MILWAUKEE COUNTY
FEDERATED LIBRARY SYSTEM

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NOTICE

Milwaukee County
Federated Library System
Board of Trustees

Monday, February 26, 2024

2:30 P.M.

This meeting will be held online at

Meeting URL: CLICK HERE
Meeting ID: 869 1526 0562
Meeting Passcode: KM4SjHrw
Telephone Passcode: 75086058

AGENDA

1. Call to order

2. Adoption of agenda
   Action

3. Approval of minutes: the MCFLS Board of Trustees meeting on January 22, 2024
   Action Attachment A

4. Public comment

Please note: Upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through sign language interpreters or other auxiliary aides.

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MCFLS Standing Committee Reports

5. Library Directors Advisory Council.

    a. Introduction of new 2024 LDAC Chair, Nyama Reed of the Whitefish Bay Public Library.
    b. Report of the February 1 meeting.

    Action Attachment B

6. MCFLS Finance and Personnel Committee.

    a. Update on the MCFLS Director Evaluation process.
    b. The next meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee is scheduled for March 6, 2024.

7. MCFLS Legislative and System Services.

    a. The Legislative and System Services Committee met with Rachel Arndt on February 2, 2024 to provide a debriefing on the strategic planning retreat.
    b. The next meeting is scheduled for March 7, 2024 to review the 2023 system annual report and discuss additional information provided by Rachel Arndt.

Administrative reports requiring action

8. Financial reports.
    a. Revised 2023 December financial report and explanation of corrections made.
    b. January 2024 financial report.

    Action Attachment C

9. Results of MCFLS Board meeting schedule survey.

    Action Attachment D

10. Revised draft of 2024 System/Director goals.

    Action Attachment E

Administrative Informational Items

11. 2023 Marketing report.

    Attachment F

12. Peter Loeffel will provide a review of pending legislation affecting library services.
    a. Link to WLA site on pending legislation.

    Attachment G

13. Director's Report.

    Attachment H

Next meeting date: Tentatively scheduled for 3:30 pm on Monday, March 18 via Zoom.

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Milwaukee County Federated Library System
Board of Trustees
Regular Monthly Meeting held Monday, January 22nd, 2024
Zoom and in person Meeting

ROLL CALL

Present: Paul Ziehler, President
Guy Johnson, Vice President
Monica Deluhery, Trustee
Howard Snyder, Trustee
Steven Shea, Treasurer

Excused: Elizabeth Suelzer, Trustee

Staff: Steve Heser, Director
Brittney Hornung, Business Manager
Jennifer Schmidt, Library Systems Administrator

Others: Joan Johnson, Milwaukee Public Library

CALL TO ORDER. President Ziehler called the regularly scheduled 3:30pm monthly meeting of the Milwaukee County Federated Library System Board of Trustees to order at 3:33 p.m.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA. President Ziehler referred to the agenda. Treasurer Shea moved and Treasurer Deluhery seconded a motion to adopt the agenda as distributed. Unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES. President Ziehler referred to the minutes of the November 27th, 2023 shown as the Attachment A of the agenda packet. Being no corrections noted,
Treasurer Shea moved and Trustee Deluhery seconded the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT.

No comment made.

MCFLS STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS.

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Library Directors Advisory Council

a. Introduction of new 2024 LDAC Chair, Nyama Reed of the Whitefish Bay Public Library. With Nyama Reed absent, the introduction will be postponed for the next scheduled MCFLS Board meeting.
b. Reports of the December 7, 2023 and January 4, 2024 meetings.
Director Heser gave a brief overview of the December 2023 and January 2024 LDAC meetings shown as attachment B of the Agenda packet. During the December meeting there was discussion of libraries becoming CIPA compliant and steps needed to reach this. Milwaukee Public Library is currently the only MCFLS library that is CIPA compliant and receives grant funding for this. There was also discussion on the Annual Report and a County Cat mobile app update which allowed for beta testing which has not happened before. The upgrade has gone well with no issues so far. There were also updates to the new phone system, All of Us grant project and Marketing update. During the January meeting there was another update for the All of Us grant with experts attending the meeting to discuss the project and generate interest. A MCFLS Director retreat was suggested as a more informal meeting for discussion on topics of interest for the libraries outside of the library building. Director Heser presented Director and System goals for 2024 which will also be presented to the Board during this meeting. A new toolbar was reviewed called ReciteMe which is designed to assist patrons with visual impairments or those who speak English as a second language. This will be researched and compared to other products before a decision is made. During member updates, Oak Creek shared that their village manager granted $3.00/hr wage increases to all circulation desk clerks in the library. President Ziehler asked if this is comparable to the other member libraries and if this data could be shared at the next MCFLS Board meeting. Vice President Johnson moved and Trustee Snyder seconded the motion to approve the LDAC as presented and place it on file. Unanimously approved.

[Jen Schmidt joined at 3:39pm]

MCFLS Finance and Personnel Committee

a. Overview of the MCFLS Director Evaluation process.
Director Heser Shared that the process will be similar to previous years. Director Heser has completed a self assessment which will be included with the goals in the survey. Brittney Hornung will distribute the survey that will be presented to the Finance and Personnel Committee March 6th and to the full Board at the following Board meeting. Director Heser will also be preparing comments to the survey results prior to the Board meeting.

b. The next meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee is scheduled for March 6, 2024.

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MCFLS Legislative and System Services

a. The next meeting of the Legislative and System Services Committee is scheduled for February 2, 2024 to provide a debriefing on the strategic planning retreat.
Vice President Johnson asked what time the meeting is scheduled for. Director Heser shared this meeting will be Friday February 2nd at 9:00am via Zoom meeting software. Rachel Arndt will be in attendance to share her findings from the Strategic Planning meeting. Director Heser will share out more information in the agenda packet before this meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS REQUIRING ACTION.

Financial Report for November and December 2023

President Ziehler asked that only the December 2023 FR be reviewed. Director Heser shared the December 2023 Financial Report shown as attachment C of the Agenda packet. Highlighted was the increase in Interest in Investment Funds which was higher than anticipated. Milwaukee Public library also invested funds into the Overdrive Advantage Fund which is shown in the revenue and expenditure increases for those lines. Another highlighted area is the LSTA Technology Grant revenue which was higher than the revised budget amount due to the All of Us grant funding that came through after the revision was approved by the Board. Trustee Snyder what the Marketing expense line is made up of. Director Heser shared that it is made up of social media expenses, radio ads, and other various marketing strategies. Discussion ensued. President Ziehler asked why the excess in revenue is so high compared to years prior. LSTA funding was received in 2023 that was spent in 2022. President Ziehler asked that this bee looked at closer and to provide an explanation at the next meeting.
Trustee Snyder moved and Vice President Johnson seconded a motion to approve the November and December Financial reports as presented. Unanimously approved.

Wisconsin Public Library Consortium (WPLC) update

a. WPLC Digital Library Steering Committee members.
Director Heser shared that this is the group that oversees the ebook and audiobook loaning system statewide. There was a meeting with the new members of the committee to go over roles and expectations.
b. Archives and Digitization Project/MOU.
Director Heser shared the MOU agreement shown as attachment D of the Agenda packet. MCFLS would like to sign this agreement with the Board's approval to participate in the Archives and Digitization project. Members such as Milwaukee Public library have made investments in digitization of their resources so this project would help in the investment. Financial obligation would be minimal to around $600 or $700 a year for participation. More information will be shared on financial details once they are available. Treasurer Shea moved and Trustee Snyder seconded a motion to approve the participation in the Archives and Digitization project/MOU. Unanimously approved.

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Draft of 2024 System/Director Goals

Director Heser shared the 2024 MCFLS System/Director goals shown as attachment E of the Agenda packet. These goals include items that are required to happen this year along with some of the MCFLS staff goals. Some big goals include the Strategic Plan, migration to Aspen Discovery, the new phone service, and site visits of MCFLS staff to local libraries. President Ziehler asked about cross training which is already in progress with Jen Schmidt training her team of Kellie and Belinda on tasks they all complete. President Ziehler also asked if there should be a goal for improved marketing added. Trustee Snyder commented on how the System and Director goals are also the Board of Trustee's goals and fit with the system values. Trustee Snyder shared ideas from the discussion at the Strategic Planning process and what some of the library directors had shared. Discussion ensued. Director Heser will review this input and revise these goals.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION ITEMS.

Director's Report

Director Heser shared the Director's report shown as Attachment F of the Agenda packet. Activities included were the preparation for the Strategic Planning meeting, staff self-evaluations, and the Annual report. Director Heser shared that he and President Ziehler met with the County Executive and deputy Chief of Staff to provide an overview and update on library services and county residents about getting library services to incarcerated residents. Trustee Snyder shared about getting more information about the libraries out to the public and suggested who to reach out to for this. State activities include participation in data dashboard demonstrations. Also, an All of Us mixer program update which is active as on today. Strategic planning activities are continuing and will be a focus. Another focus is the State annual report which is due March 30th. The process for the delivery contract being put out to bid is beginning so there will be more on that in the coming meetings.

NEXT MEETING. Scheduled for Monday February 26th, 2024 at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom. Treasurer Shea requested an earlier start time. Director Heser will poll the MCFLS Board members to consider a new meeting time.

ADJOURNMENT. With no further business to be addressed, Trustee Snyder motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:38 p.m., Treasurer Shea seconded. Unanimously approved.

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To: MCFLS Board of Trustees
From: Nyama Y. Reed, 2024 LDAC Chair
Date: February 20, 2024
Re: Summary of February 1, 2024 LDAC meeting

WFB Public Library Mission Statement
The Whitefish Bay Public Library, as a cornerstone of the community, is dedicated to connecting all people, inspiring a love of learning, and providing access to ideas, information, and resources.

