



# WILS

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

FEBRUARY 2024



# WELCOME!



Greetings and welcome to our wrap-up of yet another year! What is that adage about the days being long and the years short? While I believe that saying is intended to encourage parents of young children to take the long view, it seems relevant here, too. I'm entering my 4th year with WiLS, and it often feels like time is on 2x speed. Perhaps you can relate.

This report is a snapshot of the incredible work our team has accomplished over the past year in partnership with members and others across the state. Our five-year strategic plan is a strong thread that ties together our efforts and energy in 2023 to strengthen communities, fuel innovation, and optimize organizational health. It gives our staff direction and drive, and our 2023 accomplishments are realizing that vision. I am extraordinarily proud of what the WiLS team has tackled in 2023, and we look forward to partnering with you in 2024. Thank you for following our story!



# OUR MISSION

We believe libraries, cultural institutions, and their partners make the world a better place.

We build relationships and provide services so they can do more with their time and money.

We help our members turn ideas into action.





# OUR VALUES

## **We work in the best interest of our members.**

We take their missions very seriously, we respect and value their time and money, and we do our best to deliver services that are effective, efficient, and affordable.

## **We are optimistic about the future of our members.**

Our members have always overcome challenges and we believe that they will continue to do so in the future. We approach our work, despite challenges, with the positive spirit of possibility.

## **We promote new ideas and experimentation.**

We encourage our members to try new things, we promote the outcomes of members' experimental endeavors, and we demonstrate this value through our own internal practices.

## **We strive to do the best we can.**

We are honest with ourselves and others. We are reflective about what we do and who we are as an organization, we recognize when we can do better, and we do our best to improve.

## **We believe that we're all in this together.**

Our community is an ecosystem that thrives when we recognize our value to one another. We work to connect members and provide opportunities for collaboration in order to grow and strengthen all parts of our ecosystem.

## **We stand up for the ALA Code of Ethics and Freedom to Read statement.**

We are champions for the professional ethics of our library members and do work that is consistent with those ethics.

## **We are committed to equity, diversity, & inclusion.**

We believe our community is stronger when people with a wide array of experiences and perspectives come together. We strive to create thoughtful and respectful environments where those interactions can take place. As individuals and as an organization, we continually examine our own practices and biases to live up to our commitment.

As a staff, we revisit these often to ensure they genuinely reflect our organizational values and that we live them in our work. This year, we made updates and revisions to these two values for clarity and accuracy.





# THE WILS BOARD

## Representing Academic Libraries

Mindy King, UW-Stevens Point

Kim Olson-Kopp, Viterbo University

Ashley McHose, Lakeshore Technical College

## Representing K12 Libraries

Michelle Byholm, Chequamegon School District

Paula Norman, School District of Rhinelander

Micki Uppena, Mineral Point School District

## At-Large Representatives

Jennifer Gurske, Madison Trust for Historic Preservation

Sarah Miller, WiscNet

## Representing Public Libraries

Barb Brattin, Kenosha Public Library, Kenosha County  
Library System

Steve Platteter, Prairie Lakes Library System

Tasha Saecker, Appleton Public Library

## Representing Special Libraries and Cultural Organizations

Adrienne Thunder, Ho-Chunk Nation Language Division

Heather L. Winter, Milwaukee Art Museum







# COOPERATIVE PURCHASING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CooPAC)

CooPAC (rhymes with Tupac) provides input related to cooperative purchasing from the member perspective on all facets of the service, including licensing, pricing and service fee structures, and potential new service developments.

**Michelle Byholm**

Chequamegon School District

**Beth Henika**

Milwaukee Public Library

**Page Leahy**

Platteville School District

**Emily Leonard**

School District of Menomonee Falls

**Ashley McHose**

Lakeshore Technical College

**Cory Mitchell, Chair**

UW-Stout

**Cheryl Nessman**

Mead Public Library

**Jill Thomas**

Lawrence University





# OUR CREW



Jeff Brunner



Jennifer Chamberlain



Cole Clark



Melody Clark



Andi Coffin



Laura Damon-Moore



Sara Gold



Erin F.H. Huges



Kim Kiesewetter



Tom Klement



Lisa Marten



Melissa McLimans



Rebecca Rosenstiel



Nick Smith



Kristen Whitson



# WHAT WE DO



Consulting  
Services



Cooperative  
Purchasing



Collaboration  
Support



Digital  
Projects



Events  
Management



Giving  
Back





### Consulting Services

WiLS has the experts to guide you to the answers you need. We are project management and process development pros who listen to your needs to create a reliable process, whether it is strategic planning, survey development, or an idea you've had for a long time, but don't know where to start.

