

Lakeland Library Cooperative ILS
Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Stronger Together



Introduction

The Lakeland Library Cooperative Integrated Library System (ILS) provides resource sharing tools that are vital to its 40 public library members in western Michigan. Ranging from large to small, rural to urban, the ILS allows members to provide vital library services through collaboration.

This plan represents the overall strategy for the LLC ILS over the next three years and is presented to the ILS Council for questions, discussion, and revisions in August 2018. Upon approval, LLC ILS staff will finalize an Activity Plan that will support the overall strategy and evolve as we work towards goals. LLC ILS staff will regularly review progress towards meeting plan goals and report to the ILS Council via a data report (dashboard).

Our planning process was inclusive and enlightening. We remain committed to our members and core services and members and are excited about the focus that this plan will bring through 2021. We hope this plan inspires you to grow and change with us over the next three years.

Background

This planning process allowed LLC ILS space to assess how we're doing. We wanted to know what members valued about the ILS and if they were satisfied with the services they receive. In addition, we knew that our members had a lot of input about opportunities for improvement, so we wanted to capture this feedback in a systematic way and use it to create a path forward. We spent significant time gathering and reviewing data so we could learn more about what was on the minds of our member libraries and how to best respond to their concerns in a way that makes sense within our budget and scope of influence. We entered into the strategic planning process with open minds, but rooted in our values of cooperation, resource sharing, and service to library users.

Amanda E. Standerfer from Fast Forward Libraries, a strategic planning consultant and librarian, helped guide us through the planning process. The Planning Team included:

- Sheryl VanderWagen, LLC ILS Manager
- Thom Riley, LLC IT Manager
- Carol Dawe, LLC Director
- Sandie Enders, Muskegon Area District Library
- Diane Kooiker, Herrick District Library
- Rob Bristow, Georgetown Township Public Library
- Teresa Kline, Fennville District Library
- Donna Clark, Cedar Springs Public Library
- LaVonne Marshall, Coopersville Area District Library

The Planning Team met regularly starting in January 2018 to design, manage, and execute the planning process.

Planning Process & Data Highlights

In order to create a cohesive, actionable plan, informed by data, we talked to wide array of stakeholders using various tools. Initial Planning Team input guided development of a member survey that was executed in the spring of 2018 (see Appendix 1 for survey highlights). As patterns emerged in the data,

we narrowed focus areas to Training, Technology, and Organizational Development to test how these resonated with members (through a series of Focus Groups and individual interviews).

We held a Member Summit on April 20, 2018 to dig into the focus areas and brainstorm possible activities. By grouping activities, goals emerged and the Planning Team started to organize the strategic plan. After the Summit, staff also considered various vision and mission statements as well as refining the definitions of each focus area. Finally, the Planning Team came together to review the plan outline and refine goals.

Vision

Facilitating member library collaboration for exceptional customer service.

Our vision is what we hope to achieve: if we facilitate collaboration, it will lead to exceptional customer service. We believe that our vision is achievable if we effectively carry out our mission.

Mission

The Lakeland Library Cooperative ILS provides resource sharing and access to information for member libraries that enables responsive services to their communities.

Our mission is the core of what we do and is our promise to our members. We provide services needed by our members that enable them to effectively serve their communities.

Strategic Focus Areas

This plan is divided into three areas of focus: Training, Technology, and Organizational Development. These areas emerged during the member survey and were discussed at length during the Member Summit on April 20, 2018. Summit attendees brainstormed potential activities for each focus area, which became key input for the Planning Team as we brought together the plan components, planned for implementation, and developed measures of success. This graphic is a snapshot of what we want our members to see in us if we are successful.

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Training

We provide the ILS training needed for member libraries to provide excellent access to library services and information in their communities.

Our members have the training they need to serve their patrons.

Technology

We are proactive about technology so our members are confident that they have resource sharing tools to best serve their patrons.

Our technology is reliable and responsive.

