

# Strategic Plan

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## **Northern Lights Library Network Fiscal Years 2019 – 2023**

Northern Lights Library Network (NLLN) is a cooperative system of two-hundred-and-eighty academic, public, school, and special libraries in twenty-three counties in North-central, North-west, and West-central Minnesota. NLLN strengthens libraries in the region by discovering, enhancing, and sharing resources through administrative, technological, and educational support.

The Northern Lights Library Network membership consists of four regional public library systems; academic libraries on two campuses of the University of Minnesota at Crookston and Morris; MnScu institutions including Minnesota State University Moorhead, Bemidji State University, Northland Community College, Minnesota State Community and Technical College on four campuses, three tribal colleges, and numerous private colleges; one-hundred-and-eighty-five school libraries (including public and charter schools, Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, and private schools) in seventy-nine school districts; and a rich variety of special libraries in museums, county law libraries, hospitals, and early childhood programs.

Northern Lights Library Network is one of seven multi-county, multi-type library systems in Minnesota mandated by Minnesota Statute 134.351 to develop and maintain services including, but not limited to “referral of users, intra-system reciprocal borrowing, cooperative collection development, cooperative reference services, staff development, research and development, cooperative storage facilities, and publicity and community relations”.

The seven multi-county, multi-type systems also execute the following functions: Develop library staff professionally; improve local library collections; sponsor and support funding for libraries; champion for libraries; create, develop, and maintain library programs that enrich the lives of Minnesotans; move the discipline of Library and Information Science forward; lead and administer their own nonprofit agencies. The seven systems are governed by regional boards.

Northern Lights Library Network is funded by the Minnesota Legislature through the Minnesota Department of Education.

In compliance with Minnesota Administrative Rules 3530.2400 Subpart 2. Plan., applicants for operating grants “shall provide to the Division of State Library Services by the application date a five-year plan which addresses the provisions of the five qualifying services required in Minnesota Statutes 1979 Supplement, section 134.351, subdivision 3”, which states, “In order for a multi-county, multi-type library system to qualify for planning, development, or operating aid ... each participating library in the system shall adopt an organizational agreement providing for the following:

- (a) Sharing of resources among all participating libraries;
- (b) Long-range planning for cooperative programs;
- (c) The development of a delivery system for services and programs;

- (d) The development of a bibliographic database; and
- (e) A communications system among all cooperating libraries.”

The Long-range Strategic Plan for Northern Lights Library Network includes a vision statement, mission statement, identification of core values, and goals and objectives. A basic logic model is used, which is a picture of how each program works and the measures required to insure they work, including Inputs and Activities (state aid expenditures and objective narratives), Outputs, and Impact.

**Vision Statement:** Libraries are attractive, welcoming places that are friendly, open, inclusive, accessible, innovative, and a source of community pride where people can go to learn what they need to know in order to thrive and grow in their communities. When libraries work together, communities grow stronger, and the lives of Minnesotans are enriched.

**Mission Statement:** Northern Lights Library Network (NLLN) is a cooperative system of two-hundred-and-eighty academic, public, school, and special libraries in twenty-three counties in North-central, North-west, and West-central Minnesota. NLLN strengthens libraries in the region by discovering, enhancing, and sharing resources through administrative, technological, and educational support.

*The main purpose of Northern Lights Library Network is to make all libraries in the region stronger.*

**Core Values:** In principle and practice, libraries are at the core of a democratic society, defending the freedom of all citizens to:

- Access information to make informed decision
- Read material that interests them
- Use technology successfully to learn about recent developments and to access resources
- Engage in learning throughout the life cycle.

Libraries are inclusive environments that are accessible to all persons.

All who use our libraries and collections feel welcome.

Libraries and collections are well organized and easy to use.

Library user needs and interests are determined and once they are determined, we assist library users in learning how to use library resources to meet their needs and interests.

Libraries are bridges between physical and electronic access to information, bridges between people and technology, and bridges between the resources available and the community using those resources.

The purpose and benefits of libraries are communicated to citizens in the region.

The inherent value of books is understood.

On-going, sustainable, and continuous library funding at the local, state, and national levels is defended and supported.

Northern Lights Library Network exists to determine the kinds of library services people need at the local level and to determine what supporting structures are required for local library systems, taking into account the unique needs of different types of libraries.

NLLN reduces duplication of services by enhancing coordination among libraries. As resources are shared, services are expanded, and efficiency is improved as libraries can offer services or

programs they may not otherwise be able to afford. All of the work performed by Northern Lights Library Network effects the direct service of its members, and has an exponential effect on its client base.