<https://www.wils.org/do/consulting-services/>

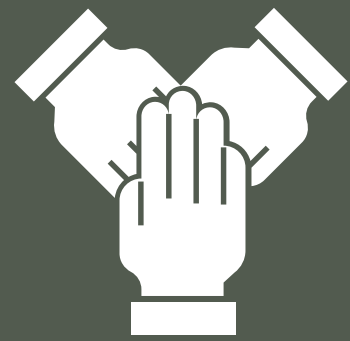
If you want to make a purchase for your library or cultural institution, join over 450 organizations using our Cooperative Purchasing program to save money and time. Our negotiated discounts and streamlined subscription management portal will add dollars to your budget and hours to your day.

<https://www.wils.org/do/coop/>



### Cooperative Purchasing





## Collaboration Support

WiLS manages state and national consortia. Our finely-honed skills in project and financial management, governance and meeting support, communication, and research can activate a variety of communities of practice, from single-task workgroups to large, ongoing collaborations.

<https://www.wils.org/do/collab/>

From planning to scanning, cataloging to preservation, WiLS staff members have the expertise to help you launch and tend your digital collections. Whether you are looking for education and training for your staff or a consultation to get a project launched, WiLS can help you at any stage of your digital project.

<https://www.wils.org/do/digital-projects/>



## Digital Projects





## Events Management

WiLS event management services allow you to focus on what's important – your attendees! – by taking off your plate the coordination of planning meetings, timeline administration, technology considerations, venue arrangements, communication, financial management, and more.

<https://www.wils.org/do/event-management/>

WiLS believes we are all in this together. Our community of libraries and cultural organizations is an ecosystem that we are honored to invest in. We offer grants and free learning opportunities, and WiLS staff members are allotted a percentage of their time to spend on pro bono projects that give back to the community.

<https://www.wils.org/do/giving-back/>



## Giving Back



# THE WiLS COMMUNITY

**688** Member libraries and cultural organizations throughout Wisconsin and beyond.

**464** Members participating in our cooperative purchasing program.

**115** Organizations that have received consulting or data services from WiLS.

**823** Organizations that receive collaboration support services from WiLS. Many are part of more than one collaboration or consortium!





# CONSULTING SERVICES

In 2023, we worked with libraries, library systems, and their communities to develop both custom and collaborative solutions, including strategic plans, communities of practice, and data training and education.

We worked with

**36**  
libraries

A 35% increase  
from 2022

We partnered with

**7**  
library systems

to help them plan, grow,  
evolve, and collaborate

We developed

**16**  
surveys

to help our partners answer  
questions about their  
services & communities

We convened

**332**  
people

in focus groups,  
community conversations,  
& gatherings



# COOPERATIVE PURCHASING

IN 2023

**3,719**  
subscriptions  
managed

**92%**  
renewal  
rate

**461**  
quotes  
delivered

**324**  
new  
orders

**100+**  
vendor  
partners

**600+**  
vendor  
products

**\$9,700,000+**  
in products purchased, saving our  
members time and money



# WiLS STRATEGIC GOALS

2022-2027

## STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY

WiLS supports our members by creating engaging opportunities that strengthen collaborations and strategic partnerships that are viewed by our community as vital and essential.

## FUEL INNOVATION

WiLS helps our members, our profession, and our own organization continuously seek out new ideas and ways of doing things more efficiently and cost-effectively.

## ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

WiLS is invested in the long-term health and sustainability of our member community and our organization. WiLS designs services that strengthen staff and boards, build capacity, and ensure continuity of operations.





# STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES



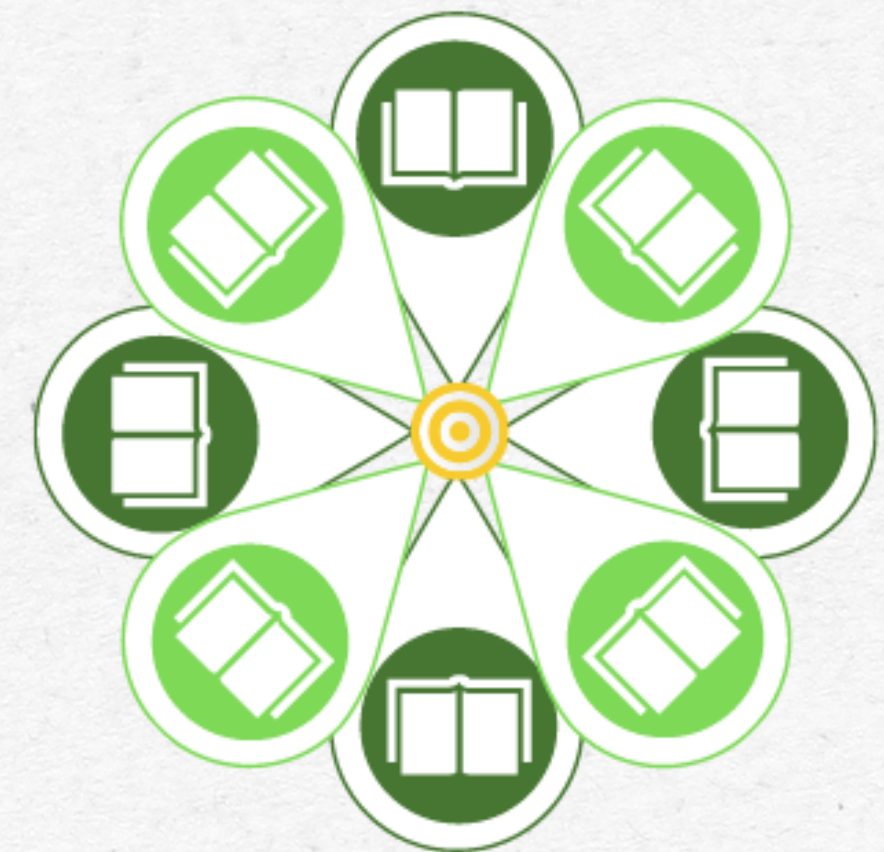
# SMALL LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLANNING COHORT

Every library and every community should be able to afford a strategic plan.

A strategic plan helps libraries make big decisions, from how to wisely use their budgets to make the maximum difference in their communities to having a clear pathway to achieving goals.

WiLS provides a cohort learning and hands-on strategic planning opportunity that helps libraries in small communities of 5,000 people or fewer learn about their community's needs and aspirations and use that knowledge to craft strategic directions for the next 3-5 years.

To date, 22 communities in Wisconsin have participated in the cohort.



**SMALL LIBRARY  
STRATEGIC PLANNING  
COHORT**

<https://www.wils.org/do/consulting-services/small-libs/>





## BOOK CHALLENGE HINDSIGHT: WHAT YOU WISH YOU'D KNOWN

Given the record number of challenges last year, a trend that showed no sign of slowing, we created space for our members and a panel of guests with valuable experience and advice to share on handling book challenges to get together and share their knowledge and questions.

Attendees contributed their questions before the webinar, which were themed and asked of the panelists, who delivered valuable and practical advice to benefit and strengthen our community.

It was the most well-attended WiLSWorld Shorts we've ever held, engaging all types of libraries, cultural organizations, and statewide agencies.



# recollection



W I S C O N S I N

## SUSTAINABILITY

After an intense advocacy effort, Recollection Wisconsin received state funding to support the work of helping cultural heritage organizations create, share, and tend to their digital historical collections.

## EDUCATION

Recollection Wisconsin updated and revised the Digital Readiness Toolkit to add more guidance and resources to organizations developing, sharing, and maintaining AV collections, such as videos and oral histories.

## GROWTH

Despite focusing on sustainability, Recollection Wisconsin still saw impressive growth:

- 8 new content partners
- 60,000 new resources,
- 11% increase in research sessions

716k

Photos, letters  
documents, oral  
histories, maps,  
yearbooks, & more

256

Wisconsin libraries,  
archives, historical  
societies, museums,  
& state agencies

142k

Research sessions by  
historians, educators,  
students, genealogists,  
& curious people in 2023

<https://recollectionwisconsin.org/>





**286**  
Districts

**1069**  
Schools

**478,970**  
Students

**5,000,000**  
Lifetime checkouts

The WSDLC is the third-largest education digital library in the United States in circulation. The collection contains nearly 21,000 titles and 60,000 copies of ebooks, digital audiobooks, and magazines. Due to the consortium's collaboration, strong relationships with vendors, and innovative collection development strategies, that collection grew 121% in 2023 while only increasing cost by 21%.

In 2023, 54 school districts joined WSDLC and students checked out 1.4 million titles.

<https://wsdlc.org/>





## Visioning Session

WiLS facilitated a WPLC visioning session in October to identify goals and issues for the WPLC to address in the coming years. Those include advocacy and sustainability for the WPLC and its projects, investigating and planning to undertake the governance of statewide delivery, restructuring the Technology Collaborative governance and project path, as well as strategic planning development.

