



## 2019 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

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

The process to choose these initiatives begins with listening to our members. Over the year, we meet with members through individual visits, consortia meetings, facilitated discussions, and informal conversations at conferences or even by phone or email. The WiLS staff reviews what we've learned over the year and creates some ideas for Board review and input. After the Board provides 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 2019:

### Continue implementation of changes to our cooperative purchasing service.

Our 2018 initiative to revamp our cooperative purchasing service resulted in a report with suggested changes to the service. We will continue to implement these changes according to a timeline adopted by CoOPAC and the Board.

### Develop a unified strategy to communicate the value of WiLS as a cornerstone organization for library service in the state.

While many in the Wisconsin library community recognize the importance of WiLS to the library ecosystem, others don't understand the role of WiLS or think of us as "just another vendor." We'd like to undertake a strategic initiative to change that perception by engaging a marketing professional to develop a unified marketing and communications strategy, taking into account our mission, values, ownership of our members, and the work that we do. Our hope is that this strategy would not only communicate the value of WiLS as a whole, but would provide us with a framework to illustrate the value of individual services provided by WiLS.

While the primary goal of this initiative would be to develop a strategy to improve awareness of WiLS and its role in the state, this initiative has another desired outcome: *to educate WiLS staff on marketing and communication.*

Specific WiLS staff members will be identified to work with the marketing professional on the creation of this strategy. Our hope is that these individuals would learn more about marketing and how to implement the strategy created through this initiative and would be able to apply this knowledge both to WiLS and to assisting our members. The marketing professional could be called upon to review materials and help staff with implementation of the strategy as part of this learning and education process.

## Develop outcome measures to assess and communicate the value of our services.

Alongside the development of a strategy to communicate the overall value of WiLS, we would like to develop appropriate assessment and outcome measures to illustrate the value and impact of the services we provide, including strategies for capturing user stories and data. In order to better illustrate the impact of our services for our members and partners, we would engage an assessment professional to help develop these measures.

Like the communication initiative above, we believe this initiative will also educate WiLS staff on outcome-based assessment. Specific staff members will be identified to work with the hired professional on the creation of these outcome measures.

We also expect this initiative to help clarify WiLS' role in helping our members with their need for better ways to assess and communicate their value, which was one of the areas of need identified at the 2018 Board retreat.

## Formalize WiLS' role in educating and creating conversations around big-picture and future-facing topics of importance to the Wisconsin library community.

WiLS has helped to educate the community about big-picture and future-facing topics through opportunities like WiLSWorld and WiLSWorld Shorts. We have also occasionally convened "think tanks" to discuss topics such as digital preservation. This year, we would like to develop an action plan to formalize our role in moving the community forward around important topics. The plan would include specific ways that WiLS will regularly convene the community around topics of interest, how those topics will be identified, and activities WiLS staff will undertake to educate themselves and to take part in national conversations around important topics for the community.

## Develop an infrastructure for connecting, storing, and sharing among members.

As we talk with members, we often hear the desire to learn from one another and work together. This desire may be simply to exchange information with other libraries in a geographic area or of a particular type, or it may be working toward a common goal with other institutions.

WiLS is in a strong position to assist with this need. We have a large number of multitype members, we have experience in helping libraries to work together through our consortium management service, and we act as a connector in the community. In this initiative, we would work with some pilot groups to determine what assistance is needed to help libraries successfully work together and learn from one another, and, through that experience, develop an “infrastructure” for connecting, storing, and sharing. This infrastructure could include repositories for information, policies for retention and sharing, and services that would allow groups of members to accomplish their goals together.