EMPIRE STATE LIBRARY NETWORK STRATEC **MARCH, 2020**

LETTER FROM THE ESLN DIRECTORS

From March to October 2019, ESLN engaged with Margaret Sullivan Studio to create a strategic roadmap for ESLN. The purpose of this work is to position ESLN optimally for the future, establish its role in elevating the quality of library services, and to prioritize initiatives among its nine council members for the greatest impact across New York State.

In a world characterized by rapid change and unforeseen circumstances, ESLN can equip councils to respond proactively to unanticipated conditions and industry disruptions to help meet their members' needs and circumstances.

We, the directors, incorporated strategic thinking, statewide considerations, member needs, with an iterative "design process" to create an ESLN strategy that will make ESLN more adaptive, responsive, and relevant to ESLN constituents.

INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF ESLN

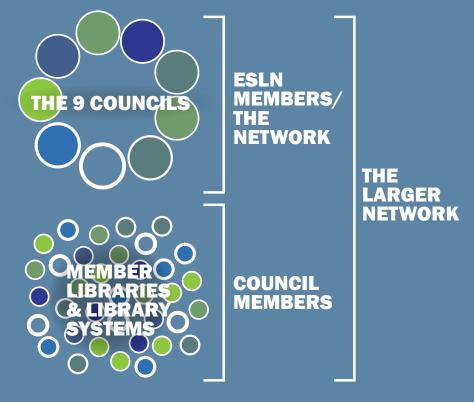
The purpose of the Empire State Library Network will be to:

- 1. Leverage the network of colleagues, resources, and expertise we enjoy among our organizations.
- 2. Increase and grow our influence in New York State on behalf of our councils and council members.
- 3. Increase our organizational skill sets around strategic thinking to improve problem solving, innovation, and collaboration.



DEFINITIONS TO KNOW:

- **ESLN Members =** the nine councils
- **Council staff =** the nine councils
- **Council members =** the member libraries and library systems of each council
- We = ESLN the combined nine councils
- Our = ESLN the combined nine councils
- You = Council or ESLN staff
- **Network =** the nine councils
- Larger Network = The nine councils and their members



THE FIELD GUIDE

HOW TO USE THIS FIELD GUIDE:

This field guide outlines ESLN's goals and provides a plan to accomplish it by utilizing the collective strengths of the nine councils. This field guide's purpose is to provide clear direction for ESLN/council staff to leverage ESLN values and cultural characteristics and apply them locally.

THE GOALS OF THIS FIELD GUIDE ARE TO:

- A. Articulate short-term and long-term direction for ESLN.
- B. Provide actionable next steps for ensuring success.
- C. Identify ways we can activate, strengthen, and utilize ESLN.
- D. Position ESLN as a resource to support council strategies and initiatives for statewide impact
- E. Position ESLN as an innovative, problemsolving resource for the nine councils.

WE WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ESLN BY....

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our Vision

- **Our Mission**
- **3 Our Values & Cultural Characteristics**
 - **Our Strategic Initiatives**
 - **Activation Guide**
- + Network Strengths Business Plan

1 OUR VISION

EXTERNAL:

• ESLN reads the landscape and puts resources into strategic products and services that elevate the quality of library services across the state.



Restate what the external vision means to you in your own words:

INTERNAL:

 The combined ESLN network delivers solutions that make important library work more attainable. Each council is responsible for creating the structure to help their members take advantage of those tools or resources, and ESLN captures and tells the story of the collective impact.

ACTIVATE! Restate what the internal vision means to you in your own words:

2 OUR MISSION

OUR VALUES & CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

" Advancing New York libraries and archives through innovative programs and meaningful collaboration." These are the characteristics that both apply to the "ESLN" brand and an ESLN project:

- Collaborative
- Strategic/ Big-Picture Thinking
- Service-centric
- Risk-taking
- Engaged
- Inclusive
- Innovative
- Influential
- Future-forward

ACTIVATE! What gets you excited about the mission?



OUR VALUES & CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

EXTERNAL:

• ESLN identifies, amplifies, and scales innovative and essential projects in libraries and cultural heritage organizations.

INTERNAL:

• ESLN motivates councils to engage in divergent thinking by evaluating influences and disruptions in industry and society that impact the larger network.

ACTIVATE! What do our external values mean to you in your own words?

ACTIVATE! What do our internal values mean to you in your own words?

OUR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

4 OUR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

OUR MAIN GOAL:

Over the next 3 years, the following initiatives will guide ESLN's priorities:



Identify areas of industry disruptions, focus, mutual interest, shared need, and potential impact that council members can consider relevant to their future endeavors.

STRATEGIC 2

Develop ESLN Services in an incubation environment.



Institute a collaborative framework across councils to facilitate big-picture thinking.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Identify areas of industry disruptions, focus, mutual interest, shared need, and potential impact that council members can consider relevant to their future endeavors.

BIG PICTURE GOAL: ESLN will provide leadership in maintaining a strategic state-wide focus on future challenges we foresee for council members.

HOW WE DO THIS:

- 1. Engage with leaders, influencers, experts, and futurists in the state that align with ESLN's mission and values.
- 2. Research, observe, and connect our observations strategically.
- **3.** Increase influence and impact for ESLN and our council members.
- 4. Increase our learning about future-forces and member needs that will benefit our councils.
- 5. Engage in deeper understanding about the New York State political environment and improve our influence through relationship building with key players.

