



Your guide to the
Nebraska Library
Commission
July 1, 2020–
June 30, 2022
Biennium in Review
FY2020-22
Vol. 27 No. 1

NCompass

N E W S L E T T E R



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Federal Grants Help Increase Collections

CARES Act and ARPA funds totaling \$180,184 helped meet the demand for more materials in the Nebraska OverDrive Libraries consortium this Biennium. Magazine subscriptions in English and twenty other languages were added in February 2021 with the number of titles increasing to 4,111 by the end of June 2022. In late June of 2021, 188 children's videos, many told with American Sign Language were added to the collection.

Sixteen public libraries joined the consortium to increase the total member libraries to 189. Circulation of materials continued to increase with customers downloading 1,026,558 audiobooks, 972,849 ebooks, 49,802 magazines, and 1,005 videos. Increases in audiobook usage continued to outpace other materials.

Nebraska eReads funding, approved by the Legislature for the Nebraska Library Commission's Biennium budget, provided Nebraska OverDrive Libraries with an additional \$184,611

for content purchases. The total Nebraska eReads funding of \$418,405 was divided between the consortium, Omaha Public Library, Ralston Public Library, and Lincoln City Libraries based on the size of their legal service areas.

The Library Commission coordinates and supports the OverDrive service for Nebraska OverDrive Libraries and contributed funds for materials purchased. Any legally-established public library (population under 100,000) meeting the criteria for this service is invited to participate. For more information see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/overdrive> or contact Susan Knisely, Nebraska Library Commission Online Library Services Librarian, 402-471-3849, 800-307-2665, susan.knisely@nebraska.gov or Devra Dragos, Nebraska Library Commission Technology & Access Services Director, 402-471-4335, 800-307-2665, devra.dragos@nebraska.gov.

Ed. Note: Due to state budget reductions, future print editions of the **NCompass Newsletter** will be limited to the Annual/Biennial Report editions, until further notice. To receive regular information from the Nebraska Library Commission, subscribe to the weekly **NCompass E-Newslist**. Fill out the form at <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/enews> to stay abreast of Nebraska library activities. Receive a weekly email in your inbox with a short summary of each posting on the **NCompass Blog** from the previous week. Click on the headline in the email message to read the complete content of the blog post and to comment.



From the Director...

The Nebraska Library Commission is pleased to present this report covering activities, events, and initiatives over the past two years. There are the on-going services the Commission provides toward its statutory mission of statewide promotion, development, and coordination of library services, and there are new initiatives that contribute to Nebraska residents' quality of life.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to sudden and significant changes. Health safety requirements resulted in closings and other restrictions. Re-openings happened with continued effort to provide safe environments. The pandemic brought new service arrangements. Libraries were quick to adapt with many offering curbside pick-up of books and other materials, promotion of the library's digital resources – subscription services, eBooks, audiobooks, online program streaming, and more. The Library Commission collected and posted information about libraries and their status regarding local service policies. The Commission also posted selected information for libraries, businesses, and the public related to COVID-19 and pandemic resources.

Among the Commission's activities the past two years, the Library Innovation Studios (LIS) project completed its fifth and final year following extension of the project beyond the original three-year federal grant funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Pandemic conditions slowed the project but the extension allowed all participant libraries to host studios for the full duration. Reports from libraries and a well-attended makerspace conference in November 2021 affirmed success and positive outcomes.

Appreciated are the libraries, librarians, volunteers and community members that hosted the LIS project, served as trainers, and those that have used makerspace devices to create a variety of items. The project has had many successes. Those successes are the result of the contributions of the project team. Their creativity,

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Nebraska Library Commissioners July 2020– June 2021

Debby Whitehill Bloom, Omaha

Vernon Davis, Lincoln

Arunkumar Pondicherry, Lincoln

Lois Todd-Meyer, Lincoln

Julie Tye, Kearney

Kristin Wiebe, Scottsbluff

Beth Kabes, Creston

Commission meetings are held the second Friday of every other month or as scheduled by public action of the board.

This publication was supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provision of the Library Services and Technology Act.

Nebraska Library Commission Funding July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2022

State of Nebraska Funds	\$7,998,147
Federal Funds	\$7,998,147
Cash Funds	\$19,429
Total	\$13,620,001

Projects Funded through the Nebraska Library Commission July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2022

ARPA Grant	\$2,295,587
CARES Grant	\$192,196
Braille Services (Utah State Library)	\$2,040
Collaborative Summer Reading Program	\$16,199
Continuing Education & Training	\$17,218
Electronic Information Resources	\$944,348
Interlibrary Loan (Lender Compensation)	\$189,312
Library Improvement Grants	\$6,051
Library Innovation Studios	\$178,805
Motion Picture Licensing for Public Libraries	\$39,327
OverDrive Downloadable Books	\$470,532
Public Library Statistical Reporting Software (Bibliostat)	\$12,347
Regional Library Systems	\$1,191,813
Scholarships, Stipends, Internships	\$53,537
State Aid to Public Libraries	\$762,953
United for Libraries (ALA Membership)	\$46,716
Youth Grants for Excellence	17,073
TOTAL	\$6,436,054

Commissioners Guide Library Commission

Members of the Nebraska Library Commission (commissioners) are appointed by the governor for three-year terms. By tradition, but not statute, the six commissioners are appointed from Nebraska's four regions. With regional re-organization several years ago, the practice has been to appoint members from each of the state's four regions plus two members appointed on an at-large basis.



Appointments reflect the intent to have representation in consideration of the agency's statewide promotion, development, and library services coordination state statutory mission.

As the agency's governing board, commissioners meet for reports and updates on current and upcoming trends, issues, and activities. During the past two fiscal years, commissioners received reports and discussed the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funded Library Innovation Studios project grant, rural library broadband service initiatives, response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and development of grant programs for libraries funded by the federal

economic stimulus legislation (the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act and American Rescue Plan Act as administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services). Review of the Commission's major service programs, federal

library programs, agency budget, and personnel updates are regular agenda items.

Commission members serving this past two fiscal years were

Debby Whitehill Bloom (Commission Chair 20-21), Omaha; Vernon Davis, Lincoln; Beth Kabes, Creston; Arunkumar Pondicherry (Commission Chair 21-22), Lincoln; Lois Todd-Meyer, Lincoln; Julie Tye, Kearney; and Kristin Wiebe, Scottsbluff. Commission meetings are held the second Friday of every other month. Exceptions to that schedule are in consideration of special events during the year such as Nebraska Library Advocacy Day.

For more information, including meeting agendas and minutes, see the Library Commission website at <http://nlc.nebraska.gov>, search on Commission Meetings.

