

Mideastern Michigan Library Cooperative Work Plan 2016-17 Final Report

Submitted by Denise Hooks, Director

Vision Statement: Continue our commitment to the advancement of library service by assisting all members in providing and delivering valuable, cost effective services to their library communities.

Preface: This yearend report is similar to last year in that funding did stay flat with no increase to State Aid, but we maintained the support of the legislature and that is a positive position to hold. Michigan Tax Tribunal issues are still prevalent as more big box stores apply for tax exemptions for both occupied and unoccupied properties. The real victory this year was in legislation that passed through both the Michigan Senate and House and was signed by Governor Snyder to provide automatic opt-outs for libraries to Downtown Development Authorities and others which siphon millage dollars from dedicated library millages.

Goal 1: Move the Cooperative forward by maintaining an effective structure.

[...calls for the Cooperative to maintain an effective organizational structure and program of services through regular evaluation and validation of services. Providing core and unit cost services are the focus of this effort.]

- Hold business meetings of both the Advisory Council and MMLC Board according to the schedule adopted at the annual meeting. **All meetings were held in accordance with published schedules.**
- Follow goals of Strategic Plan document to further organizational objectives; continue to audit plan goals against Work Plan objectives for efficacy and completion. **Throughout the year, we review our objectives to be certain that we are on track in accomplishing what we have committed to do.**
- Conduct regular assessment of services and adapt to changing needs of members; survey members throughout year for new ideas and seek opportunities to introduce members to innovation. **Members are regularly asked to give input on services, meeting topics, and to provide ideas for future initiatives. MMLC has actively worked to update and upgrade our website. Members were given a sneak peek of the new site at the annual meeting in May; the fully revised site debuted over the summer with newly expanded functionality, ease of navigation, and improved ability for regular updates.**
- Continue to review/revise cooperative policies as required. **Several policies were reviewed and edited by the Document Review Committee. Board approval followed.**
- Introduce new services and streamline cooperative processes through the use of technology; review Technology Plan for validation and currency. **The Technology Plan 2014-17 Final Report was presented and the new Technology Plan 2017-20 introduced at the September Board meeting. Board approval followed.**

Goal 2: Move the Cooperative forward by exploring and promoting alliances.

[...puts a high priority on cooperation and collaboration with other organizations, both within and outside of the Cooperative area. The search for partnerships is intended to encourage growth and development of services as well as to identify opportunities to increase funding.]

- Work with other cooperatives to provide workshops and opportunities for networking among members. **We have a leadership role on the Collaborating Partners planning group this year and two Safety workshop were scheduled for September. In addition, the Cooperative**

Directors Association sponsored several webinars on topics such as human resources, American Disabilities Compliance, Parliamentary Procedure, and document retention.

- Find ways to partner with other groups and organizations to further cooperative goals; develop plans with cooperatives in geographic proximity to MMLC. **We partnered with White Pine Library Cooperative on Meet the Candidate sessions for Michigan legislative elections. We also worked with four other cooperatives in providing their members with programming services.**
- Encourage and foster collaboration among member libraries, including initiatives between different types of libraries; continue to monitor and enhance existing collaborations. **The 3D Printer Project was a great way for libraries to work together to share equipment and programming ideas. All public library members participated as well as two academic institutions. A school library was the first to try out the equipment in one of the sharing regions, but was forced to drop out when the librarian left her position.**
- Support libraries by providing year round programming opportunities for their communities; widen the scale of programming by offering service to libraries outside of the cooperative service area; gradually increase the number of libraries served outside of the cooperative. **The number of programs offered this year has increased by 5%. We continue to add new libraries and extend our coverage area to maximize pricing for libraries and performer opportunities.**

Goal 3: Move the Cooperative forward by the promotion of libraries.

[...makes the promotion of library services to the general public a priority for the Cooperative. The purpose is to increase public awareness of libraries and public use of library services.]

- Work with other organizations, including Cooperative Director's Association, Library of Michigan, Midwest Collaborative for Library Services, MLA, and MiALA to promote member libraries; serve on statewide continuing education committees and remain active in the conversation for the purpose of shaping the agenda. **We continue to work with all of our partner organizations on advancing our agendas to serve libraries directly and indirectly.**
- Alert members to ways of enhancing public awareness; provide ideas for marketing through new avenues; continue to offer library promotion grants to each public library member. **The Promotions Grant was received so well last fiscal year that we continued the grant for another year of funding.**
- Support the adoption of new services with opportunities to experiment through "pilot" activities; engage members in the final evaluation; encourage members to assist MMLC in the decisions related to end-of-pilot sunset. **The 3D Printer Project was a wonderful way for members to participate in the co-op planning processes. The end result has been the enhancement of ties to adjacent libraries and a sustained way to involve the community in a technology 'adventure' that they may not have experienced before.**
- Make certain that MMLC libraries are included in statewide initiatives. **MMLC has a strong voice that ensures that member libraries are represented when new opportunities arise.**

Goal 4: Move the Cooperative forward by strengthening member libraries.

