

CW MARS

Fund: 7000-9506

During the pandemic, the network responded to member library needs by helping to facilitate library closures, reopenings, and new curbside services as well as increasing online content and access.

ILS support and services

CW MARS extended card expiration dates as well as item due dates and holds for library users and turned off notices and automatic renewals which were then reactivated once statewide delivery services resumed. To assist libraries, CW MARS created ILS best practices guides for holds, transits and quarantining items and updated patron notice text to include details about the quarantine time period. For their academic members, they relaxed loan policies to allow students of community colleges to checkout materials at their public library while their college library was closed. CW MARS tested and rolled out an ILS new feature to help facilitate curbside scheduling at no additional cost to libraries. CW MARS removed fine policies for 19 libraries and encouraged all libraries to work with their towns to make this a lasting change to help with equity and access.

CW MARS also coordinated communication between member libraries to help keep libraries connected and facilitated frequent Zoom conversations to provide opportunities for collaboration, networking and support.

They advocated for member needs statewide and coordinated a shared document to track opening and closing hours, changes in services, and details on when libraries were resuming holds and delivery services across the CW MARS network.

eContent

Since library buildings were closed, virtual services including eBooks and databases became very important. To help facilitate their use, CW MARS updated databases access for remote users and let users sign up for the OverDrive Instant Digital Card which allowed them instant access to eBooks and audiobooks through their mobile devices. Cards that had blocks on them because they were expired or had outstanding fees were allowed to access digital content. The network received \$70,440.13 in LEA funds from the MBLC which they used to purchase 1,175 titles / 1,730 copies of shared content.

CW MARS worked with vendors to renegotiate pricing to help libraries upgrade to higher speed connections that better serve their communities.

Internet Connectivity and Access

CW MARS manages and supports Internet connectivity and equipment for 109 member libraries. CW MARS worked with telecommunications vendors to renegotiate contract pricing for higher speed library connections. CW MARS worked with libraries to extend wifi coverage so libraries were better able to serve their communities.