Topics of Action or Discussion

- Strategic Plan
  - Steve Heser updated the group on the timeline for reviewing the strategic plan session.
  - Feedback from directors who attended the session was positive.
- Revisiting the idea of allowing holds on magazines to be placed in delivery
  - Nyama Reed (WFB) suggested allowing holds on magazines for delivery due to a significant decrease in magazine usage at Whitefish Bay. A couple of other directors supported the idea, but others stated they would/could not participate. Nyama Reed proposed an opt-in/opt-out process. Due to the current workloads for MCFLS staff, there will be a test run post-Aspen completion for interested libraries.
- Survey results: 2024 MCFLS Director Retreat
  - Steve Heser shared survey results for the 2024 MCFLS Director retreat. Late July on a Thursday or Friday was the top choice for timing, and the Milwaukee Zoo was the preferred location. Discussion topics may include HR/hiring, building management, and mental health. Brian Van Klooster (GD) suggested a presenter and Nyama Reed suggested an open session for directors to discuss things with each other. Retreat details will be reviewed as the event approaches.

Technology

- Discussion: end of LSTA support for Beanstack and options for moving forward
  - Director Heser said Beanstack will be available until April 2025, giving WiLS and libraries more time to explore contracts or find alternatives.
- Aspen Discovery update
  - Jen Schmidt updated on Aspen Discovery and events. MCFLS and MPL CCDM collaborated on cataloging. MCFLS made personalized catalogs with CountyCat-like URLs. Each library should assign a contact for troubleshooting. Staff training is in April on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Social media blasts and a beta site link will be shared from May 15th to June 15th, leading to the go-live on June 15th.

Informational

- Steve Heser led discussion of informational items
  - 2023 annual report update. Annual reports are due to the system by Thursday, February 29.
  - Meeting with the County Community Reintegration Center staff on February 23rd to talk about library services to incarcerated residents.
  - Library Legislative Day is February 6th.

Additional Agenda Items

- MCFLS phone number changes timeline
  - Steve Heser announced that new phone numbers will be active from March 1st and will fully replace old numbers by the end of March.

Member Library Updates

- Milwaukee Public Library: Many Black History Month events, including a talk by the author of "King Alive" on February 16th and John Gurda at Central next Tuesday. Visit the MPL website for more events.
- Greendale Library: Hosting candidate forums.
- North Shore Library: Reached 75% of the fundraising goal for a new library, planning to start construction in the next 6 months.

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February 26, 2024
To: MCFLS Trustees
From: Steve Heser, MCFLS Director
Re: 2023 December Financial Report

A higher financial position than usual was noted on the December 2023 financial report and system staff were asked to review the report and discuss findings with President Ziehler. Line items addressed below highlight some of the discrepancies between the revised 2023 budget and actual performance. Areas highlighted in yellow were corrected in a revised December 2023 financial report that is attached to the February 2024 agenda.

Revenue side

- Line: 7: Interest is 24,000 higher than anticipated.
- Line 21: LSTA Technology Grant revenue. $197,000 in reimbursement was received in 2023 for grant expenses made in 2022.

Expense side

- Line 72: Sorting and Delivery Expense. $40,000 in unspent funding is tied to expenses in 2023 that have yet to be paid.
- Line 83: Contingency. There is $123,786 in unspent contingency funding.
- Line 199: Member Cataloging Contract Reserve. The $185,769 put aside for member cataloging costs in 2024 was not included in the YTD expense column.

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M.C.F.L.S
Financial Report
For the Month Ending December 31, 2023

		Orional Budget	Revised Budget	+/-	Year to Date	%	Balance	%
1								
2								
3	**General Revenues**							
4	State Aid Revenue	$3,568,561	$ 3,568,561		$3,568,565.00	(100.00)	$ (4)	0.00
5	Milwaukee County Allocation	$66,650	$ 66,650		$66,650.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
6	West Milwaukee Contract -Other	$31,179	$ 31,179		$31,149.00	(99.90)	$ 30	(0.10)
7	Interest on Invested Funds	$2,000	$ 2,000		$26,417.44	(1,320.87)	$ (24,417)	1,220.85
8	Member Forms/Supplies Rev (57)	$21,000	$ 21,000		$19,849.01	(94.52)	$ 1,151	(5.48)
9	Member Postage Revenue (56)	$16,100	$ 16,100		$13,932.60	(86.54)	$ 2,167	(13.46)
10	Member OCLC Revenue (68)	$127,336	$ 127,336		$127,336.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
11	Member Telecomm. Revenue (66)	$16,800	$ 15,900	$ (900)	$15,900.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
12	Member Softwre Maint-Basic (64)	$156,391	$ 156,391		$156,392.00	(100.00)	$ (1)	0.00
13	Member Softwre Maint-Other (64)	$41,572	$ 41,572		$41,571.00	(100.00)	$ 1	(0.00)
14	Member Tech. Assist.-Time Rev.	$20,000	$ 20,000		$16,615.00	(83.08)	$ 3,385	(16.93)
15	Member Special Projects Rev (72)	$70,000	$ 70,000		$19,226.81	(27.47)	$ 50,773	(72.53)
16	Member Catalog Contract Rev (79)	$162,822	$ 162,822		$162,825.00	(100.00)	$ (3)	0.00
17	Member Database Rev (54)	$14,651	$ 24,353	$ 9,702	$24,353.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
18	Member EcomTransaction Fees (43)	$7,900	$ 7,900		$6,112.43	(77.37)	$ 1,788	(22.63)
19	Carryover Revenue	$15,000	$ 116,784	$ 101,784	$116,784.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
20	Staff Benefits/Co-Pay Revenue	$62,061	$ 48,740	$ (13,321)	$46,607.47	(95.62)	$ 2,132	(4.37)
21	LSTA Technology Grant Revenue	$3,000	$ 264,690	$ 261,690	$310,250.24	(117.21)	$ (45,560)	17.21
22	Member Digital Content Rev (84)	$233,385	$ 233,385		$253,384.00	(108.57)	$ (19,999)	8.57
23	Member PC Mngmt License Rev	$2,545	$ 2,545		$2,212.83	(86.95)	$ 332	(13.05)
24	Member Replace Fines Rev (90)	$7,000	$ 17,000	$ 10,000	$3,861.75	(22.72)	$ 13,138	(77.28)
25	Member Overdrive Adv Rev (91)	$15,000	$ 15,000		$415,001.00	(2,766.67)	$ (400,001)	2,666.67
26	Member Collection Dev Tool Rev	$18,023	$ 18,023		$36,046.00	(200.00)	$ (18,023)	100.00
27	**Total General Revenues**	$4,678,976	$ 5,047,931	$ 368,955	$5,481,041.58	(108.58)	$ (433,111)	8.58
28								
29	**Special Revenues**							
30	W. Milwaukee Borrowing Rev (97)	$41,706	$ 41,706		$41,706.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
31	InfoPass Project Mgmnt Rev	$1,308	$ 1,308		$1,308.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
32	Ecommerce Revenue (100)	$150,000	$ 150,000		$139,016.03	(92.68)	$ 10,984	(7.32)
33	MCFLS Reciprocal Borrowing Reserve	$48,144	$ 48,144					
34	**Total Special Revenues**	$241,158	$ 241,158	$ -	$182,030.03	(75.48)	$ 59,128	(24.52)
35								
36	**Total Revenues**	$4,920,134	$ 5,289,089	$ 368,955	**$5,663,071.61**	(107.07)	$ (373,983)	7.07
37								
38		**Orional Budget**	**Revised Budget**	**+/-**	**Year to Date**	**%**	**Balance**	**%**
39								
40	**General Expenditures**							
41	Fringe Benefits Expense	$298,612	$ 223,634	$ (74,978)	$245,274.18	(109.68)	$ (21,640)	9.68
42	Salaries Expense	$505,071	$ 437,571	$ (67,500)	$434,855.81	(99.38)	$ 2,716	(0.62)
43	Member Ecom Transaction Exp (18)	$7,900	$ 7,900		$7,341.85	(92.93)	$ 558	(7.06)
44	TNS Calls/Renewal Line Expense	$2,064	$ 2,300	$ 236	$2,024.71	(88.03)	$ 275	(11.96)
45	Conference/Training Expense	$6,500	$ 10,000	$ 3,500	$9,889.93	(98.90)	$ 110	(1.10)
46	Memberships Expense	$9,300	$ 9,300		$6,622.94	(71.21)	$ 2,677	(28.78)
47	Continuing Education Expense	$9,000	$ 9,000		$7,579.00	(84.21)	$ 1,421	(15.79)
48	Office Supplies Expense	$1,500	$ 1,500		$1,241.59	(82.77)	$ 258	(17.20)
49	Copy Machine Maint. Expense	$1,000	$ 1,000		$243.24	(24.32)	$ 757	(75.70)
50	MCFLS WI Pub Lib Consortium Ex	$6,953	$ 6,953		$6,953.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
51	MCFLS Buying Pool	$175,000	$ 225,000	$ 50,000	$215,345.80	(95.71)	$ 9,654	(4.29)
52	MCFLS Database Expense	$98,110	$ 98,110		$98,110.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
53	MCFLS Catalog Enhancement Exp	$189,642	$ 194,998	$ 5,356	$164,265.92	(84.24)	$ 30,732	(15.76)
54	Member Database Expense (17)	$14,651	$ 24,353	$ 9,702	$24,352.00	(100.00)	$ 1	(0.00)
55	MCFLS Postage Expense	$600	$ 600		$576.00	(96.00)	$ 24	(4.00)
56	Member Postage Expense (9)	$16,100	$ 16,100		$15,500.00	(96.27)	$ 600	(3.73)
57	Member Forms/Supplies Expense (8)	$21,000	$ 21,000		$25,993.49	(123.78)	$ (4,993)	23.78
58	Telephone Expense	$6,000	$ 6,000		$7,259.97	(121.00)	$ (1,260)	21.00
59	Meetings Expense	$1,000	$ 1,000		$1,130.35	(113.04)	$ (130)	13.00
60	Insurance Expense	$12,000	$ 12,000		$11,927.00	(99.39)	$ 73	(0.61)
61	Legal Expense	$1,500	$ 1,500		$1,552.50	(103.50)	$ (53)	3.53
62	Audit Expense	$12,700	$ 12,700		$13,936.53	(109.74)	$ (1,237)	9.74
63	Payroll Service Expense	$5,400	$ 8,000	$ 2,600	$5,702.57	(71.28)	$ 2,297	(28.71)
64	III Software Support Expense (12,13)	$197,963	$ 197,963		$189,134.80	(95.54)	$ 8,828	(4.46)
65	III Telephone Notification Subscr Exp	$12,530	$ 12,530		$9,187.30	(73.32)	$ 3,343	(26.68)
66	Member Telecomm. Expense (11)	$16,800	$ 15,900	$ (900)	$15,900.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
67	MCFLS Telecomm. Maint. Expense	$45,000	$ 55,000	$ 10,000	$50,720.00	(92.22)	$ 4,280	(7.78)
68	OCLC Expense (10)	$145,631	$ 144,251	$ (1,380)	$145,472.72	(100.85)	$ (1,221)	0.85
69	MCFLS Computer Room Equipment	$10,000	$ 10,000		$4,385.02	(43.85)	$ 5,615	(56.15)
70	MCFLS Software Expense	$10,000	$ 10,000		$10,977.88	(109.78)	$ (978)	9.78

