

Mideastern Michigan Library Cooperative Work Plan 2019-20 Final Report

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Additions from Eric Palmer, New MMLC 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: With a new MMLC Director in place, this will be a year of developing relationships with member library directors and setting goals for the next five years through the Strategic Plan revision process. Sustained best practices and the incorporation of new ideas will help guide the cooperative's operational direction for the next several years. A recent member survey indicated that members are highly interested in training on strategic planning, a trustee training retreat, member networking, library funding, and human resource consulting. Cooperative member involvement and commitment to active participation signals a very bright future for MMLC! With the Director being new and the pandemic, a few items have not been completed as they were planned.

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. We held an Advisory Meeting in October 19 and February 20. We had a Board meeting in January 20. The Joint meeting in May with both the Advisory and Board was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Follow goals of Strategic Plan document to further organizational objectives; continue to audit plan goals against Work Plan objectives for efficacy and completion. **Schedule meetings of the Document Review Committee to revise the Strategic Plan 2015-20; survey library members for input and create goals that reflect future member and cooperative needs.** Planning for the Fall 2020
- 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. Continue to review/revise cooperative policies as required. The Director met with most of the Library Directors at their libraries before the pandemic started. He has tried to email the entire group members with updates weekly and email individual members to see how they are doing as well as seeing if there is something else he can do for them. Director has worked directly with the Lapeer County Librarians especially during the pandemic via Zoom.
- Introduce new services and streamline cooperative processes through the use of technology; review/revise Technology Plan annually. **Review and revise the Technology Plan 2017-20 to reflect future member and cooperative needs; survey members.** Planning for the Fall 2020

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. **Participate on the Collaborating Partners Committee to plan the 2020 workshop; provide event registration services.** MMLC worked with the Collaborating Partners on the workshop and did the registration for the 3 virtual workshops that were held the first three Tuesday of July 2020 via Zoom.
- Find ways to partner with other groups and organizations to further cooperative goals; develop plans with cooperatives in geographic proximity to MMLC. Talked with Publisher's Consulting LLC about working with MMLC, not sure it's a financial option at the current time.
- Encourage and foster collaboration among member libraries, including initiatives between different types of libraries; continue to monitor and enhance existing collaborations. Director met with Lapeer County Libraries on a regularly basis especially during the pandemic.
- 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; ensure that all libraries booking through the cooperative are receiving same quality of service. **A new grant opportunity for member libraries will fund a program for each public library location outside of the June – August programming period.** Many of MMLC members took advantage of the New Grant, but we had to change the grant during the pandemic where they could use the Grant for Summer programs and virtual. Due to the Pandemic we had to cancel most of the live performers and change some to virtual programming for the Summer.

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. The Director has meet with MCDA all year long (weekly during the pandemic via Zoom). As a group we were able to help create a document that libraries will need to think about to reopen their libraries during the Pandemic. The Coop Directors also meet with our partners. MCDA is having a workshop called 'Big Disruptions Can Lead to Big Opportunities' with Maxine Bleiweis for its members in August. Over 130 libraries will be in attendance.
- Alert members to ways of enhancing public awareness; provide ideas for marketing through new avenues. As the MMLC finds something that could help members we will push out the information.
- Support the adoption of new services with opportunities to experiment through "pilot" activities; **continue the revised and enhanced grant program for public library members.**
- Make certain that MMLC libraries are included in statewide initiatives. MMLC Director participated in as many activities during the year that he could, like a meeting at the LM for new Coop Directors. During the pandemic he attended as many Zoom meetings to promote the cooperative and bring back vital information for its members.
- **Review the efficacy of social media for the purpose of sharing information about MMLC and promoting member libraries.**

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.]

- Maintain regular contact with members through targeted emails, listserv postings, direct telephone calls, **and in-person visits**. In his first year as director, Eric visited 25 of the 27 libraries in the Cooperative before the pandemic hit. Talking with the directors about what he can do for them and what MMLC can do for their libraries. During the pandemic he has emailed all the members keeping them informed from zoom meeting he attended put on by ALA, MLA, LM MCLS
- 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. Director did his Director's Report bimonthly and during the Pandemic he tried to email all the members updates on a weekly basis.
- Continue to be available to members for advisement and consulting needs. Director helped LDL with their search for a director and may help SDL with their director search in the Fall.
- 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. Director attended PLA in February however Eric was sick through most of it. MMLC was planning on sending both director and Administrative Specialist to the Small Rural Conference in Traverse City in April, but due to pandemic it was canceled.
- When possible, offer "value-added" options such as Director Search opportunities; continue to assist with the transition to QuickBooks for member libraries and act as a consultant for libraries in other cooperatives. **Conduct a feasibility study on a cooperative internship linked with one or more of the Michigan colleges with library science programs.** MMLC Administrative Specialist did some training with LDL on using Quickbooks. Internally, we had a discussion on the internship for possible Intern for Summer 2021, however with the Pandemic that has been put on hold.

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 other cooperative's efforts to offer statewide library discounts. Director will be attending TLN Technology Form in August.
- Continually look for cost effective ways to promote innovation.
- Negotiate agreements with vendors for improved pricing on services to libraries; investigate consortium pricing if neither TLN nor MCLS offers that vendor's product. Director with the other MCDA had meetings with Overdrive and Midwest Tape about pricing.
- Provide funding to support member led initiatives; survey members for new technologies to explore and **shared project ideas**.

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 special/local collections, the importance of library data, and advocacy training.** In October we had a session with LM and their special collection specialist.

- Offer grant opportunities for members to encourage professional development attendance at workshops and conferences. **Increase the amount of money offered in the Continuing Education grant program.** Due to the pandemic we are anticipating a cut to MMLC Budget so we are relooking at all of our grants for next year.
- 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. Director attended MLA Annual Conference in October, PLA Conference in February all before the pandemic, all the following conferences were canceled or changed to virtual.
- Provide follow-up reports, share information, and post ideas on MMLC website.

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 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; **support attendance through grants in 2020 at the NLLD event held at the end of the ALA annual conference.** The director was set to attend the MLA advocacy day in Lansing with several members planning on joining him there. MMLC had selected 3 Advisory Members, 1 Board member and director to attend NLLD in Washington DC in May 2020. We had purchased their registration and hotel as well as the flight for the Director flight to DC. All of this had to be canceled due to the pandemic.
- Sponsor meetings to assist members in learning about candidate positions on library issues; **partner with other cooperatives to hold Meet the Candidate meetings during election years.** One library in cooperative had a Meet the Candidate at their library in January 2020. MLA during the pandemic had a meeting with US Representative Elissa Slotkin and the Director attended the zoom meeting.
- 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. Director provided information through the Director's Reports which are sent out bimonthly. During the pandemic he tried to send out information weekly or if he felt it was important he would send emails out more often to members.