Organizational Development

We strive to be a learning organization that values effective collaboration.

We are stronger together.



Vision: Facilitating member library collaboration for exceptional customer service.

Mission: The Lakeland Library Cooperative ILS provides resource sharing and access to information for member libraries that enables responsive services to their communities.

Outcomes

What's working: Members are committed to cooperation. We have a strong sense of customer service and want to provide the best services possible to member libraries so they can serve their communities.

Our members are not afraid of change. The pace of change can be overwhelming, but we continuously work to help members manage change and focus on what's needed to implement change.

Overall, members are satisfied with the ILS and think it's valuable. They are committed to the future of the ILS and look forward to what's next.

What else is needed: Our members want tools to enable them to increase engagement and services to their users. New technology opportunities and ILS enhancements are available on a regular basis and we need to make sure we're informed about what's best for our members. Then as we are implementing new technology or features (or even updating current features), we need to make sure members receive appropriate training that allows them to fully take advantage of the ILS.

What needs to be better: We know that there is tension with members because of the diversity of library size and geographies served. We believe we can facilitate more empathy and understanding between members by shifting the narrative around this issue. Rather than being a challenge, we know this is a strength, so when this tension comes up in our discussions and decision-making, we can do more to verbalize the tension rather than allowing resentments to grow.

This way of working together can be a model for the way we strive to work together in all aspects of our shared ILS. This plan places importance on increasing our operational capacities, not only of ILS staff but of member leaders as well. Increasing our facilitation skills, opportunities for structured dialogue, and our decision-making processes will increase member engagement and satisfaction.

Goals, Activities, Measures

The following page is a one-page summary of the strategic plan. It includes the focus area statements and details the goals in each area. Following the one-page summary, there is additional detail for each focus area, including potential activities for each goal and possible metrics. The complete Activity Plan is being drafted by LLC ILS staff and will serve as an implementation guide during the life of this plan. Progress toward meeting plan goals will be regularly reported at future member meetings.

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Training

Our members have the training they need to serve their patrons.

There is a clear training path for new and seasoned staff at member libraries.

Training is delivered in multiple formats and is easily accessible.

Member libraries plan for their annual training needs and communicate these needs to LLC ILS staff.

Technology

Our technology is reliable and responsive.

Members have a comprehensive understanding of the functionality of the ILS so they can effectively assist patrons.

We have thoroughly evaluated our current ILS system and can make recommendations for the future.

We track technology trends related to resource sharing and regularly communicate points of interest with our members.

Organizational Development

We are stronger together.

Members have the information and knowledge needed to make decisions.

Member learning is supported.

We have a plan for evaluating and building capacity.

Vision: Facilitating member library collaboration for exceptional customer service.

Mission: The Lakeland Library Cooperative ILS provides resource sharing and access to information for member libraries that enables responsive services to their communities.

Training

We provide the ILS training needed for member libraries to provide excellent access to library services and information in their communities.

Our members have the training they need to serve their patrons.

A comprehensive training program is essential for our members to be able to fully take advantage of the ILS. We know that our members have varied needs when it comes to training and the goals and activities in this focus area will help us deepen our understanding of these needs and respond in flexible ways.

We heard loud and clear at the Summit that our members want training delivered in new formats. This includes online and recorded training. We will strive to respond to the ongoing and just-in-time training needs of our members.

Also, we can facilitate training between members by making it easier for them to share tips with each other. We can also annually ask members to think about their desired training and we can develop our training schedule to align with these needs.

Goal	Possible Activities
1) <i>There is a clear training path for new and seasoned staff at member libraries.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review resources and staff allocated to training • Create checklist of training available and sequence for working through training • Enhance annual training calendar with ratings and recommended audience
2) <i>Training is delivered in multiple formats and is easily accessible.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form Training Committee to review training offerings and make recommendations • Hold four training sessions via Zoom • Record two training videos intended for end-users for members to use
3) <i>Member libraries plan for their annual training needs and communicate these needs to LLC ILS staff.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create training incentive program • Create template for member libraries to track staff training needs compared to training available and training completed • Conduct training audits during site visits to create recommended training plan

Measures of Success

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Member survey • Number of trainings held • Number attending training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre- and post-training surveys • Training audits • Hits on training resources website |
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Technology

We are proactive about technology so our members are confident that they have resource sharing tools to best serve their patrons.

