



STRATEGIC PLAN

July 2015 to June 2020



Allegany County
Library System



Ruth Enlow Library
of Garrett County



Washington County
Free Library



Western Maryland Regional Library

Hagerstown, Maryland

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Strategic Planners



Dear Reader,

Welcome to the Western Maryland Regional Library's (WMRL's) Strategic Plan FY2016 – FY2020. Examining current practices and assumptions, and forecasting the needs of our region's libraries for the next five years are not easy tasks to accomplish; however, they are at the core of successful strategic planning. The following pages are the result of that planning process.

With the cooperation and collaboration of many people throughout western Maryland and the state, we developed a plan that reflects who we are, what we do, and where we want to go for the next five years. We consider this plan a living document that can adapt to the ever changing needs of our member libraries:

The Allegany County Library System

The Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County

The Washington County Free Library

This strategic plan will be our guide for creating and delivering an exceptional level of service to our member libraries.

Thank you for taking the time to read our plan. We look forward to its implementation, and we will strive for its great success.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth M. Hulett".

Elizabeth M. Hulett
Associate Director
Western Maryland Regional Library

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Executive Summary

Overview

In April 2015, the Associate Director of the Western Maryland Regional Library (WMRL) initiated a process to develop a five-year strategic plan. The WMRL system consists of the regional library and three county library systems of Allegany, Garrett, and Washington Counties. The WMRL Advisory Board provided executive oversight, and operational planning was guided by a planning team representing WMRL and the three county libraries.

The Current State

To develop an understanding of the current state of WMRL, data was collected by two methods during June 2015. The first collection method gathered data through focus groups and interviews. The second collection method was a web-based survey. During a two-day planning conference in August 2015, a group of 22 strategic planners (See Appendix) used the data from the two collection methods to identify the following key strategic challenges facing the WMRL system:

- Developing alternative revenue sources outside of state and local funding
- Balancing resource allocation to meet individual and collective library needs
- Fostering meaningful collaboration among WMRL and member libraries
- Communicating effectively among WMRL and member libraries
- Demonstrating the libraries' value to patrons and funders
- Providing innovative programming support and resources
- Applying entrepreneurial solutions to improve library facilities

Future Direction

With a shared understanding of the current state, the strategic planners offered improvements to the mission, vision, and planning assumptions. They then engaged in a discussion of ideas regarding the direction WMRL should take over the next five years. These ideas were organized into the following strategic focus areas.

- Research & Development
- Region-Wide Communications
- Staff Development
- Collections & Support

About WMRL

Established May 13, 1967, at a joint meeting of the boards of trustees of the Allegany County Library, the Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County and the Washington County Free Library, as the *Western Maryland Area Library Service*, the regional library was created to improve library service to all residents of Allegany, Garrett, and Washington Counties.

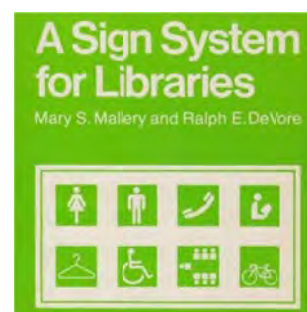
The Maryland Legislature formalized this role as a Regional Resource Center in Maryland Law, Education § 23-202 to § 23-205. The law defines regional libraries and their role in providing, through mutual cooperation and coordination, materials and services that individual libraries cannot adequately provide alone.

In 1998 the Maryland Legislature mandated funding for the regional libraries on a per capita basis. Operating as *Western Maryland Public Libraries* for many years, the name of the regional library formally changed in 2008 to the *Western Maryland Regional Library*.

In recent years, technological innovations have naturally evolved into services that can easily be centralized at the regional level. Western Maryland Regional Library services include web design, staff development, delivery, digitization of historic photos/documents, downloadable on-demand audio books/eBooks, online databases, and centralized computer management systems. In addition, WMRL continues to offer traditional services such as interlibrary loan, printing, deposit collections of books, audio books, DVDs, and the cataloging and processing of these materials.



The Western Maryland Regional Library is the birthplace of the internationally recognized public library symbol! First designed in 1978 for the libraries of western Maryland, this iconic symbol appeared in the 1982 American Library Association publication *A Sign System for Libraries*, co-authored by the regional library's Mary S. Mallery and Ralph E. DeVore.



Mission

WMRL enhances its member libraries' ability to serve their communities.



Vision

Empowering libraries to move mountains.



Tagline

We add POW to your WOW.




Planning Assumptions

- Customer expectations will influence library services.
- Funding from government sources will remain flat or decrease.
- Advances in technology will impact library services and collections.
- Some funders and customers are unaware of the library's true value.

