



Northeast Ohio  
Regional  
Library System

## MARKETING PLAN

Approved by the Board of Trustees on May 17, 2022

## INTRODUCTION

The Northeast Ohio Regional Library System (NEO-RLS) is a multi-type library consortium bringing together a wide variety of talents and resources to maximize library potential throughout the 22-county region. While partially funded through the State of Ohio, NEO-RLS is heavily dependent on the membership dues paid by public, academic, special, and school library members, as well as fees for services. The staff of NEO-RLS provides high quality training, professional development opportunities, and services that meet the varying needs of regional members.

## JUSTIFICATION

This plan is intended to guide the on-going marketing efforts of NEO-RLS to work in tandem with the organizational goals and objectives of current and future strategic plans. A review of the plan will be conducted every two years using a SWOTA analysis and updates will be made as needed.

## MISSION STATEMENT

NEO-RLS provides high-quality, high-value staff and organizational development opportunities, and dynamic collaborative possibilities to the diverse Northeast Ohio library community.

## VISION

NEO-RLS is the catalyst for maximizing library potential.

## VALUES

### *Member Focused*

We are committed to serving our members with the highest standards of respect, integrity, honesty, communication, and confidentiality. We are committed to maximizing member benefits through good stewardship.

### *Proactive*

We are committed to providing innovative and sustainable services and learning opportunities that allow the libraries and library staff in our region to perform exceptionally and remain at the forefront of the profession.

### *Inclusive*

We are committed to creating and supporting a fair and healthy, high-performing community by ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities to all. We enable individuals and groups to feel safe, respected, engaged, motivated, and valued for who they are and for their contributions.

### *Collaborative*

We are committed to collaboration as the key to serving all of the library types in our region.

## SITUATION ANALYSIS

### Target Audience

NEO-RLS serves all public, academic, school, and special libraries located within the Northeast Ohio region. However, the target audiences can be segmented further into the following groups:

- Library staff/paraprofessionals
- Professional librarians
- Library administrators
- MLIS students
- Retirees
- Out of region individuals
- Out of state individuals

Needs of target audience: \*

- Continuing education
- Network and collaboration opportunities
- Consulting services
- Vendor discounts
- Circulating collections

\*A needs assessment survey is conducted every two years per the Administrative Policy manual.

According to survey data from 2021, NEO-RLS members desired more diversity in continuing education offerings and speakers. Members asked for more DEI training for their staff and help with recruiting more diverse job applicants. They also expressed interest in marketing and IT specific programming.

Many respondents felt that programs and services were more tailored to library management and administration. Participants asked for increased continuing education offerings relevant to library staff. There was an interest in knowing more about, and, in increasing representation of library staff on NEO-RLS committees and board.

### Product/Services

- Continuing Education
  - In-person & online
  - Webinar Archive
  - Network groups
  - Academies
  - Special Events
- Vendor discounts
- Consulting
  - Strategic planning
  - Staff Day Planning
  - e-Rate
  - One-on-one management coaching

- Custom consulting
- Salary survey

## Competitors

Although NEO-RLS does not have direct competitors, the following organizations within Ohio provide some similar or overlapping services.

- Regionals
  - [SWON](#) - network groups
  - [SERLS](#) - kits
  - [NORWELD](#) - Continuing education (emphasis on youth services), web hosting
- [OLC](#)
  - Advocacy
  - Continuing education
  - Trustee training
  - New Director training
  - Annual conference
  - Vendor discounts
- [OPLIN](#)
  - Website hosting
  - Internet services
  - Continuing education
  - NorthStar Digital literacy
- [OhioNET](#)
  - Cataloging training
  - EResources
  - Vendor discounts
  - Technology Services
- [OCLC](#)
  - WorldCat/Online catalog training
  - WebJunction
- [State Library of Ohio](#)
  - Continuing education
  - Strategic planning

## SWOTA ANALYSIS

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility of newsletter template and website</li> <li>• Collaborative marketing</li> <li>• Known resource for regional library information</li> <li>• Active and engaged Marketing/PR Advisory Group</li> <li>• Positive public image</li> <li>• DEIA awareness in marketing materials</li> <li>• Awareness of member needs</li> <li>• Newsletter</li> </ul>	<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrading website/new MMS</li> <li>• Leverage partnerships for marketing</li> <li>• Better utilize targeted marketing</li> <li>• Marketing outside of the region</li> <li>• Information packets for new board and committee members, new directors, and speakers</li> <li>• Infographics for communicating impact</li> <li>• Improvements to newsletter</li> <li>• More intentional marketing related to DEIA</li> <li>• Better utilization of marketing statistics</li> </ul>
<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No established marketing plan</li> <li>• Ineffective social media presence</li> <li>• Inconsistent use of targeted marketing</li> <li>• Website hosted – duplication of processes and no automation</li> <li>• No staff members dedicated to marketing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding insecurity</li> <li>• Loss of members or member participation</li> <li>• Overshadowed by competitors</li> <li>• Regional library funding</li> <li>• Instability in the library workforce</li> <li>• Social media becoming irrelevant/changing</li> <li>• Limited access to free marketing tools</li> <li>• Lack of technology knowledge or access to technology on part of library staff</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aspirations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate with all members regardless of technology access or knowledge</li> <li>• Utilize unique modes of marketing, such as a podcasts</li> <li>• National awareness and participation of NEO-RLS</li> <li>• Staff member solely dedicated to marketing</li> <li>• Capacity to help libraries in our region with marketing</li> </ul>	

## MARKETING STRATEGY

### Positioning

- High-quality/low-cost/local

NEO-RLS offers high-quality and relevant continuing education and services at affordable rates.

### Promotion

NEO-RLS currently uses the website and newsletter for the bulk of its marketing efforts. A weekly e-mail newsletter is sent to all NEO-RLS members that highlights current continuing education offerings, relevant services, and topics of interest.

Social media platforms have not been utilized to a high degree. Recently, Facebook and LinkedIn have been set up and NEO-RLS staff plan to post more regularly.

Promotional flyers and brochures are provided to members online through the website and at site visits and in-person events.

### Goals & Objectives

- Increase individual and library membership
- Increase consulting revenue
- Stronger social media presence
- More awareness within and outside of the region
- More consistent and inclusive branding
  - Redesign newsletter

### Promotional Schedule/Guidelines

- Special Newsletter Schedule - Last week of every month\*

Jan	Vendors
Feb	Academic Libraries
Mar	Special Libraries
Apr	NEO-RLS Governance and Leadership
May	Awards
Jun	Public Libraries
Jul	Annual Report
Aug	School Libraries
Sept	Letter of Intent – benefits of membership/impact report
Oct	Tech/IT
Nov	Consulting
Dec	Summer Reading

\*Per holiday

- Social media (Facebook and LinkedIn)
  - Posts via Canva Content Calendar
  - Guidelines for posting
    - Special events – in person
      - Every two weeks (starting 6 weeks prior to the event)
    - Webinars
      - Two weeks prior to the event
    - Updates/announcements as needed
- Broadcast emails as needed
  - Under 25 participants registered two weeks prior to the event
  - Recruitment
    - Board
    - Board committees
    - Advisory groups
  - Summer reading
  - Special events
  - Announcements

- Flyers
  - Downloadable PDFs
  - Visits and in-person events

## Evaluation

- Statistics
- Impact Reports - infographic
- Audit Schedule – accuracy and accessibility
  - Website (every two years)
  - Print and digital marketing materials (annually)