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M.C.F.L.S
Financial Report
For the Month Ending December 31, 2023

71	MCFLS Equipment Expense	$10,000	$ 10,000		$2,803.00	(28.03)	$ 7,197	(71.97)
72	Member Special Projects Exp (15)	$70,000	$ 70,000		$26,100.68	(37.29)	$ 43,899	(62.71)
73	Sorting and Delivery Expense	$305,000	$ 305,000		$273,566.58	(89.69)	$ 31,433	(10.31)
74	South Central Delivery Expense	$21,894	$ 21,894		$21,894.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
75	MPL Resource Contract Expense	$223,035	$ 223,035		$223,035.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
76	MPL Rent Lease Contract Exp.	$95,387	$ 95,387		$95,387.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
77	ILS Expense	$36,450	$ 36,450		$36,450.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
78	MCFLS Catalog Cont Exp to MPL	$321,170	$ 321,170		$321,170.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
79	Member Catalog Contract Exp. (16)	$162,822	$ 162,822		$162,822.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
80	MCFLS Collection Dev Tool Exp	$26,972	$ 26,972		$26,972.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
81	Member Collection Dev Tool Exp	$18,023	$ 18,023		$18,023.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
82	Internet Expense	$21,635	$ 26,286	$ 4,651	$30,371.65	(115.54)	$ (4,086)	15.54
83	Contingency Expense	$43,958	$ 134,950	$ 90,992	$11,163.86	(8.27)	$ 123,786	(91.73)
84	Member Digital Content Exp (22)	$233,385	$ 233,385		$253,181.00	(108.48)	$ (19,796)	8.48
85	Marketing	$60,000	$ 60,000		$52,765.42	(87.94)	$ 7,235	(12.06)
86	Cooperative Purchasing Sub Exp	$2,500	$ 2,786	$ 286	$2,786.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
87	Member PC Management License Exp	$1,875	$ 1,875		$1,005.90	(53.65)	$ 869	(46.35)
88	LSTA Technology Grant Expense	$3,000	$ 143,621	$ 140,621	$132,325.70	(92.14)	$ 11,295	(7.86)
89	MCFLS MKE Mixer Expense	$1,400	$ 1,400		$1,693.03	(120.93)	$ (293)	20.93
90	Member Replacement Fines Exp (24)	$7,000	$ 17,000	$ 10,000	$3,861.75	(22.72)	$ 13,138	(77.28)
91	Member OverDrive Adv Exp (25)	$15,000	$ 15,000		$400,000.00	(2,666.67)	$ (385,000)	2,566.67
92	Youth Services Exp	$10,000	$ 10,000		$235.64	(2.36)	$ 9,764	(97.64)
93	Inclusive Services Exp	$10,000	$ 10,000		$0.00	0.00	$ 10,000	(100.00)
94	**Total General Expenditures**	$3,540,034	$ 3,723,220	$ 183,186	$3,831,069.31	(102.90)	$ (107,850)	2.90
95								
96	**Special Expenditures**							
97	W. Milw Borrowing Exp (30)	$41,706	$ 41,706		$42,065.00	(100.86)	$ (359)	0.86
98	RB - MCFLS Payment Expense	$1,188,394	$ 1,188,394		$1,188,395.00	(100.00)	$ (1)	0.00
99	ILS Migration Reserve	$0	$ -		$0.00	0.00	$ -	0.00
100	Member Catalog Contract Reserve		$ 185,769	$ 185,769	$185,769.00	(100.00)	$ -	0.00
101	Ecommerce Expense (32)	$150,000	$ 150,000		$140,713.61	(93.81)	$ 9,286	(6.19)
102	**Total Special Expenditures**	$1,380,100	$ 1,565,869	$ 185,769	$1,556,942.61	(99.43)	$ 8,926	(0.57)
103								
104	**Total Expenditures**	$4,920,134	$ 5,289,089	$ 368,955	$5,388,011.92	(101.87)	$ (98,923)	1.87
105								
106	**Revenue/Expenditures +/-**				$275,059.69			

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M.C.F.L.S
Financial Report
For the Month Ending January 31, 2024

		Orional Budget	Revised Budget	+/-	Year to Date	%	Balance	%
1								
2								
3	**General Revenues**							
4	State Aid Revenue	$3,925,188	$ 3,925,188		$2,943,891.00	(75.00)	$ 981,297	(25.00)
5	Milwaukee County Allocation	$66,650	$ 66,650		$33,325.00	(50.00)	$ 33,325	(50.00)
6	West Milwaukee Contract -Other	$49,752	$ 49,752			0.00	$ 49,752	(100.00)
7	Interest on Invested Funds	$2,000	$ 2,000			0.00	$ 2,000	(100.00)
8	Member Forms/Supplies Rev (57)	$19,500	$ 19,500		$2,324.49	(11.92)	$ 17,176	(88.08)
9	Member Postage Revenue (56)	$15,100	$ 15,100		$2,796.12	(18.52)	$ 12,304	(81.48)
10	Member OCLC Revenue (68)	$129,883	$ 129,883			0.00	$ 129,883	(100.00)
11	Member Telecomm. Revenue (66)	$15,600	$ 15,600			0.00	$ 15,600	(100.00)
12	Member Softwre Maint-Basic (64)	$163,498	$ 163,498			0.00	$ 163,498	(100.00)
13	Member Softwre Maint-Other (64)	$43,462	$ 43,462			0.00	$ 43,462	(100.00)
14	Member Tech. Assist.-Time Rev.	$20,000	$ 20,000		$1,470.00	(7.35)	$ 18,530	(92.65)
15	Member Special Projects Rev (72)	$70,000	$ 70,000		$9,664.92	(13.81)	$ 60,335	(86.19)
16	Member Catalog Contract Rev (79)	$0	$ -			0.00	$ -	0.00
17	Member Database Rev (54)	$42,715	$ 42,715			0.00	$ 42,715	(100.00)
18	Member EcomTransaction Fees (43)	$7,100	$ 7,100		$1,198.92	(16.89)	$ 5,901	(83.11)
19	Carryover Revenue	$15,000	$ 15,000			0.00	$ 15,000	(100.00)
20	Staff Benefits/Co-Pay Revenue	$53,276	$ 53,276			0.00	$ 53,276	(100.00)
21	LSTA Technology Grant Revenue	$3,000	$ 3,000			0.00	$ 3,000	(100.00)
22	Member Digital Content Rev (84)	$254,169	$ 254,169			0.00	$ 254,169	(100.00)
23	Member PC Mngmt License Rev	$2,545	$ 2,545		$194.30	(7.63)	$ 2,351	(92.38)
24	Member Replace Fines Rev (90)	$17,000	$ 17,000		$1,632.34	(9.60)	$ 15,368	(90.40)
25	Member Overdrive Adv Rev (91)	$15,000	$ 15,000			0.00	$ 15,000	(100.00)
26	Member Collection Dev Tool Rev	$0	$ -			0.00	$ -	0.00
27	**Total General Revenues**	$4,930,438	$ 4,930,438	$ -	$2,996,497.09	(60.78)	$ 1,933,941	(39.22)
28								
29	**Special Revenues**							
30	W. Milwaukee Borrowing Rev (97)	$41,706	$ 41,706			0.00	$ 41,706	(100.00)
31	InfoPass Project Mgmnt Rev	$1,308	$ 1,308			0.00	$ 1,308	(100.00)
32	Ecommerce Revenue (100)	$150,000	$ 150,000			0.00	$ 150,000	(100.00)
33	Member Cataloging Contract Reserve	$185,769	$ 185,769					
34	**Total Special Revenues**	$378,783	$ 378,783	$ -	$0.00	0.00	$ 378,783	(100.00)
35								
36	**Total Revenues**	$5,309,221	$ 5,309,221	$ 0	**$2,996,497.09**	(56.44)	$ 2,312,724	(43.56)
37								
38		**Orional Budget**	**Revised Budget**	**+/-**	**Year to Date**	**%**	**Balance**	**%**
39								
40	**General Expenditures**							
41	Fringe Benefits Expense	$247,256	$ 247,256		$28,317.84	(11.45)	$ 218,938	(88.55)
42	Salaries Expense	$482,023	$ 482,023		$51,905.82	(10.77)	$ 430,117	(89.23)
43	Member Ecom Transaction Exp (18)	$7,100	$ 7,100			0.00	$ 7,100	(100.00)
44	TNS Calls/Renewal Line Expense	$2,300	$ 2,300			0.00	$ 2,300	(100.00)
45	Conference/Training Expense	$10,000	$ 10,000		$914.00	(9.14)	$ 9,086	(90.86)
46	Memberships Expense	$9,300	$ 9,300		$220.00	(2.37)	$ 9,080	(97.63)
47	Continuing Education Expense	$10,000	$ 10,000			0.00	$ 10,000	(100.00)
48	Office Supplies Expense	$1,500	$ 1,500			0.00	$ 1,500	(100.00)
49	Copy Machine Maint. Expense	$1,000	$ 1,000		$61.43	(6.14)	$ 939	(93.90)
50	MCFLS WI Pub Lib Consortium Ex	$7,848	$ 7,848			0.00	$ 7,848	(100.00)
51	MCFLS Buying Pool	$275,600	$ 275,600		$33,599.82	(12.19)	$ 242,000	(87.81)
52	MCFLS Database Expense	$127,453	$ 127,453		$38,771.66	(30.42)	$ 88,681	(69.58)
53	MCFLS Catalog Enhancement Exp	$208,121	$ 208,121		$91,039.14	(43.74)	$ 117,082	(56.26)
54	Member Database Expense (17)	$42,715	$ 42,715		$45,524.00	(106.58)	$ (2,809)	6.58
55	MCFLS Postage Expense	$600	$ 600			0.00	$ 600	(100.00)
56	Member Postage Expense (9)	$15,100	$ 15,100			0.00	$ 15,100	(100.00)
57	Member Forms/Supplies Expense (8)	$19,500	$ 19,500			0.00	$ 19,500	(100.00)
58	Telephone Expense	$6,000	$ 6,000		$521.24	(8.69)	$ 5,479	(91.32)
59	Meetings Expense	$1,000	$ 1,000			0.00	$ 1,000	(100.00)
60	Insurance Expense	$12,000	$ 12,000		$7,612.00	(63.43)	$ 4,388	(36.57)
61	Legal Expense	$1,500	$ 1,500			0.00	$ 1,500	(100.00)
62	Audit Expense	$12,800	$ 12,800		$1,505.51	(11.76)	$ 11,294	(88.23)
63	Payroll Service Expense	$4,740	$ 4,740		$616.22	(13.00)	$ 4,124	(87.00)
64	III Software Support Expense (12,13)	$206,960	$ 206,960		$101,950.94	(49.26)	$ 105,009	(50.74)
65	III Telephone Notification Subscr Exp	$15,811	$ 15,811		$4,661.54	(29.48)	$ 11,149	(70.51)
66	Member Telecomm. Expense (11)	$15,600	$ 15,600			0.00	$ 15,600	(100.00)
67	MCFLS Telecomm. Maint. Expense	$45,000	$ 45,000		$13,654.80	(30.34)	$ 31,345	(69.66)
68	OCLC Expense (10)	$148,579	$ 148,579		$149,660.73	(100.73)	$ (1,082)	0.73
69	MCFLS Computer Room Equipment	$25,000	$ 25,000			0.00	$ 25,000	(100.00)
70	MCFLS Software Expense	$10,000	$ 10,000		$200.00	(2.00)	$ 9,800	(98.00)