Goals and Objectives

	Goal 1: Provide member libraries with research and development services to help them effectively leverage resources.
Research & Development	Objectives
	1.1: By June 2017, complete a Salary Study for member libraries.
	1.2: Beginning July 2017 and ongoing, continually explore and implement best practices for shared purchasing.
	1.3: By January 2018, make recommendations for funding a WMRL Development Coordinator.
	1.4: By June 2018, publish a Facilities Master Plan for member libraries.
1.5: By June 2020, complete a comprehensive Marketing Plan for member libraries.	

	Goal 2: Help facilitate a flow of information among WMRL and member libraries so that each can effectively serve their communities.
Region-Wide Communications	Objectives
	2.1: Beginning December 2015, publish and maintain an updated Organization and Functions Guide describing the WMRL mission, organizational structure, functional areas, core services, and staff positions.
	2.2: By June 2016, make a recommendation to either improve or to eliminate interest/support groups.
	2.3: Beginning July 2016, WMRL Annual Plan and Budget will include specific details of WMRL's support for member libraries in the coming fiscal year.
2.4: By June 2017, update and maintain a region-wide staff photographic directory which includes job functions and contact information.	



Goal 3: Provide for the tools, training, and time to help ensure that every library staff member is engaged, skilled, and equipped to serve their communities.

Staff Development

Objectives

- 3.1:** By June 2016, create a process to annually assess region-wide staff knowledge and skills needed to meet job expectations.
- 3.2:** Beginning October 2016, monthly provide an average of three staff development opportunities that are based on the annual assessment.
- 3.3:** By June 2017, create a process to annually assess resources, equipment, and technology trends to meet library staff needs.
- 3.4:** By June 2018, explore and, if feasible, develop a procedure to help member libraries obtain sustainable substitute coverage that allows staff to take advantage of learning opportunities.
- 3.5:** Beginning July 2018, annually provide each member library access to at least five new resources based on results of Obj 3.3.



Coding in Libraries



Goal 4: Provide collections and support to help meet the needs of each member library.

Collections & Support

Objectives

- 4.1:** By June 2016, investigate and adjust the deposit collection categories when possible and funds permit.
- 4.2:** By June 2016, develop a collection analysis tool for Polaris.
- 4.3:** Beginning July 2016, develop and promote at least one WHILBR event per year.
- 4.4:** Beginning July 2016, annually provide one new turn-key public program for use by member libraries.
- 4.5:** By October 2016, create consensus criteria to evaluate databases.
- 4.6:** By June 2017, increase by 25% the number of library staff suggestions received for deposit collection purchases.

Objectives in Chronological Order

- 2.1: Beginning December 2015, publish and maintain an updated Organization and Functions Guide describing the WMRL mission, organizational structure, functional areas, core services, and staff positions.
- 2.2: By June 2016, make a recommendation to either improve or to eliminate interest/support groups.
- 3.1: By June 2016, create a process to annually assess region-wide staff knowledge and skills needed to meet job expectations.
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- 4.4: Beginning July 2016, annually provide one new turn-key public program for use by member libraries.
- 3.2: Beginning October 2016, monthly provide an average of three staff development opportunities that are based on the annual assessment.
- 4.5: By October 2016, create consensus criteria to evaluate databases.
- 1.1: By June 2017, complete a Salary Study for member libraries.
- 2.4: By June 2017, update and maintain a region-wide staff photographic directory which includes job functions and contact information.
- 3.3: By June 2017, create a process to annually assess resources, equipment, and technology trends to meet library staff needs.

- 4.6: By June 2017, increase by 25% the number of library staff suggestions received for deposit collection purchases.
- 1.2: Beginning July 2017 and ongoing, continually explore and implement best practices for shared purchasing.
- 1.3: By January 2018, make recommendations for funding a WMRL Development Coordinator.
- 1.4: By June 2018, publish a Facilities Master Plan for member libraries.
- 3.4: By June 2018, explore and, if feasible, develop a procedure to help member libraries obtain sustainable substitute coverage that allows staff to take advantage of learning opportunities.
- 3.5: Beginning July 2018, annually provide each member library access to at least five new resources based on results of Obj 3.3.
- 1.5: By June 2020, complete a comprehensive Marketing Plan for member libraries.

Appendix - In Appreciation

It took the talent, commitment, and experiences of many different people to complete this plan. Under the expert direction of Harry Christiansen of Christiansen Consulting, LLC, several groups of people contributed to the creation of this plan. WMRL would like to thank the WMRL Advisory Board, the Strategic Planning Committee, Focus Group participants from all three county libraries' staffs and boards of trustees, and the Strategic Planners who participated in the two-day conference. WMRL would also like to thank Irene Padilla, Assistant State Superintendent for Libraries, and Wesley Wilson, Chief of the State Library Resource Center, who consulted with us during this process.