HOW WE WILL IMPLEMENT THIS STRATEGY NOW:

- 1. Create an advisory board.
 - This advisory board of influential and forward thinking individuals will provide ESLN access to others who are shaping the future in areas that align with the mission and values of ESLN. The advisory board will advocate on behalf of ESLN and its output.

CHARACTERISTICS FOR SUCCESS:

- 1. Coordinated with other advocacy work in the state.
- 2. Responsive to what we are seeing our council members needing.
- **3.** Aligned with mission-driven initiatives that we believe are important.
- 4. Aligned with state leaders' goals, with a focus on state legislators and the Governor.
- 5. Creation of champions in the New York State legislature.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Identify areas of industry disruptions, focus, mutual interest, shared need, and potential impact that council members can consider relevant to their future endeavors.

OUTCOME GOALS - BY 4TH QUARTER 2020

- 1. Convene an active advisory board.
- 2. Have improved, impactful relationships with the state's influencers that we can leverage for the benefit of council members.

INITIATIVE LEADERS

- 1. Director Team Members:
- 2. ESLN/ Council Staff Team Members:
- 3. Member Team Members (?):

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

- Directive: The Advisory Board will advise ESLN directors on existing and future services and programs, and connect ESLN to other influencers to strengthen connections while elevating the role of libraries in the process.
- 2. Who: The Advisory Board will include up to 15 representatives that reflect our memberships and other industry leaders. Those selected will be able to bring a new perspective and influence to our decision making. Representatives should be influential and ESLN supporters.
- **3.** Meetings: There will be one in-person and two virtual meetings per year (for three years).

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1. February 2020: Develop and define the purpose and scope of work, structure, criteria, for Advisory Board and potential members.
- 2. March 2020: Recruit members for the Advisory Board.
- 3. April 2020: Complete Advisory Board roster.
- 4. June/July 2020: 1st in-person Advisory Board meeting.
- 5. September 2020: Meet with leaders of SUNY & CUNY.

4 OUR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

STRATEGIC 2 Develop ESLN Services in an incubation environment.

BIG PICTURE GOAL: ESLN will operate as a

"research and development arm" to assist the larger network in providing solutions to challenging issues. ESLN will apply innovation, problem solving, and collaboration techniques to activate this strategy.

HOW WE DO THIS:

- 1. Create solutions for future scenarios based on anticipating future conditions that will impact the larger network.
- 2. Work collectively and across councils on identified problems and projects to enhance our services for our members. These projects may be intended to enhance current service offerings for identified future conditions or they can be imagined "future scenarios" that address identified future challenges.
- 3. Engage the statewide ESLN network optimally and use the skills and talents within it to address challenges the larger network will be facing. We empower cross-council groups to develop their initiatives.

HOW WE WILL IMPLEMENT THIS STRATEGY NOW:

- 1. Engage the larger network optimally, and facilitate opportunities for our staff to work on cross-council projects collectively.
- 2. Provide the time to assess and evaluate the experiences to incorporate techniques and best practices for cross-council innovation, collaboration, and problem-solving.
- 3. Determine the initiatives to prioritize and move forward.
- 4. Continue to infuse innovative techniques into the development process.

CHARACTERISTICS FOR SUCCESS:

- 1. ESLN/Council staff are engaged in an R&D activity.
- 2. Tools and techniques for innovation and idea creation are constantly being practiced.
- **3.** Staff members are aware of the "Strategic Why" they are engaged in this project.
- 4. Staff members see where their work may have relevancy in the future for their members.
- 5. Staff members take advantage of the opportunity to think differently and envision the future together.

4 OUR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

STRATEGIC 2 Develop ESLN Services in an incubation environment.

OUTCOME GOALS - BY 4TH QUARTER 2020

- 1. Create solutions for future scenarios based on anticipating future conditions that will impact the larger network.
- Work collectively and across councils on identified problems and projects to enhance our services for our members. These projects may be intended to enhance current service offerings for identified future conditions or they can be imagined "future scenarios" that address identified future challenges.
- 3. Engage the statewide ESLN network optimally, and use the skills and talents within it to address challenges the larger network will be facing. We empower cross-council groups to develop their initiatives.

INITIATIVE LEADERS

- 1. Director Team Members:
- 2. ESLN/ Council Staff Team Members:
- 3. Member Team Members (?):

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

- 1. Most incubation will take place at the council/local level and can be scaled up depending on the need.
- 2. For any projects that come from this model, some council has to own it, nurture it, and manage it.
- 3. ESLN will support entrepreneurial instincts of all staff and allow staff to generate ideas with other council staff around innovation. ESLN will provide direction on how to present implementation plan to directors for consideration.
- 4. The Advisory Board will provide insight into potential initiatives.
- 5. ESLN will consider in-depth research on issues that impact our services and publish findings.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1. March 2020: Develop a process for staff and directors to be entrepreneurs.
- 2. April 2020: Look at a research model to adopt for ESLN R&D.



STRATEGIC 3

Institute a collaborative framework across councils to facilitate big-picture thinking.

HOW WE DO THIS:

- 1. Incorporate strategic thinking within the councils, not just at the director level.
- 2. Create agendas that focus on strategic, big-picture, bold thinking that allows us to "Shape ESLN's Future."
- **3.** Engage in meetings that are structured for strategic thinking around bold issues facing the state, ESLN, and council members.
- 4. Create an annual online staff-driven charrette to engage in big-picture, bold, strategic thinking techniques.