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M.C.F.L.S
Financial Report
For the Month Ending January 31, 2024

71	MCFLS Equipment Expense	$10,000	$ 10,000			0.00	$ 10,000	(100.00)
72	Member Special Projects Exp (15)	$70,000	$ 70,000			0.00	$ 70,000	(100.00)
73	Sorting and Delivery Expense	$305,000	$ 305,000		$22,581.00	(7.40)	$ 282,419	(92.60)
74	South Central Delivery Expense	$21,806	$ 21,806			0.00	$ 21,806	(100.00)
75	MPL Resource Contract Expense	$245,324	$ 245,324			0.00	$ 245,324	(100.00)
76	MPL Rent Lease Contract Exp.	$95,387	$ 95,387			0.00	$ 95,387	(100.00)
77	ILS Expense	$36,450	$ 36,450			0.00	$ 36,450	(100.00)
78	MCFLS Catalog Cont Exp to MPL	$353,267	$ 353,267			0.00	$ 353,267	(100.00)
79	Member Catalog Contract Exp. (16)	$0	$ -			0.00	$ -	0.00
80	MCFLS Collection Dev Tool Exp	$46,345	$ 46,345			0.00	$ 46,345	(100.00)
81	Member Collection Dev Tool Exp	$0	$ -			0.00	$ -	0.00
82	Internet Expense	$20,178	$ 20,178			0.00	$ 20,178	(100.00)
83	Contingency Expense	$77,098	$ 77,098		$2,572.11	(3.34)	$ 74,526	(96.66)
84	Member Digital Content Exp (22)	$254,169	$ 254,169			0.00	$ 254,169	(100.00)
85	Marketing	$60,000	$ 60,000		$7,783.40	(12.97)	$ 52,217	(87.03)
86	Cooperative Purchasing Sub Exp	$2,786	$ 2,786			0.00	$ 2,786	(100.00)
87	Member PC Management License Exp	$1,875	$ 1,875			0.00	$ 1,875	(100.00)
88	LSTA Technology Grant Expense	$3,000	$ 3,000			0.00	$ 3,000	(100.00)
89	MCFLS MKE Mixer Expense	$1,400	$ 1,400			0.00	$ 1,400	(100.00)
90	Member Replacement Fines Exp (24)	$17,000	$ 17,000		$3,422.19	(20.13)	$ 13,578	(79.87)
91	Member OverDrive Adv Exp (25)	$15,000	$ 15,000			0.00	$ 15,000	(100.00)
92	Youth Services Exp	$10,000	$ 10,000			0.00	$ 10,000	(100.00)
93	Inclusive Services Exp	$10,000	$ 10,000			0.00	$ 10,000	(100.00)
94	**Total General Expenditures**	$3,628,491	$ 3,628,491	$ -	$607,095.39	(16.73)	$ 3,021,396	(83.27)
95								
96	**Special Expenditures**							
97	W. Milw Borrowing Exp (30)	$41,706	$ 41,706			0.00	$ 41,706	(100.00)
98	RB - MCFLS Payment Expense	$1,284,682	$ 1,284,682			0.00	$ 1,284,682	(100.00)
99	ILS Migration Reserve	$0	$ -			0.00	$ -	0.00
100	Member Catalog Contract Reserve	$185,769	$ 185,769			0.00	$ 185,769	(100.00)
101	Ecommerce Expense (32)	$150,000	$ 150,000		$32,613.20	(21.74)	$ 117,387	(78.26)
102	**Total Special Expenditures**	$1,662,157	$ 1,662,157	$ -	$32,613.20	(1.96)	$ 1,629,544	(98.04)
103								
104	**Total Expenditures**	$5,290,648	$ 5,290,648	$ -	$639,708.59	(12.09)	$ 4,650,939	(87.91)
105								
106	**Revenue/Expenditures +/-**				$2,356,788.50			

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MCFLS Board Meeting Availability

2024

MCFLS Board Meeting Availability

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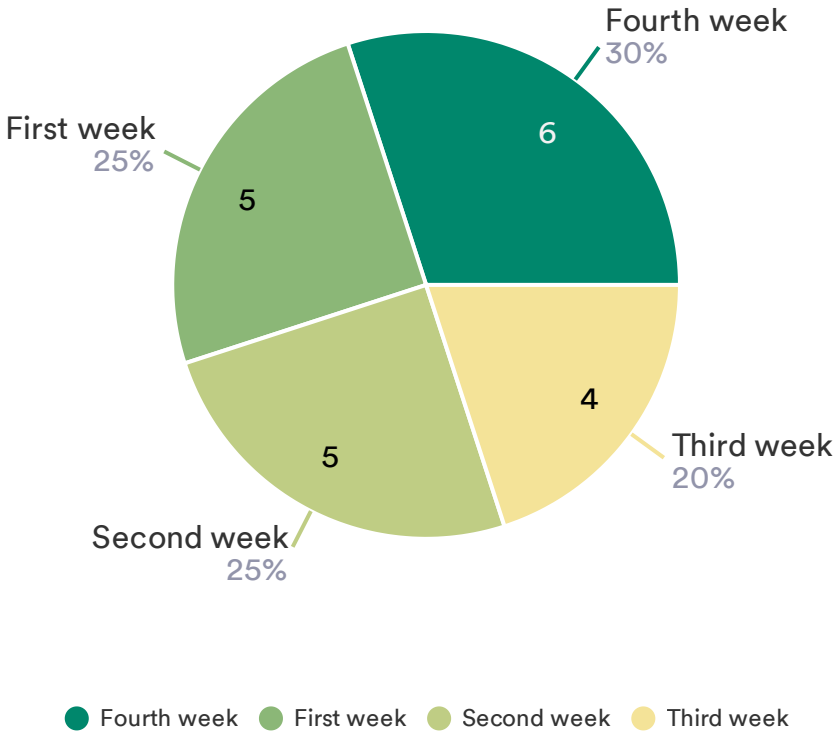
Available Weeks of the Month