Excellence in Leadership Award Recipients 2020 & 2021

2020 – Brad Hauptman

(not pictured)

Nebraska Library Commission Audio Tape Duplication Coordinator –TBBS



2020 – Holly Woldt

Nebraska Library Commission Library Technology Support Specialist



2021 – Holly Atterbury

Nebraska Library Commission Reader Services Advisor - TBBS



2021 – Sam Shaw

Nebraska Library Commission Planning and Data Services Coordinator

Library Commission Staff Transitions, FY2020-22

Arrivals

- **Eric Saxon**, Office Specialist – TBBS (5/24/2021)
- **Alisha Baginski**, Administrative Technician Started on 12/6/2021 and left on 5/2/2022
- **Mackenzie Marrow**, Library Technician (4/4/2022)

Departures

- **Cynthia Nigh**, (9/27/2020)
- **David Eckmann**, (3/12/2021)
- **Linda Babcock**, (12/5/2021)

Reassignments

- **Chelsea Lemburg**, Staff Assistant II (7/1/2021)

From the Director...

(continued from page 2)

dedication, and hard work have demonstrated results beyond those of the project's original goals. Notable are the contributions and support from project partner organizations – Nebraska Extension, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nebraska Innovation Studio, and Nebraska's Regional Library Systems. The public libraries selected for project participation were key to the project's success. Results from the participating libraries reflect the enthusiasm, effort, and creativity of library staff, volunteer trainers, local project partners, and community members.

Publishing and reading were not slowed by pandemic conditions. Ebook and audiobook loans increased significantly as evidenced by the lending activity of Nebraska libraries. In addition, the Commission's Talking Book and Braille Service kept pace with prior year lending activity. The Commission's book club collection also experienced significant use. And educational activities transitioned to more extensive online delivery.

The Library Commission's efforts depend on the contributions of many organizations and individuals. Thanks to all who serve on the State Advisory Council on Libraries, and partner organizations – Regional Library Systems, Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Library Association, and Nebraska School Librarians Association. Library services in Nebraska are best when these organizations work together for mutual benefit and toward the purpose of serving Nebraskans.

Nebraska libraries – public, school, college/university, and special – make significant, beneficial and positive differences in the lives of Nebraskans. Stories coming from Nebraska libraries are meaningful and inspiring. The Nebraska Library Commission is pleased to support the work and efforts of the thousands of library workers, volunteers and supporters who contribute their time, talent and efforts to Nebraska library services.

Rod Wagner 🗨️

Public Library Accreditation to Resume in 2022

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Public Library Accreditation renewal process was suspended for 2020 and 2021. The accreditation expiration dates for all accredited public libraries was extended by 2 years.

In 2021, a special Accreditation process was opened only for libraries applying for the first time and libraries with Accreditation that has lapsed. Five libraries received their Accreditation for the first time: Elm Creek Public Library, Rising City Community Library, Shelton Public Library, Maxine White-Sutherland Public Library, and St. Edward Public Library. This brought the total to 183 accredited public libraries.

At the beginning of 2022, a Review Team of library directors and Regional Library System directors was assembled to do a self-evaluation of the program, with the goal of making it easier for libraries to navigate the process when it resumes in July 2022.

The biggest change is that Accreditation is now valid for five years, rather than three. We have heard from many libraries that the demographics of their communities had not changed significantly enough in three years to update

the goals in their Community Needs Response Plans. We agreed and so re-accreditation is now due every five years. Due to this change, the accreditation expiration dates of many libraries were changed, so that about 1/5 of the total number of accredited libraries will come up for re-accreditation each year.

The purpose of Nebraska Public Library Accreditation is to encourage excellent library service in Nebraska communities. The guidelines used to evaluate libraries and their services are community-based, so libraries are required to submit Community Needs Response Plans showing that they have researched their communities' needs and can provide appropriate library services that meet those unique needs. The accreditation process ensures that libraries adhere to minimum standards for library service, and provides libraries evidence that certain expenditures, services, and practices are needed and expected.

For more information about Public Library Accreditation in Nebraska, contact Christa Porter, christa.porter@nebraska.gov, 402-471-2665. 🗨️



NCompass Live Webinars Remain Popular

The Nebraska Library Commission continues to offer free online webinars broadcast live every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. CT. During FY2020-2022, 99 episodes of NCompass Live were broadcast with 1,875 live attendees. Audience members watched from across the United States and Canada.

NCompass Live sessions were presented by Nebraska Library Commission staff and guest speakers from public, academic and school libraries in Nebraska, as well as from Alabama, Arkansas, California,

Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, and Texas.

More than 680 archived sessions are recorded and available for viewing at <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/ncompasslive/NCArchivist.asp>. For the list of upcoming sessions, see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/ncompasslive/>. To suggest a topic for NCompass Live, contact Christa Porter, contact information above. 🗨️

Council Advises Commission

The Nebraska Library Commission established the State Advisory Council on Libraries to advise on statewide library development, planning, services, and federal library programs – including input on the Library Commission’s Library Services and Technology Act five-year plan and programs.

The council meets three times annually – in July, November, and March. Meetings included discussion topics related to current and emerging trends and issues. In addition, meetings included updates from Commission staff and from Nebraska Library Association and Nebraska School Librarians Association representatives. The council’s July 2020 meeting included discussion of library services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The November 2020 meeting included a discussion of library services during the pandemic and priorities

for federal stimulus appropriations. The council’s March 2021 meeting included discussion of the changing landscape for library services – planning for the post-pandemic future. Council discussion topics July 2021 through March 2022 included book and content challenges, LSTA state program five-year evaluation, and the LSTA five-year state program plan.