Our technology is reliable and responsive.

Technology is the backbone of the ILS. It's what brings members together and drives cooperation. This focus area helps us frame some goals around technology that help us plan for the future. Technology is constantly changing and we sometimes struggle to keep up, but by having focused goals and activities, we can see our progress and move forward in a systematic way.

One of our biggest future challenges is at the core of everything we do: the ILS product. We know we need to evaluate our current ILS system to see if it's currently meeting our needs and if it has the flexibility to meet the changing needs of our member libraries and the users they serve. We plan to form a Committee to undertake the task of evaluating our current system and making recommendations for the future.

Also, there are other technology solutions that our members look to us to provide. This list continues to grow and we know we need structures in place to learn about new technology opportunities and a way to share what we are learning.

Goal	Possible Activities
1) <i>Members have a comprehensive understanding of the functionality of the ILS so they can effectively assist patrons.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating training checklist • Create ways for members to share tips • Conduct end-user survey/focus groups to learn more about how ILS can meet needs
2) <i>We have thoroughly evaluated our current ILS system and can make recommendations for the future.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Committee to evaluate current ILS • Generate list of options and features member desire in ILS • Investigate options for enhancement in current system
3) <i>We track technology trends related to resource sharing and regularly communicate points of interest with our members.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a way to communicate technology trends to members

Measures of Success

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training documents / tip sheets posted online or shared • Annual Member survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member assessment about knowledge of current system and future needs • Committee recommendation about current vendor or RFP |
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Organizational Development

We strive to be a learning organization that values effective collaboration.

We are stronger together.

To become a stronger organization, we recognize that we need to focus on organizational development. Key areas like communication, leadership development, and evaluation need to be just as much a part of our organization as the software platform that brings us together.

Working together through the ILS generates a lot of data that we can capture and analyze to inform changes and improvements for the future. In short, we can learn a lot just by paying attention to what is going on with ILS operations.

But we want to go beyond just paying attention for learning opportunities to harnessing learning to launch us forward. We know that constant change is simply a part of libraries today, so we can be proactive about improving our internal structures so we are ready to face difficult changes that might confront our members and their ability to collaborate.

Establishing best practices for communication, leadership development, and evaluation now will lead to stronger operations and more benefits for our members in the future. Through this strategic focus, we'll also strengthen our connection with individual members and ensure our success for the long-term.

Goal	Possible Activities
1) <i>Members have the information and knowledge needed to make decisions.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send structured meeting materials with participant expectations in advance of meetings • Hold meeting facilitation training for current and rising leaders • Create plan to contact members not engaged or attending meeting
2) <i>Member learning is supported.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate formal and informal networking at meetings • Use discussion and dialogue facilitation tools at meetings (as part of agenda)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate evaluation data and reports at meetings
3) <i>We have a plan for evaluating and building capacity.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form Committee to develop communications plan • Conduct capacity assessment to learn about Board and member needs • Evaluate ILS staffing needs and create plan to increase staff

Measures of Success

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-meeting feedback surveys • Annual member survey • Decision-making tracking • Communications plan with metrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing plan with metrics • Fiscal management plan with projections • Member participation in leadership roles
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Next Steps