20 Responses



MCFLS Board Meeting Availability

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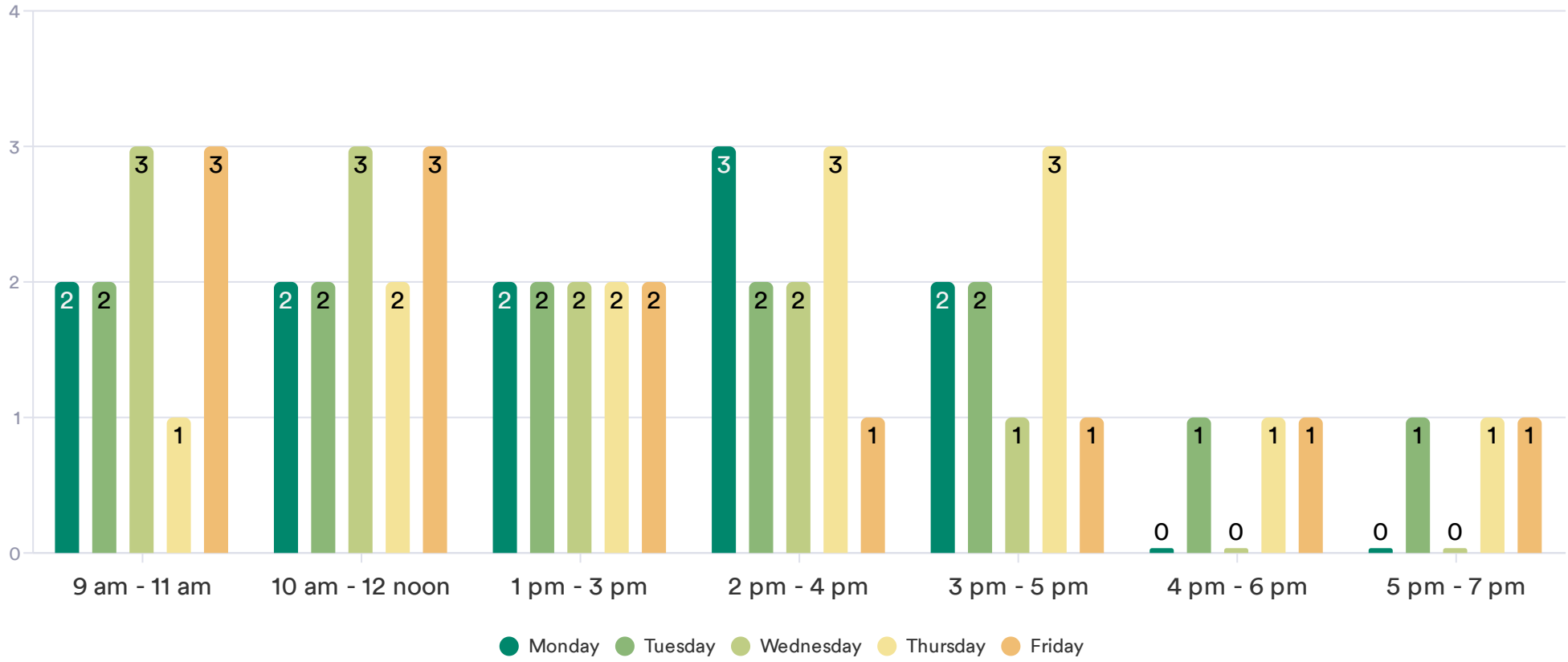
Please indicate days and times you are generally available.

6 Responses



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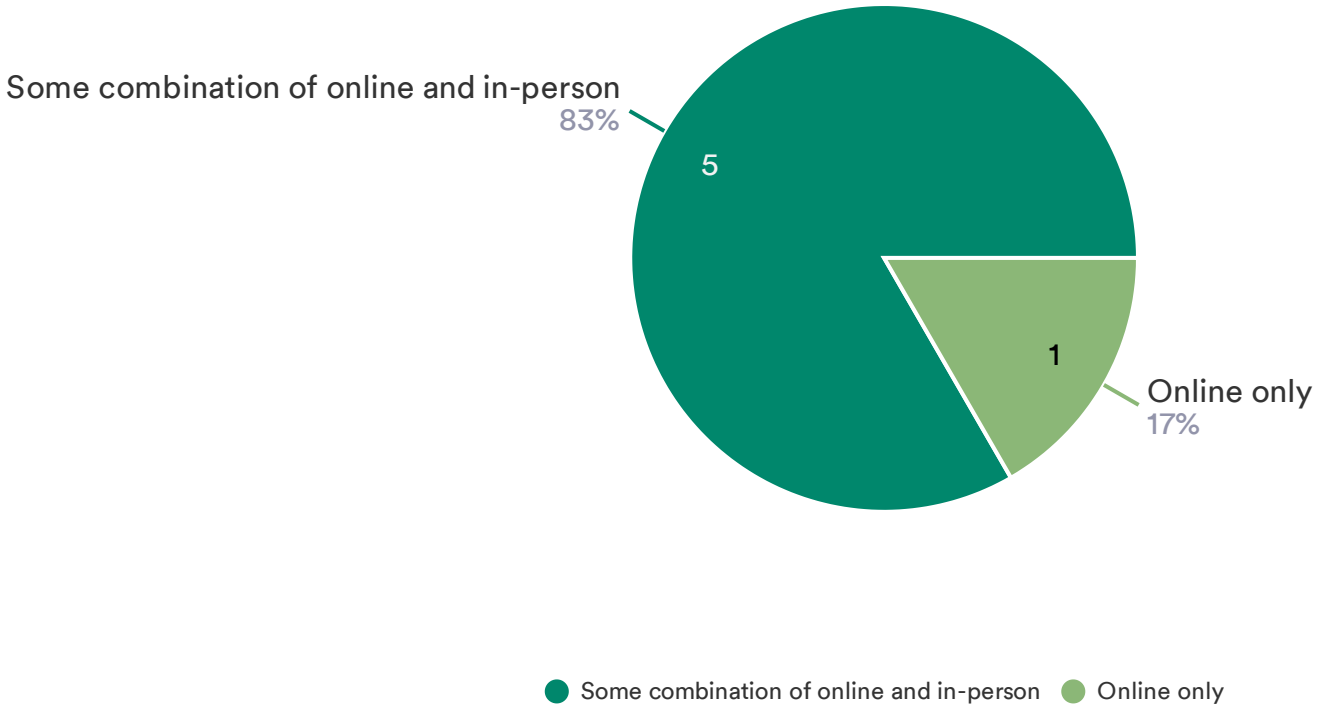
Please indicate your preference for a meeting format

6 Responses



MCFLS Board Meeting Availability

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Please add any comments or notes regarding your schedule.

4 Responses- 2 Empty

Data	Responses
If the meetings are virtual, I'm available most weekdays from 9-2, except Wednesday and Thursday between 8-10. I prefer to have meetings in the late afternoon, but I can be flexible.	1
The 5 pm-7 pm times work the best for me. I typically get back to the Milwaukee area between 4:15-4:30 pm so I would be a bit late if the meetings begin at 4 pm.	1
May have some limited times on some Mondays Second and third Mondays are the buiest.	1
Since I don't drive, I rely on Mary's schedule. If in-person, after 10 am preferred. Otherwise, I'm a flexible guy.	1

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MILWAUKEE COUNTY
FEDERATED LIBRARY SYSTEM

709 North Eighth Street
Milwaukee, WI 53233
PH: 414-286-8149
FAX: 414-286-3209

2024 MCFLS SYSTEM/DIRECTOR GOALS

- Oversee the creation of the 2025 – 2028 MCFLS System Strategic Plan and renegotiation of agreements including those for reciprocal borrowing, cataloging and resource library services.

- Through strategic planning, create an organizational values statement that defines MCFLS core principles and ideals. The MCFLS values statement will work together with our mission and vision to direct our goals and activities as a system.

- Continue MCFLS DEI and inclusivity efforts with the Inclusive Services committee and community partners to open the resources of public libraries to all Milwaukee County residents.

- Initiate the process of putting the system delivery contract out for bid in 2024 as directed by the MCFLS Board.

- Implement several system technology changes, including:
    - Migration to the Aspen Discovery platform by June 2024.
    - Move to Shoutbomb for telephone notification by mid-year 2024.
    - Transfer phone services to RingCentral in first quarter of 2024.

- Again offer site visits to member libraries to discuss their specific needs and how the system can help meet them.

- Continue to guide the system's marketing efforts with the help of system staff, particularly the Public Information Coordinator. Implement campaigns currently planned and take advantage of local or statewide opportunities to draw residents to our libraries.

- Improve internal MCFLS functions:
    - Work with system staff on documenting internal workflows with an eye toward succession planning and a more formal training program.
    - Procure a project management tool to share progress on individual and system goals.
    - Investigate possible staff team building or in-service activities

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Marketing Report for 2023

LIBRARIES ROCK FOREVER. THE END.

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Print Advertising

- **Valpak** – one mailing in January
- **Vericast** – "**SAVE"** home delivered ad wraps. This covers the northwest section of the county. 6 mailings (every other month).
- **Community Magazine Publications** (2x per year for each)
  - South Milwaukee *Bridges*
  - Oak Creek *Current*
  - Greendale *Life in the Village*
  - St. Francis