Council meetings include time for members to comment on their library’s, organization’s, or community’s successes and challenges. Council members’ input is important to gaining information and understanding about issues, conditions, and trends from across Nebraska. The Library Commission appoints council members representative of all types of libraries and all Nebraska regions and including librarians, library trustees, educators, and the public. ➡

State Advisory Council members serving during FY 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 included:

- Cali Biaggi**, Doane University, Crete
- Laura England-Biggs** (NLA liaison 2021-22, appointed member 2022), Keene Memorial Library, Fremont
- Michael Burris**, Holdrege Area Public Library, Holdrege
- Jessica Chamberlain**, Norfolk Public Library, Norfolk (Council Chair, 2021-22)
- Scott Childers**, Southeast Library System, Lincoln
- Dixie Codner**, Learning Resources Center, Central Community College, Grand Island
- Susan Franklin**, Hastings College, Hastings
- David Graber**, Conn Library, Wayne State College
- Pat Gross**, Bayard
- Joy Harvey** (NSLA Liaison 2021-22)
- Gail Irwin**, Ainsworth Public Library
- Lisa Irwin**, Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment Center, Kearney
- Joann Jackson**, Fairmont
- Kimberly Endicott**, Wayne
- Lori Long**, Gothenburg Jr/Sr High School

- Laura Marlane**, Omaha Public Library
- Dana Morgan**, Leyton High School, Dalton
- Emily Nimsakont** (NLA Liaison 2022)
- Stephanie O’Connor**, Alliance Public Library, Alliance
- Lisa Olivigni**, Lincoln City Libraries, Eiseley Branch
- Tom Pfeifer**, Nebraska State Penitentiary, Lincoln
- Julie Pinnell**, Cochrane-Woods Library, Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln
- Charlene Rasmussen**, Wayne
- Allison Reisig**, Western Nebraska Community College, Scottsbluff
- Sky Seery**, North Platte High School, North Platte (Council Chair 2020-21)
- Michael Straatmann** (NLA Liaison 2020, appointed member 2021, Council Vice-Chair 2021)
- Rachel Stiner**, Omaha Public Library, Omaha
- Nicole Thompson**, Lied Scottsbluff Public Library, Scottsbluff
- Matthew Williams**, Kearney Public Library, Kearney ➡

A Sweet take on Library Technology

Pretty Sweet Tech comes from Amanda Sweet, the Nebraska Library Commission’s Technology Innovation Librarian. While Pretty Sweet Tech started out as a webinar series on the NLC’s NCompass Live webinar show, the concept has expanded to include guidebooks, curated information resources, consultation services, and a library of things



NLC’s Library Technology Blog

that can be checked out by libraries statewide. Technology is a broad topic, so Pretty Sweet Tech topics cover technology for makerspaces, community engagement, library improvement, and general digital skills in all facets of life. The only criteria for inclusion in Pretty Sweet Tech is that the technology does some good in the world and can add value to libraries. Information and resources are promoted and distributed via NCompass Live, in-person and virtual workshops, and various social media marketing channels.

For some, technology means resume and career assistance using online tools and resources. Others may wish to experiment with the technology of the future, like artificial intelligence or coding. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to connect communities with technology that matters. So whether a local business is exploring drone technology to survey land on a construction site, or a mother is returning to the job market looking to build new skills, the library can help. Look for Pretty Sweet Tech updates on the NLC’s social media and system newsletters for all the latest resources.

Follow this blog to learn how tech can do some good in the world at <http://nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/category/pretty-sweet-tech/> or contact Amanda Sweet at 402-471-3106, or amanda.sweet@nebraska.gov. ➡



Better Broadband for Nebraska Libraries

On May 26, 2021, Governor Ricketts signed the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Act (the Act), LB 388 (2021), Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 86-1301 - 86-1310, which created the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program (NBBP) to facilitate and fund the deployment of broadband networks in unserved and underserved areas of Nebraska. In the 2021 legislative session, \$20 million was appropriated to this program annually beginning in fiscal year 2021-2022. Fifteen Nebraska Public Libraries connected to fiber as part of phase one of this program. The communities selected for the second and final phase of this program will be announced at the end of year 2022.

Seven libraries were connected to fiber in 2022, independently with a local ISP in their community. This brings the total of libraries newly connected to fiber during FY 2020-21 to sixteen.

During FY 2020-21, the NLC also announced a new four year program offering deep discounts on fiber construction to Nebraska public libraries using funding from the USAC E-rate program. In May of 2020 the Nebraska Public Service Commission (PSC) issued an order establishing the E-Rate Special Construction State Matching Grant Program to facilitate the build-out of new fiber to Nebraska public libraries and schools.

The State Matching Grant Program is a four year program with one million dollars available to applicants that do not currently have a fiber internet connection. Nebraska public libraries are able to apply for up to 10% of the total fiber build-out construction cost with these grant funds. The E-rate Program will

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Nebraskans are *United for Libraries*

United for Libraries is a division of the American Library Association. United for Libraries provides its members with a variety of information and educational resources and services. The Nebraska Library Commission supports United for Libraries memberships for all of Nebraska's public libraries and regional library systems. Membership enables libraries access to expert advice and information for library staff, library trustees, foundations, friends of libraries, and library advocates.

United for Libraries is a national network of library supporters who believe in the importance of libraries as the social and intellectual centers of communities and campuses. No one has a stronger voice for libraries than those who use them, raise money for them, and govern them. The mission of United for Libraries is to support those who govern, promote, advocate, and fundraise for all types of libraries.

With statewide membership, Nebraska has a special website to access resources, webinars, online training, and publications. Nebraska's

United for Libraries
Association of Library Trustees,
Advocates, Friends and Foundations
A division of the American Library Association



United for Libraries membership provides access to these resources at no charge to libraries. Resources include:

- **eLearning**
- **The Voice of America's Libraries newsletter**
- **Discussion Forums** for tips, questions, advice, and more – Friends (public, school, academic), Trustees, Foundations
- **Publications** (books, fact sheets for Friends and Foundations, Library Board Practical Guides Tip Sheets, Toolkits, and more)

- **Trustee Academy 2.0** (five online courses)
- **Short Takes for Trustees** (series of 10 short videos (8-10 minutes each))
- **Webinars** (Learning Live Monthly Webinar Series, monthly member forums and recorded webinars)

For more information, see United for Libraries at <http://www.ala.org/united/> or contact Rod Wagner, Nebraska Library Commission Director, rod.wagner@nebraska.gov, 402-471-4001, 800-307-2665.

Tech Kits Through the Mail

The Nebraska Library Commission's Tech Kits Through the Mail initiative exists to prepare Nebraska communities for the jobs of the future. Amanda Sweet, NLC's Technology Innovation Librarian, curated a collection of tech kits to represent the major technology shaping the world of work, including robotics, virtual and augmented reality, the internet of things, drones, and artificial intelligence. Kits range in difficulty, starting with robots like the Ozobot Evo, which uses screen-free techniques to introduce basic robotics coding concepts to kids. Kits like the Finch 2.0 robot and

the Databot 2.0 sensor box take it up a notch to explore artificial intelligence and data science. The Tech Kits are paired with information resources and career concepts for each major technology type. Kits can be checked out for 30 days at a time and libraries only have to pay return shipping. This allows libraries with lower budgets and fewer staff resources to access new technology. Over 325 kits went out in 2022, and interest is growing. For more information about Tech Kits, contact Amanda Sweet at amanda.sweet@nebraska.gov, or 402-471-3106.