HOW WE WILL IMPLEMENT THIS STRATEGY NOW:

- Develop an approach to the agenda that maximizes strategic thinking, and share projects and "problems" with each other.
- 2. Identify staff members in our councils that are interested in developing and teaching strategic thinking skills.

CHARACTERISTICS FOR SUCCESS:

1. Maintain the high-level, strategic lens.



STRATEGIC 3

Institute a collaborative framework across councils to facilitate big-picture thinking.

OUTCOME GOALS

- 1. ESLN/Council staff feel inspired by the bold vision we have for our constituencies.
- 2. ESLN/Council staff are energized by the engagement we have with our peers.
- **3.** ESLN/Council staff update and provide feedback regularly.
- 4. ESLN/Council staff are engaged in big-picture, bold strategic thinking.

INITIATIVE LEADERS

- 1. Director Team Members: Laura Osterhout, Mary-Carol Lindbloom, Meg Backus, Tim Spindler
- 2. ESLN/ Council Staff Team Members: TBD
- 3. Member Team Members (?) TBD

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

- 1. Incorporate strategic thinking at each council.
- 2. Create agendas that focus on strategic, big-picture, bold thinking that allows us to "Shape ESLN's Future."
- **3.** Engage in meetings that are structured for strategic thinking around bold issues facing the state, ESLN, and council members.
- 4. Create an annual online staff-driven charrette to engage in big-picture, bold, strategic thinking techniques.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

1. July 1, 2020 and ongoing.



These thought-starter questions are intended to help elicit more information to support the outcome goals of the strategic initiatives.



ACTIVATE! How can ESLN stay in-touch and up-todate with the boldest issues (futureforces) in the state so that ESLN can work innovatively to solve them?



What are some projects, services, or programs that you as ESLN/Council staff feel need further research and/ or development to make them more relevant based on the future-forces that are impacting council members?



ACTIVATE!) Who are some "future-forward" and influential members of the state that align with ESLN mission and values?



ACTIVATE!) Identify some ways that you as ESLN/ Council staff think an advisory council can help ESLN serve your council and council members better:



These thought-starter questions are intended to help elicit more information to support the outcome goals of the strategic initiatives.



ACTIVATE!) What are some ways council members can help identify their needs, especially into the future?



How can councils continue to connect with member libraries and stay in touch with their needs?



ACTIVATE!) In order to better meet the needs of councils and council members, what are some ways that ESLN can innovate and be creative?

What are some initiatives or projects (ACTIVATE!) that you as ESLN/Council staff believe will impact council members that you just haven't had time or resources to develop?



These thought-starter questions are intended to help elicit more information to support the outcome goals of the strategic initiatives.



If you could do one thing, and one thing only, for your council members what would it be? Why?



How can you imagine better collaborating with all the councils and using the combined strengths of ESLN to shape our collective future?



ACTIVATE!) How are we continually being inspired and motivated by our vision on a regular basis?



ACTIVATE!) How can I as an ESLN/Council staff member imagine using my skills, talents, and resources to contribute to **ESLN's influence and impact?**

+ OUR STRENGTHS

Each of ESLN's councils has its own strengths that are just waiting to be activated through our organization as a whole!

TOGETHER OUR STRENGTHS ARE...

- 1. Representing a unified vision.
- 2. Optimizing the individual strengths of each council.
- 3. Activating ESLN.
- 4. Working collectively on high-level goals that have the most impact to demonstrate relevancy and, serving our council members most effectively.
- 5. Using the ESLN collaborative network to enrich ESLN/Council staff's learning and impact.
- 6. Soliciting feedback from ESLN/Council staff and the member organizations we serve.

INDIVIDUALLY OUR STRENGTHS ARE...

Plentiful. We bring distinct value to ESLN. This field guide outlines what we do best in order to help us see the strengths of each council, and how we can be using each others' strengths.

WESTERN NEW YORK LIBRARY RESOURCES COUNCIL

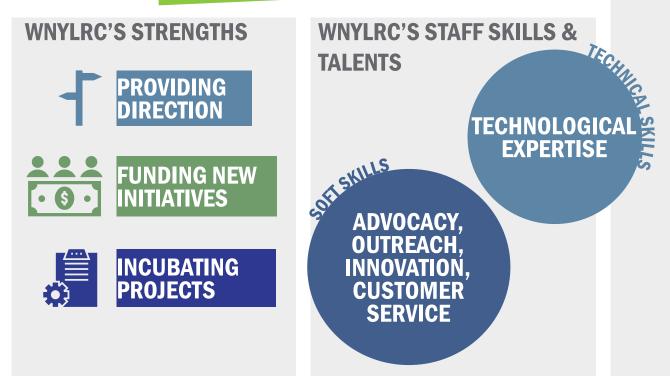




Sheryl Knab Executive Director

WNYLRC is... "Questioning existing practices. Testing new ideas." WHAT SHOULD WNYLRC BE KNOWN FOR AMONG THE COUNCILS?

Innovation and Incubation!



CALL US FOR...

- Advice on technology!
- Creating new ideas!
- Contacts for outreach!
- Advice on funding!
- Advice on new projects!

