



Northeast Ohio  
Regional  
Library System

School | Public | Academic | Special  
*Maximizing Library Potential Together*

Strategic Plan  
July 2019 through June 2022

Approved by the Board of Trustees on May 21, 2019

## Our Mission

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To empower the Northeast Ohio library community through high-quality staff development and dynamic collaborative opportunities

## Our Vision

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To be the catalyst for maximizing library potential.

## Our Values

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### Collaborative

*We are committed to collaboration as the key to serving our region's multi-type libraries with excellence. We strive to work collaboratively with each other, with individual libraries, the staff of the region's libraries, local, regional, state and national organizations, the State Library of Ohio, and the other regional library systems in our state.*

### Professional

*We are committed to serving our members with the highest standards of respect, integrity, honesty, communication, and confidentiality in order to meet their needs. We strive to provide excellent customer service by listening and by sharing our knowledge willingly and cheerfully in order to support the libraries and staff within our region and state.*

### Proactive

*We are committed to keeping up with the current and emerging trends facing libraries and their communities. We strive to provide 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.*

## Our Future

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- Cultivate increased NEO-RLS Membership awareness, involvement, and leadership opportunities.
- Advance library staff development through new resources and learning opportunities.
- Create an online Expert Registry as a Membership benefit to connect member libraries with specialized resources and expertise.
- Bring OELMA under the umbrella of NEO-RLS management services in a manner that is sustainable, financially rewarding, and a model for future ventures.
- Develop succession plans for NEO-RLS.

## Introduction

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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.

In recent years, NEO-RLS leadership has focused on eliminating NEO-RLS's operating deficit while strengthening ties with regional and geographic members and maintaining excellent services. The careful planning and hard work of the team of NEO-RLS's Board of Trustees, management, and staff brings NEO-RLS to its current more stable and professional condition. The success of these efforts is reflected in the growing membership rolls and increasing utilization of NEO-RLS services.

This year NEO-RLS embarked on aspirational planning in the effort to fulfill its mission "to empower the Northeast Ohio Library Community through high-quality staff development and dynamic collaborative activities." NEO-RLS staff members and management are always open to listening to library needs, looking for trends and patterns and finding ways to put people and resources together creatively for the greater good. This plan builds on those strengths and efforts.

## Goal 1

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### Cultivate increased NEO-RLS Membership awareness, involvement, and leadership opportunities.

*Outcome: NEO-RLS member libraries and their staff will be fully aware of the wide array of services and training available to them and to their communities. Members will be passionate about keeping NEO-RLS relevant and visible through their participation on committees, advisory groups and on the Board of Trustees. Members will view participation in NEO-RLS as a source of leadership opportunity enabling staff at all levels to grow, resulting in stronger libraries throughout the region. Members will contribute to legislative advocacy efforts through their involvement in NEO-RLS.*

#### POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND TIMEFRAME

- Expand board committees to provide greater opportunities for member involvement on a regional basis. (March 2019 – FY2021)
- Revise Bylaws as needed to accommodate new committees (October 2019-April 2020)
- Create Ad hoc committees to serve until new committees are formalized
  - Awards Committee (March 2019)
    - Develop guidelines and handle process for awards (March 2019-FY2019-2020)
    - Advise on future new awards (FY2020-2021)
  - Marketing/PR Committee (July 2019)
    - Look at objectives and baseline analytics for NEO-RLS marketing efforts (FY2019-2020)
  - Other proposed new committees:
    - Multi-Type (Special, School, and Academic) Libraries Committee (July 2020)
    - Technology Committee (assists in evaluation and fulfillment of NEO-RLS needs) (July 2020)
    - Legislative Committee (July 2021)
- Increase participation through the addition of Board Liaisons from partnering organizations (FY2020-2021)
- Provide increased opportunities for membership involvement on a regional basis through the creation of Conference/Event Planning Advisory Groups (September 2019)
- Create a Board of Trustees and Committee onboarding webinar(s) to ensure that participants are aware of expectations and responsibilities and can advocate for NEO-RLS with confidence (Winter 2020)

## Goal 2

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### Advance library staff development through new resources and learning opportunities.

