



2023-2024 Annual Report

September 2024

WISPALS, the Wisconsin Project for Automated Libraries, was organized in 1989 by librarians at Gateway Technical College, Moraine Park Technical College, and Waukesha County Technical College. Now, [eleven total colleges form the membership](#) of the consortium, representing more than half of all the technical college students in the state and two-thirds of all the technical college credentials granted.

The **WISPALS mission** is to advance the teaching and learning missions of its member institutions through sharing information and creating collaborative and financially responsible solutions to common challenges.

The **WISPALS values** are to work toward solutions that are financially responsible and efficient in order to provide the best possible service to the college community; to educate one another and learn together; to stay on the forefront of librarianship, each developing professional skills while innovating and experimenting to further collective and individual missions; and to work to highlight the value of technical college libraries to member institutions and to the wider library community.

The **WISPALS purpose** is to provide member libraries shared access to an integrated library system, information resources, electronic databases, and other services and technologies at reduced costs. It promotes the exchange of knowledge, skills, and best practices for libraries. WISPALS also serves as a liaison between member libraries and local, state, and national library organizations and vendors.

The eleven WISPALS colleges have a combined total of 2,138,463 resources available to their users via the shared consortium catalog. In 2023-2024, 32,006 physical items were checked out to patrons with an additional 28,087 renewals.

WISPALS Officers

Board President: Dr. Jeannie Worden, Northcentral Technical College

Executive Committee Chair: Kim LaPlante, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

Executive Committee Incoming Chair: Alison Moffat, Northwood Technical College

WISPALS Executive Committee



Madeleine Pitsch, Blackhawk Technical College

Kathryn Johnston, Fox Valley Technical College

Gary Flynn, Gateway Technical College

Ashley McHose, Lakeshore Technical College

Amber Stancher, Mid-State Technical College

Hans Baierl, Moraine Park Technical College

Katie Aldrich, Chair, Northcentral Technical College

Kim LaPlante, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

Alison Moffat, Northwood Technical College

Amy Manion, Waukesha County Technical College

Ellen Range, Western Technical College

Welcome Message from the WISPALS Chair

“If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.” – Henry Ford

The WISPALS consortium thrives through collaboration. As a hub of creativity and innovation, member librarians have come together to exchange ideas, best practices, and fresh approaches. We’ve sparked inspiration and elevated the quality of the services we provide. The synergy of diverse perspectives and strategic goals has enriched both our collective knowledge and our plans for the future.

During the past year, WISPALS explored and selected a new integrated library system to replace the current system when our contract ends next July. The new system promises streamlined workflows, enhanced user experiences, data-driven insights, and overall cost savings.

This WISPALS Annual Report shares highlights of the 2023-2024 academic year. As we reflect on the past year, we are energized by the possibilities ahead and thankful for the work that has been accomplished.

We continue moving forward together with great results!

- Kim LaPlante, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, WISPALS 2023-2024 Chair

2023-2024 Consortium Highlights

Core services

Integrated library system (ILS) support and administration continues to be WISPALS' principal service. The ILS is the main access point for staff, students, and community members to access the library's holdings. The library uses the ILS to catalog, index, and track materials and patrons, place orders, and lend out materials. WISPALS maintains and updates the system for all members as well as provides training, user guides, best practices and procedures.

In addition, consortium members continue to participate in a suite of cooperative purchases. In 2023-2024, WISPALS provided the cooperative purchasing coordination and management for 64 electronic resource subscriptions with eight vendors, totaling \$367,791.35 for the year. The consortium continued to advocate for reduced yearly price increases for electronic resources and of the 62 renewing subscriptions, 57 renewed at lower than a 5% increase from the previous year and 31 renewed at or below 3%.

