**Organizational Structures**

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**Independent Libraries – No county-wide system** (Knowledge: worked for four years as library director in this type of library; worked for seven years as district consultant to nine libraries within two counties that fall into this type of library)

Pros:
- Tailor policies to specific community demographics/needs
- No “red tape” or lengthy steps to make decisions

Cons:
- Disparity of services among libraries within the same county
  - Examples:
    - Different ILS so patrons have multiple library cards
    - Different circulation policies and procedures
- Unserved populations have barriers to library services (either pay for membership or need to drive a long distance to access the District Center’s print resources)
- Libraries competing for funding with local foundations and county organizations
- Higher state aid library standards compared to member libraries of a federated library system and/or branches of a consolidated library system
- Duplication of administrative costs
  - Examples of duplicated administrative costs for each library:
    - Yearly Audit/Financial Review
    - ILS
    - Payroll/Bookkeeping

**Federated County-wide Library System** (Knowledge: worked for seven years as district consultant to two county-wide federated library systems)

Pros:
- All county residents are eligible for library services at any library within the system
- System member libraries are governed by a board made up of direct service area community members.
- Reduced cost of member library expenses due to the system’s purchases/services
  - Examples of savings by member libraries:
    - Cost of shared ILS (if paid with system funds)
    - Cost of shared databases (if paid with system funds)
    - Cost of other services/purchases if paid with system funds

Cons:
- Usually tension between system and member libraries because member library boards still want to have control over policies and procedures; not always agree with system-wide decisions
  - Examples:
    - Circulation policies/procedures
    - Holiday closures
• Depending on system board make-up; still have the “what’s in it for MY library” when decisions are made at the system level
• Libraries competing for funding with local foundations and county organizations
• Duplication of administrative costs
  o Examples of duplicated administrative costs for each library:
    ▪ Yearly Audit/Financial Review
    ▪ Payroll/Bookkeeping

“Councils of Governments”
Cathi Alloway, Director, Schlow Centre Region Library  calloway@schlowlibrary.org

Schlow Centre Region Library (SLPL) in State College, PA is the only known public library in the U.S. funded through a council of governments (COG). Schlow receives annual revenue from a consortium of six municipalities, the Centre Region Council of Governments (CR-COG). Being an agency of CR-COG provides many resources, and makes it much easier to communicate with elected officials, who work together in group meetings and activities. It also provides a standard and formula for municipal contributions that makes budgeting and long-range financial success much easier.

A council of governments (COG) is also known as a regional council / commission / district. It is a group of government entities, usually counties or municipalities, which band together to offer planning, coordination and technical assistance to members. Regional “Metropolitan Planning Organizations” (MPO), which plan and prepare road and infrastructure improvements, and Area Agencies on Aging are typical COG enterprises. CR-COG is one of the largest COGs in Pennsylvania, providing MPO and Codes services, along with popular regional parks, pools, and the public library. The 2018 budget for SLPL includes $1,479,045 in COG municipal contributions, which represents 58% of library revenues. More information on COGs can be found at narc.org (National Association of Regional Councils). See also Catherine Alloway, “Reimagining Libraries: A Regional Library Funding Model”, 2-8-2018 ELGL website: https://elgl.org/reimagining-libraries-baytown-library-writes-its-own-story-4/

Consolidated Library Pros and Cons
Rob Lesher

Pros
1. Central Control
2. Consolidated Elected Officials
3. Staffing Consistency
4. Branding Consistency
5. Streamlined Planning

Cons
1. Local Funding can go away
2. Still have local library identification
3. Building maintenance
4. Travel
5. Institutionalization
**Other Resources**


The Aspen Institute, “Strategies for Success” for libraries includes information on financial structures:  

Lisa Peet, Library Journal, “Holding Pattern: Budgets & Funding”, 2/16/2018 on public library budgets:  
[https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=holding-pattern-budgets-funding](https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=holding-pattern-budgets-funding)

Carol Ebdon, Ji Hyung Park, Aimee L. Franklin, et al. “Institutional Arrangements for Public Library Funding and Spending,” The American Review of Public Administration, July 3, 2018. The article looks at data and found wide variations in institutional structure and funding, and concluded, “taxing authority leads to increased spending,” and “relative reliance on nonlocal sources is generally associated with lower levels of spending.”  

Coalition for Networked Information. “The Transformation of the Public Library”. A summary of a 1995 panel that looked at public library and funding – points continue to resonate with today’s situation.  
[https://www.cni.org/resources/historical-resources/the-transformation-of-the-public-library](https://www.cni.org/resources/historical-resources/the-transformation-of-the-public-library)