WiLS 2017 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Each year, WiLS staff and board work together to choose a few key initiatives to benefit members and to advance the mission of the organization.

The process to choose these initiatives begins with information gathering and listening to our members. Over the course of the year, we meet with members through individual visits, consortia meetings, facilitated discussions, and through more informal conversations at conferences or even by phone or email. The WiLS staff gathers together to review what we've learned over the year and to create some ideas for board review and input. After the board provides their feedback, the ideas are formalized and brought back to the board for final approval.

As a result of this process, we have established the following initiatives for 2017:

Undertake a process to gain understanding and to start conversations around digital preservation.

Storage and preservation of digital assets – or the lack thereof – is an issue that impacts all of our members. It is nebulous and difficult to define, and, therefore, difficult to determine the best course of action for an institution. This year, we will undertake a process to start working toward shared solutions for digital preservation for our members. Specifically, we will convene multi-type discussions about digital preservation in order to understand the needs of our members and to formulate a plan for collaborative digital preservation in the state and our role in that initiative.

Share opportunities for members to participate in open access initiatives, and participate in initiatives ourselves.

We recognize that open access is a key issue to our academic members, and we want to do what we can to help support them in moving this issue forward on their campuses. As such, we will discover and share information about educational opportunities and open access initiatives. We will work with publishers to offer lower rates on open access fees through our cooperative purchasing program. We will also discuss joining organizations that support open access in order to express our support and to facilitate our learning and sharing with the WiLS community. We will facilitate conversations around the topic when possible.

Continue to develop our planning and consulting services by capitalizing on our existing work and developing potential areas of expansion.

Over the past three years, WiLS has developed a reputation for providing strategic planning processes for public libraries that fit within the library's budget and recognize the unique needs of each library. Through this work, we have developed our own process for planning, and, in 2017, we will investigate new ways to utilize this process in different ways to benefit members. We will also be considering new areas of service based on feedback from these planning processes and known member needs.

One area we will investigate this year is consulting around tools for managing time, tasks, and internal communications. Because of our virtual office and our relatively small staff, we rely on cloud-based tools and efficient use of those tools in order to get as much done as possible. We would like to share our knowledge and experience with others. In 2017, we'll develop a "tools audit" pilot with a member library to determine what such a service might look like and how it could best benefit members.

Expand our knowledge of using data.

We know that using data is an area of need of members, and it's also an area of need for WiLS. We'd like to more effectively use data in our consortium management services, cooperative purchasing, consulting, and internally for our own planning. In 2017, we will invest time in growing staff knowledge about collecting, analyzing, and presenting data. Our hope is that this investment will not only allow us to provide better service, but could also provide us with a roadmap for educating members around this important topic.

Learn more from inside and outside the state...and then share!

We want to be able to share innovative ideas and products that may help our members, and, in order to do so, we need to learn more from both inside and outside of the state.

Inside the state, we want to continue to learn what our members are doing well, and we want to expand this effort to be more proactive in capturing and sharing those stories.

We've always invested in sending staff to ALA in order to meet with vendors, but we will be rethinking this strategy and may be investing the same resources differently in order to learn more about what's happening outside of our state and to maximize benefit to our members. We'll also be talking more with our peers around the country to learn how they work and what initiatives they are undertaking to look for potential partnerships and

potential directions that will benefit Wisconsin.

We'll also be thinking about how we share this information to the community and try some new things to spread what we're learning, including webinars that feature members and vendors.

Continue to look for ways to engage community members not yet engaged with WiLS.

While we provide services to many libraries in the state, there are staff members within those institutions, along with institutions that do not receive services from WiLS, that are not aware of WiLS and the services we provide. We will continue to look for ways to engage those individuals, including expansion of our newsletter focus, connecting with SLIS and SOIS to engage with students, and identifying libraries that do not currently participate in WiLS and making an effort to reach out to these libraries.

Continue to improve internal operations and how we work.

We're always looking for ways to do things better and to improve our member experience. While this is an ongoing process rather than a unique initiative for 2017, we include it on the list to emphasize its importance and to share some of our plans for 2017:

- Work on our renewal process to make sure we are making at least annual contact with all general members.
- Work to improve virtual meetings, both for ourselves and the consortia we manage, by developing a virtual meeting planning template/checklist and employing it with consortia we work with and also investigating equipment to help with combination virtual/in-person meetings.
- Continue to learn more about the tools we use every day and to share the knowledge we gain with members.
- Investigate ConsortiaManager as a potential replacement for MyWiLS, as it could provide additional functionality. If ConsortiaManager will not work for us, update MyWiLS to a new portal infrastructure.