## WPLC's National Presence

The WPLC and Wisconsin's Digital Library were highlighted during a session at Digipalooza, the OverDrive user conference in August 2023. WiLS' Sara Gold presented on a panel, *UniteAgainstBookBans: Advocate for your Community's Right to Read*, with ALA President Emily Drabinski and Virginia Library Association Director Lisa Varga.

In 2023  
Wisconsin library card  
holders checked out

**8.6**  
**MILLION**

ebooks, digital  
audiobooks,  
& magazines from  
Wisconsin's Digital Library

<https://wplc.info>



# WISCAL

## Wisconsin's Shared Collection for Academic Libraries

WISCAL is a collection of over 1,500 ebooks and digital audiobooks on the OverDrive platform shared by 14 Wisconsin private and public academic libraries.

In 2023, two new members joined WISCAL and the group developed a shared selection plan to reduce the collection development workload on individual libraries.

The members use the collection in diverse ways, supporting EDI and college-wide book club initiatives, bolstering specific curriculum areas, supplementing existing physical and digital resources, and creating additional recreational reading opportunities for students.

<https://www.wils.org/do/collab/wiscal/>



The 11-member consortium of Wisconsin technical college libraries began an in-depth ILS exploration process, developing and releasing a Request for Information to vendors, doing a first round of selection, and beginning demonstrations to see products in action.

WISPALS also streamlined communication and documentation, created pathways for member library staff to connect with one another, and joined the Wisconsin Library Association as institutional members.