Exploring library experience options

This year, WISPALS underwent an extensive ILS exploration process. A Request for Information (RFI) was developed and issued to several identified vendors and products. Throughout the winter and spring, WISPALS members reviewed vendor demos, evaluated products, and participated in multiple discussions to identify the most suitable solution at the best price that will provide the best possible service to each institution's students, faculty, staff, and community. In June 2024, WISPALS elected to migrate from Innovative's Sierra to OCLC's WorldShare Management Services. Migration will take place over the next fiscal year, with a launch goal of July 2025.

Improved web presence

WISPALS also revamped the consortium [website](#), giving it a new look and feel and reviewing and updating all the site content. This website is used to draw attention to the work that WISPALS is doing with stakeholders and peer organizations, including other libraries and consortia. It is also used to introduce potential new consortium members to WISPALS' work.

Building connections among member library staff

When the consortium decided to simplify and streamline its work in 2022, meetings of its three subcommittees were paused. Those subcommittees were a primary way that staff at member libraries could connect with one another around the similar work that they do on their own campuses. To bridge this new gap, the Executive Committee decided to heighten the visibility of a shared consortium Basecamp, a virtual space where all staff members at all WISPALS libraries could share documents as well as ask and respond to questions. A call for introductions was made and there was broad participation from among WISPALS member library staff.

Highlights from the Member Libraries

Blackhawk Technical College Library grew its programming and support of students, which correlated with a continuing increase in the usage of library database resources. To increase impact in supporting students with information literacy and BTC Core Ability “Demonstrate Critical Thinking,” the library collaborated with English Composition faculty and designed three library research modules covering topic development, strategic searching, and source evaluation and citation. In Fall 2023, the research modules were added to Blackboard courses in one section of English Composition and then to all sections - 329 students - in Spring 2024. 80% of the students who completed the feedback survey agreed with the statement, “I learned something new that will help me succeed in this class.” BTC Library also increased community programming by launching The Library Book Club “Due Dates” in Fall 2023. There were seven meetings from October 2023 through May 2024 with 6-10 attendees at each meeting. The Due Dates book club which will be continuing this year, along with continued assessment of the English Composition research modules.



Fox Valley Technical College Library migrated to Workday and successfully created the integration to load updated patron files of employees and students into Sierra. Workday also changed library purchasing, budget, hiring, and other HR procedures. The library hosted a Halloween open house with very good participation. FCTC library also added two VR headsets and created a dedicated space for their use.



Gateway Technical College Library staff have been passionate about Banned Books Week programming in the past year, holding a read-in, hosting a Crucial Conversation with the college community, and planning for a major speaker, Ian Rosenberg, for the 2024 event. The Wisconsin Technical College System OER Grant has also been a project the library is proud of this year, assisting 21 faculty members who are adopting OER materials for 30 different courses.



Lakeshore Technical College Library officially opened the Lakeshore Archives in 2023-24. With 3,500 unique items and over 550 in the online database, it is currently the second largest technical college archive in Wisconsin. Also, the Lakeshore Library was awarded a WiLS Ideas to Action grant to develop a multilingual library focused on curating foundation resources in Spanish and Hmong, translating library service documents, and coordinating multilingual programs to build a more inclusive campus. Thanks to



this grant, the library was able to support virtual family night's Bilingual Storytime, providing over 112 families with a children's book, craft kit, and meal kit; translate key service documents in Spanish and Hmong; and enhance library materials with almost 200 new books, eBooks, and eAudiobooks in Spanish and Hmong.

Mid-State Technical College Library concentrated on expanding the loaner laptop program and digital literacy instruction. Through grant funding, an additional 100 laptops were made available for student check-out and over 300 students participated in the digital literacy workshops.



Moraine Park Technical College Library at Beaver Dam was part of a major renovation that brought improved study rooms and work areas for students. OER/AER faculty workshops were provided by the library and curriculum department to help faculty discover new resources and understand copyright and licensing considerations. The three campus libraries worked on reducing the number of computers to conserve college resources yet still meet student needs.