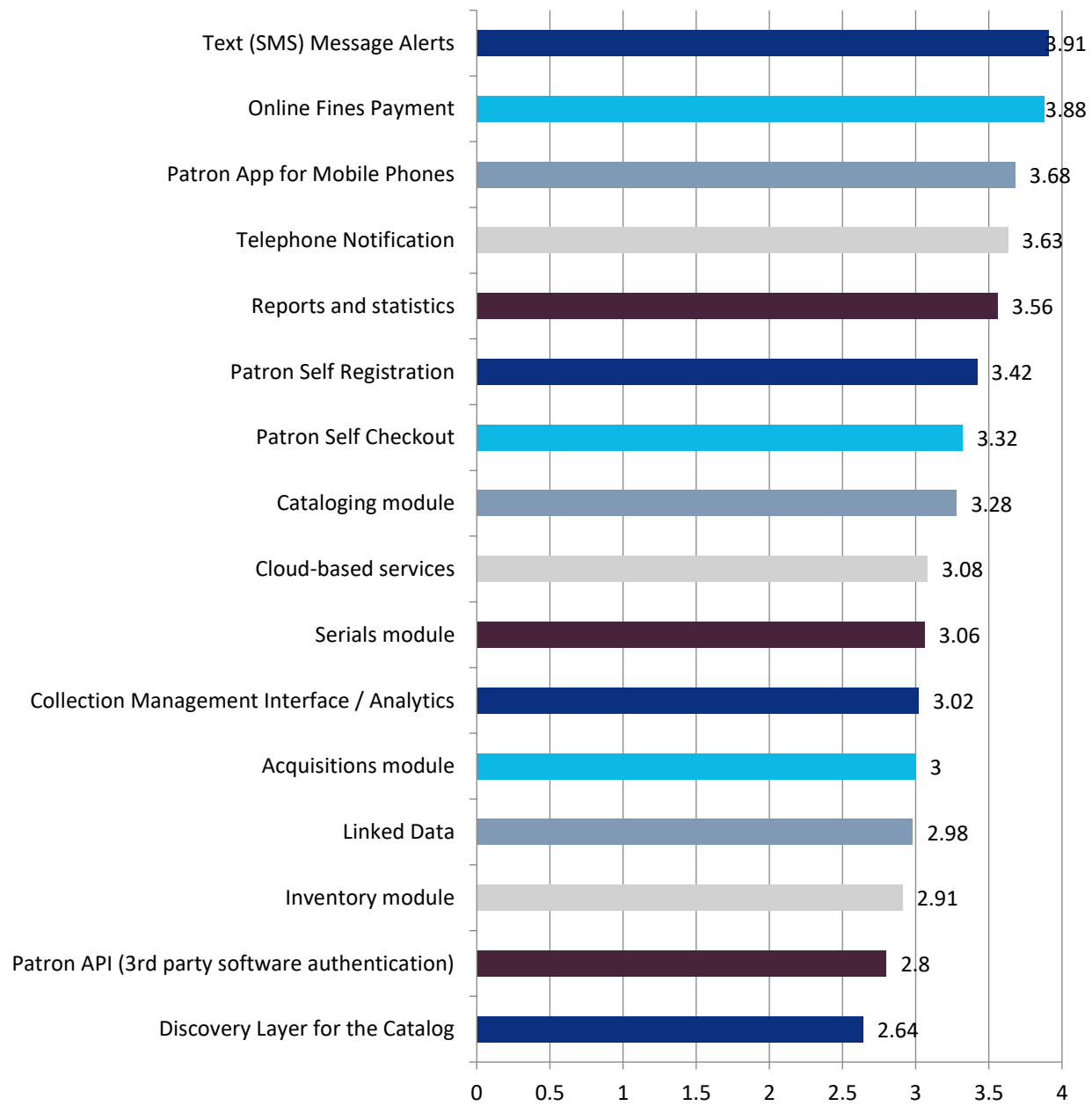
After this plan is adopted by the ILS Council, staff will finalize the Activity Plan, which will guide implementation efforts. Implementation will be an ongoing process as the timing of certain activities are determined by priority and sequence. The Activity Plan will be reviewed and adjusted annually based on progress made by staff and ILS Committees.