<https://wispals.org/>



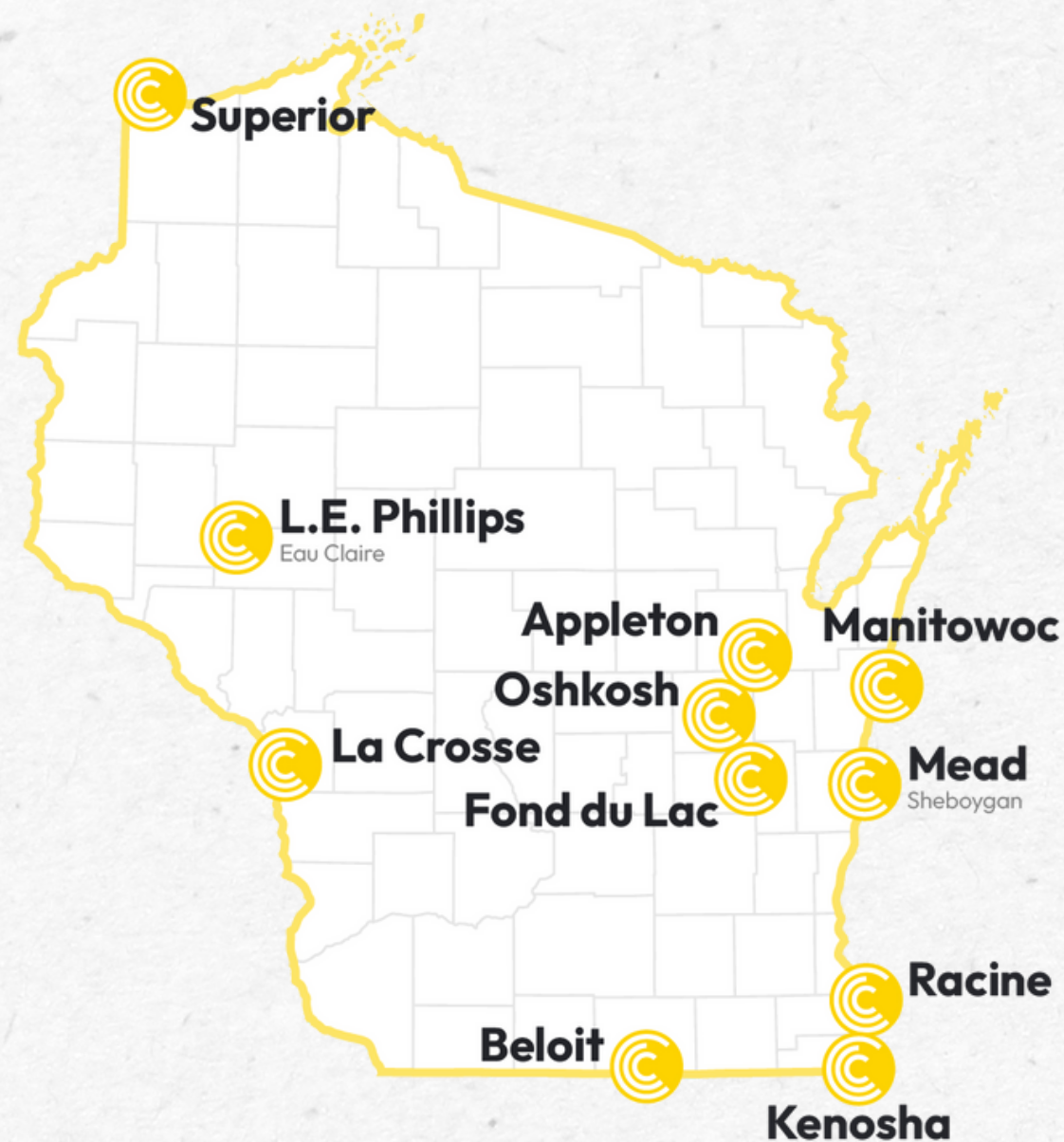
# LIBRARY MEMORY PROJECT

We worked with Bridges Library System in collaboration with a number of stakeholders representing twenty-one libraries and local communities to evaluate and help plan the future of the Library Memory Project, which aims to provide programs to those affected by memory loss, Alzheimer's disease, and other forms of dementia.

<https://www.librarymemoryproject.org/>







The City Library Collective is a collaboration of 11 libraries serving mid-size communities throughout Wisconsin, addressing common concerns, pooling knowledge on service improvement, and incubating solutions to challenges all public libraries face.

**Together, CLC member libraries serve a population of 635,000, nearly 11% of all Wisconsin residents.**

In 2023, CLC's work focused on strengthening staff. An information-gathering process revealed a common passion across CLC staff for libraries and patrons and an appreciation for the dynamic nature of libraries. However, the process also revealed barriers to diversity and career advancement, and that staff continue to be overwhelmed by the social service needs of patrons.

In the coming year, the CLC will work to further understand how public-facing service impacts staff satisfaction and retention.

<https://citylibrarycollective.org/>





Culture Keepers Collective is a Native-led collective administered by WiLS that serves the needs of cultural workers to advance their communities' work within tribal libraries, archives, and museums.



EDUCATING and helping provide culturally relevant programming and services through training events, resources, and consultations



COLLABORATING to meet the unique needs of the Native Nations digital stewardship work with Indigenous and non-Indigenous institutions



SUSTAINING the Mukurtu Midwest Hub for collaborative use and as a portal for Wisconsin Indigenous culture keepers to share materials in culturally appropriate ways



ADVOCATING on contemporary issues related to developing and sustaining Indigenous data sovereignty of Wisconsin's Native Nations



A map of the United States with various location pins. There is one yellow pin in Alaska, one blue pin in British Columbia, Canada, and one blue pin in California. In the western US, there are two blue pins in Washington and one blue pin in Oregon. In the central US, there are three blue pins in Minnesota, one yellow pin in Illinois, and one blue pin in Indiana. In the eastern US, there are three yellow pins in Pennsylvania, one yellow pin in New York, and one blue pin in New Jersey. Other yellow pins are located in Maine, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, Canada. The text "IMLS COMMUNITY MEMORY COHORTS" is overlaid on the map.

# IMLS COMMUNITY MEMORY COHORTS

Since 2019, WiLS has provided support and guidance for small, rural, and tribal libraries around the country that are developing community memory projects, thanks to IMLS' Accelerating Promising Practices program.

This year, the second of two cohorts wrapped up their work, and in all, 17 community memory projects were completed.

WiLS facilitated many virtual and in-person learning opportunities for project leaders and the supporting slide decks, handouts, worksheets, and other materials have been combined and shared in the [IMLS Tools and Resources Kit](#) so organizations doing similar work can benefit.