Nebraska Library Innovation Studios Makerspace Grant Final Report

The *Library Innovation Studios: Transforming Rural Communities* project used makerspaces, hosted by 35 rural and small libraries to support participatory learning experiences. The project achieved success in stimulating creativity, innovation, and the exchange of ideas to facilitate entrepreneurship, skill development, and learning.

Makers reported making and selling products, starting businesses, purchasing equipment, and gaining skills.

In total 2,709 individuals/makers were certified to operate equipment at the Library Innovation Studios. On average, each individual was certified on 2.9 machines—for a total of 7,797 certifications. An average 77 unique individuals were trained at each host library (an average of 223 machine certifications).

Nearly all the libraries have purchased makerspace equipment and many have impressive makerspaces today.

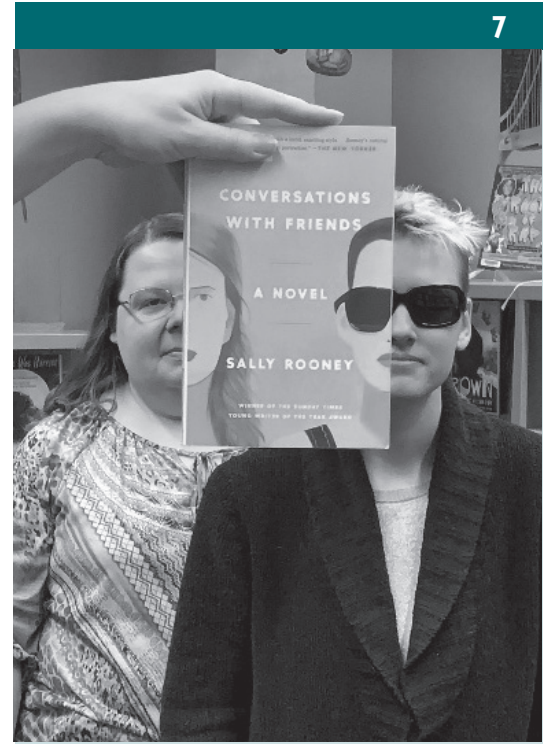
Over 320 pieces of equipment were acquired by the 35 host libraries—an average of 9 devices each. The estimated equipment value is over \$450,000. Nearly all 35 libraries reported that the process helped them to develop local partners, brought new people to the library, and paved the way to move towards a permanent makerspace. As designed, the makerspaces served as the vehicle for libraries to expand their role as community anchor organizations. The community action teams developed locally led to community change as most of the host libraries went on to establish permanent makerspaces with community support.

The project generated products and they are accessible from our project website at <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/grants/InnovationStudios/> There you will find downloadable resources; written machine instructions; marketing, event and community

engagement templates; the makerspace conference agenda; as well as the makerspace-related Niche Academy courses that anyone can access.

The 2021 Nebraska Makerspace Conference was attended by 150 staff from public, academic and school libraries as well as representatives from community makerspaces. It featured 47 separate sessions, demonstrations and hands-on making opportunities to continue the learning process. In response to two recommendations that came out of the conferences' networking brainstorming session, two major products have been produced. The recently launched Makerspaces Mailing List already has over 130 users. The mailing list is an avenue for those interested in makerspaces to share information and ask questions. The second product just launched is the Nebraska Makerspace Database accessible from the Nebraska Library Commission's website at <https://nlc.nebraska.gov/libraries/maker/orglist.asp> Makerspaces in Nebraska can upload information about their makerspace to include an inventory of equipment they offer and other important details about the makerspace. This database is searchable and the information will be useful to anyone interested in makerspaces. Contact information included in the database will promote continued networking opportunities.

For more information about the project or equipment that was featured in the rotating makerspaces, see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/grants/InnovationStudios/>, or contact JoAnn McManus, Library Innovation Studios Project Manager, joann.mcmanus@nebraska.gov, 402-471-4870, 800-307-2665. This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services [grant #LG-95-17-0046-17].



Making Art from Cover Art

Visitors to the Commission website and social media pages were treated to 104 "Bookface Friday" posts during the Biennium. Starting as an idea to help promote the Nebraska 150 book list titles in 2017, staff have continued to create a new bookface weekly using covers from the book club kit, state document, library science, and OverDrive collections. Each post contains not only the cover art creation, but also details about the title and the collection it belongs to, and how patrons can access that collection. Bookface models include Commission staff, family, and visitors. Social media posts regularly receive rave reviews from followers, often mentioning that they visit our pages just to see the latest Bookface. Check out the #BookFaceFriday posts on the Commission Blog at www.nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/ or on the Commission Facebook page at www.facebook.com/NebraskaLibraryCommission. For more information, contact Tessa Terry, Communication Coordinator, tessa.terry@nebraska.gov, 402-471-3434, 800-307-2665.




Library Commission Provides State Aid to Libraries

The Library Commission supported public libraries during the year with total payments of \$378,467 (2021: \$379,547; 2020: \$366,838) - in direct state aid, including *Dollars for Data* and other special incentive awards. To be eligible for state aid, libraries must be accredited by the Nebraska Library Commission, must submit their annual *Public Libraries Survey* online, and their local funding must be at least equal to the lowest annual local income from the three previous years (maintenance of effort) or state aid is proportionately reduced. Four additional libraries attained accreditation status and became eligible to receive state aid this year.

Direct State Aid. In 2022, 183 public libraries received state aid payments (179 in 2021) and 148 of these libraries earned additional payments to acknowledge their achievement of Gold or Silver accreditation status (147 in 2021).

Incentive Payments. Additional direct state aid payments, based on the amount of funds received from another public entity, were made to 81 libraries in 2022 (81 in 2021).

Dollars for Data. The Library Commission awarded payments of \$200 to 45 (45 in 2021) unaccredited libraries that completed and submitted the annual *Public Libraries Survey* online. Providing public library data is an important activity for all libraries so that the Library Commission and the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) have an accurate picture of public library service throughout Nebraska communities. Since submitting the annual survey is a necessary step toward meeting the standards of service outlined in the *Guidelines for Public Library Accreditation*, these libraries are closer to achieving accredited status.

For more information, contact Sam Shaw, Nebraska Library Commission Planning and Data Services Coordinator, sam.shaw@nebraska.gov, 402-471-3216, 800-307-2665. 

Kreutz Bennett Fund Leaves \$700,000 Impact

Since 2012, the Kreutz Bennett Donor-Advised Fund, an affiliated fund of the Nebraska

Community Foundation, has granted over \$700,000 to Nebraska's small-town public libraries through a term endowment established by the late Shirley Kreutz Bennett, a lifelong educator originally from Harvard, Nebraska.