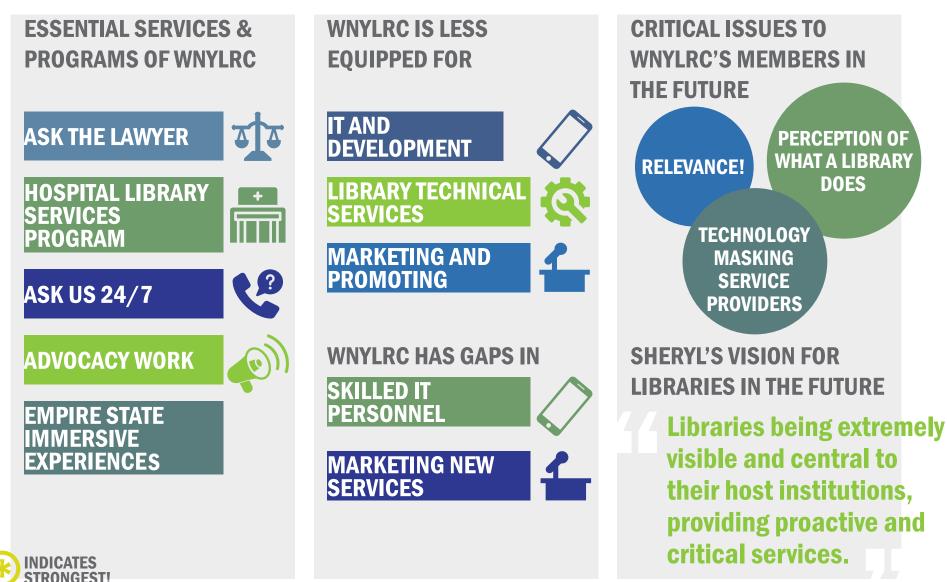






WESTERN NEW YORK LIBRARY RESOURCES COUNCIL





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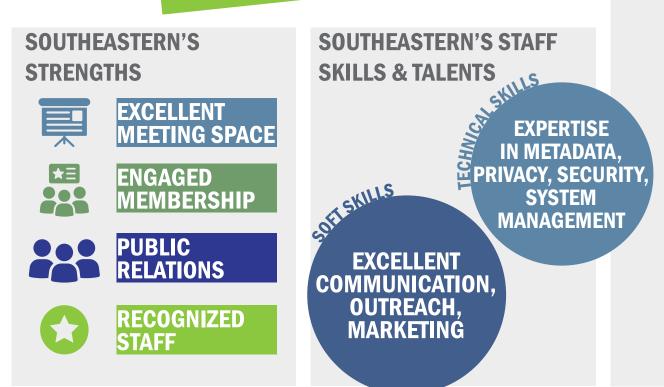
SOUTHEASTERN NEW YORK LIBRARY RESOURCES COUNCIL





Tessa Killian Executive Director

SOUTHEASTERN is... "a bridge from libraries to information."



WHAT SHOULD SOUTHEASTERN **BE KNOWN FOR AMONG THE COUNCILS?**

> **Consistency of services**, being responsible and responsive to members, excellent customer service and approachable, professional attitude among staff.

CALL US FOR...

- Advice on security & privacy!
- Advice on outreach!
- Advice on engaging members!

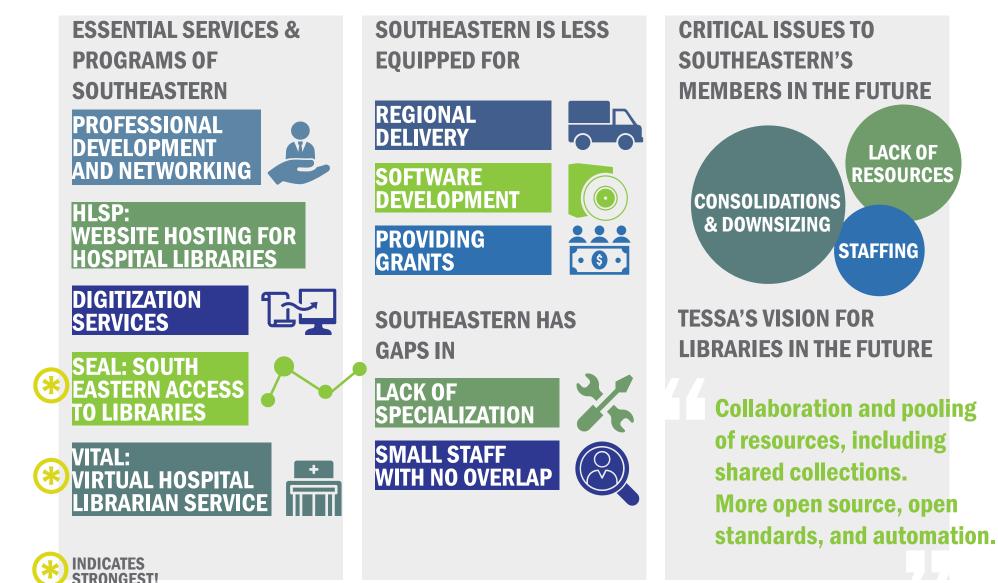
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SOUTHEASTERN NEW YORK LIBRARY RESOURCES COUNCIL









ROCHESTER REGIONAL LIBRARY COUNCIL





Laura Osterhout Executive Director

RRLC is...

"innovation through collaboration"



WHAT SHOULD RRLC BE KNOWN FOR AMONG THE COUNCILS?

> High quality and highly valued education and training. Bringing people together to address a problem and solve it collectively - strategic and collective impact.

CALL US FOR...

- Advice on solving problems as a team!
- Advice on how to prioritize!
- Learning how to develop skills!