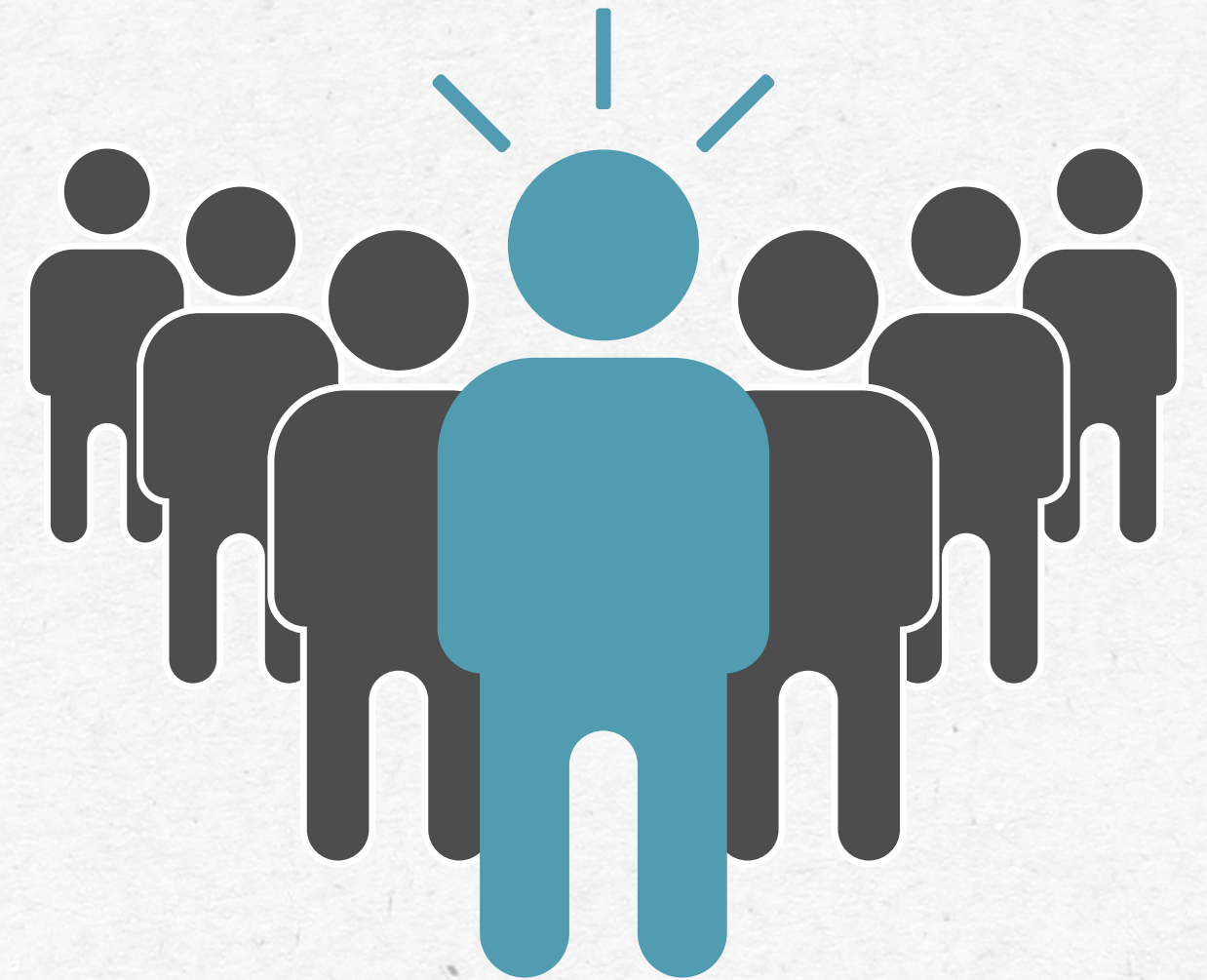
# FUELING INNOVATION





# PERSONALIZED COOPERATIVE PURCHASING SERVICE

Many new members learn about WiLS Cooperative Purchasing through their participation in WSDLC, WPLC, and other WiLS-managed services. The Cooperative Purchasing team reaches out to them to make sure they're getting exactly the resources they need at prices they can afford, and our flexible payment options allow those members to pay on a schedule that works best for them.





## Data Research Service Development

With LSTA support, WiLS authored the Wisconsin Library Data Landscape Project: Final Report, which assessed Wisconsin's public library "data ecosystem" – the intersection of all the people, organizations, and resources in the state involved in library data usage and how they currently function. Plus, we launched the inaugural Data Classroom, a hands-on experience using real-world data guided by a data analyst.

## Strategic Planning Additions & Refinements

We've added a new phase to our strategic planning process to focus on activation and meaningful assessment, plus developed more ways for the strategic planning process to engage more community members. We experimented (successfully!) with stakeholder interviews, Q&A boards, and drop-in community gatherings. We worked with two libraries to evaluate their expiring strategic plans and helped them create their next plans.



# WILS IDEAS TO ACTION FUND

BRINGING YOUR IDEAS TO LIFE | <https://www.wils.org/ideas-to-action/>

Clear Lake School District, Bringing Our History to Life

Hales Corners Library, W. Ben Hunt Prairie Learning Garden

Hartland Public Library, Biking Along the Ice Age Trail with the Hartland Public Library

Lake Geneva Public Library, Leaves and Sheaves: Papermaking for Art and the Environment

UW-Stevens Point, Poem in Your Pocket Day

Western Technical College, Blooming with Books: Cultivating a Community of Readers of All Ages in the Learning Commons

Wisconsin Library Association, Great Lakes, Great Reads: A Community Read for Our Watershed