This plan gives suggested metrics for each focus area, but staff will finalize the actual data they will collect as the Activity Plan evolves. Some evaluation aspects, like an annual member survey, will report on progress for several goals, while other goals will have specific metrics collected during implementation. In short, evaluation of progress towards strategic plan goals will evolve during implementation. What we do know is that we are committed to reporting progress to members and opening channels for communication and continued input as we move forward.

Finally, we commit to a comprehensive review and update of this plan starting in the fall of 2021. We have high hopes that this plan will move us significantly forward and want to use this process as a best practice for maintaining momentum and an institutionalized way of operating. We know that this plan is just the first step and we are committed to moving forward together to strengthen our cooperation well into the future.

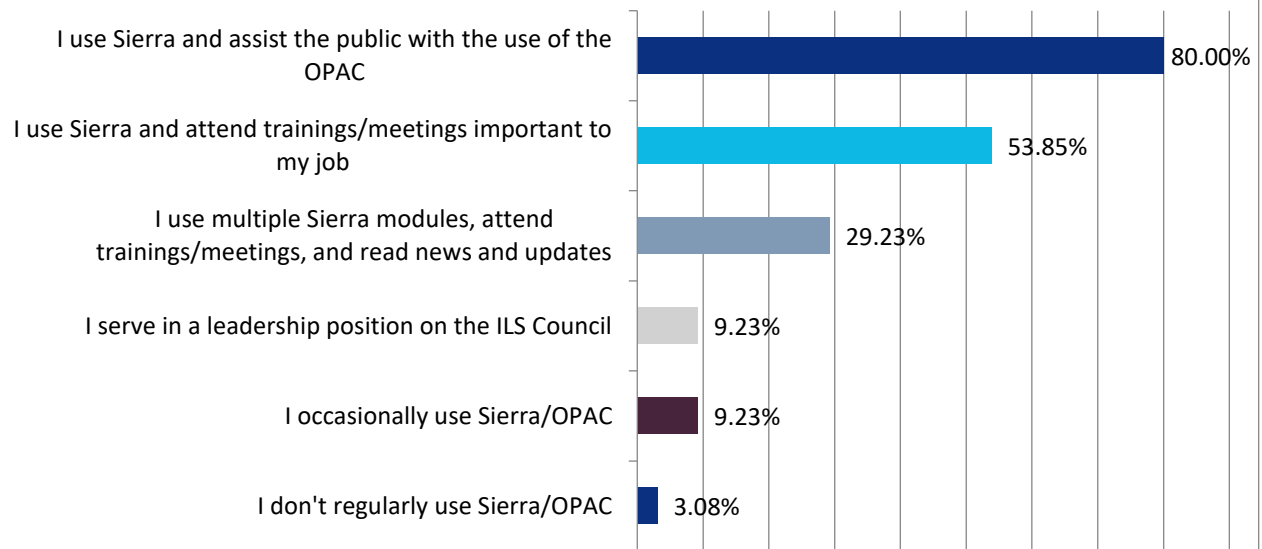
Appendix 1: Selected Data from the Member Survey

Please indicate your library's interest in the below...



*by weighted average

How would you describe your current level of engagement with the shared ILS?