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Print Ads

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Print Ads

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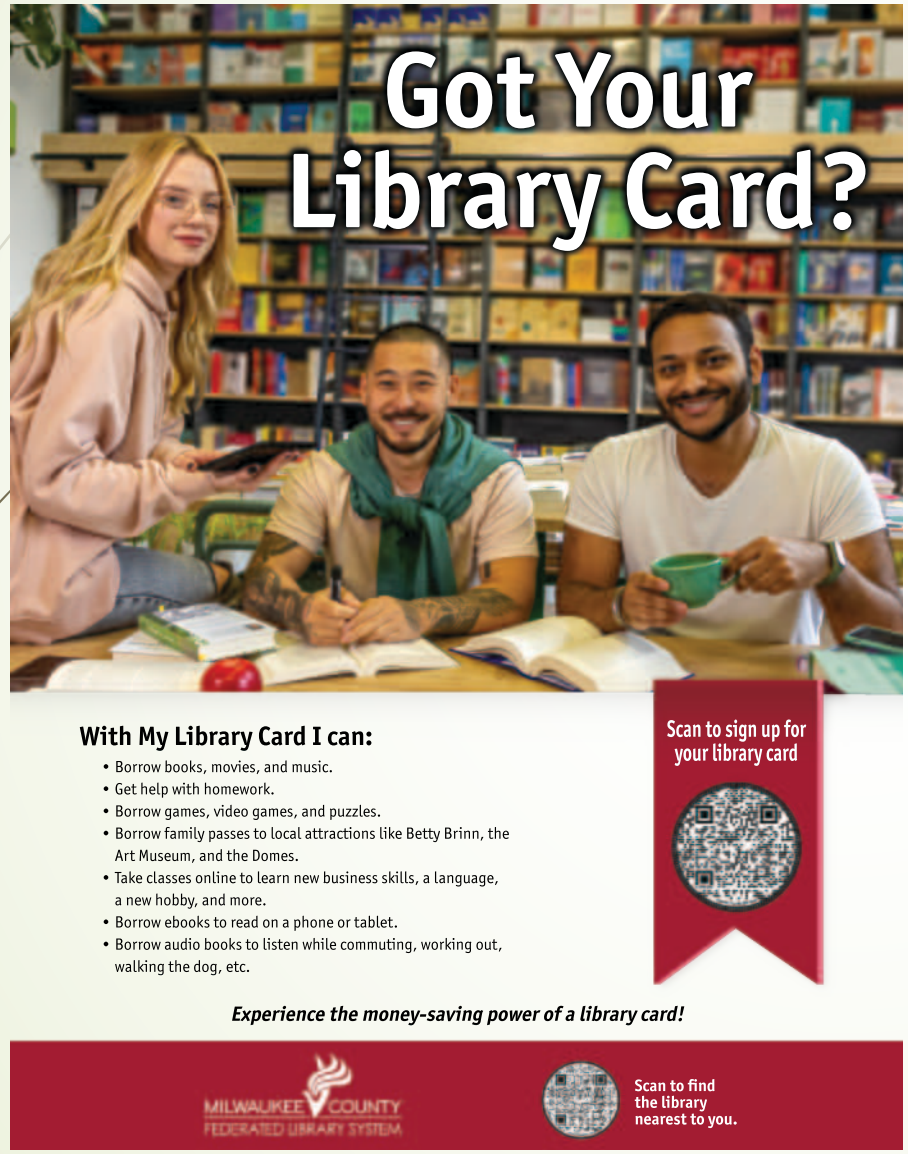
Print Ads



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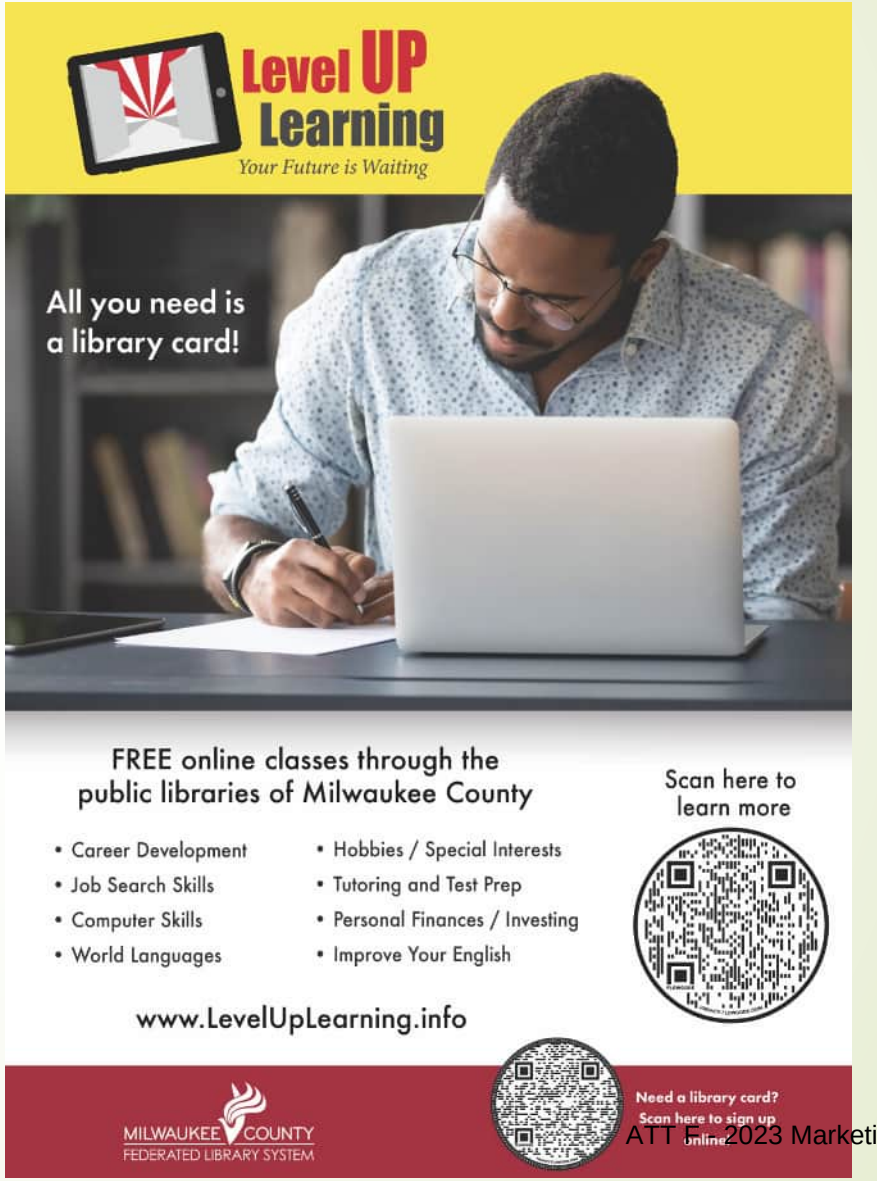
Print Ads



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Radio Advertising

- **WHAD** -- radio sponsorship spots & ad placement in e-newsletters
- **HYFIN Radio Milwauke**e – on air sponsorship spots every other month
- **B93.3** –
  - "Read with B" (Sept/Oct) -- on air ads, 3 library visits (videos posted to their website and youtube). Collaboration with Bridges System
  - "Winter Wonders" (Nov/Dec) – signage at drive through light show (Boerner Botanical Gardens), swag in gift bags, on-air ads.

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Social Media Presence

- (as of 11/25):
  - **202 posts (FB and Instagram)**

  - **<u>FACEBOOK</u>**
  - 852 new page followers (3,794 FB followers total)
  - 159,012 reach
  - 18,673 interactions

  - **<u>INSTAGRAM</u>**
  - 149 new followers (475 IG followers total)
  - 29,182 reach
  - 1,812 interactions

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Social Media Demographics

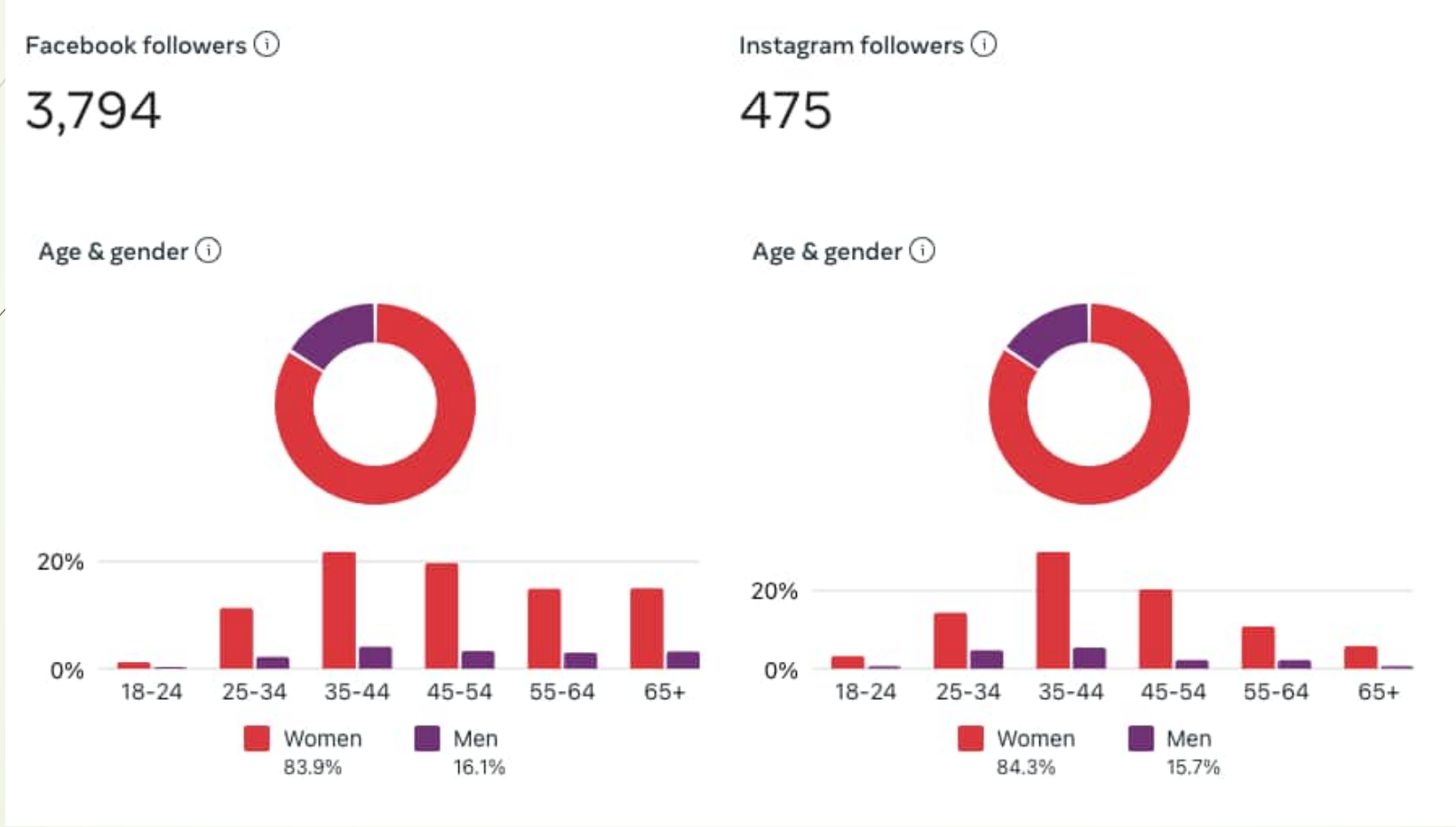

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Photo Contest – 32 participants

Photo Scavenger Hunt – 538 participants

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Library Video Tours

(3 done, much more to come!)