WJ Niederkorn Library, Libraries for Everyone: Supervised Visitations at Your Library

**\$155,000** | **38** libraries and cultural organizations

awarded since 2018

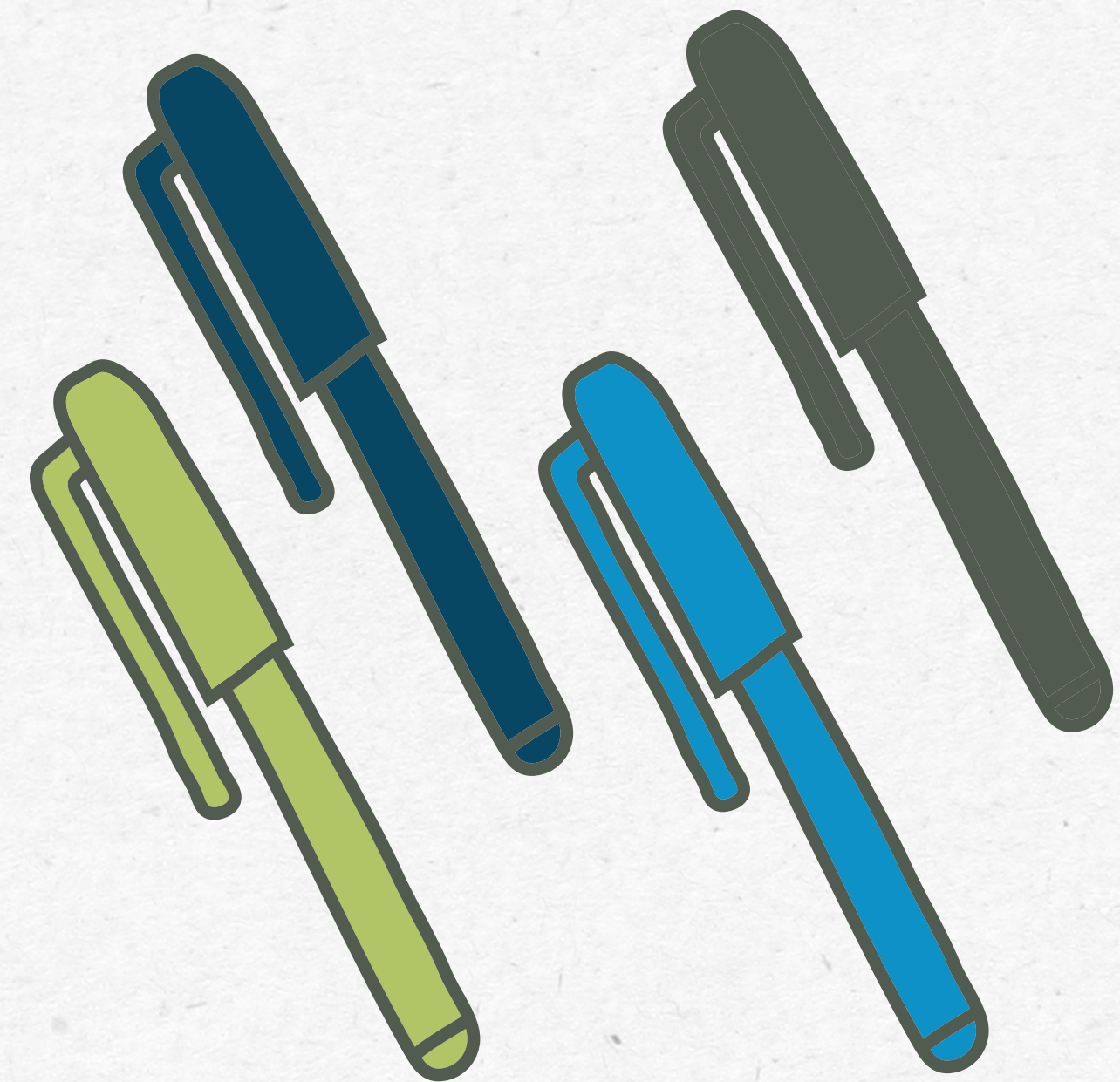


2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023



# NEW EXPERTISE: GRAPHIC DESIGN

We added Graphic Design to our consulting toolkit. Libraries can now contract with WiLS to develop both communication materials for strategic planning processes as well as an expertly designed final plan.







# SOCIAL WORK CONCEPTS IN LIBRARIES

This workshop, featuring three guest social workers in libraries and education, allowed participants to learn what social work in and with the library looks like, why some libraries consider it, and the benefits and challenges. Participants learned how to apply social work concepts no matter their budgetary constraints and about common models of library/social work partnerships. The guest panelists discussed their social work programs and models to demonstrate how their programs are tailored to unique community needs.