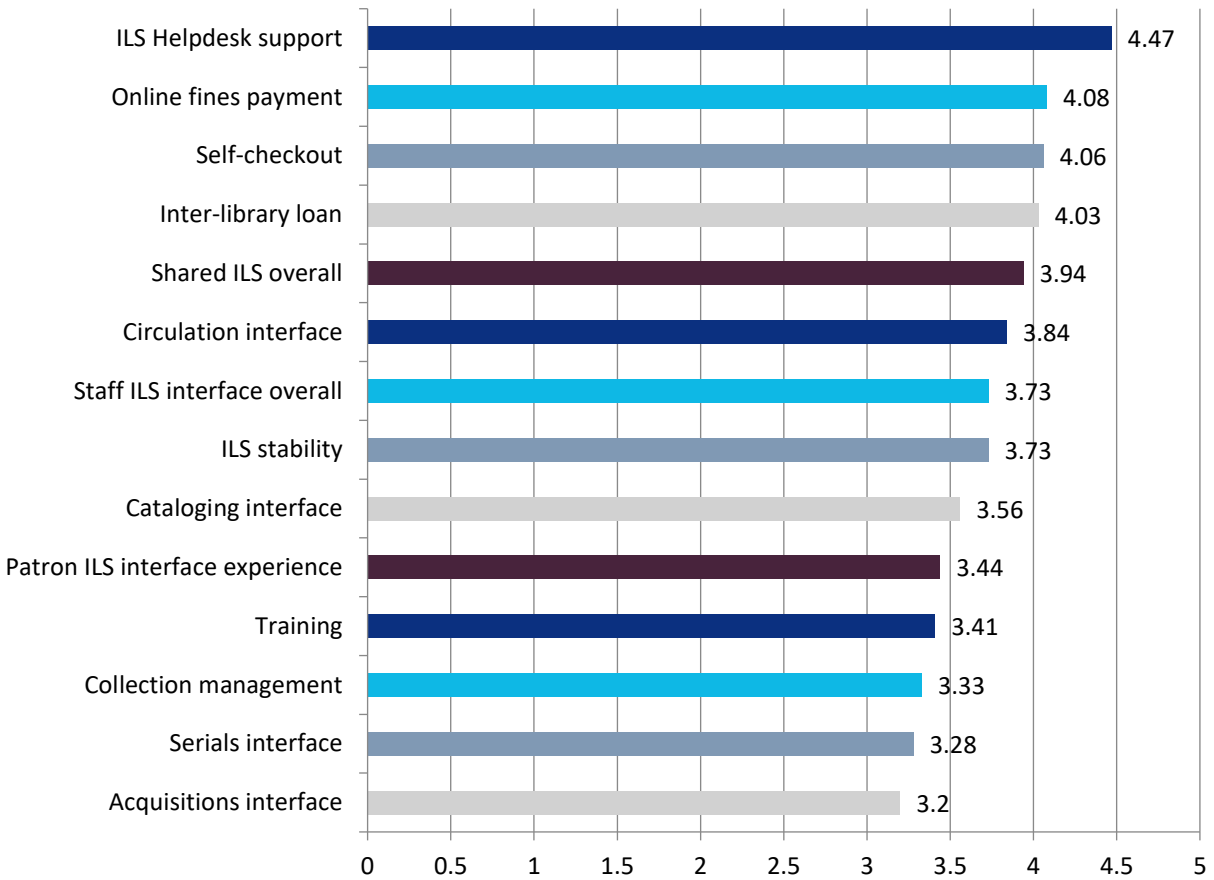


What would increase your level of engagement?

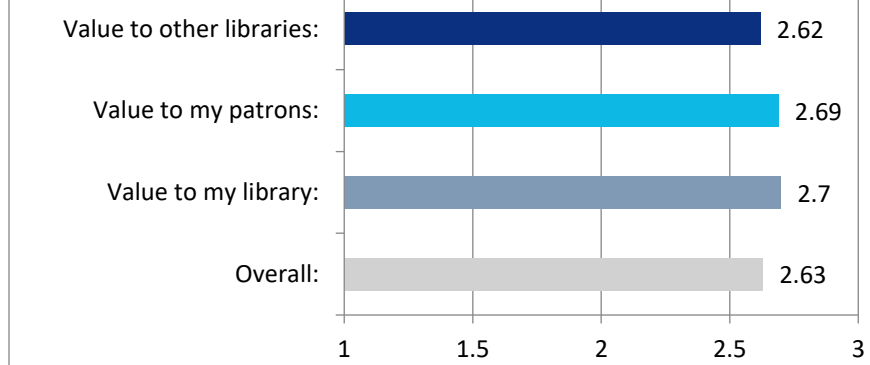
- Increased speed, less downtime, and more focused training. I have learned a lot of things by accident. Small tricks and shortcuts make a big difference in efficiency.
- Just to have more time.
- A more streamlined, easier to use interface.
- Online tutorials for occasional users to help us remember basic steps.
- More training.
- What if workshops could be recorded? Then those who can't go in person because they have to work can still learn from it when they have time to watch a video.
- Relevance to my community and user friendliness.
- Increased hours at work.
- More time and more money.
- More training on what Sierra has to offer.
- Knowledge and training.
- Having more time to devote to LLC.
- Being able to attend meetings remotely or having meetings closer to my library.
- Having more time to engage in these meetings and trainings.
- Why would I want to be more involved with the shared ILS? What is there to be engaged with?
- I am always interested in learning more about how the ILS can better serve my patrons. I think the cooperative has stepped up its game and is doing more to offer opportunities for learning and engagement on a variety of topics to its members.
- Our library needs to find more funding for more staff.
- More workshops.
- Less administrative responsibilities in my position and more time to be involved in technical services.

