

WELCOME LETTER

Dear SMLC Member:

Welcome to the Southwest Michigan Library Cooperative! We hope you find the network, training opportunities, and services in our cooperative useful to your library and community! We encourage you to become actively involved in the cooperative through attending meetings, networking with colleagues, offering training sessions to your staff/attending yourself, and having a representative from your library take a turn serving on our nine-member cooperative board.

The Southwest Michigan Library Cooperative is a library cooperative serving public, private, special, and academic libraries in Southwest Michigan. 38 Public Libraries make up SMLC. A complete list and a directory of all the public library directors can be found on our website.

The cooperative's website will also have our current calendar for both trainings and meetings. We meet three times a year for Advisory Council and Board meetings and have several informal Director Chats throughout the year as well. There will also be training sessions which are usually offered to SMLC members for free!

One thing to note is the cooperative grants (due by Sep. 1st each year), which are guaranteed reimbursement grants to your library. Details can be found on our website as well. For a complete list of SMLC programs and services, check out the inside of this brochure.

We are here to help. Don't hesitate to give me a call if there is ever a way that I can aid your library.

WELCOME!

Sincerely, Andrea Estelle, SMLC Director

TEAMWORK:

coming together is a beginning

keeping together is progress

working together is success

-Henry Ford



Find us online at:

<https://smlccooperative.com/>



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WELCOME

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN LIBRARY COOPERATIVE

STRONG LIBRARIES – STRONG COMMUNITIES

TOGETHER!

THE HISTORY OF SMLC/ PLAN OF SERVICE

THE SMLC PLAN OF SERVICE AND BYLAWS CAN BE FOUND AT:

<https://smlccooperative.com/plan-of-service/>

Past board and advisory council minutes, audits, and a list of who is serving currently on the SMLC Board are all found on our website.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COOPERATIVE

The Southwest Michigan Library Cooperative was established in 1978. You may notice that SMLC operates differently than other cooperatives. There is no cost to be a member, no building, and a part-time director is the only staff. This came about in 2006. In 2006, SMLC nearly folded as a result of the late arrival of State Aid caused by the Michigan economy. All the SMLC employees left and the SMLC building was sold. \$25,000 remained in funds at SMLC and the cooperative went into “hibernation.” When State Aid came through in 2007, the cooperative was able to come out of hibernation and address the issue of cooperative services. The stream-lined model that SMLC operates in today was set up.

SMLC sees the value in networking, training, and group discounts and began to focus on ‘what could be done to deliver service directly to each public library’. A corporate service delivery model was adapted. Later, a part-time director was added to facilitate the model. At the time of the 2006 crisis, SMLC felt that they could not join Lakeland as their ILS system was a barrier, while Woodlands would cause SMLC to reject its multi-type approach and in both cases result in the surrender of more of our State Aid to an antiquated model. Dissolution would have also cost the members state aid. Thus, the current streamlined, corporate model for a library cooperative was developed. SMLC’s budget and services are planned around this unique type of operating model.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

* Please note that services vary by library type. The items listed below are available to Public Member Libraries.

- **NETWORKING:**
Communicate with professional colleagues at cooperative meetings and Director Chats.
- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/ TRAINING:**
The cooperative offers several training opportunities each year, usually free to members
- **GRANTS:**
Three \$1000 grants available every year to public member libraries in professional development, collection development and/or technology.
Find out all the details/contact information at: <https://smlccooperative.com/programs-services/grants/>
- **ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS:**
* MLA (Michigan Library Association) and *MCLS (Midwest Collaborative for Library Services) organizational membership costs are paid by the cooperative.
- **MOVIE LICENSING:**
The cooperative offers SWANK movie licensing to its public member libraries.
- **RIDES:**
RIDES is a statewide library courier service, servicing Michigan libraries.
MeLCat participation is dependent on RIDES services. The SMLC Cooperative pays for RIDES for public member libraries.
- **AMAZON BUSINESS PRIME:**
Free Amazon Business Prime is available to member libraries at:
<https://tln.org/page/amazon>
- **GROUP PURCHASING:** Tutor.com discount and a separate Overdrive Consortium (Southwest Michigan Digital Library) available for individual member libraries to purchase. Other group purchases and discounts pursued when available/members request.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023

VISION: STRONG LIBRARIES – STRONG COMMUNITIES TOGETHER!

Mission: We create opportunities for member libraries to connect, share resources, and provide essential services to the communities they serve.

*** PLAN / Activity Ideas ***

Training: Develop member-driven training opportunities that are meaningful and timely.

- Create continuing education committee
- Use member skills/knowledge to invite members to train others in the cooperative
- New Director orientations
- Training series or Training Days
- Host a “big” training event

Networking: Facilitate networking opportunities for member libraries to share knowledge and build relationships.

- Director networking opportunities
- New director program (New Director Chat)
- Skills/Knowledge inventory
- Encourage members to connect with each other (use our listservs!)
- Develop class size networking groups
- Consider adding additional role/function groups
- Welcome committee to reach out to new members
- Extra time at meetings for networking
- Shared Google Drive with topical folders for sharing

Engage: Increase member awareness and engagement.

- Annual Letter about SMLC for trustees
- Annual infographic report
- Annual member meeting
- Continue to FW important emails

Core Services: Align core services with member needs.

- Survey membership
- Seek group purchase feedback

Grants: Expand grant programs to stimulate engagement and experimentation