<https://youtu.be/78kRsQjtVds>





## DIGITAL STEWARDSHIP LEARNING COMMUNITY

WiLS is partnering with OCLC to implement facilitated group learning in WebJunction's Digital Collections Stewardship course. Funded by IMLS, the project will pilot a training model using facilitated peer learning groups with five state library partners and develop a new course for WebJunction's Digital Collections Stewardship training series on how to build more diverse, inclusive, and comprehensive collections.

<https://bit.ly/webjunction-wils>



In its third year, the Curating Indigenous Digital Collections fellowship looks a little bit different than previous years. Rather than focusing on just one tribal partner, the 2023 fellow has been spending time laying the foundation for the future of the Collective to benefit all of Wisconsin's Native Nations by visiting tribal partners, listening to their needs for cultural heritage support, and working to help WiLS find ways to meet those needs.

<https://www.wils.org/mukurtu/>







# ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH





# THE 36-HOUR FULL-TIME WORK WEEK EXPERIMENT

In early 2023, an article on the 4 Day Week Global movement caught the attention of the WiLS Staff Development team. A growing body of research suggests that knowledge workers, particularly those working remotely, only produce high-quality work 3 to 5 hours per day. At WiLS, we are always looking for ways to boost employee wellness and improve workplace productivity, so we dug into the research and launched a reduced work week pilot, which we conducted over the summer in 2023. The goal? To encourage a healthier work-life balance while maintaining current productivity levels. The result? Revealed in this edition of WiLSWorld Shorts, which you can watch on our YouTube channel.

[https://youtu.be/J3zYv\\_1hl9Q](https://youtu.be/J3zYv_1hl9Q)



# CONSULTING NATIONWIDE

We completed our first non-Badger State strategic plan! In a fully virtual process, WiLS worked with Dormont Public Library in Pennsylvania to create the library's first strategic plan. We also developed a data dashboard, using annual data reported to IMLS and other library data points, to offer Teton County Library in Jackson, Wyoming, a dashboard that compiles key metrics into a single repository for easy review.



# MyWiLS ORIENTATION TOOLKIT

## for Library Media Specialists

Our new MyWiLS Orientation Toolkit for K12s helps librarians get the most out of their MyWiLS membership, and eases the transition for new incoming staff.

### **YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Information about your subscriptions through WiLS and space to help you keep track of ones you order directly from vendors.

### **CONTACTS AND INVOICING**

How to view and update your school's contact information for cooperative purchasing and your invoicing preferences.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Helpful links, how to access usage statistics, WiLS' communications, and other WiLS services or projects that can benefit you.

<https://www.wils.org/k12-toolkit>

**Versions for academic and public libraries are in the works!**



# INTERNAL COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Most of our staff members are involved in managing or supporting groups of people working together to get things done. Collectively, we dedicate a lot of hours to helping libraries and cultural organizations collaborate on projects and partnerships, and among us, we have a wealth of experience in facilitating projects. Through a bimonthly virtual Collaboration Support meet-up, we are bringing those staff members together to share best practices, brainstorm solutions to common challenges, and piggyback on each other's experiences for the benefit of WiLS and the community members who receive our services.





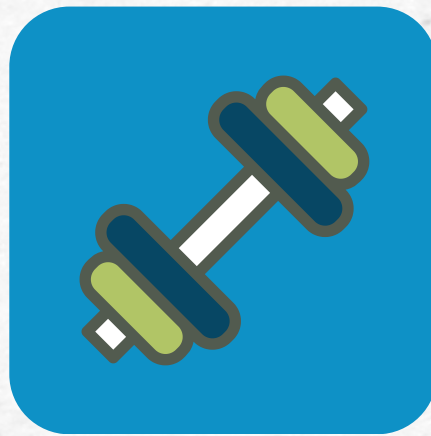


**LOOKING  
AHEAD**





# IN 2024



## Strengthening Community

Be on the lookout for our biennial member survey! Your feedback is crucial to service improvement and new development.



## Fueling Innovation

We will continue to expand our data and consulting services, MyWiLS Orientation Toolkits, direct-order vendor partnerships, and MyWiLS capabilities.



## Organizational Health

We will expand and improve consortia capacity and growth as well as create and streamline processes to support service development and delivery.



# DON'T BE A STRANGER!



<https://wils.org>



[information@wils.org](mailto:information@wils.org)



608-218-4480



[@wils.org](#)





THANK  
YOU FOR  
READING!