Kreutz Bennett's estate gift has helped dozens Nebraska libraries in communities with populations under 3,000 achieve a margin of excellence over the last 11 years. The Fund spent the remainder of the gift's principal in 2022, marking over a decade of success and countless lives impacted by her generosity.

During the Biennium, \$207,373 was distributed. Facilities Grants supported construction of new or expanded library buildings and renovation or restoration work, Enhancement Grants allowed for improvements in library services, and Planning for Accreditation Grants covered activities and expenses associated with earning Public Library Accreditation from the Nebraska Library Commission.

"The reason she focused on that is because she did a lot of traveling and experiencing the world," said NCF's Kristine Gale. "She felt libraries were a way for rural Nebraskans to learn and experience things they may not otherwise be able to experience. Shirley would feel amazing about the impact she made."

In this final year, requests were received for more than what was left in the fund, so the Nebraska Library Commission contributed American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to help cover some of the grants. As a result, all applications submitted in 2022 were funded.

The Nebraska Community Foundation and the Nebraska Library Commission screened applicants for eligibility and provided guidance for those invited to submit proposals.



Each year, the Kreutz Bennett Donor-Advised Fund advisory committee, made up of Kreutz Bennett's nieces and nephews, reviewed applications and awarded funding to match every local dollar raised.

The 2021 and 2022 Kreutz Bennett Fund Grants were awarded to the following libraries:

- **Agnes Robinson Waterloo Public Library**, \$14,427: outdoor learning space
- **Albion Public Library**, \$1,300: expansion of genealogy and vision impaired areas.
- **Arapahoe Public Library**, \$20,000: renovations
- **Bayard Public Library**, \$8,500: interior and exterior updates
- **Beaver City Public Library**, \$2,500: photo kiosk
- **Bridgeport Public Library**, \$10,000: renovation
- **Butler Memorial Library, Cambridge**, \$1,500: updates to the Children's reading area \$10,000: renovations
- **Clarkson Public Library**, \$3,000: children's activity wall
- **Davenport Public Library**, \$750: planning for accreditation activities .
- **Elgin Public Library**, \$20,000: new Community Room
- **Emerson Public Library**, \$1,975: raised garden beds for lifelong learning programming; \$5,600: renovations
- **Hastings Memorial Library, Grant**, \$10,000: makerspace equipment
- **Lied Lincoln Township Library**, \$13,000: outdoor learning space
- **Lied Pierce Public Library**, \$9,900: makerspace equipment and supplies
- **Lied Randolph Public Library**, \$3,800: musical outdoor playground
- **Logan County Public Library, Stapleton**, \$1,000: OverDrive, Summer Reading Program supplies

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Braille E-Readers Expand Access

In March of 2022, the Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS) was finally given authorization to distribute the National Library Service's (NLS) Braille e-reader. Since the introduction of the e-reader the TBBS has seen a 400% increase in patrons (≈30) receiving Braille materials from TBBS. This is a project that has been in the works for a few years.

Because of supply chain issues, parts shortages, and the Covid-19 pandemic, the rollout was delayed for months.

The Braille e-reader is made by Humanware. It is equivalent to Humanware's Brailliant BI 20X braille display. It's portable, 7" long and 3 1/2" wide. The top face of the e-reader can be divided into two sections: front and rear.

For now, Utah's talking book library is distributing the machines and answering troubleshooting questions.

The front section of the top face consists of a refreshable braille display containing 20 braille cells and 20 cursor routing buttons. Each cursor routing button is associated with the braille cell directly below it. When editing text, pressing one of the cursor routing buttons moves the editing cursor to the associated braille cell.

The rear section of the top face includes a Perkins-style braille keyboard where each key represents

a Dot on a braille cell. The keys under your left hand represent Dots 1, 2, 3, and Backspace, where Dot 1 is located under your index finger and Backspace under your little finger. The keys under your right hand represent Dots 4, 5, 6, and Enter, where Dot 4 is located under your index finger and Enter under your little finger.

On the front edge of the e-reader are five buttons. From left to right, the buttons are as follows:

- Previous thumb key
- Left thumb key
- Home button
- Right thumb key
- Next thumb key

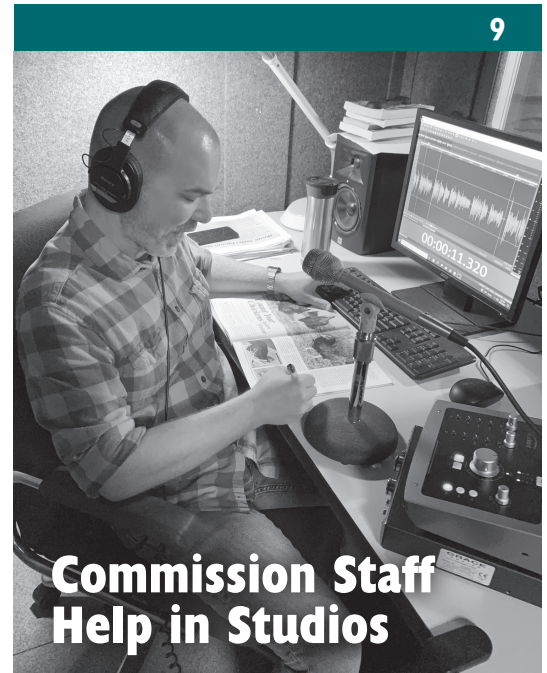
The rear edge only contains an SD card port located near the left edge of the device. This port allows you to insert SD cards for external storage.

You are also able to upload books that have been downloaded from Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) onto the device.

This will be a great addition to the variety of ways that patrons can access materials.

If you think yourself or someone you know might qualify for our service, you may find our online fillable application at <http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/tbbs/applications/individual.aspx> or you may contact the Talking Book and Braille Service via email at talkingbook@nebraska.gov or phone 402-471-4038.

For more information, contact Gabe Kramer, Director; email: gabe.kramer@nebraska.gov, or call 402-471-6242. ➡



Commission Staff Help in Studios

In March of 2020 the TBBS was forced to shut down its recording studios for the health and safety of the volunteers and staff because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lisa Kelly and Tessa Terry stepped in to try and fill the void left from not allowing volunteers to record. Matt Hier, TBBS' studio manager, also recorded many issues of magazines himself.

