65 percent of Cooperative resources in 2023, the allocation of these funds is of primary concern for Partners. While there is a methodology in place for determining the allocation of these funds to Cooperative Partners, there is limited understanding of how the funding formula methodology was developed. Based on the institutional knowledge and documentation available, it appears the original funding formula for determining funding allocation was built upon various service outputs and metrics, as well as the established service boundaries for each Partner. The unintended consequence of using a methodology dependent on service outputs and metrics was a funding formula that rewarded libraries which already had the resources to establish larger collections and attract higher levels of usership. The result essentially ensured that libraries with less resources were underfunded and continued to underperform. In 2015 the Cooperative underwent a reworking of funding allocation methodology to address some of these inequities. The adjustment was based on evaluating current metrics against the historic funding allocation results to complete a one time “adjustment” of each Partner’s allocation percentage. Since then, allocation percentages have remained static with the exception of an adjustment to add the Aloha Community Library Association into the Cooperative in 2016.

Concerns regarding the transparency and objectivity of the funding allocation process remain. For example, the methodology for determining how funds are allocated to WCCLS and Partners are based on static percentages and have not been adjusted to acknowledge changing community demands and population growth. There is also no objective methodology in place for determining annual increases to Partner allocations.

### Service Boundaries

Related to the allocation of funding are the current service boundaries for Partners which were established according to a methodology completed in 2008. The methodologies used to establish the service boundaries in 2008 and used to conduct subsequent revisions to incorporate additional Partners into the Cooperative are not well understood. Service populations resulting from these boundaries are viewed by Partners and WCCLS as out of date and non-representative of current service populations. When looking at the WCCLS allocation per Partner on a per capita basis according to different service



population methodologies, there is a significant range in funding per capita among Partners from less than \$19 per capita to greater than \$180 per capita.

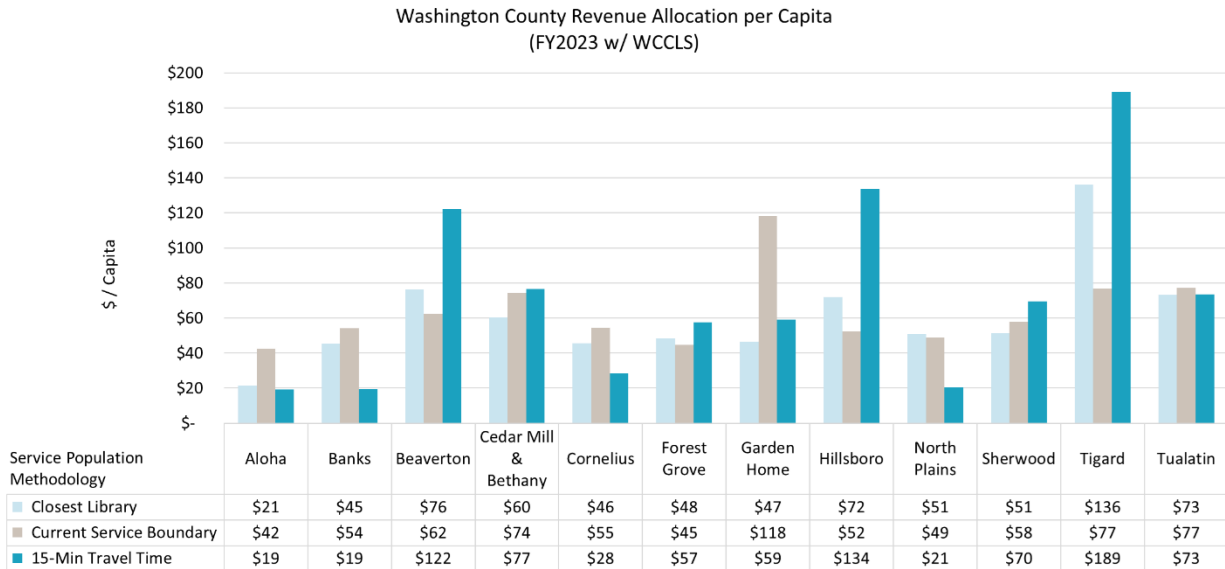


Figure 6: Washington County funds allocated to each Partner in 2023 shown as dollars per capita based on three methodologies used to define service population<sup>6</sup>

### Equity of Funding Distribution

When evaluating the current funding allocation levels according to community needs and social vulnerability, using the Center for Disease Control’s Social Vulnerability Index<sup>7</sup>, there is no clear relationship between funding per capita from WCCLS and social vulnerability of the service population based on current service boundaries. However, when considering each organization’s service population based on a service population within a 15-minute travel time, there appears to be a negative correlation between WCCLS funding per capita and service population social vulnerability. This suggests that libraries with higher funding levels per capita from WCCLS tend to have lower social vulnerability scores for populations within a 15-minute travel time. The Cooperative’s historic funding allocation methodology, which rewarded libraries with high usership, may have exacerbated the situation. Communities with higher social vulnerability scores (more vulnerable areas) tend to use libraries less than those with lower social vulnerability scores (less vulnerable areas) according to the analysis presented in Figure 7.