*Outcome: NEO-RLS will remain committed to providing engaging, informative, and relevant continuing education opportunities based on the needs and interests of the libraries and staff in the region. New formats will be explored on a regular basis in order to maintain the highest training standards and best practices. New topics will be added in order to maintain relevancy and to ensure libraries are proactively prepared for changes in their communities. Members will be enthusiastic about helping to shape continuing education opportunities by proposing programs, presenting for workshops and webinars, and by providing invaluable evaluation feedback. New resources will be created in order to further support staff development outside of standard learning opportunities.*

### POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND TIMEFRAME

- Refine and roll out system of Continuing Education organized by competencies and learning levels (Spring 2019-Summer 2019)
- Work with Marketing/PR Committee to promote competencies and level-based listing (Fall 2019)
- Develop series of online videos or webinars for library staff and boards (FY2020-2022)
  - Board introduction to the value of CE and dues-paying membership in NEO-RLS (2021)
  - New employee introductions to libraries, including topics such as intellectual freedom, understanding of the broader picture, what a library is, etc. (FY2020-2021)
  - New directors' introduction to NEO-RLS and what it can do for your library (FY 2021-2022)
- Create a "Customer Service Academy" covering the gamut of subjects from communications to handling special situations to emergency training (Fall 2019)
- Implement an online Salary Survey in conjunction with NORWELD (FY2019-2020)
- Create a New Employee NEO-RLS Welcome Packet for Libraries

## Goal 3

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**Create an online Expert Registry as a Membership benefit to connect member libraries with specialized resources and expertise.**

*Outcome: The Expert Registry will provide libraries of all sizes needed expertise in a wide variety of sought-after areas such as legal, human resources, PR/Marketing, and technology support. In particular, the Expert Registry will enable libraries without the in-house capabilities to serve their communities to the same degree as libraries with greater in-house resources, thereby benefitting all of the residents of the region. Experts will be vetted by NEO-RLS and will be honored to participate in the Expert Registry, thus making it a valued member benefit.*

### POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND TIMEFRAME

- Task Big Ideas Advisory Group to refine the project concept, topics of expertise, and formulate questions requiring a legal response (FY2019-2020)
- Research legal and practical aspects of the registry (FY2020-2021)
- Task Marketing/PR Committee to work on roll-out and marketing of service (FY2020-2021)

## Goal 4

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**Bring OELMA under the umbrella of NEO-RLS management services in a manner that is sustainable, financially rewarding, and a model for future ventures.**

*Outcome: NEO-RLS staff will easily and successfully incorporate OELMA responsibilities into their daily, weekly, monthly and annual workload. The OELMA Board and members will have their management needs addressed in a timely and satisfactory manner. Both organizations will benefit from the arrangement financially, will learn from each other and will provide critical and relevant professional support to the school libraries and librarians in Ohio.*

### POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND TIMEFRAME

- Establish a timeline of OELMA operational activity throughout the year (Spring 2019)
- Shift OELMA to a July through June fiscal year with rolling membership renewals (Summer 2019)
- Clarify NEO-RLS staff roles in regards to OELMA and include in job descriptions. Develop an overall plan for how OELMA fits into NEO-RLS's workflow and communications network (FY2019-2020)
- Review the status of services with OELMA three times over the first 18 months and discuss adaptations as needed (June 2019, December 2019, June 2020)
- Review the service internally and evaluate staffing capacity, costs, and possibilities/needs for future ventures (Annually Prior to Contract Renewal)

## Goal 5

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### Develop Succession Plans for NEO-RLS.

*Outcome: NEO-RLS will be viewed as a desirable workplace due to creative and energizing work, appropriate staffing levels and skill sets, and the ability to financially sustain such over time. NEO-RLS will be confident in its ability to attract high-quality applicants to the organization.*

### POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND TIMEFRAME

- Refer to Board Personnel Committee (Fall 2020)
  - Develop guidelines for growing staff as funding and need dictate
  - Create a plan to fill in staffing vacancies temporarily or replace staff as necessary