"I am immensely grateful for their assistance during our time of need. Narrating can be quite challenging. That Lisa and Tessa helped TBBS continue providing new recordings for our patrons speaks not only to their dedication as teammates, but also their generosity and selflessness as individuals," Hier said

Both Tessa and Lisa deserve a huge thank you for taking time out of their day to help try to keep TBBS on track. ➡

Kreutz Bennett Fund Leaves \$700,000 Impact *(continued)*

- **Maltman Memorial Public Library, Wood River**, \$4,000: purchase Golden Sower and Newberry Award children's books
- **Mead Public Library**, \$2,000: collection development
- **Newman Grove Public Library**, \$2,000: creative center cupboard and supplies
- **Palmyra Memorial Library**, \$15,080: architectural firm site survey and conceptual designs for a new library building.
- **Plainview Public Library**, \$12,500: makerspace equipment
- **Scotia Public Library**, \$4,000: Story Time kits
- **Stanton Public Library**, \$20,000: renovation to make the library ADA accessible
- **Sterling Public Library**, \$500: to create a Friends of the Library group
- **Sutherland Public Library**, \$5,041: computers, tables, chairs
- **Valparaiso Public Library**, \$5,000: replace flooring ➡



Are you missing out on important library information?

Subscribe to the Nebraska Library Commission's *NCompass E-Newslist* for weekly access to information about Nebraska library activities.

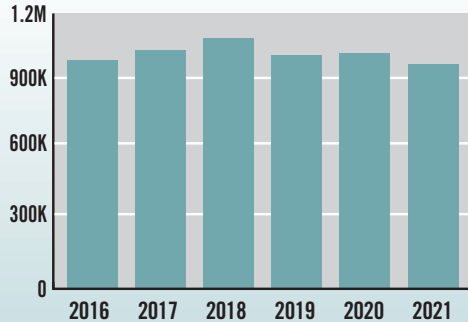
nlc.nebraska.gov/enews

A weekly news sheet from the Nebraska Library Commission, <http://nlc.nebraska.gov>

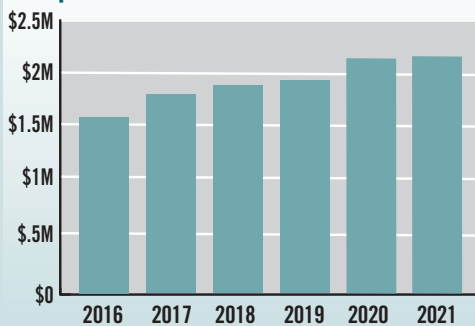
The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023
Phone: 402-471-2045 or 800-307-2665 Fax: 402-471-2083

Nebraska Public Library Statistical Survey

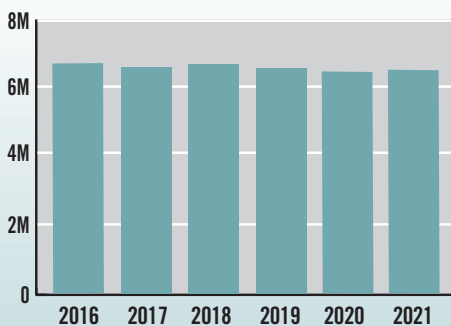
Registered Borrowers



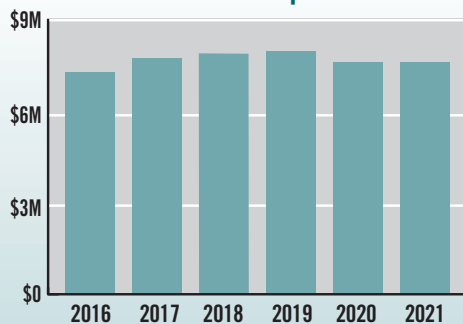
Expenditures on Electronic Materials



Collection Size



Total Collection Expenditures



According to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), there are 9,057 public libraries in the United States. In Nebraska, there are 271 public libraries plus 7 bookmobiles and 19 branch facilities. Five libraries in the state are combined with public schools and three are combined public/academic libraries. The 2021 *Public Libraries Survey* in Nebraska was completed by 95% of eligible libraries. The results provide a dependable measure of overall library service and usage trends in Nebraska.

The number of eBooks and Audiobooks used has continued to increase, with 189 (173 in 2021) libraries participating in the Nebraska OverDrive Libraries Consortium. There are at least two participating libraries in every non-metropolitan legislative district in the state. Looking at Internet connectivity in public libraries, 61% of Nebraska libraries meet or exceed the FCC definition of broadband (24 MBPS, created in 2015). 51% met this standard in 2021.

Overall circulation of material has decreased more than 16% between 2019 and 2021, and increased 44% between 2020 and 2021. Uses of electronic materials continued to increase at a steady pace, by 17% between 2019 and 2021, and over 6% from 2020 to 2021. Library programs and attendance continued to decrease, as libraries offered 11%

fewer programs in 2021 (compared to 2020), and over 40% decrease in program attendance.

Other trends revealed by the results of the 2021 *Nebraska Public Libraries Survey* include the following:

- 192 Nebraska Public Libraries loaned eBooks and Audiobooks
- Number of total resources in Nebraska public libraries: 6,669,325 items (this does not include electronic items such as eBooks and Audiobooks that are leased and shared)
- Number of Internet computers available to the public: 2,381
- Public libraries loaned 11,453,859 items in FY2021
- Number of registered library users: 994,663
- Number of public library visits in 2021: 3,680,256
- Libraries providing wireless Internet access: 222, or 95% of reporting libraries
- Libraries delivered 18,047 programs, attended by 341,392 people
- Nebraskans paid only \$43 per capita in 2021 for public library service
- 16 Nebraska public libraries were recognized as "Star Libraries" in the 2021 *Library Journal Index of Public Library Service*.

(continued on page 11)

The State of Public Libraries in Nebraska (continued)

Selected Library Statistics, FY 2019 through FY 2021

	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	3-Year Change	1-Year Change
Registered Borrowers	1,033,863	1,043,276	994,663	-3.79%	-4.66%
Total Visits	7,142,472	3,587,788	3,680,256	-48.47%	2.58%
Items Borrowed	13,656,149	9,470,979	11,453,859	-16.13%	20.94%
Items Borrowed per Capita	8.58	5.94	7.19	-16.19%	21.09%
Internet Computers for Public Use	2,753	2,506	2,381	-13.51%	-4.99%
Libraries Providing Free Wi-Fi	216	216	222	2.78%	2.78%
Number of Programs Offered	36,223	20,033	18,047	-50.18%	-9.91%
Library Program Attendance	854,573	479,354	341,392	-60.05%	-28.78%
Number of Books in Collection	5,489,435	5,418,610	5,420,590	-1.25%	0.04%
Number of Print Subscriptions	9,436	8,369	7,869	-16.61%	-5.97%
Number of Audio Materials	238,994	231,050	231,781	-3.02%	0.32%
Number of Video Materials	407,058	415,309	423,457	4.03%	1.96%
Total Materials held	6,719,951	6,656,143	6,669,325	-0.75%	0.20%
Annual Hours Open	441,160	322,809	425,959	-3.45%	31.95%
Legal Service Area Population	1,591,793	1,595,049	1,592,274	0.03%	-0.17%
Local Government Revenue	\$60,900,506	\$63,100,097	\$65,432,396	7.44%	3.70%

NEBRASKA PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE EQUALIZERS

There are more than **7.4 million** annual visits to Nebraska Public Libraries (not including virtual and online library visits).¹ That's more than **82 sellouts** at Memorial Stadium.