<sup>6</sup> Compiled by MCO using financial data provided by WCCLS and Partner libraries and service populations as determined using the methodology outlined in Service Population Considerations (page 10).

<sup>7</sup> Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) is a place-based index and database, to identify and quantify communities experiencing social vulnerability developed and maintained by the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov/svi/). SVI is a sum of 4 themes: socioeconomic status, household characteristics, racial and ethnic minority status, and housing type/transportation. Higher scores indicate higher vulnerability.

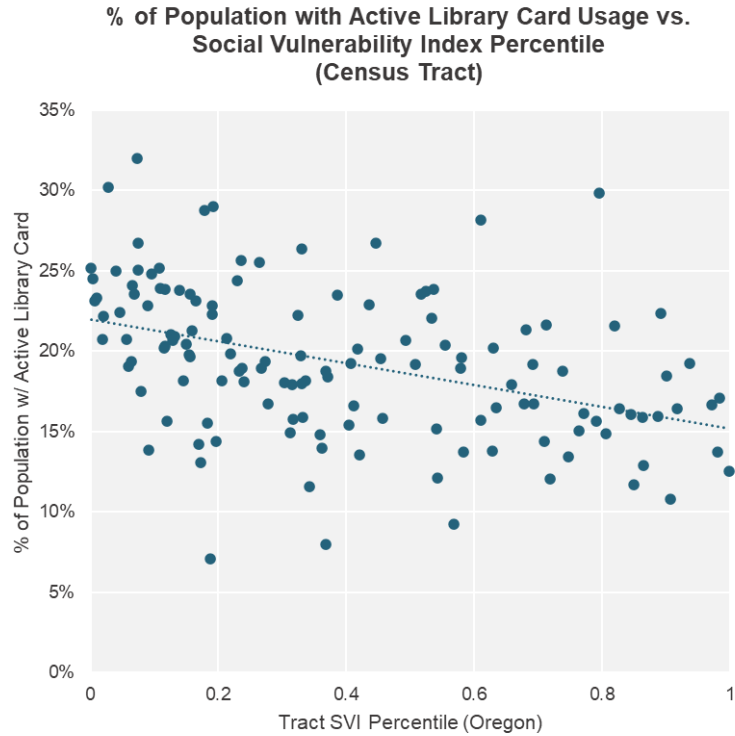


Figure 7: Estimated percentage population of with active library usage in each Washington County census tract compared to the Social Vulnerability Index percentile for census tracts in Oregon<sup>8</sup>

### Variation in Available Resources

In addition to different funding levels provided through the WCCLS allocation, each Partner has different demands and resulting capacity to fund library services through their own resources. As previously mentioned, non-profit libraries do not have to contend with competing service demands but are limited without access to their own property tax revenues. For city Partners, each organization has different numbers and levels of services to support outside of library services, as well as different permanent property tax rates and resulting funding capacity. As shown in Figure 8, the percentage of city property tax revenues spent on libraries by each Partner within the Cooperative can range from as low as 6 percent of total property tax revenues to 48 percent. These differences are currently not addressed within the current funding model.

<sup>8</sup> Compiled by MCO using library user data provided by WCCLS for FY21-24, the [2020 U.S. Census](#), and [2022 CDC Social Vulnerability Index](#).

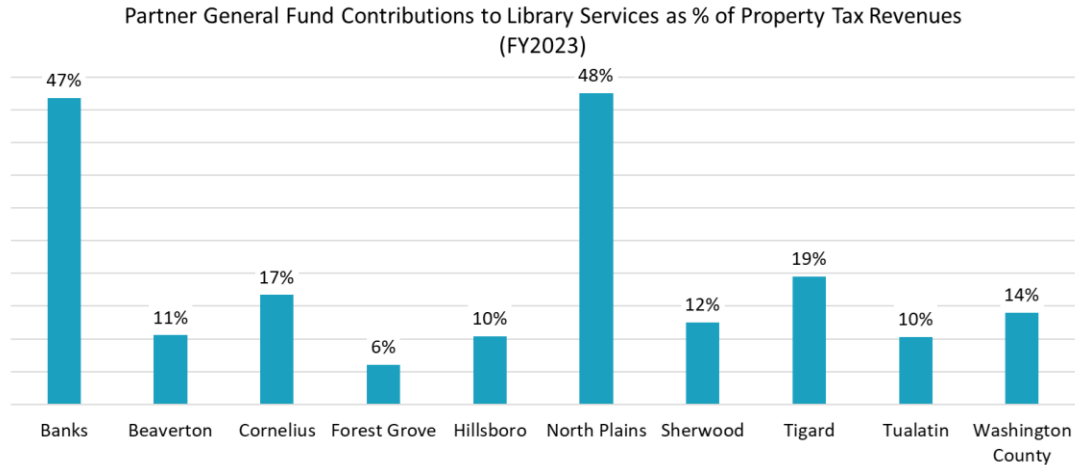


Figure 8: Partner General Fund Contributions to Library Services in FY2023 as % of Property Tax Revenues<sup>9</sup>

### Shared Criteria Evaluation – Funding

When presented with this information, Partners were asked to evaluate the extent to which they agree or disagree that the current Cooperative model meets the Shared Criteria. The results, along with MCO perspectives, are shown in Table 9. The evaluation identified gaps in the current Cooperative model’s ability to meet the Shared Criteria related to funding, including opportunities to improve the transparency and objectivity of the funding allocation methodology. The current funding structure presents challenges in the Cooperative’s ability to sustain base service levels and continually invest in library services, as well as allocate funds to promote system-wide outcomes and address differences in resources available to Partners. Centralization of some services has created operational efficiencies, however the current Cooperative model poses obstacles to realizing additional financial benefits from further optimizing operations and leveraging economies of scale.