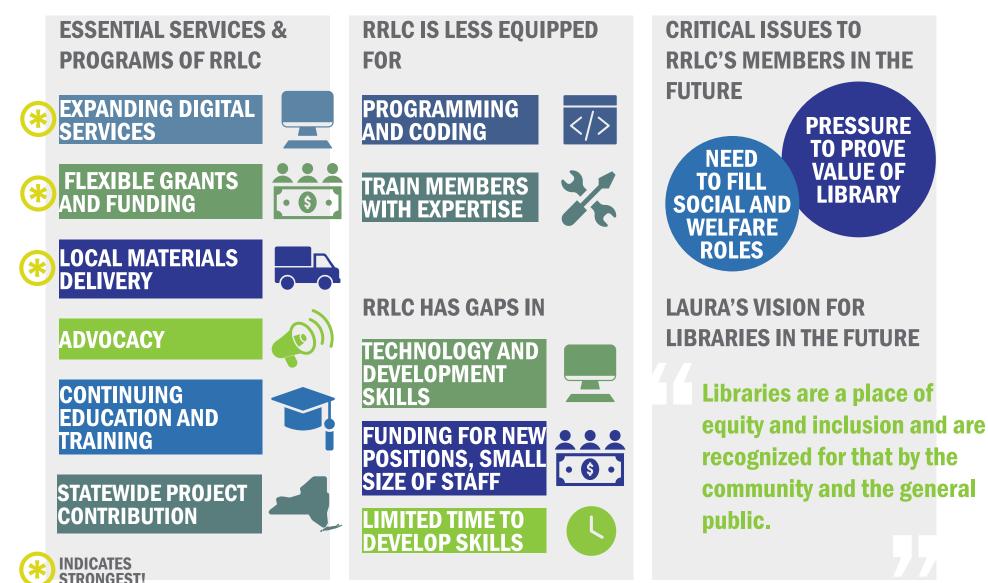
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ROCHESTER REGIONAL LIBRARY COUNCIL













CAPITAL DISTRICT LIBRARY COUNCIL

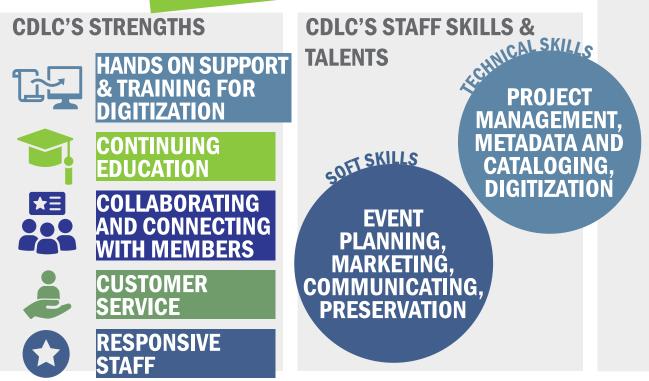




Kathleen Gundrum Executive Director

CDLC is...

"all about sharing collections and fostering connections"



WHAT SHOULD CDLC BE KNOWN FOR AMONG THE COUNCILS?

Providing connections for members, making members' collections accessible, highlighting members collections and events, keeping up to date with trends and providing CE for those trends. Collaborating with other councils to bring regional projects statewide.

CALL US FOR...

- Advice on planning great events!
- Information on hospital libraries!

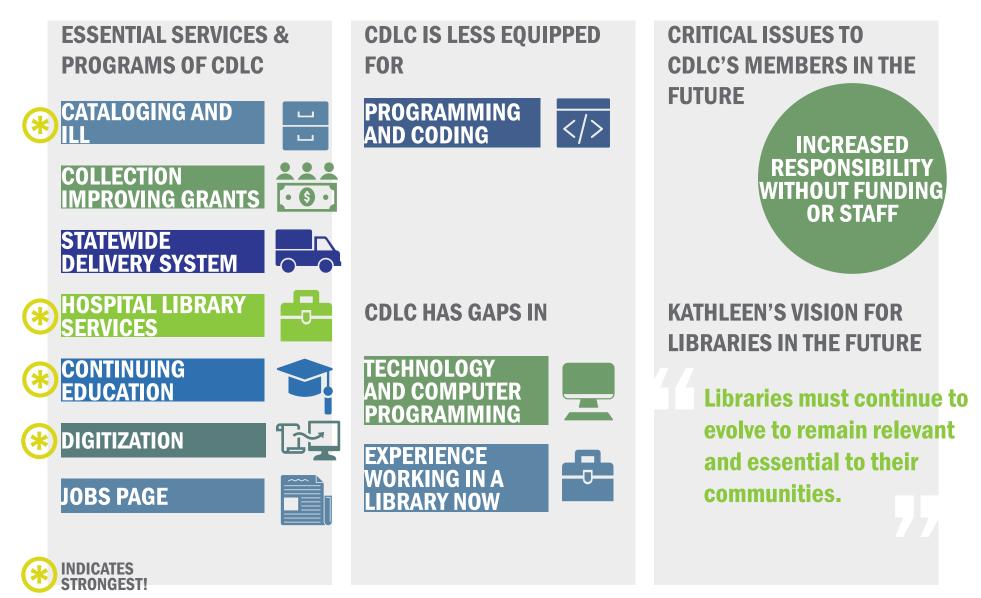
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CAPITAL DISTRICT LIBRARY COUNCIL





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CENTRAL NEW YORK LIBRARY RESOURCES COUNCIL

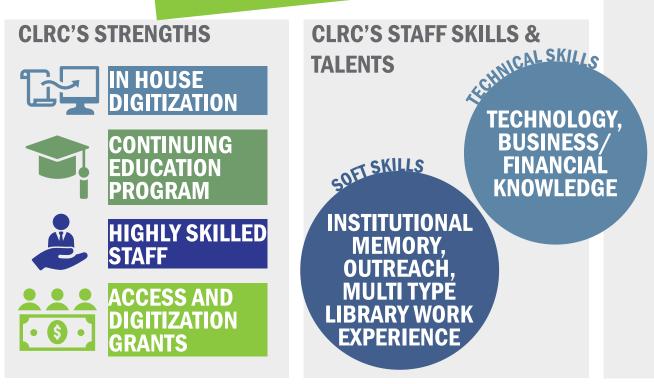




Marc Wildman Executive Director

CLRC is...