The following goals and objectives are accomplished to utilize state resources efficiently and execute library programs effectively.

### **Goal I: Share Resources Among All Participating Libraries**

#### **IA. Objective: Deliver library materials to patrons in a timely manner.**

**Inputs and Activities:** Interlibrary loan support for Viking Library System (VLS) and bookmobile service to Campbell, Minnesota.

**Output:** With support from Northern Lights Library Network, Viking Library System delivers books to libraries throughout libraries in the region. Viking Library System also brings bookmobile service to Campbell, which resides in the Lake Agassiz Regional Library System, and would not receive bookmobile service, otherwise.

**Impact:** Timely access to library materials in the NLLN region results in improved literacy rates and a better quality of life for citizens in the region.

#### **IB. Objective: Exchange resources among libraries.**

**Inputs and Activities:** NLLN Resource Exchange. Libraries in the Northern Lights Library Network (NLLN) region undergo on-going collection management procedures that result in the deselection of books and other library resources. Many private collections in the region are also in need of library homes. Other libraries in the region may need these materials. NLLN facilitates the exchange of materials among libraries by listing the items on NLLN's listerv and shipping through the Minitex Delivery System. There is no remuneration for the materials offered. The exchange includes academic, school, and special libraries in the region.

**Output:** Number of items moved throughout the region.

**Impact:** Libraries in the region receive resources they need.

### **Goal II: Long-range Planning for Cooperative Programs**

#### **IIA. Objective: Facilitate collaboration, cooperation, and resource sharing among libraries throughout the NLLN region and the State of Minnesota.**

**Inputs and Activities:** Travel to libraries and meet with librarians throughout the NLLN region and Minnesota to attend local, regional, and statewide meetings and conferences and serve on committees.

**Output:** Meetings, conferences, and committees attended by the NLLN Executive Director.

**Impact:** Strong support of libraries throughout the region and the State of Minnesota maintains and builds a strong library infrastructure in the state, communicates the purpose and benefits of libraries to citizens of the region, and possibly results in continued funding.

**IIB. Objective: Provide civic support for citizen engagement activities in member libraries to activate the constituent base, increase library support, and elect public officials who care about libraries. As valued and trusted civic resources, libraries are in key positions to empower citizens to become actively engaged in the democratic process. Community engagement programming leads to optimism, individual well-being, and overall civic health. Libraries bring people together in nonpartisan ways and provide them with unbiased facts in impartial environments. As publicly supported entities, libraries are uniquely positioned to address the information needs of the people they serve through the use of physical space, technology, books, and skilled staff.**

**Inputs and Activities:**

**Library Luncheon with Legislators**

Conversations with legislators, such as NLLN’s “Library Luncheon with Legislators”, forms positive relationships between legislators and librarians, ensuring ongoing library support for constituents in our region. Librarians in our region actively seek ongoing support for libraries in order to improve service delivery and continue to serve citizens in the state of Minnesota adequately.

**Output:** Opportunities for citizen support of libraries and active engagement in the political process.

**Impact:** An informed, voting citizenry.

**IIC. Objective: Develop activities that bring all libraries together.**

**Inputs and Activities:**

**The Life Achievement Award** from Northern Lights Library Network (NLLN) signifies a contribution to the NLLN region from a citizen who has given extraordinary service to libraries throughout a career. The award is given once a year upon the recommendation of the executive director or a governing board member.

**John Wallace Ingersoll Memorial Fund**

The John Wallace Ingersoll Memorial Fund was established December, 2016, in memory of NLLN President Wayne Ingersoll’s brother, John Wallace Ingersoll, in order to honor current and past NLLN Governing Board members and to honor current and past NLLN members. Funds will be used to support the programming of Northern Lights Library Network.

**Output:** Support of existing libraries, librarians, and programs in the region.

**Impact:** The ability of libraries of all types in the region to communicate freely with each other and collaborate on projects that enhance the services of libraries in the region strengthens rural libraries and communities.

**IID. Objective: Join together Historical and Cultural Organizations and Museums in the region in order to strengthen and preserve their collections, support professionals**

**managing their collections, and make the collections more easily accessible to citizens of the region. Develop strong ties with the Minnesota Historical Society in order to consistently disseminate information throughout the region. Create a system in Minnesota for the Historical and Cultural Organizations and Museums that is similar to the Regional Public Library System in Minnesota.**

**Inputs and Activities:** Historical and Cultural Organizations and Museums with collections in the region become members of NLLN. Maintain the Directory of Cultural and Historical Organizations and Museums in the region, available in paper and on the NLLN website.