Table 9: Current State of the Cooperative with Respect to Funding

Does the current Cooperative model...			MCO	Count of Partners	
FUNDING	F1	Allocate funding according to a transparent and objective methodology?	Strongly Agree		0
			Agree		3
			Neither		0
			Disagree	X	5
			Strongly Disagree		4
	F2	Provide reliable and stable funding sources?	Strongly Agree		1
			Agree		0
			Neither		1
			Disagree	X	7
			Strongly Disagree		3

<sup>9</sup> Compiled by MCO using financial data provided by WCCLS and Partners.



Does the current Cooperative model...			MCO	Count of Partners	
FUNDING	F3	Sustain base service levels?	Strongly Agree		1
			Agree		2
			Neither		3
			Disagree	X	4
			Strongly Disagree		2
	F4	Optimize the use of Cooperative resources to provide library services at a reasonable cost to the community?	Strongly Agree		1
			Agree		5
			Neither	X	2
			Disagree		3
			Strongly Disagree		1
	F5	Allocate resources to promote system-wide outcomes?	Strongly Agree		1
			Agree		3
			Neither		2
			Disagree	X	6
			Strongly Disagree		0
	F6	Continually invest in library services?	Strongly Agree		3
			Agree		4
			Neither		1
			Disagree	X	3
			Strongly Disagree		1
F7	Address the differences in available funding capacity and constraints across the Cooperative?	Strongly Agree		0	
		Agree		0	
		Neither		1	
		Disagree		2	
		Strongly Disagree	X	9	

### Service

This section evaluates the entire Cooperative against the shared criteria for the delivery of library services and identifies where there are gaps in achieving the ideal state of services across the entire system. This should not be taken as individual judgements on the services being provided locally. While the Cooperative’s model for delivery of services may be struggling to achieve certain Shared Criteria, it’s clear from community feedback and information gathering that each Partner library is providing important and valuable services to the community. In total, 93 percent of survey respondents that are current library users, indicated that they either agree or strongly agree with the statement “Public libraries add value to the community.”



Please rate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

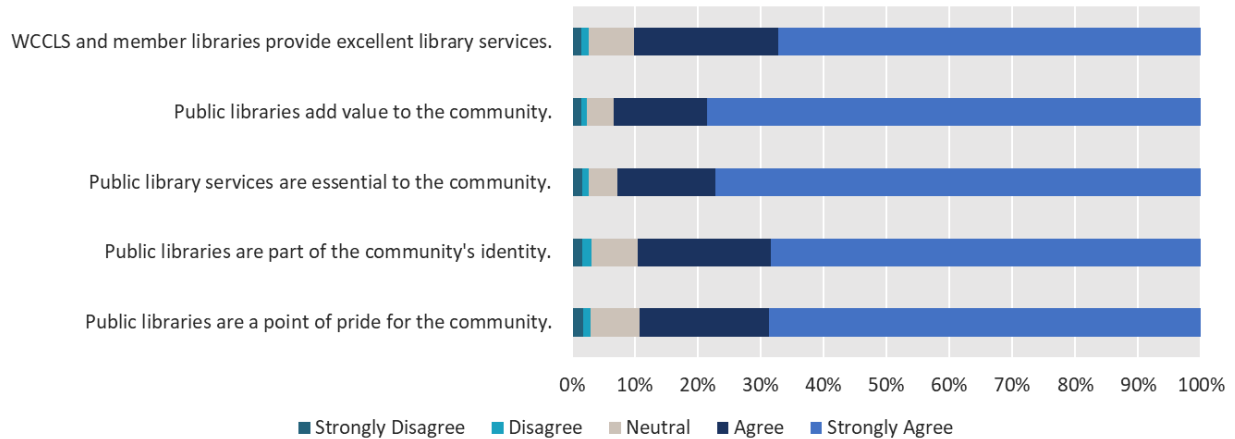


Figure 9: Survey results from 2024 WCCLS Funding and Governance Evaluation Community Survey<sup>10</sup>

Evaluating the Cooperative’s current service model is complex for a number of reasons. First, each Partner is responsible for the delivery of library services at a local level which means decisions regarding resource allocation, collection development, programming, and staffing levels differ among Partners. Second, the delivery of library services is significantly tied to funding. With more resources, libraries have the ability to be more responsive to community service needs and wants and, as a result, tend to provide higher levels of service. When resources are scarce, libraries must choose how to prioritize resources and make operational decisions that align with their own realities. As discussed in the Funding section of this report, the disparities in funding capacity and allocation across the Cooperative mean that the resources available to each Partner can vary significantly, which directly impacts services. For example, Figure 10 and Figure 11 depicts the full range of funding per capita put towards library collections and personnel by each Partner in 2023.

