

**STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**Outagamie Waupaca Library System**  
September 18, 2003

- I. OWLS is established to enable all residents of the system area to have access to effective library services.
  - A. OWLS creates and coordinates mechanisms which guarantee that system area residents have convenient access to public library service.
    - 1. System area residents have free access to all services of all public libraries in the system.
    - 2. Only local library boards have the authority to extend local library services. OWLS may not commit local libraries to the extension of services without the consent of the local board.
    - 3. OWLS advocates equitable compensation for local libraries that extend service beyond the local municipality.
  - B. OWLS provides services to member libraries to complement and improve local library services.
    - 1. OWLS services are designed to meet the needs of member libraries.
    - 2. OWLS services allow member libraries to provide services that are too costly or too specialized for them to provide on their own.
    - 3. OWLS provides or coordinates services, such as automation, that are more effectively done cooperatively than by individual libraries.
    - 4. OWLS services may be customized to address the particular needs of individual libraries or groups of libraries.
    - 5. When a choice must be made, OWLS resources are more likely to be directed to those libraries who can and will take advantage of the opportunity.
  - C. OWLS provides direct service to area residents if necessary.
    - 1. Service from local public libraries is usually preferable to direct service from the system.
    - 2. When appropriate, OWLS may plan and implement direct services.
  - D. The provision of services to member libraries and area residents is funded from a variety of sources.
    - 1. OWLS views its services as partial compensation for the extension of local library services requested by the system.
    - 2. OWLS may seek additional sources of funding to enhance the development and provision of services.

3. OWLS may implement services which require member libraries to pay fees in order to receive the service.
  4. OWLS may facilitate collaborative services that are financed by a group of member libraries.
- E. OWLS encourages the development of local library services, and awareness of those services, by providing leadership, education, training, and assistance.
1. OWLS provides continuing education opportunities and scholarships for member library trustees and staff.
  2. OWLS provides consulting services to librarians, trustees, and government officials.
  3. OWLS may investigate and try new methods of service for the purpose of determining whether those methods are appropriate and feasible for the system and its libraries.
- II. OWLS advocates an appropriate balance between local autonomy and cooperation for the benefit of individual libraries.
- A. Local libraries have a responsibility to plan and implement a program of service which is responsive to the needs of their communities.
1. Local library plans are the best foundation on which OWLS can build a strong program of service.
  2. Because their programs of service are interrelated, OWLS and its member libraries have a responsibility to regularly share planning information.
- B. Municipalities are responsible for funding local libraries at a level sufficient to provide adequate services as defined by state standards.
1. OWLS programs should not be a substitute for adequate local funding.
  2. Local library boards have a responsibility to seek sufficient funding from their governing bodies.
- C. As contracting parties, OWLS and its member libraries have specific obligations to each other.
1. All contracts and agreements are written to define the relationship between the contracting parties as clearly as possible.
  2. Each contracting party has a responsibility to monitor compliance with the terms of contracts and agreements.
- D. Because the interests of the system and its member libraries are not always identical, the governance and administration of the system are separate and distinct from that of any local library.

- III. OWLS is a conduit through which member libraries have access to the planning, resources, and services of other libraries or agencies.
  - A. OWLS plans and implements services or agreements with other libraries for the benefit of member libraries or area residents.
    - 1. OWLS enters into agreements with other library systems for the purpose of sharing resources or services.
    - 2. OWLS enters into agreements with non-public libraries for the purpose of sharing resources or services.
  - B. OWLS cooperates with other agencies or organizations for the benefit of member libraries and area residents.
    - 1. OWLS negotiates with Outagamie and Waupaca Counties to support the services provided by member libraries to residents not served by a municipal library.
    - 2. OWLS participates in cooperative consortia such as OWLSnet and WPLC in order to improve and develop services.
  - C. OWLS seeks to represent the interests of its member libraries, as well as its own interests, to the Legislature and Department of Public Instruction in the development of statewide library policy or services.
    - 1. OWLS is frequently the mechanism through which individual member libraries are represented at the state level.
    - 2. Local libraries have a responsibility to represent their own interests at the state level and support the interests of the system when appropriate.
    - 3. OWLS recognizes that the interests of member libraries may not be identical, and the interests of the system may differ from those of member libraries.