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2024 Marketing Plans

LIBRARIES STILL ROCK. EVEN MORE. THE END.

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Family Literacy Campaign

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Why a campaign for "family" literacy?

According to the Literacy Gap Map from the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, in Milwaukee County, **25% of adults** are at or below the lowest literacy level, and 20.5% live below the poverty level. About 15% of these residents say their overall health is either "fair" or "poor," the report says.

– *Milwaukee Journal Sentinal*, Oct. 3, 2023

A child of parents with low literacy is 72% more likely to have low literacy.

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Adult Resources

- **The Juice**
  - An online platform that published five news articles Mon-Fri. When a user signs on, they can choose what reading level to be shown, from 5th grade through 11+.
  - Our intent is:
    - To encourage families to read together – the lower level makes it easier for kids or adults with lower reading skills. The content is of interest to encourage people to read it.
  - MCFLS has purchased a 1 year unlimited use license.
  - Our license will begin Feb. 1, 2024.

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Adult Resources

- **Reading Horizons**
  - An online platform that provides personalized tutoring that is self-directed.
  - The program begins with an assessment test, and then serves up lessons that are tailored to the student's reading level. It can go all the way down to the alphabet and letter sounds.
  - We recognize that not every library can accommodate a program with in-person tutors, and not every student can or will come in person.
  - MCFLS has purchased a 1 year unlimited license, to begin 2/1/24.

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Adult Resources

- **Tutors in Libraries**
  - Tutors from Literacy Services of Wisconsin will come into libraries to provide weekly sessions with students.
  - Eight libraries have indicated an interest so far.
  - We have a meeting scheduled for Dec. 13th to discuss with the director of Literacy Services.

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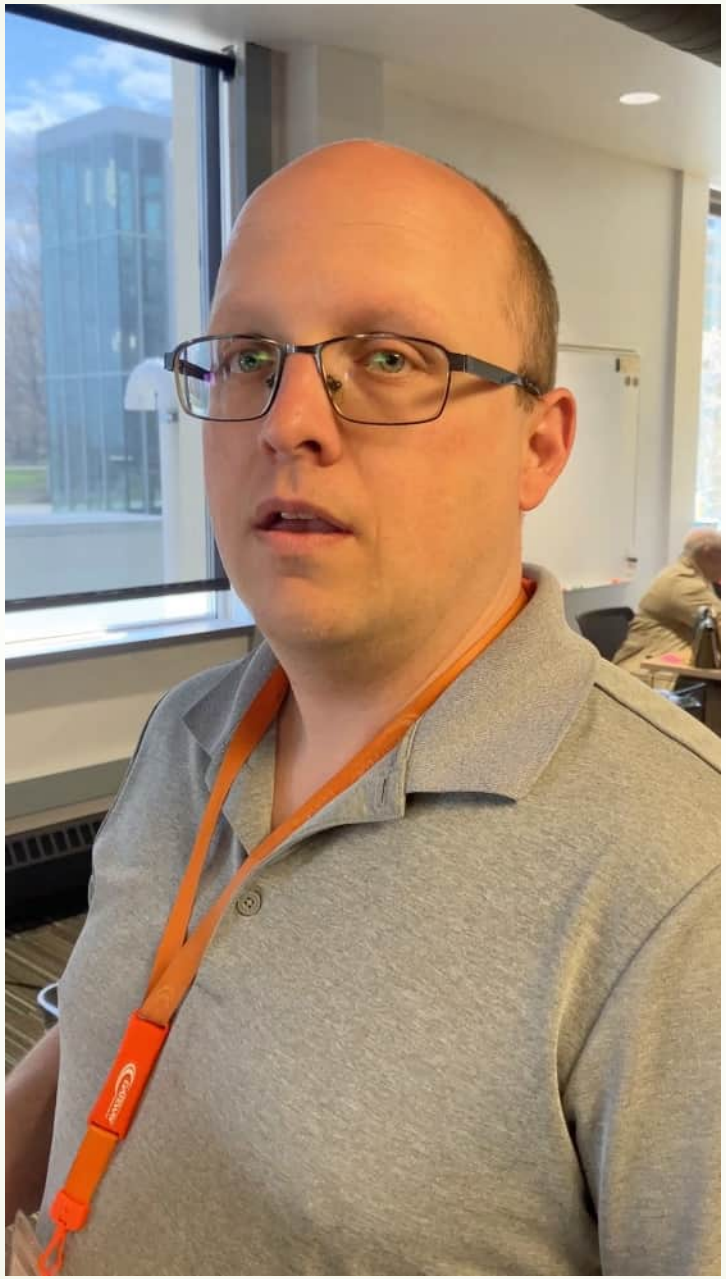

Video ads and Shorts on Youtube will be running, with links that will go to a landing page with more video instruction/info.

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“Living Libraries” Passport Program

(We said it last time,

but we mean it this time.)

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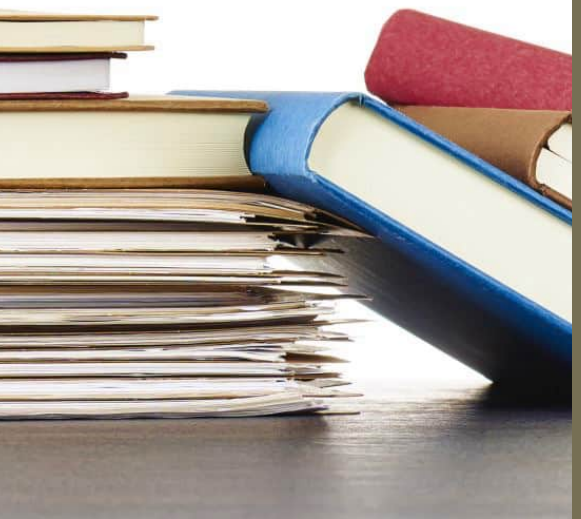
Living Libraries Passport Program

- Probably to run in late winter / spring
- Working with both print materials and an app for smart phones – discussions still in progress.
- People will visit libraries to earn points toward prizes
- If using physical materials, we are looking at setting up a "self-serve" way to stamp their books – no library staff involvement needed.



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Type of advertising	2023 Total	Notes
Print Ads	$ 19,110.00	Valpak (1 mailing, then terminated contract), Vericast, community magazines
Radio Ads	$ 14,970.00	B93.3, HYFIN, WPR
Bus Ads	$ 9,100.00	Interior placards, 150 buses
Social media ads	$ 2,847.95	Facebook, Instagram
Printing collateral	$ 2,821.00	stickers, flyers, brochures
Quizzes / prizes	$ 550.00	
Yearly service subscriptions	$ 1,322.00	
Misc	$ 796.00	
	$ 51,516.95	

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NewsBank inc.

Wisconsin Legislature - 'Obscene' books bill - Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (WI) - February 12, 2024 - page A1
February 12, 2024 | Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (WI) | Natalie Eilbert; Green Bay Press-Gazette | Page A1

Terri Lesley had no idea what was coming when she hung up with the Campbell County commissioner in June 2021, except that a group of people wanted to discuss the library.

The request wasn't so unusual. Lesley, at that time, served as the executive director of Campbell County Public Library System in Gillette, Wyoming, a position she'd held for more than a decade in a town she's lived in most of her life.

At the next board meeting, Lesley walked in cold to an awaiting hornet's nest. A group of county residents aimed their vitriol at nearly 30 pro-sex education and pro-LGBTQ+ books they wanted gone from the library shelves — fast. That, Lesley explained at the July 2021 meeting, wouldn't be possible. Residents could challenge books at any time, but those requests then enter a process. Librarians read the book, evaluate the complaint and determine whether the book violates the collection development policy.

"They resented having to go through these actions. They just wanted it done," Lesley said. "And, in my opinion, they thought the better way was to go on the attack mode."

Nevertheless, they went through the process, and the books were found not in violation. Lesley was blamed. Smear campaigns ensued; Lesley and other librarians endured threats and harassment. One family even reported Lesley to the Campbell County Sheriff's Office, demanding her arrest dispensing child pornography.

Lesley would come to understand her saga was part of a national strategy orchestrated by an anti-LGBTQ+ organization called MassResistance. Its mission, "to confront assaults on the traditional family, school children, and the moral foundation of society," also meant ousting librarians who stood in its way.

Two years later, that's exactly what happened. Lesley was fired on July 28, 2023.

More than 1,000 miles away, a new bill introduced in the Wisconsin Legislature would open school librarians to prosecution for purchasing library books considered "obscene." It's a bill that's been replicated across the United States, according to Every Library, which is tracking legislation concerning libraries. Wisconsin is one of 13 states with bills that could potentially criminalize librarians for distributing "harmful materials" to minors.

In December, USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin spoke with six education experts from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, who expressed concerns about the implications of such a bill, from how it would impact the mental health of young people to the fractures it would carve between educators and parents.

"I am really, really tired of anti-democratic extremists pretending they are protecting our kids when they fearmonger in the name of 'parental rights,'" wrote Jill Underly in an op-ed at the Wisconsin State Journal on Dec. 19. "I am sickened to hear reports of harassment and threats made against school and library staff."

What would this bill mean for school librarians?

Already, six states, including Texas, Tennessee and North Dakota, have enacted legislation that removes protections for school librarians purchasing books deemed "obscene" by area library boards. It's a move that many library advocates and educators say flies in the face not only of First Amendment rights, but the educators' training Part of that training is the ability to discern age-appropriate materials and communicate new ideas, perspectives and history through a lens of learning.

At a Dec. 5 Assembly Committee on Education public hearing, co-authors state Sen. Andre Jacque, R-De Pere, and state Rep. Scott Allen, R-Waukesha, explained the bill would allow educators to be prosecuted them for giving obscene materials to minors. Allen said the intent is to "hold educators to the same level as other Wisconsinites." Prosecution can only take place if both the district attorney and the attorney general sign off on criminal proceedings.