<sup>10</sup> Compiled by MCO using results of 2024 WCCLS community survey. Responses are shown for users who currently use in-person or online library services.

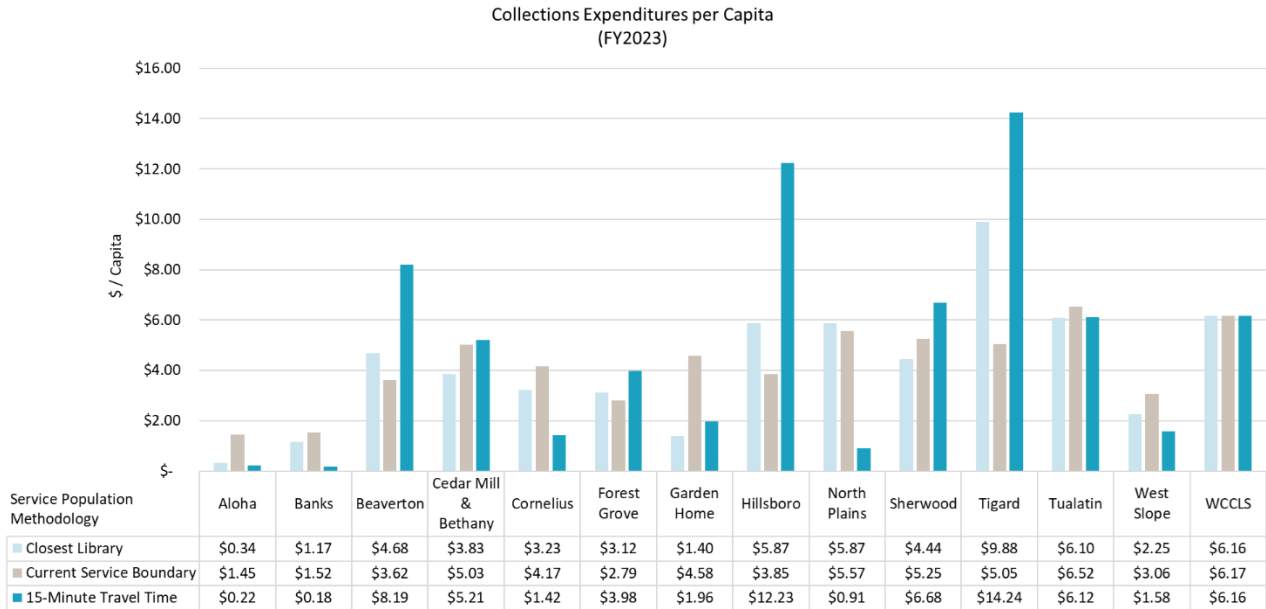


Figure 10: Library collections expenditures in 2023 shown as dollars per capita based on three methodologies used to define service population<sup>11</sup>

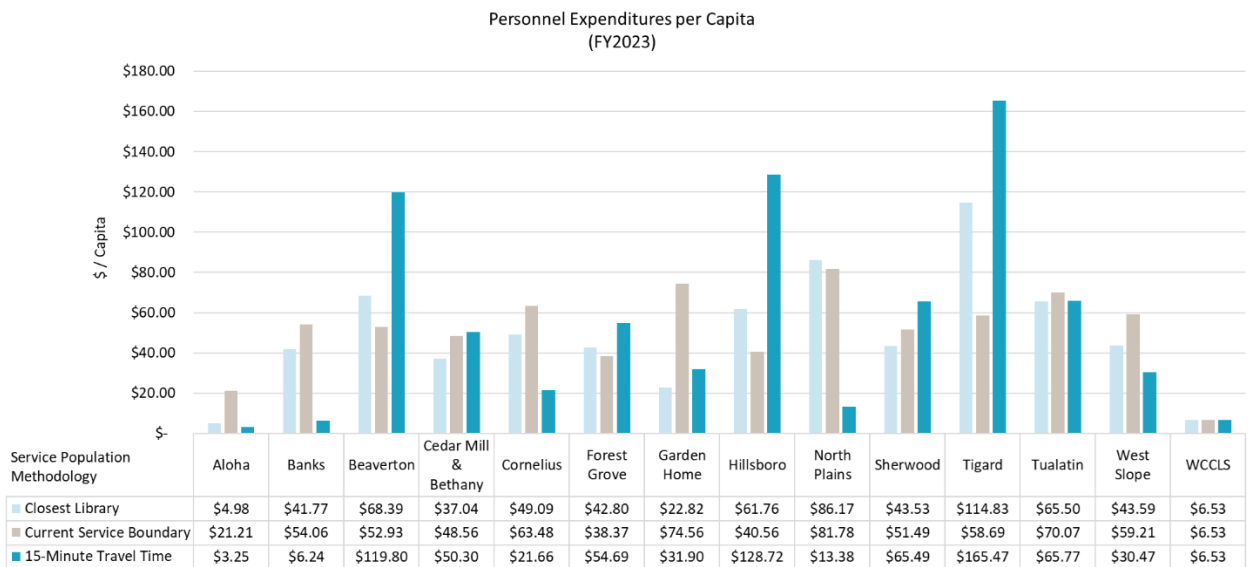


Figure 11: Library personnel expenditures in 2023 shown as dollars per capita based on three methodologies used to define service population<sup>11</sup>

WCCLS expenditures are applied to the County population under all three service population methodologies in Figure 10 and Figure 11 as WCCLS represents the countywide digital collection and staffing that serves the entire County.