"Empowering Libraries, Archives and Communities"



WHAT SHOULD CLRC BE KNOWN FOR AMONG THE COUNCILS?

> New York Heritage training/management, in-house digitization service, new initiatives and Bridging the Gap.

CALL US FOR...

- If you need digitization!
- Advice on public perception & relevancy!

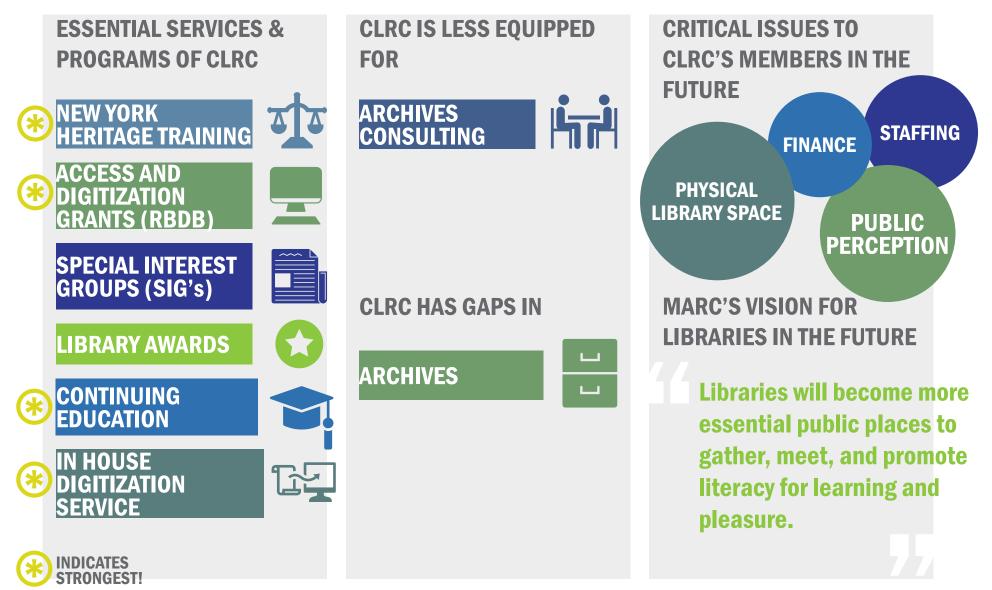
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CENTRAL NEW YORK LIBRARY RESOURCES COUNCIL





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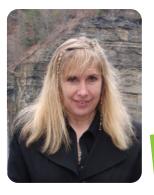






SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL LIBRARY COUNCIL

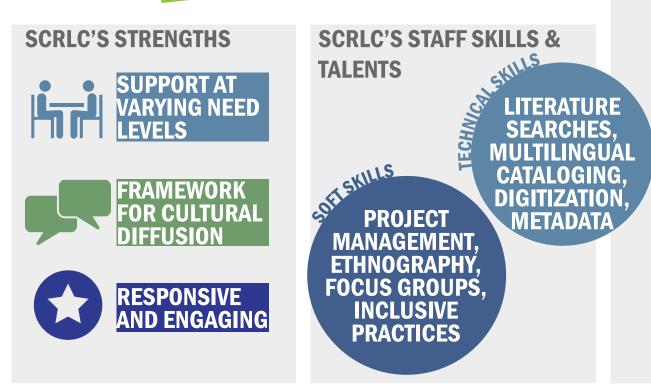




Mary-Carol Lindbloom Executive Director

SCRLC: we...

"make smart connections"



WHAT SHOULD SCRLC BE KNOWN FOR AMONG THE COUNCILS?

We have a strong and diverse
group working on issues
of diversity, equity, and
inclusion... I want us to be
known for being cooperative,
effective, and having
innovative approaches to
various services/programs.

CALL US FOR...