Nebraska Public Libraries are Technology Equalizers

- **97%** offered **FREE** public internet access
- **93%** offered **FREE** Wi-Fi
- **1,660,079** uses of Electronic Materials (eBooks and Audiobooks) in 2018
- **23,502** Children's Programs offered, with **698,689** attendees. **11,858** of these programs were focused on early (pre-K) literacy, with more than **266,702** attendees
- **3,736** Young Adult Programs offered, with **52,450** attendees
- **8,725** Adult Programs, with **135,380** attendees²

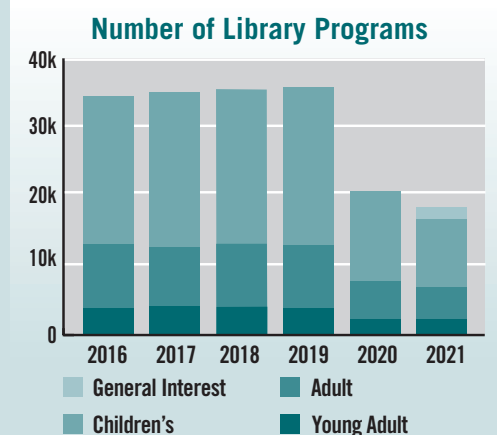
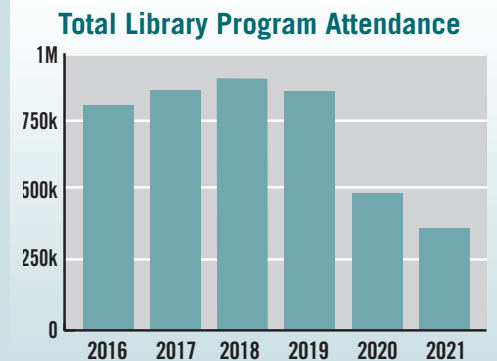
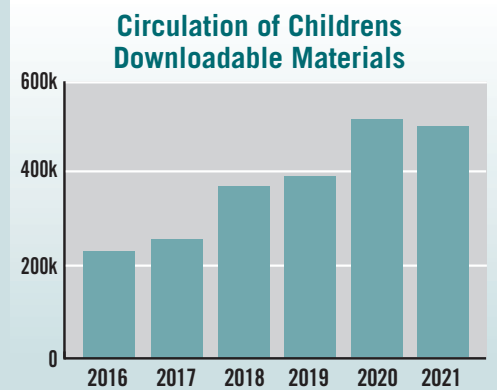
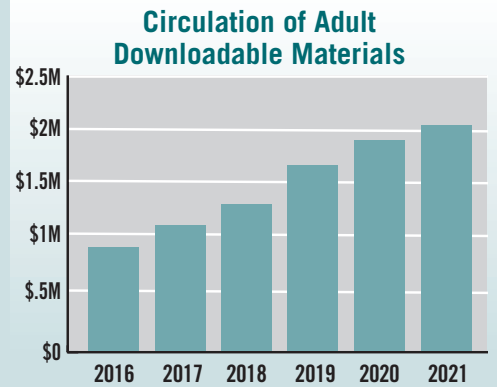
Nebraska Public Libraries Provide Access to and Assistance Using New Technology

- **192** offer color printing
- **187** offer document scanning
- **18** offer 3D printing
- **35** offer vinyl cutting
- **71** offer tablet computers
- **70** offer access to early learning technologies
- **40** offer access to recreational games
- **21** offer access to robotics
- **38** offer access to smart technologies
- **35** offer access to developmental technologies
- **193** offer general computer training
- **169** offer online database training
- **156** offer social media training
- **161** offer training for online government programs
- **104** hosted community engagement events
- **141** offered assistance with locating health information online
- **156** hosted social events for adults³

SOURCES:

- 1) 2017-2018 Nebraska Public Library Survey (95% reporting)
- 2) 2017-2018 Nebraska Public Library Survey (95% reporting)
- 3) 2017-2018 Nebraska Public Library Survey (95% reporting)

Nebraska Public Library Statistical Survey



PIIONEER

Commission Supports Pioneer Consortium

Pioneer, the Nebraska Library Automation Consortium, continued to provide a cooperative catalog to member libraries.

During the Biennium the consortium included eighteen libraries, including libraries in Alma, Arapahoe, Atkinson, Axtell, Bennington, Blue Hill, David City, Dundy County, Franklin, Grant, Holdrege, McCook, St. Paul, South Sioux City, Superior, Valley, Valparaiso, and Western Nebraska Community College. Libraries join the consortium as an alternative to replacing current and stand-alone catalog systems with another proprietary system at greater cost.

With the assistance of an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant from the Nebraska Library Commission, the consortium migrated to a new Integrated Library System (ILS) in 2022, Aspen ILS from ByWater Solutions. This union catalog allows the Pioneer Consortium to achieve the following goals:

- To allow patrons to request needed materials from the collections of Member Libraries
- To enhance cooperative electronic and physical document delivery of materials held by Member Libraries
- To provide access to electronic resources other than the union catalog to Member Libraries and their patrons
- To support cooperative collection development activities by Member Libraries

For more information see <https://nepioneer.com> or contact Christa Porter, contact information on page 8. For membership information contact Robin Quinn, hml@gpcom.net, 308-352-4894.

Significant funding for this project has been provided through grants from the Nebraska Library Commission, funded through the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.



New Look and Resources for NebraskAccess

NebraskAccess is the Nebraska Library Commission’s public resource portal for Nebraskans leading to premium research databases, evaluated websites, government publications, and more.

Timely information was provided through seasonal “Hot Topics” and “What’s New” links, as well as “Nebraska FAQs” which are created when the Library Commission Information Services reference librarians receive the same Nebraska-related question more than once.

Free, 24/7, full-text access is available to thousands of magazines and journals, biographical information, and genealogical information. Nebraskans logged in outside of libraries with either a password from the library, their Nebraska driver’s license, or State ID. They used this service to complete work or school assignments, research health and medical topics,

keep up on current events, trace family histories, make personal and business economic decisions, and explore hobbies and other topics of personal interest.