### Equitable Access to Services

Equitable access to materials, information, and resources was identified as an important criterion for the ideal state of the Cooperative. The Cooperative has taken strides to ensure access to all Cooperative

<sup>11</sup> Compiled by MCO using financial data provided by WCCLS and Partner libraries and service populations as determined using the methodology outlined in Service Population Considerations (page 10).





libraries is free and open to all residents of Washington County. Additionally, in 2021 the Partners collectively recommended to the Board of Commissioners, to no longer charge late fees or fines, to reduce barriers to accessing library services. The Board of Commissioners voted to support this important equity initiative. In some communities, individual Partner organizations have also coordinated with local school districts to provide auto enrollment for student library cards supported by WCCLS. Beyond ensuring basic access, Partner libraries do face challenges in ensuring communities have equitable access. Service levels at each library in the Cooperative can vary significantly and community members may experience differing barriers to accessing library services depending on where in the County they reside.

### Consistency of Services

Since the Cooperative exists as an agreement between 13 individual organizations and is not a distinct entity, this creates challenges in establishing, implementing, and maintaining accountability to Cooperative-level policies and procedures. As a result, there are variations in service levels available to community members depending on which libraries they use. For example, some Partners charge for printing services, while other Partners do not. Differing practices across the Cooperative not only create disparities in accessing services, but they also present challenges in establishing consistent expectations among library users.

Library operating hours, collections size and quality, facility size, amenities and quality, and programming all differ due to local ideas regarding what constitutes “base services” as well as wide ranging perspectives on what libraries should provide to their communities (e.g. culturally specific programming, job search assistance, legal aid, food security programs, language resources, accessibility resources, and other social services, etc.), combined with differing resources and capacity. While all Partners have some basic level of equipment, staff, open hours, and programs, the quantity and quality varies widely depending on available resources. Some Partners also referenced the strong linkage between library staff salaries and the quality of services, citing differing pay scales and benefits among Partners as a challenge to hiring and retaining qualified staff to provide similar services.

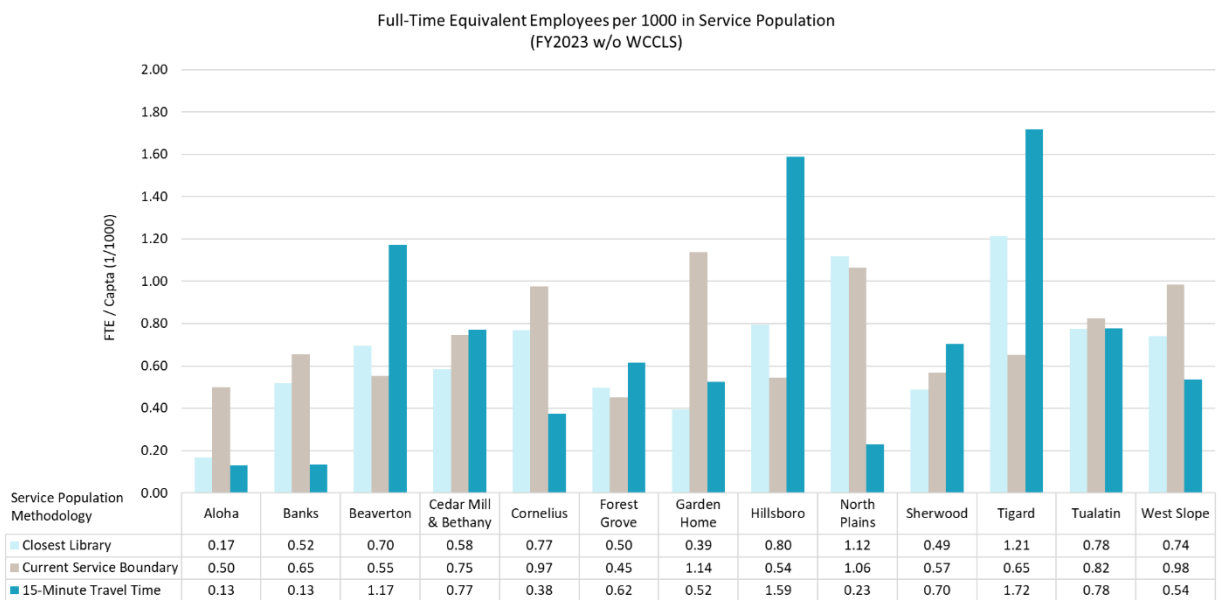


Figure 12: Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) library employees per 1,000 capita in 2023 based on three methodologies used to define



service population<sup>12</sup>

In addition to funding and staffing, differences in facilities and capital assets available to each Partner contribute to inconsistencies in service levels. Partners are responsible for acquiring, maintaining, and operating library facilities. While some Partners have been able to leverage capital bonds or community fundraising to purchase library buildings, furniture, and equipment, others are limited to what they can afford to lease or receive as in-kind donations.