[...reaffirms the role of the Cooperative in furthering its mission of strengthening the member libraries through communication, consulting services, assistance with fiscal management, Board development, and through all forms of resource sharing.]

The four bullets below are at the core of our customer service culture. Members receive regular communications and have expressed that our accessibility is highly important to them. We make it a priority to return calls and emails in a short window of time so that members are aware of our commitment to their library, to them individually, and to assisting their staff members.

- Maintain regular contact with members through targeted emails, listserv postings, and direct telephone calls.
- Encourage dialog among members to maximize knowledge of existing programs and to enhance individual library opportunities; conduct conference calls to provide access to other members for new ideas and the exchange of information.
- Continue to be available to members for advisement and consulting needs.
- Keep members informed of what is happening legislatively in the state and at the national level; devote a section of the Director's Report to current legislative action.
- When possible, offer "value-added" options such as Director Search opportunities; continue to work on QuickBooks with libraries already in process and help manage the transition from township to library fiscal management system for another member. **We have spent a considerable amount of time this year with members and non-members in advising and training on QuickBooks. In addition, we have assumed a fiscal responsibility role with the Friends of Michigan Libraries/Trustee Alliance.**

Goal 5: Move the Cooperative forward through leadership and innovation.

[...is a commitment by the Cooperative in support of leadership and innovation for the continual development of new services. The Cooperative will foster innovation through pilot projects that introduce new service methods, ideas and emerging technologies.]

- Explore new initiatives for shared services among members of MMLC; continue the practice of offering shared consortia level services and support TLN efforts to offer statewide library discounts. **Fortunately, the 3D printer set-ups will be a sustained way for libraries to share equipment and programming ideas. Each region designated a library who would house and maintain the printer set-up. The cooperative decommissioned that equipment to the designated library.**
- Continually look for cost effective ways to promote innovation. **Part of the futuring process that we have used this year is to determine what libraries may need some of the time, but not all of the time. A purchase of one piece of equipment might suffice for the needs of several libraries. Those equipment needs will be further explored in the next fiscal year.**
- Negotiate agreements with vendors for improved pricing on services to libraries; investigate consortium pricing if neither TLN nor MCLS offers that vendor's product. **The CDA spent a considerable amount of time this year developing a process that focuses on coordination of vendor opportunities and enhances our ability to request service exploration by TLN, our designated vendor contact.**
- Provide new equipment to enhance member delivery of services; invest in innovative equipment for trial use; survey members for new technologies to explore. **We conducted a futuring exercise in order to be informed about the needs of our members and will incorporate those ideas into the Technology Plan 2017-20.**

Goal 6: Move the Cooperative forward by encouraging and facilitating professional development.

[...is a broad effort to build the skills and knowledge base of the Cooperative by investing in its human resources through education of library staff and trustees.]

- Use knowledge of trends and new developments in library field to offer timely, effective programs and workshops; continue to provide workshops on relevant topics in conjunction with Advisory Council meeting; focus attention during this fiscal year on marketing. **Our October speaker for the Advisory Council meeting, Kathy Dempsey, the Accidental Marketer, spoke about the basic tenets of marketing and what libraries can do to promote their services. The February meeting was a wrap-up of the 3D Printer Project and also featured**

Library of Michigan staff members Cathy Lancaster, Youth Services Coordinator, and Clare Membiela, Library Law Consultant, who spoke about their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to service to libraries.

- Attend workshops and conferences to learn about new trends and developments that would benefit members; attend MLA, PLA, Rural Libraries Conference, and ALA as offered. **During the year, I attended Michigan Library Association, American Library Association, and OverDrive conferences.**
- Provide follow-up reports, share information, and post ideas on MMLC website. **Reports were posted and emails on specific topics of interest were shared with members.**

Goal 7: Move the Cooperative forward by supporting advocacy and advocating for all types of libraries in the membership.

[...is a recognition of the Cooperative's advocacy role and the increasing importance of library advocacy in the 21st century as libraries face legal, financial, and legislative issues.]

- Attend ALA Legislative Day activities coordinated by the Library of Michigan; provide funding opportunities for others in cooperative to attend; conduct training sessions prior to the Washington D.C. NLLD event and collect evaluations post-trip in order to report to Board. **A group of eight board members and directors completed the preparatory work needed and traveled to Washington D.C. for the event. The evaluation reports were shared with the Board at the September meeting.**
- Sponsor meetings to assist members in learning about candidate positions on library issues; hold Meet the Candidate meetings during election years. **MMLC again partnered with White Pine Library Cooperative to offer Meet the Candidate sessions in the fall.**
- Alert members to efforts to lobby directly with legislators on behalf of libraries; regularly provide updates on MLA and ALA strategic plans for advocacy and scan MIRS and District Dispatch for information to share; send specific Call to Action emails when needed. **Communications are regularly shared with members as MLA and ALA send out updates and Calls to Action. Additionally, journal and newspaper articles are sent to members.**
- Work with MLA to provide an avenue for libraries to understand the process of legislative lobbying and ways to educate new legislators. **We began a conversation this year with MLA to discuss ways to provide advocacy training for the library community. The concept is moving forward and will be implemented in the spring of 2018.**