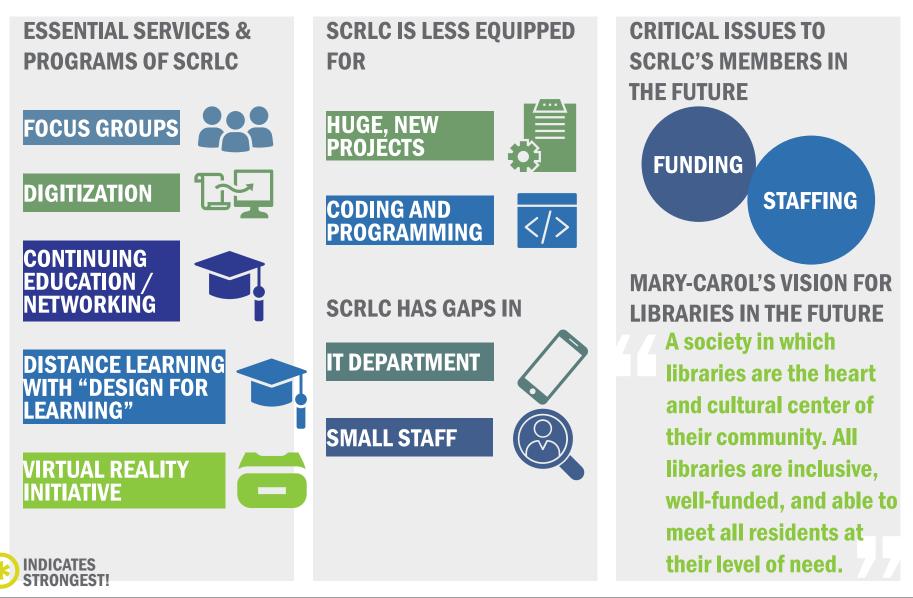
- Advice on diversity & inclusion!
- Advice on innovative programs!





SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL LIBRARY COUNCIL





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NORTHERN NEW YORK LIBRARY NETWORK





Meg Backus Executive Director

NNYLN is...

"cooperatively providing support and services necessary for all of its members to meet their individual goals."



WHAT SHOULD NNYLN BE KNOWN FOR AMONG THE COUNCILS?

> The NY Historic Newspapers and the collaborative, discerning staff who make useful contributions to worthy projects.

CALL US FOR....

- Advice on building member and staff relations!
- Advice on being organized!

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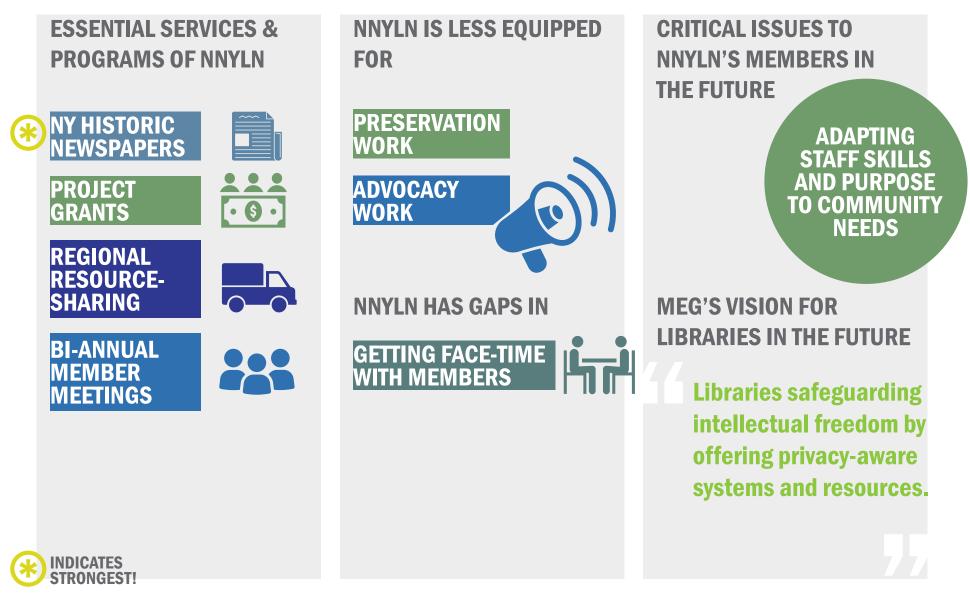
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NORTHERN NEW YORK LIBRARY NETWORK





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METROPOLITAN NEW YORK LIBRARY RESOURCES COUNCIL





Nate Hill **Executive Director**

Metro is...

"where New York's libraries and archives come together to learn, share ideas, and collaborate."

METRO'S STAFF SKILLS &





WHAT SHOULD METRO BE **KNOWN FOR AMONG THE COUNCILS?**

The vision is for METRO to function as a software design and development agency and support service for the councils, other consortia, libraries, archives, museums, and more. This is NOT to exclude our other work, which is more traditional and will continue to fit within the NYS funding structure.

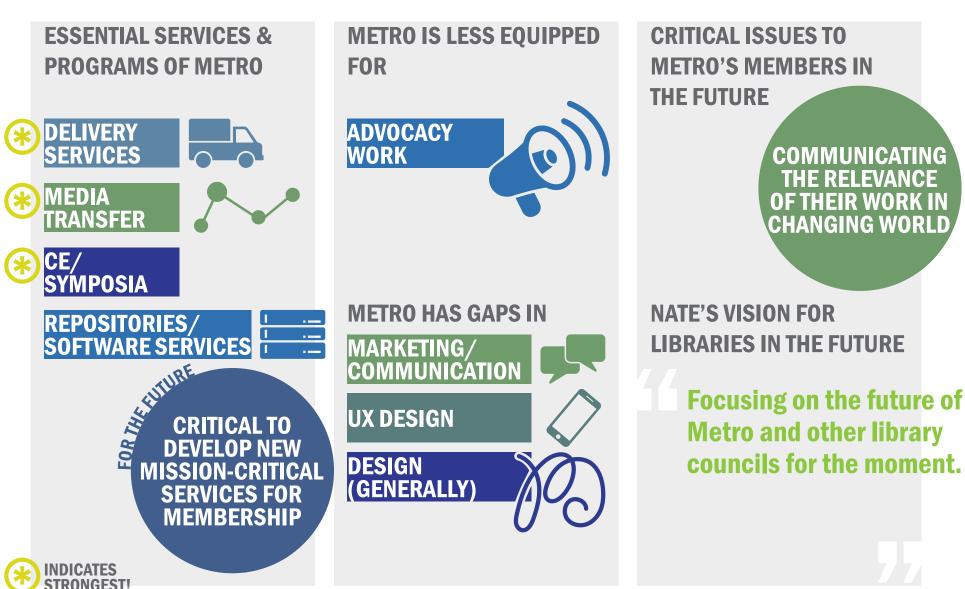
- **CALL US FOR**
 - Using our awesome facility!
- Advice on event planning!
- **Advice on digital services!**