- I am not sure that I would increase my level of engagement solely because we do receive all of the information from the meetings and trainings.
- More time in my position.
- Being able to use Sierra wherever I need to. More training on different aspects of Sierra other than the basic functions used by staff daily. We have only a few people that know how to run reports and obtain useful information and statistics in Sierra.
- I make sure I attend the meetings when they agenda items are something important to us as a member. Otherwise, I would need to participate remotely.
- More flexibility with library schedule.
- Offering classes/trainings at more than one time/day.
- More knowledge of what is going on, again a local leadership problem.
- I believe my current level of engagement is adequate and appropriate.
- My understanding is some of the modules my library doesn't use, such as serials, is a budget decision. So, lower pricing might increase engagement.
- Additional staff within the library to allow me to become more engaged.
- More time and the ability to join more meetings.

What is your current level of satisfaction with the following?



Please rate the value of the shared ILS.



What makes you proud about being a member of the shared ILS?

- I feel like I serve my patrons well and am always able to fulfill their needs. If they walk away happy then I'm happy. We wouldn't be able to do that without relying on other libraries and their resources.
- We can offer a much better product/service to our patrons because of our part in the cooperative than we could on our own
- I like the seamlessness of collections. I don't think patrons really perceive that there is a barrier between libraries and that they see it as one big happy system. That's great!
- Being part of an environment that works towards a greater good
- ILL and access to materials faster and easier than Melcat.
- We have a huge selection of items our patrons have access to which they otherwise wouldn't due to our small size.
- Everyone is very kind and helpful with each other and patrons
- It's bigger than just those in this building. It's so much more. It's a community. A community I know little about, honestly.
- Sharing within the cooperative gives my patrons more than my library could offer on its own. I like that we are seeking new ways to connect with the public and continue to seek new technology in an effort to be leaders in library service.
- The ability to share resources amongst all the libraries.
- Membership in LLC greatly enhances collection availability for patrons; sharing costs with LLC members allows for purchase of higher end ILS
- Diverse collections. Shared knowledge.
- Our patrons have access to many materials
- The ability to borrow materials from other libraries with ease!
- Patrons have access to an incredible amount of materials and receive great service.
- The ability to get items for our patrons and to do so quickly.
- Availability of materials and the awesome ILS (Sheryl) staff.
- We're working together to provide something to library users that none of us can do alone.
- Offering our patrons access to more materials than we are able to provide.
- The incredible members and their knowledge.
- Wide variety of services to member libraries. The lending among ILS members is a good addition to MeL.
- That we can accomplish more together than my library would on its own
- Being able to connect with other libraries and librarians. I feel like we have a great thing that not all libraries are able to be a part of.
- That I can offer patrons access to a wider variety of materials.
- Resource sharing saves taxpayer money and makes a wider range of resources available to all.
- Great group of professionals to work with. Generosity of members. Help from Lakeland staff is wonderful.
- It expands the items that the public has access to! It is a sharing of resources.
- Being able to offer an extremely wide variety of resources and materials to our patrons.
- Resource sharing, added value to every patron.
- The range of resources it opens to my patrons.
- The ability to say that a patron is able to check out items from 8 counties, and close to 100 different libraries is amazing. To be able to share items through inter-library loans provides such a great selection of resources.
- I'm very proud of our commitment to work together and serve our patrons well. I like the ways in which we have moved forward in the last few years, and hope that forward momentum will continue.
- The large amount of member libraries & the willingness to share material.