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Wisconsin's definition of "obscene" is consistent with the Miller Test, the legal test used to determine whether First Amendment expressions are "obscene," based on a 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision. That definition, which Allen shared at the December hearing, says that a writing, picture, film or other recording is considered obscene if the average person, applying community standards, would find that it "appeals to the prurient interest if taken as a whole," if the sexual content is obviously offensive, and if the material lacks serious literary, artistic, political, education, or scientific value, if taken as a whole.

Allen, in his testimony, objected to the idea that the bill is about banning books or is part of some culture war. It's about providing "accountability." Jacque concurred, and said his mother, a retired educator, also expressed concern about today's reading materials. It's about ensuring that when parents send their children to school, they're sending them to a safe space, Jacque said.

Some of the books presented at the public hearing included "The Infinite Moment of Us" by Lauren Myracle, "Fun Home" by Alison Bechdel and "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood. The pages of the books up for scrutiny were auto-flagged by a website called BookLooks.org, created by a group of concerned parents, which scans texts for sexually explicit words and feeds back the number of times those words appear in the book.

Among educators applauding the bill were Waukesha school board president Kelly Piacsek and Mukwonago Area School District Superintendent Joe Koch. Koch, who described the thin line of what is acceptable literature in K-12 schools, wants to see a clearly understood definition of what constitutes obscene material in order for counties to be consistent.

Educators argue that everything the bill attempts to accomplish already exists. The U.S. Supreme Court has already weighed in on what is considered obscene — the Miller Test — a definition Wisconsin has adopted. Ben Miller, director of library services at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, described the policies and procedures at the local level already in place at most libraries to determine how a book is selected, how it's weeded, how it leaves the library and how it's challenged.

Finally, if a teacher or librarian actually disseminates something obscene, they already can be prosecuted for it.

"Libraries invite civil discourse into the books on the shelves and where they are in the library. That's already a right that people have," Miller said.

Even if it is decided that a challenged book abides by the collections' policies and remains on the shelf, a parent can still have a conversation with their school librarian to make sure a child isn't reading certain materials, said Monica Treptow, school library media consultant at Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

The bill, Treptow said, unnecessarily pits parents against librarians. After all, school librarians are educators, she said, and educators want to have relationships with parents. But it's also important to not limit choice in the larger school body.

"We want to encourage parents to be involved in what their kids are reading. It's not about keeping secrets," Treptow said. "We can work together to make sure that that child is not reading certain materials. But every single parent has that same choice. And these people want to take that choice away from others, and that's where the problems ensue."

When USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin reached out to Wisconsin MassResistance for comment on why it's trying to advance these bills, founding member Karen Mahoney declined, even though she had been emailed in advance, at her request, what the interview would cover.

"We've been down this road many times with the mainstream press. The articles are invariably hit pieces," Mahoney said.

Surveys show LGBTQ+ students see libraries as safe spaces

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In 2022, Human Rights Campaign and the University of Connecticut surveyed nearly 13,000 LGBTQ+ youths across the U.S. on their mental well-being, school and home experiences, health, and more.

What they found is that nearly half of all LGBTQ+ youth, and more than half of transgender and genderqueer youth, said they felt unsafe in at least one school setting. Yet, nine in 10 LGBTQ+ youth said they usually or always felt safe in their school libraries. Treptow believes that sense of safety and belonging has everything to do with choice, empathy and curiosity.

"One of the features of the school library that is sort of absent from the other areas of school is that we have the breadth of a collection that allows for (empathy), because none of the books are required reading," Treptow said. "It's all about voice. It's all about choice in the library."

When she taught eighth grade, Abigail Swetz, communications director for DPI, noticed a pattern as she took her students to the library on a regular basis. One of her students had recently transitioned socially — meaning, they changed their pronouns, clothing, hairstyles, names and more, in alignment to their gender identity. A friend asked the librarian about a book they could read featuring a trans character.

"They were just confused. They had asked for this book so they could know their friend a little bit better," Swetz said.

By the end of the week, multiple students asked to read the book, including the trans student, which got them communicating more. It happened because a librarian gave the student a book that generated discussion about LGBTQ+ understanding and empathy, Swetz said.

Now, Swetz wonders whether this "really beautiful thing" could happen if some of these bills are signed into law.

"The thing that worries me the most is when people argue against these identities and explorations of ideas, it makes it seem like empathy is seen as an agenda, and that is a very dangerous road to go down," Swetz said. "The language we use is heard by our children and the people we're using it with, even if we're not talking directly to, for example, an LGBTQ+ student. They're hearing what we're saying about them."

Just one in five LGBTQ+ students said they had access to LGBTQ+ inclusive sex education and fewer than one in seven have ever been taught about LGBTQ+ history. Instead, a majority of LGBTQ+ youth, more than eight in 10, are turning to the internet to fill these educational gaps.

That's a problem, said Deborah Caldwell-Stone, the director of the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom, who believes young people should be able to go to the library to find accurate answers to their questions. And that's especially true for older teenagers on the verge of college, entering the military or starting careers.

"Adolescents don't automatically become adults on their 18th birthdays. They grow up, and part of that process is the ability to explore the world on their own," Caldwell-Stone said. "Librarians can be very important in guiding young people to curated content that is accurate."

It doesn't make sense, Caldwell-Stone argued, that adults appear not to have a problem handing their children phones with internet capabilities, but draw the line at being able to access certain books at the library.

"Given all that's out there, information (found on the internet) can be true or untrue, malign or not malign," Caldwell-Stone said, "but we discourage them from using a curated collection developed by a professional who's been trained especially to make sure that the collection serves the information needs of the audience they're serving."

There's a copycat nature to the books being questioned

PEN America, a nonprofit that defends writers, artists, and journalists and protects free expression worldwide, has tracked 5,894 instances of school book bans in the United States over the last two years. All told, 2,598 authors, illustrators and translators have been impacted by book bans over the 2021-22 and 2022-

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23 school years, including Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Eric Carle, Toni Morrison and even a graphic novel adaptation of Anne Frank's diary.

For Caldwell-Stone, banning library books goes against the very basic principle of libraries. The library is a locus for voluntary reading, one that is community-based and -funded. It's also a costly process.

Back in Wisconsin, Elkhorn Area School District temporarily removed 444 books from its middle and high school libraries. The majority of the books challenged were reviewed, approved for continued use and returned to circulation, which required time and resources to handle quickly.

The copycat nature of the books being questioned raises red flags for Iris Halpern, a Colorado-based attorney defending multiple librarians, including Lesley, across the country.

"They've never read the books. They're told in these template playbooks to turn to the one page where there might be something racially or sexually controversial," Halpern said. "Like they always flag Toni Morrison's 'The Bluest Eye' because there's incest in it. Yes, that's not a pretty picture of the world, but that's not what the book is about. It isn't pornography."

Morrison was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993. Judges described her as someone "who in novels characterized by visionary force and poetic import, gives life to an essential aspect of American reality," according to the judges.

"What we're seeing is that, as bills like this get enacted or threatened, we see library media specialists stopping the purchase of books, which isn't going to help anyone," Treptow said. "There's a fear going on, a self-censorship."

The Wisconsin bill is already having a chilling effect on school librarians across the state, said Treptow, at a time when library staffing is already waning. Based on a report released in January 2023, one in every three teachers, which includes librarians, will leave the field in five years.

And, as Miller points out, librarians aren't in it for the money. Using dollar amounts adjusted to 2021, the median salary for teachers fell from more than $62,000 in 2011 to $56,000 in 2021, the report said.

Lesley, from Gillette, Wyoming, misses her job. She fell in love with books early in life and then, her former career in public relations landed her a job in the library with which she was so familiar. She believed in her library's mantra, "We serve everyone in the community — not the select few."

Her whole life is in the community — her three children, her husband, a dog named Mr. Earl. She hasn't made a decision about her future yet, but she's painfully aware that getting a different library job would mean moving and she isn't ready to do that.

That doesn't mean she has regrets.

"I'm a strong believer in the First Amendment, and I can't abide bullies — I've always been like that," Lesley said. "So when I see this group trying to pick on a marginalized part of our community, I felt like somebody has to fight for them. Somebody has to stand up because what they're doing is wrong. It might as well be me."

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MILWAUKEE COUNTY
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February 26, 2024

January/February 2024 Director's Report

Summary of activities

System Activities

- Strategic planning. System staff met with Rachel Arndt on February 7 for a three hour staff retreat to get feedback on the January 18 system retreat. Rachel and I will meet again on February 29 to talk over takeaways from these meetings and prepare for the L&SS meeting on March 7.
- Meeting with the Community Reintegration Center. On February 23 I met with staff from the Community Reintegration Center and deputy chief of staff Tim Schabo regarding potential support for library services for residents at the facility.
- Annual report. I have worked with numerous directors regarding the annual report, answering questions and holding one-on-one meetings to help them meet the February 29 deadline.

State activities

- Library Legislative Day. I arranged for transportation for MCFLS and Bridges member libraries to attend Library Legislative Day on February 6. I met with representatives Evan Goyke and Jessie Rodriguez in addition to staff from Senator Dan Knodl's office and relayed stories from our communities and libraries.
- Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries (WAPL) Presentation. I've agreed to present on our compensation survey activities at the WAPL conference this May. Riti Grover (system director at Monarch) and Jeannie Dilger (Palatine PL) are offering a session on how to use the data and create a compensation plan for directors and library boards.

Grant activities

- All of Us grant MKE Mixer project. Staff from the All of Us research program have begun using the Mixer boxes for their presentations. We expect to get feedback on how equipment is working and what, if any, changes need to be made.

Upcoming Activities

1. Continue activities related to strategic planning.
2. Complete the state annual report for the system.
3. Begin the process of putting the delivery contract out to bid.