STRENGTHS SURVEY AUGUST 7, 2019





METROPOLITAN NEW YORK LIBRARY RESOURCES COUNCIL









LONG ISLAND LIBRARY RESOURCES COUNCIL





Tim Spindler Executive Director

LILRC...

"enhances access to information, encourages resource sharing, and promotes library interests"



WHAT SHOULD LILRC BE KNOWN FOR AMONG THE COUNCILS?

> The most important is for us to run a successful education program.

CALL US FOR...

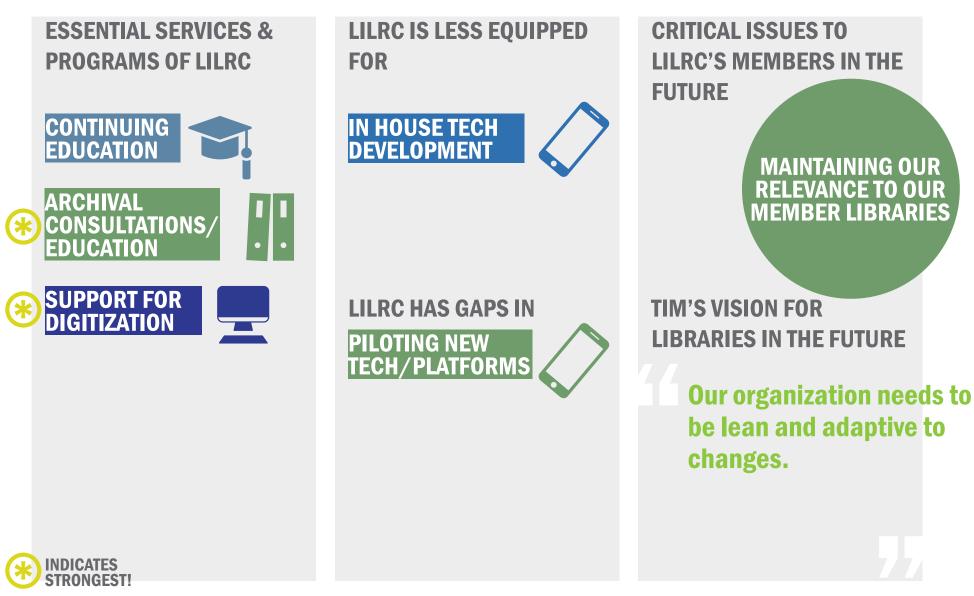
- Advice on archiving!
- Advice on continuing education!





LONG ISLAND LIBRARY RESOURCES COUNCIL





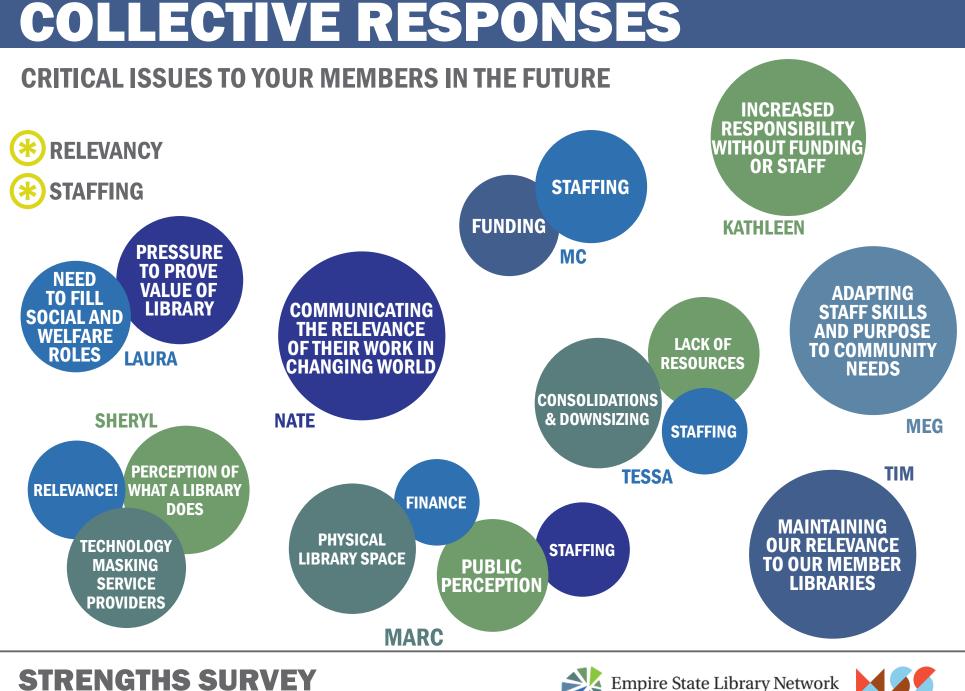
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Discover. Connect. Engage

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MARGARET SULLIVAN STUDIO