**Output:** Activities that encourage the growth and support of Historical and Cultural Organizations and Museums ensures ongoing financial and structural stability.

**Impact:** Citizens throughout the region and beyond will increase their understanding of Minnesota rural history through access to and awareness of rural, historical, cultural, and museum collections.

### **III. Objective: Conduct research.**

**Inputs and Activities:** Conduct qualitative or quantitative research on topics related to library-related needs in the Northern Lights Library Network region.

**Output:** Presentation of research at conferences and in publications.

**Impact:** With a foundation of research, librarians can show the value of their work.

### **III. Objective: Advocate for libraries.**

**Inputs and Activities:** Attendance at library legislative meetings and testimony before the Minnesota Legislature in support of libraries.

**Output:** The number and types of advocacy activities.

**Impact:** Great libraries create community optimism, individual well-being, and overall civic health. People who read experience a fine quality of life.

## **Goal III: Development of a Delivery System for Services and Programs**

**IIIA. Objective: Support literacy initiatives among all types of libraries in the Northern Lights Library Network (NLLN) region in North-central, North-west, and West-central Minnesota through the *Minnesota Literacy Initiative*. From early reading activities to advanced literary discussions, library literacy initiatives bring people together to get to know books in enjoyable and satisfying situations. Literacy promotes personal improvement and enlightenment, ensures equity, dignifies, and creates prosperity.**

**Inputs and Activities for the *Minnesota Literacy Initiative*: Career development, professional engagement, scholarships, and library service funding** for staff and library board member participation in continuing education programs, events, and participation at national and international conferences for library professionals in the region who may not be able to attend without the support of Northern Lights Library Network (NLLN). Continuing education scholarships are awarded as incentive for individual growth and development in order to enhance library services throughout the NLLN region. Scholarships are available to all employees of NLLN member libraries. Scholarships may be used for the following purposes: Registration or tuition; Lodging; Meals; Transportation (mileage is for the use of a personal vehicle – only one person in a vehicle may request mileage); Parking; Required books or educational materials; Cost of a substitute to cover while applicant is at an event (applicant must have paid the cost of a substitute before requesting reimbursement). Reports summarizing the benefits of receiving the scholarships are required upon completion of continuing education opportunity.

**Output:** Number of scholarships and how they are used.

**Impact:** Library staff attendance at local, regional, national, and international conferences generates new ideas and best library practices among colleagues and library constituents.

**Inputs and Activities for the *Minnesota Literacy Initiative*: Ongoing library administrative and technical support for the Maamagin Achigaazo Community Library** at White Earth and the White Earth Child Care/Early Childhood Program (WECC/ECP) and support for the Tribal College Libraries.

**Output:** Number of activities and types of programs supported.

**Impact:** A community library at White Earth and support of the Tribal College Libraries provides access to literacy-rich materials for people in the region, including books and access to electronic resources, along with increased use of information sources throughout Ojibwe communities prepares children to begin school and provides people of all ages with access to reading material. As a result, literacy rates will improve.

**Inputs and Activities for the *Minnesota Literacy Initiative*: Training and onsite assistance for librarians in the region** to assist them in keeping up with changes in the library environment using practical adult learning principles linked to skill-building, whereby:

- Learning is self-directed
- Learning fills an immediate need and is highly participatory
- Learning will be helpful and applicable in the work setting
- Learning is experiential whereby participants and trainers learn from one another
- Training encompasses time for reflection and feedback
- A mutually respectful environment is created between trainers and learners.

**Output:** The learning opportunities provided.

**Impact:** People in the NLLN region will know how to access the information they need to improve their lives.

**Inputs and Activities for the *Minnesota Literacy Initiative*: Increase access to books for citizens in the NLLN region:**

**eBook access** for middle and high school students throughout the NLLN region.

Many students living within the counties served by **Lake Agassiz Regional Library (LARL)** and **Northwest Regional Library (NWRL)** have been issued iPads or tablets by their schools. LARL and NWRL have seen a steady increase in the use of eBook and eAudiobook collections. Teachers and media specialists from across the region have contacted LARL and NWRL, asking how their students can obtain access to eBooks and eAudiobooks. LARL and NWRL are encouraging schools, teachers, and students to register for LARL and NWRL library cards to access the eBook services provided to them through their public library. Along with Overdrive, the *Tumblebook Library* is provided for the Northwest Regional Library System. eBook and eAudiobook access for students enhance efforts schools make to provide content rich materials to students.