- Even though we are a small library, we are able to provide what our patrons need as a part of the shared ILS.
- Opportunities to learn, share, and engage with fellow ILS members. Availability of materials and resources for patron use through the shared ILS
- Ability to have items available for our patrons.
- I am proud that so many libraries of so many different sizes can work together amicably to get problems solved in a manner that is appropriate to everyone.
- Getting materials patrons need/ want.
- Personally, I like the sense of teamwork and camaraderie that comes with being a part of the ILS.
- Being able to help patrons get the materials they want that my library is unable to provide.
- We have a great group of libraries with a vast material selection. It provides the majority of what my patrons need and want.
- Being able to point patrons to the items they need - whether in my library or in the cooperative. And, even being able to point them outside the cooperative to Melcat.

What do you think are the three most important things the ILS Council needs to address in the next 3 years?

Ease Making **Collection** Interface **Training** Staff
Continue

Mobile App Cost **Technology** User Friendly
Libraries Patron

Services Cost **Smaller Libraries** Upgrades
Mobile Training Features Collection Share

What excites you about the future of the shared ILS? Why is that exciting?

- Shared resources are a win - win for the public and for the libraries. They save money and make us look good. I'm also excited about the prospect of using linked data to promote our materials and services to a wider audience.
- It's exciting to see it grow because it means we can improve with time
- Our patrons love the ILS services. Without them we would not be able to serve everyone to their satisfaction. It would be exciting to have enhancements or changes that make serving patrons even better.
- Anything that increases our visibility to and services for our patrons makes me excited, because I think that's why we exist.

- This process is exciting to me because it will help give us direction and possibly provide new ideas so that will help improve the satisfaction of all libraries involved.
- Keeping costs low and still making the sharing of resources our first priority.
- Again, availability of so many materials.
- Variety of ideas from member libraries.
- Software should become more accessible to patrons and staff alike.
- That we might be able to do a lot more than we are currently able to do and will be able to open our collection to a wider range of people in more user friendly ways.
- That we can continue to offer more to patrons with the shared ILS.
- Nothing. That's part of the problem.
- I like that the libraries in our ILS are eager to grow into the future and want to be more than we are today for our communities. This eagerness will drive us forward to reaching goals.
- Big and small libraries cooperating together to get the good for all sizes, and sharing resources.
- I look forward to being able to continue to offer the best possible service to our own patrons, and to assist in offering expanded service to patrons of neighboring communities.
- Possibly having more modules to use if works with library's budget; updated OPAC catalog format (library doesn't use Encore now--not sure why that is)
- Together, we can do so much more than alone. We can make a huge impact on the West Michigan Community and we can still be relevant, when we come together for a greater purpose.
- The ILS Council is already taking steps towards improvement by sending out this survey. I hope that continuous feedback will be considered in the future.
- Being able to continue as a member. Our patrons who interlibrary loan really appreciate the service.
- For me, the most exciting aspect of the future of the shared ILS is the opportunity to work together as a group to bring really great services to our communities.
- There is so much out there that we could be doing for our patrons. So many ways we can get them to connect and get excited about libraries again. If we miss out on this, we are going to struggle to keep the ball rolling in a positive direction for libraries in general.
- It would be great if we could ever figure out how to show the KDL and GRPL items again.
- The unknown?
- The fact that we're having a conversation about how we can improve the ILS is, in and of itself, an exciting thing.