WCCLS Library Funding and Governance Evaluation

Issue 2
Date: July 2024
Subject: WCCLS Library Funding and Governance Evaluation – Shared Vision

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Project Background

Public library service in Washington County is provided by a partnership between Washington County, nine cities, and three nonprofit organizations (together known as the Cooperative). In February 2024, the County engaged with Merina+Co, a local consulting firm, to conduct an evaluation of the existing Cooperative funding and governance model. For more information on the project background refer to **Issue 1: June 10, 2024** at https://www.wccls.org/writing-our-future.

Building a Shared Vision for the Ideal Cooperative Model

WCCLS and partners have the shared desire to address long-standing funding and governance issues, ultimately improving service consistency and equity across the County, and supporting community needs by creating a library system with a fiscally sustainable future. The partners participated in a process for establishing a shared vision for the ideal Cooperative model that will serve as a guidepost while working towards the recommended proposals for funding and governance of the Cooperative.

The ideal Service model…	The ideal Funding model…	The ideal Governance model…
• Ensures equitable access to materials, information, and resources • Is responsive to the needs of our diverse community • Leverages the use of resources across the Cooperative to create efficiency and economies of scale • Provides a consistent level of base services to all community members • Maintains unique library identities • Addresses differences between Partners in ability to provide services	• Allocates funding according to a transparent and objective methodology • Provides reliable and stable funding sources • Sustains base service levels • Optimizes the use of Cooperative resources to provide library services at a reasonable cost to the community • Allocates resources to promote system-wide outcomes • Continually invests in library services • Addresses the differences in available funding capacity and constraints across the Cooperative	• Provides Partners a meaningful role in governance and decision-making related to the Cooperative • Provides a long-term solution for governance and decision-making • Enables Partner libraries to make operational and policy decisions that reflect individual community values • Establishes a unified vision and direction for library services • Provides mutual accountability over Cooperative services and funding • Provides representation for all community members in the County • Facilitates efficient countywide decision-making in response to community needs

Using the Shared Vision and Criteria to Evaluate the Current State

The shared criteria do not represent a comprehensive list of what is possible or will be accomplished, but rather serve as a framework for evaluating key trade-offs and factors in determining proposed recommendations for how to make service, funding, and governance improvements in line with the shared vision. Merina+Co is conducting information gathering and analysis to help partners evaluate where the current state of the Cooperative rates against the shared vision.

Stakeholder and Community Input

We want to hear from your community members and stakeholders! As a reminder, Merina+Co is conducting surveys starting in July 2024 to gather perspectives from community members, library staff, and members of local library advisory and governing entities, on the current state of the Cooperative and service levels. Please help us get the word out!