



NICE Project: ILS Recommendation

ILS Vendor Selection Targeted Workgroup Recommendations

The ILS Vendor Selection Targeted Workgroup recommends Koha from the vendor Bywater with a caveat that the acquisitions module needs to be fully functional¹ for consortia by the time NWLS and WVLS migrate, which is anticipated in 2025. The workgroup reached a majority on this recommendation after utilizing the decision-making matrix individually and as a group. It should be noted that Marathon County Public Library is not currently able to support the ILS selection due to staff and operational stability concerns related to the change.

Decision Highlights

- Koha works with both Aspen and Pika and will allow for continuing on two discovery layers if needed.
- Implementation with Koha is more equitable for both systems and member libraries; migrating together could facilitate the development of shared policies and procedures.
- Lower costs annually and less risk of yearly large increases.
- Most sustainable choice. Bywater continues to grow and supports larger consortia, as well as continuously develops new features and enhancements for the Koha software.

Background

Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS) and Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS) are collaborating to engage in a comprehensive joint ILS consortium exploration project. Last year, system and member library staff formed the NICE team to determine the value and feasibility of an ILS merger between the two systems and respective ILS consortia. Based on that information, the team determined that an ILS merger is feasible. LSTA funds are being used to facilitate this second phase of work in which targeted workgroups are being formed around critical decision points. The workgroups are made up of system and member library staff who have insights, expertise, or perspectives that will help craft recommendations.

¹ Bywater offers an acquisitions module for Koha currently. However, multiple acquisitions units for consortia is in development and is anticipated to be fully functional in May of 2024.

Each workgroup uses the NICE Project's [Decision Making Principles and rubric](#). During the feasibility process of the project, the team created a core set of values to apply to future ILS decisions to ensure those shared decisions conform, as much as reasonably possible, to core values. These core values reflect what the NICE project team heard from stakeholders throughout the initial stage of work. Those values were translated into the rubric that is used to guide decision-making.

The ILS Vendor Selection Workgroup met three times in the Fall of 2023, reviewing several documents including the V-CAT ILS evaluation and Review Committee Final Report, NWLN ILS Exploration Takeaways, ILS Vendor Cost Proposals, and NICE Focus Group and Survey takeaways. The vendors and products identified by the NICE Team were ByWater and Koha, Innovative and Sierra, and TLC and CARL. During the process additional information was identified and gathered from the identified vendors. TLC's CARL was not chosen by any members, so the group removed it from the list of options.

How does this decision differ from NWLN and V-Cat ILS exploration processes and decisions?

Both NWLN and V-Cat are exploring and pursuing a stand-alone ILS option in the case that Project NICE does not move forward. The outcomes and recommendations from those exploration processes may differ from that of Project NICE. While both of those processes were taken into consideration by the workgroup members, the recommendation was based on which vendor the group felt would be best for both systems to move forward together and best aligned with the NICE process principles.

Next Steps

The ILS recommendation will be used as the basis for making other NICE Project related decisions such as funding formulas, policy and procedure recommendations and so forth.

This recommendation, along with all others from the project will be included in a final report which the NICE team, the respective ILS consortia, and ultimately the system boards will carefully consider in their decision-making.

Can I Offer Feedback?

Yes! Feedback is welcomed, encouraged, and necessary. Submit your questions or comments using this [form](#) which goes to the NICE Leadership Team. Please indicate that your feedback is related to the ILS selection workgroup recommendation.