Appendix - WMRL Advisory Board



Lisa McKenney, Public Services Coordinator
Allegany County Library System



John Taube, Director
Allegany County Library System



Elizabeth Hulett, Associate Director
Western Maryland Regional Library



Cathy Ashby, Director
Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County



Kim Lishia, Branch Manager
Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County



Mary Baykan, Director
Washington County Free Library &
Western Maryland Regional Library



Kathleen O'Connell, Assistant Director
Washington County Free Library

Appendix - Strategic Planners

Allegheny County Library System

Maryland Appel, Materials Services Coordinator

Nora Drake, LaVale Library Branch Manager

* Chris McGee, Reference and Instruction Librarian

Lisa McKenney, Public Services Coordinator

* Liz Sell, Washington Street Library Branch Manager

Jennifer Spriggs, Administrative Services Coordinator

John Taube, Director

Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County

Crystal Adkins, Accident Library Branch Manager

Cathy Ashby, Director

* Suzanne Bonser, Circulation Supervisor

Kim Lishia, Grantsville Library Branch Manager

Washington County Free Library

Mary Baykan, Director

* Lisa Key, Circulation Manager

* Barb Kronewitter, Collection Development Supervisor

Kathleen O'Connell, Assistant Director

Marilyn Pontius, Adult Services Supervisor

Marcella Whitmore, Leonard P. Snyder Memorial Library Branch Manager

Western Maryland Regional Library

* Tracy Carroll, Web Specialist

* Elizabeth Hulett, Associate Director

Sally Hull, Resource Associate

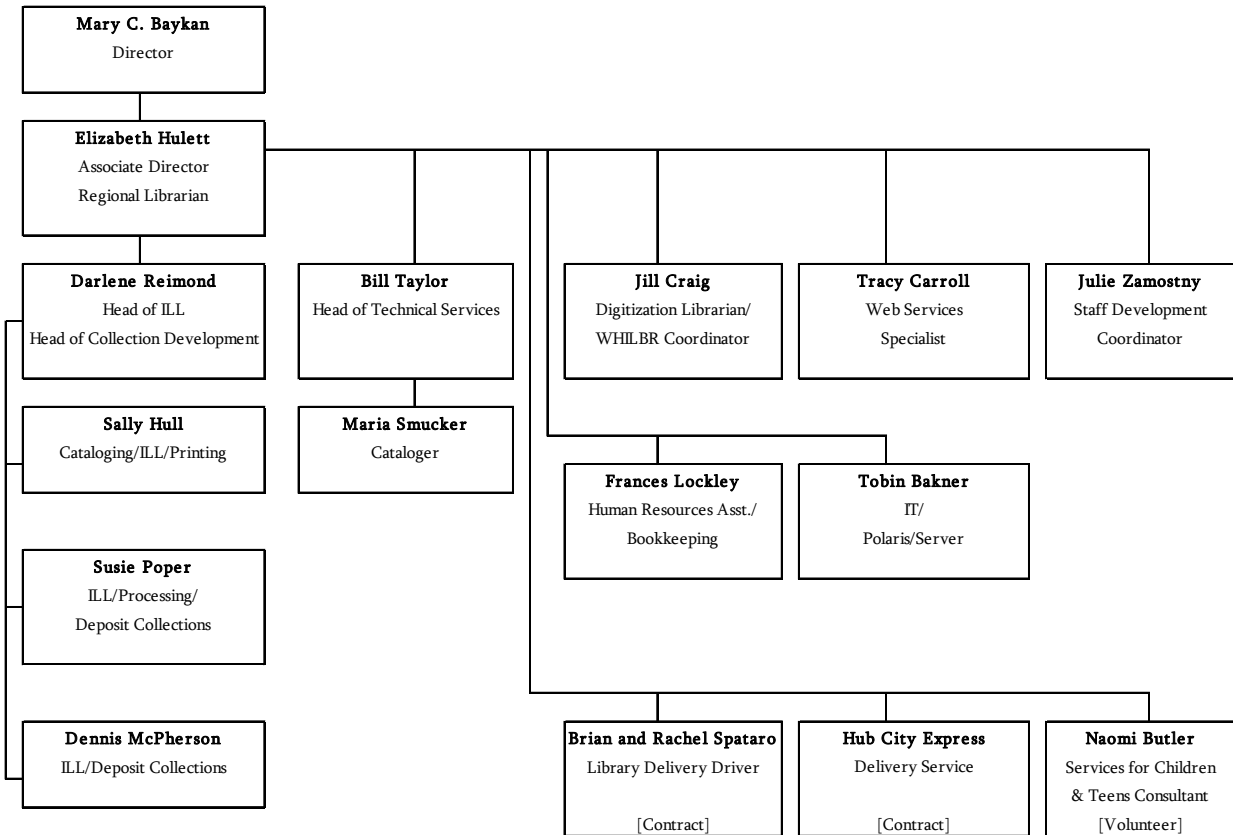
Darlene Reimond, Inter-Library Loan/Collection Development Supervisor

* Bill Taylor, Integrated Library System Administrator

Julie Zamostny, Staff Development Coordinator

* Planning Team

Appendix - WMRL Organizational Chart (August 2015)



Point of Contact

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