**eAudio book access for citizens in the Kitchigami Regional Library System (KRLS).**

As eAudio technology has increased, Kitchigami Regional Library System has seen a dramatic increase in the use of eAudio books by young adults, adults, and seniors, yet, there is frustration among constituents because there are limited eAudio materials available in the KRLS region. The demand for eAudio books is outstripping Kitchi's ability to provide them. The youth audience in particular has expanded for these items while the older adult audience is growing at a faster rate than anticipated. While students throughout the Kitchigami region have ready access to eBooks, access to eAudio books is limited. KRLS would like to encourage teachers and students to register for KRLS borrower cards and use the eAudio services provided to them through their public library. Rather than schools spending additional funding to purchase their own eAudio book collections and duplicating efforts across the region, KRLS can be the eAudio book access point for the students. Since adults and seniors also have limited access to affordable eAudio books, KRLS can significantly improve their access by the purchase of simultaneous multi-user eAudio titles. With funding from NLLN, KRLS can increase significantly its holdings of juvenile and YA eAudio titles and explore multiple simultaneous user licenses for some titles meant for an older audience.

**Output:** The number of electronic resources supplied with support of NLLN.

**Impact:** Reading increases understanding and improves lives. Reading newspapers, magazines, journals, and books gives readers information they can use to improve their health, well-being, and to build behaviors that lead to satisfying lifestyles. Reading expands possibilities and promises experiences beyond the scope of every-day life.

**Inputs and Activities for the *Minnesota Literacy Initiative*:** Send summaries of select books from the book reviewing journal, *Booklist*, to member libraries.

**Output:** Library employees can determine which books to purchase and make available to their patrons.

**Impact:** Improve library collections.

**Goal IV: Development of a Bibliographic Database**

**IVA. Objective: Support the NorthStar Union Destiny Library Catalog.**

**Inputs and Activities:** Bring libraries without online catalogs into the online Destiny system, support the 112 libraries in the NorthStar Library Destiny Catalog union catalog, provide ongoing training for the 112 libraries using Destiny in the NorthStar network.

**Output:** The number of transactions occurring through the NorthStar Library Consortium.

**Impact:** Improved access to library materials by students and teachers using the Destiny Catalog.

**IVB. Objective: Access to online bibliographic materials using the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) Union Catalog.**

**Inputs and Activities: Support cataloging fees** for membership to the OCLC CatExpress group subscription for Northwest Regional Library, Lincoln High School Thief River Falls, Kittson School Media Center, Warren/Alvarado/Oslo High School, Breckenridge High School District, Clearbrook Gonvick High School, ADA-Borup Public School, Independent School District 435, Audubon High School Media Center, Perham/Dent Public School, Holy Rosary School, BUG-O-NA-GE Shig School, Grygla School Media Center, Bemidji Public School, Park Rapids High School, Northland Community Schools ISD #118, Circle of Life School, St. Joseph's School, Lancaster public School, Tri-County School, Mahnomen Public School, Frazee-Vergas School, Pine River Backus Public School, Badger School, Blackduck Public School, White Earth Tribal & Community College Library.

**Output:** Cataloging of 1,600 records.

**Impact:** Patron access to online cataloged materials.

**Goal V: Communications System among all Cooperating Libraries**

**VA. Objective:** Facilitate communication among all NLLN members.

**Inputs and Activities:** Develop and maintain membership lists and electronic methods of communication among NLLN members.

**Output:** email, Listbox, Facebook, and Twitter communication between and among members.

**Impact:** Ongoing communication among members supports existing networks that communicate the purpose and benefits of libraries to citizens in the region.

The Strategic Plan for Northern Lights Library Network for **Fiscal Years 2019 – 2023** circulated among members during the Spring of 2018, and the changes and suggestions from members was incorporated into the existing plan. Prior to the 2018 circulation, an electronic survey system was used to gather qualitative data from twenty-three representative NLLN members and a quantitative Lickert scale survey was designed, based on the qualitative material. Forty percent of members completed the survey. The survey was tested for reliability and found to be highly reliable.

From the survey results, the vision statement, a mission statement, identification of core values, and the development of goals and objectives of the organization were developed. To determine program development and implementation that arise from goals and objectives, a logic model was developed for each for planned work and intended results, including: activities, outputs, and impact.

With the scientifically valid strategic plan, the programs and services delineated in this strategic plan were designed and written. The 2018 membership review provides the groundwork for the 2018 – 2023 strategic plan. The programs and services outlined in the strategic plan were written over five years leading up to and including the 2018-2023 plan.