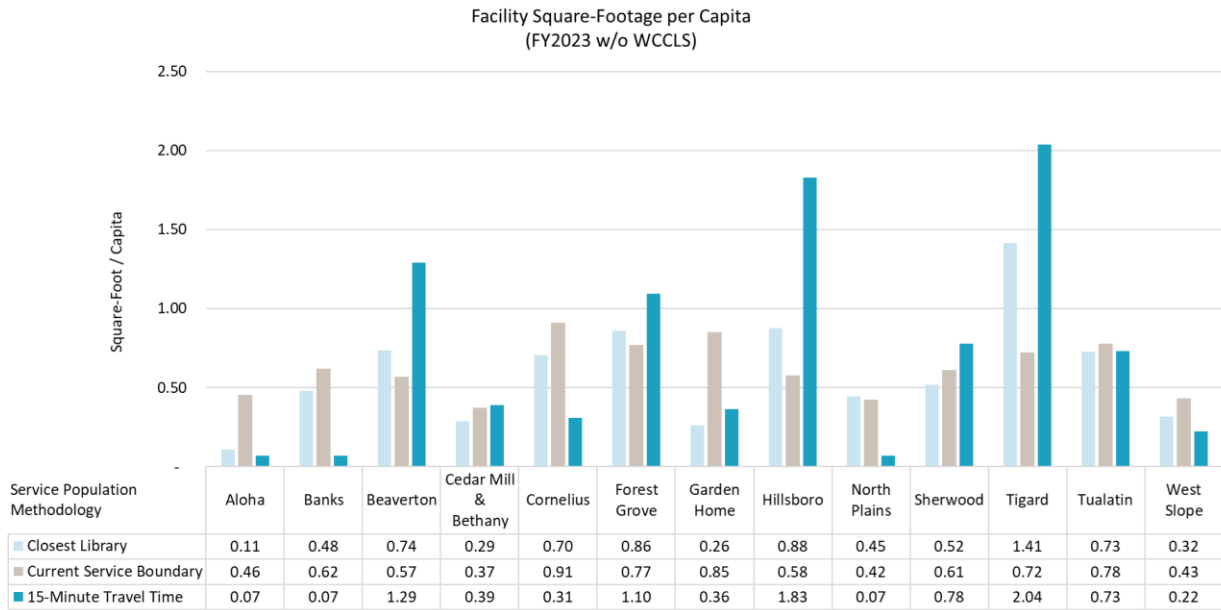


Figure 13: Library facilities square-footage per capita in 2023 based on three methodologies used to define service population<sup>13</sup>

### Unique Library Identities

A survey was distributed to gather feedback from library and non-library users in the community and received a high volume of participation from community members across the County. Partners and community members that responded to the community survey reference pride in maintaining individual and unique library identities. One of the strengths of the current Cooperative model identified by Partners is the ability afforded to them to make individual decisions on how best to respond to their individual community’s needs and maintain their unique and independent identities.

### Responding to Diverse Community Needs

Washington County is diverse and as a result, the wants and needs for each library are also diverse. These needs are being addressed, to varying degrees, by each Partner locally and through the fact that the entire Cooperative collection is available to library users. When it comes to reaching underserved and non-library users, many Partners are challenged in their ability to do this as conducting outreach to non-library users requires significant resources to meet community members where they are at. The need for focused outreach was acknowledged by many Partners and is reflected in WCCLS’s efforts to establish a focus for their Partnerships team to facilitate this outreach moving forward.

<sup>12</sup> Compiled by MCO data from [Oregon Public Library Statistics 2022-2023](#) and service populations as determined using the methodology outlined in Service Population Considerations (page 10).

<sup>13</sup> Compiled by MCO data from [Oregon Public Library Statistics 2022-2023](#) and service populations as determined using the methodology outlined in Service Population Considerations (page 10).



The community survey, as well as the surveys to community-based organizations and library staff provided some insight into the barriers that community members may be experiencing when it comes to accessing library services. Limited time and resources to access library services, as well as limited understanding of what library services are available, were identified as key challenges for non-library users. Additionally, access to programs and materials in languages other than English were highlighted as primary opportunities to be more responsive to community needs. On a large scale, the Cooperative has implemented a centralized program for sourcing Spanish language materials but in addition to that, each library experiences differing levels of demand for books, materials, and programs in languages other than English. Furthermore, the ability for each Partner to hire staff reflective of the community, conduct outreach and education, provide programs and materials in other languages, and generally bridge barriers to accessing services, is largely dependent on the funding and resources available to them.