Northcentral Technical College Library grew in strategic student support with research instruction in six new course-specific partnerships, four new workshop offerings, six new videos, adding a research table activity for students at the Fall Picnic, and increasing campus awareness with a gamified information training for Advisors and Career Coaches. In addition, the NTC Library successfully launched a new FAQ & connection platform – LibAnswers – enhancing both live & asynchronous support options for students with an added layer of patron privacy; this service received over 1400 FAQ views within the first six months. Finally, the NTC Library participated in a highly successful HLC college accreditation by providing evidence documentation, serving on the DEI charter team, and representing the college during the tour and two site visit sessions.



Northeast Wisconsin Technical College Library supported student success by increasing Canvas and technology training, expanding technology and research microlearning videos (with over 38,000 views), and updating all Ask a Librarian FAQs and guides. The Library also created an assessment plan tied to Institutional Learning Outcomes, developed student guides for AI and Virtual Reality, and checked out over 1770 laptops and 240 hotspots. To support community vibrancy, the Library expanded the DEI book club and the Diverse Voices collection. Additionally, the Library contributed to college success by completing over 60 OER reports for faculty, remixing 13 OER textbooks in LibreTexts, and providing research for strategic planning, the Aspen award application, and other key initiatives.



Northwood Technical College Library was excited to receive funding as part of the Wisconsin Technical College System OER Grant and has been working to build internal OER training and supports. The library has also assembled a cross-departmental team, including the library, to focus on artificial intelligence.



Waukesha County Technical College Library took on the responsibility of distributing student IDs this year to provide more options to students who can now get them outside normal business hours. The library worked with WCTC's IT department on a smooth transition, which included formalizing procedures, undergoing training, and planning a promotional campaign. The library advertised this new service on its College portal and the Library website, among other outlets, and created handouts for students in both English and Spanish. To date, they have distributed almost 3,000 ID cards without a single complaint. They have also made the Library even more welcoming to students with accessibility needs by installing a grant-funded self-checkout machine to allow students to control the level of interaction they have with others.



Western Technical College Library launched and led two significant projects this year while continuing to serve the ongoing library and resource needs of the College and sustaining efforts to train co-workers in trauma-informed and culturally responsive practice. The first was a literacy building project, funded by a WiLS Ideas to Action grant, which facilitated reading groups across the college and regional learning centers and in partnership with area high schools. These efforts centered particularly on building literacy skills for health and public safety students, human services students, student parents, neurodivergent students, and multilingual learners. The second significant effort for the year was the development and launch of an ongoing program initiated by statewide funding for Open Educational Resources (OER) to facilitate faculty adaptation and creation of student-centered OER to support student learning, cost savings, and course curricula.



Budget

Below are the actual expenditures for WISPALS' 2023-2024 fiscal year.

Item	Amount
Project management/staff	\$ 100,000.00
ILS software	\$ 142,291.72
Electronic resources	\$ 352,745.03
Other	\$ 2,048.86
TOTAL	\$ 597,085.59

Looking Forward

ILS migration process

Throughout the next year, WISPALS will be undergoing an extensive migration process. They will be working to map and migrate all of their ILS data, which includes, materials records, patron records, serials and acquisitions data, and more. WISPALS will work closely with the new vendor, OCLC, over the upcoming fiscal year to migrate and test all data with a go-live date of July 2025.

Building community

As with last year, community building was a topic of conversation at the WISPALS Annual Meeting, held in June 2024. Following up on the use of Basecamp to give staff a chance to get to know one another, discussions were had about the renewed importance of peer support work with the approaching ILS migration. In 2024-2025, the consortium will work to coordinate topic-specific meetups that give staff time to learn together and from one another, while also respecting the capacity limitations of participating members. This may take the form of regular virtual meetings, training video watch parties, the reinstatement of previous subcommittees or the creation of new ones for migration and implementation purposes, or other approaches that arise during the migration process.