Table 10: Top 8 non-English languages indicated in WCCLS 2024 community survey results for question "What language or languages do you use at home?" for each library selected for question "Which Washington County library locations do you visit?"<sup>14</sup>

	Aloha	Banks	Beaverton	Cedar Mill & Bethany	Cornelius	Forest Grove	Garden Home	Hillsboro	North Plains	Sherwood	Tigard	Tualatin	West Slope
<i>Spanish</i>	7%	3%	7%	4%	17%	10%	5%	9%	5%	6%	7%	8%	5%
<i>Vietnamese</i>	1%	-	1%	1%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Chinese</i>	2%	2%	3%	4%	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%
<i>Korean</i>	1%	-	1%	1%	-	-	-	1%	-	1%	1%	-	-
<i>Arabic</i>	1%	-	1%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Russian</i>	-	-	-	-	1%	-	-	1%	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Japanese</i>	1%	-	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
<i>Filipino/Tagalog</i>	1%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1%	-	-	-	-

### Collaboration and Cooperation

One of the underlying sentiments among Partners is that they are better together than they could be on their own. Part of this stems from the centralization of key services, such as the integrated library system, digital collections, and courier services, which create economies of scale and allow community members to access the breadth of materials across the Cooperative. As mentioned in Financial Analysis (page 10), many Partners acknowledge that there are further opportunities to centralize operations to achieve greater economies of scale and allow libraries to focus on providing more direct services to the community.

The current governance structure presents some challenges to realizing these benefits such as each Partner organization having its own administrative structures and systems (financial, human resources, and information technology systems, etc.), distinct policies and priorities, as well as individual philosophies and practices related to services such as collection development, cataloguing, programming, etc. While the Cooperative seeks to realize the benefits of cooperation and collaboration among Partners,

<sup>14</sup> Compiled by MCO using results of 2024 WCCLS community survey. Responses are shown for users who currently use in-person library services.



there are limited communication channels and collaboration mechanisms for cooperating on operations across Partner libraries.

**Shared Criteria Evaluation – Service**

Partners were asked to evaluate the extent to which they agree or disagree that the current Cooperative model meets the Shared Criteria. The results, along with MCO perspectives, are shown in Table 11. The current Cooperative model enables the Partner libraries to maintain their unique ideas while also creating efficiencies across the Cooperative, however opportunities exist to further optimize resources and achieve economies of scale. The current Cooperative model poses barriers to facilitating equitable, responsive, and consistent service delivery due to differences in Partner abilities, as well as limitations inherent to the current funding and governance structure.

Table 11: Current State of the Cooperative with Respect to Service

Does the current Cooperative model...			MCO	Count of Partners	
SERVICE	S1	Ensure equitable access to materials, information, and resources?	Strongly Agree		1
			Agree		6
			Neither		2
			Disagree	X	1
			Strongly Disagree		2
	S2	Respond to the needs of our diverse community?	Strongly Agree		0
			Agree		8
			Neither		1
			Disagree	X	2
			Strongly Disagree		1
	S3	Leverage the use of resources across the Cooperative to create efficiency and economies of scale?	Strongly Agree		0
			Agree		4
			Neither	X	1
			Disagree		5
			Strongly Disagree		2
	S4	Provides a consistent level of base services to all community members?	Strongly Agree		1
			Agree		2
			Neither		3
			Disagree	X	4
			Strongly Disagree		2
	S5	Maintain unique library identities?	Strongly Agree	X	9
			Agree		2
			Neither		0
			Disagree		0
			Strongly Disagree		1



Does the current Cooperative model...			MCO	Count of Partners
SERVICE	S6	Address differences between Partners in ability to provide services?	Strongly Agree	0
			Agree	1
			Neither	0
			Disagree	X
			Strongly Disagree	4

## Cooperative Strengths

The Cooperative is a long-standing agreement between 13 separate organizations to cooperate in the delivery of library services to the community. The Cooperative has provided, and continues to provide, important and valuable services to the community. WCCLS and Partners agree that cooperation and collaboration are essential to providing higher levels of service to the community than can be achieved apart. Within this current model, each Partner can make operational and policy decisions that reflect their individual community’s values and identities while still realizing the benefits of leveraging resources across the Cooperative.

Table 12: Strengths of the current cooperative model identified in the Current State Assessment

Governance	Funding	Service
<b>G3.</b> Enables Partner libraries to make operational and policy decisions that reflect individual community values	<b>F4.</b> Optimizes the use of Cooperative resources to provide library services at a reasonable cost to the community	<b>S3.</b> Leverages the use of resources across the Cooperative to create efficiency and economies of scale  <b>S5.</b> Maintains unique library identities

## Cooperative Opportunities

While the current Cooperative model enables Partners to maintain unique identities and operational decision-making while realizing some benefits of cooperation, there are inherent challenges to the current Cooperative model that present barriers to achieving the remaining Shared Criteria. The Cooperative is an agreement between 13 separate organizations to cooperate in the delivery of library services to the community but the Cooperative itself is *not* a distinct entity. This means that each Partner, facing its own unique challenges and contexts, must be responsive to the needs of their communities, as well as the policies and priorities of their independent governing bodies, while also cooperating with WCCLS and other Partners to deliver services. The result of this model are challenges in establishing a unified vision for library service delivery, facilitating efficient and effective communications, establishing clear roles and responsibilities, and maintaining accountability to shared policies and procedures.

Within the current model, each organization is doing their best to be responsive to the needs of their individual communities, yet the quantity and quality of services they are able to offer are largely dependent on the resources available to them. Differences in Partner capacity in addition to the current WCCLS funding allocation methodology and service boundaries, which may have historically reinforced existing inequities among Partners by disproportionately benefiting those who already possess financial resources, have resulted in inconsistent levels of services across the Cooperative.

The results of the Current State Assessment identify which Shared Criteria are not being met within the



current Cooperative governance, funding and service delivery model. These criteria represent the gaps in achieving the ideal state of the Cooperative and present key opportunities for the Cooperative moving forward. While some of the challenges described in this report may be temporarily and/or partially addressed with modifications to the Cooperative’s current funding model and governance agreements (Near-term opportunities outlined in Table 13), it is apparent that consideration of alternative governance, funding, and service delivery models is necessary to make significant strides in fulfilling the shared criteria (Long-Term Opportunities in Table 14).

Table 13: Near-Term Opportunities (gaps) identified in the Current State Assessment

Governance	Funding	Service
<b>G1.</b> Provides Partners a meaningful role in governance and decision-making related to the Cooperative	<b>F1.</b> Allocates funding according to a transparent and objective methodology	<b>S3.</b> Leverages the use of resources across the Cooperative to create efficiency and economies of scale
<b>G5.</b> Provides mutual accountability over Cooperative services and funding	<b>F2.</b> Provides reliable and stable funding sources	<b>S4.</b> Provides a consistent level of base services to all community members
	<b>F3.</b> Sustains base service levels	

Table 14: Long-Term Opportunities (gaps) for the current cooperative model

Governance	Funding	Service
<b>G2.</b> Provides a long-term solution for governance and decision-making	<b>F4.</b> Optimizes the use of Cooperative resources to provide library services at a reasonable cost to the community	<b>S1.</b> Ensures equitable access to materials, information, and resources
<b>G4.</b> Establishes a unified vision and direction for library services	<b>F5.</b> Allocates resources to promote system-wide outcomes	<b>S2.</b> Is responsive to the needs of our diverse community
<b>G6.</b> Provides representation for all community members in the County	<b>F6.</b> Continually invests in library services	<b>S6.</b> Addresses differences between Partners in ability to provide services
<b>G7.</b> Facilitates efficient countywide decision-making in response to community needs	<b>F7.</b> Addresses the differences in available funding capacity and constraints across the Cooperative	

## Moving Forward

The opportunities identified during the Current State Assessment describe the gaps in achieving the ideal state of the Cooperative and are intended to guide the development of solutions to bridge the identified gaps. While some of the challenges described in this report may be temporarily and/or partially addressed with modifications to the Cooperative’s current funding model and governance agreements, it is apparent that consideration of alternative governance, funding, and service delivery models is necessary to make significant strides in fulfilling the shared criteria. The Funding and Governance Evaluation Project includes a work plan (Table 15) to address both near- and long-term alternatives and Cooperative Partners have committed to evaluating all options for moving the Cooperative closer towards the Shared Vision and Criteria.



Table 15: WCCLS Funding and Governance Evaluation Project Work Plan

<b>Funding and Governance Evaluation Project Work Plan</b>	
<b>Phase 1</b>	
<b>Task 1: Project Management and Engagement/Communications Planning</b>	Ongoing
<b>Task 2: Information Gathering and Benchmarking</b>	Complete
<b>Task 3: Define Success (“Shared Vision and Shared Criteria”)</b>	Complete
<b>Task 4: Assess the Current State</b>	Complete
<b>Task 5: Future State Analysis – Base Service Levels and Near-Term Funding Options</b>	January 2025
<b>Phase 2</b>	
<b>Task 6: Future State Analysis – Service Boundaries Improvements</b>	June 2025
<b>Task 7: Future State Analysis – Funding Formula Improvements</b>	June 2025
<b>Task 8: Future State Analysis – Governance Improvements</b>	September 2025
<b>Phase 3</b>	
<b>Task 9: Revise Intergovernmental Agreements</b>	January 2026
<b>Phase 4</b>	
<b>Task 10: Long-Term Recommendations and Roadmap</b>	December 2026

The near-term workplan for beginning to address some of the identified gaps includes work to establish a consistent understanding of base service levels, determine a rational and objective way for allocating funding and establishing service boundaries, the development of a range of proposals for the WCCLS levy, as well as possible changes to the current IGAs to address governance gaps. The work to be completed in Phases 1-3 will begin to address some of the opportunities listed in Table 13.

Evaluating all available opportunities for addressing the identified gaps requires full consideration of the long-term options for the Cooperative moving forward. Work conducted in the evaluation of near-term improvements will identify some options available to address some of the gaps. The evaluation of long-term future state alternatives will look to build upon this work by weighing additional opportunities, including more significant changes in governance and funding structures, to evaluate which alternatives move the Cooperative closer to the Shared Vision and Criteria. This process will require prioritization and weighting of options against one another, as the options available to address some shared criteria present key tradeoffs. This work will be completed as part of Phase 4 of the Funding and Governance Evaluation Project.