New content was considered for the coming fiscal year, and a new contract will add databases for underserved middle and high school students. Planning started to revamp the look and access methods for the NebraskAccess website.

See <http://nebraskaccess.nebraska.gov> to check out the offerings in NebraskAccess. For more information contact Devra Dragos, Nebraska Library Commission Technology & Access Services Director, devra.dragos@nebraska.gov, 402-471-4335, 800-307-2665.

NebraskAccess databases are funded through the State of Nebraska and the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services, as administered by the Nebraska Library Commission.

Number of searches undertaken in the statewide subscription databases between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2022:

Biography Reference Bank & Center	9,735,714
Consumer Health Complete	1,071,509
FirstSearch/WorldCat Discovery	3,064,304
Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia.	3,052,649
GreenFILE	3,181,102
Legal Information Reference Center.	2,670,359
MasterFILE Complete	7,221,854
MyHeritage.	324,209
Novelist Plus & K-8	194,281
Novelist Plus K-8.	28,418
Point of View Reference Center	2,763,645
Primary Search.	4,104,429
Psychology and Behavioral Sciences	3,186,570
Science & Technology Collection	3,093,261
Small Business Reference Center	2,163,757

Support for Children's Services a Priority

The Nebraska Library Commission continued to support library services to children and young adults. During the Biennium the Commission supported the statewide Summer Reading Program with training and materials. The Library Commission supported statewide workshops, organized by the Regional Library Systems. Sally Snyder, Nebraska Library Commission Children and Young Adult Library Service Coordinator, gave book-talks in-person and via Zoom to librarians across the state.

The Library Commission supplied manuals, booklists, and material on the Library Commission website to complement the themes, 2021: "Tails and Tales" and 2022 "Oceans of Possibilities." As a member of the Collaborative Summer Library Program consortium (consisting of representation from all fifty states, the District of Columbia and five territories), the Library Commission contributed funding for development and distribution of Summer Reading Program materials to libraries across Nebraska, see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/youth/summerreading>. Children and teens also participated in the Summer Reading Program through the Library Commission's Talking Book and Braille Service.

The Nebraska Library Commission and Regional Library Systems invited children and teens across the state to read and discuss the same book, providing Book Club Kits to facilitate group reading and activities. The 2021 **One Book for Nebraska Kids** was *Harbor Me* by Jacqueline Woodson. The 2021 **One Book for Nebraska Teens** was *Piecing Me Together* by Renee Watson. The 2022 **One Book for Nebraska Kids** was *The Adventures of Beanboy* by Lisa Harkrader. The 2022 **One Book for Nebraska Teens** was *Stupid Fast* by Geoff Herbach. See <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/youth/OBOK> for information and activities.



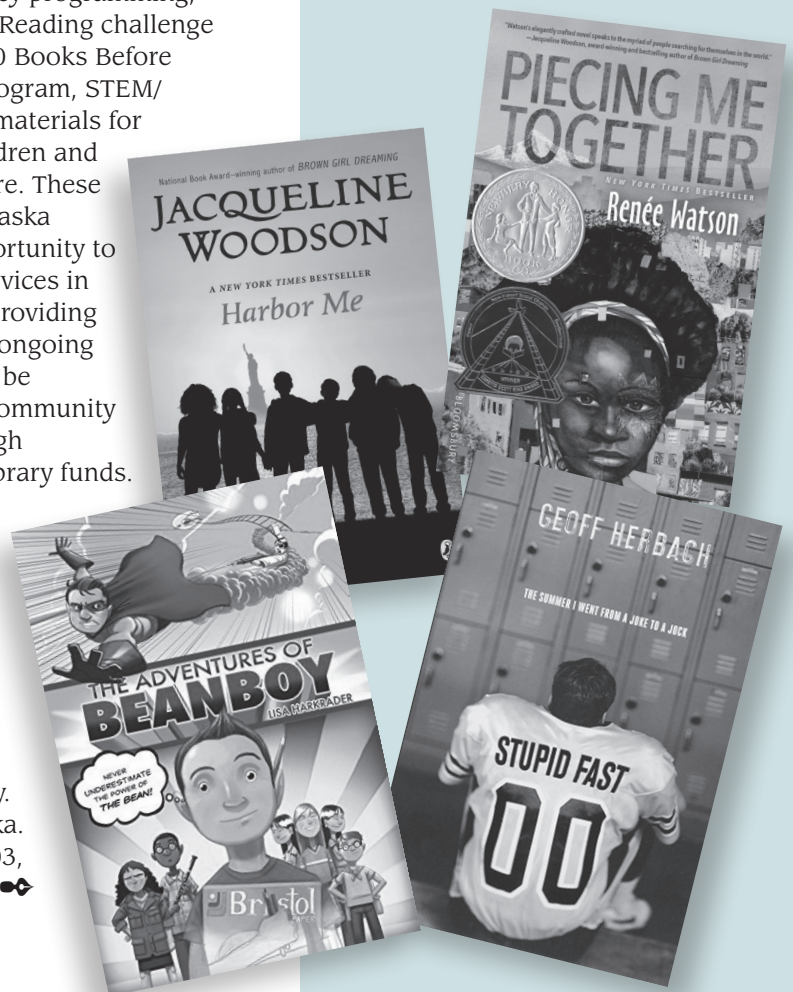
\$147,966 was awarded to public libraries in Youth Grants for Excellence, using funding provided by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Funded projects provided Makerspace tools, early literacy programming, the "100 Books" Reading challenge for teens, a "1000 Books Before Kindergarten" program, STEM/STEAM-focused materials for activities for children and families, and more. These grants gave Nebraska libraries the opportunity to expand youth services in new directions, providing a foundation for ongoing services that will be continued with community support or through reallocation of library funds.

For more information contact Sally Snyder, Nebraska Library Commission Children's and Young Adult Library Services Coordinator, sally.snyder@nebraska.gov, 402-471-4003, 800-307-2665.

Continuing Education Programs Provided

The Nebraska Library Commission continued a long-standing commitment to support Nebraska libraries in their efforts to improve library service by providing continuing education (CE) and training for librarians, board members, and Nebraska residents. The Commission sponsored or underwrote 535 events, which were attended by 842 Nebraska library staff and board members during the fiscal year. These training activities included the annual "Big Talk from Small Libraries" online conferences, thirty-five Basic Skills courses (with multiple sections), NCompass Live webinars, and training for the Cataloging Certificate program.

For more information about continuing education, contact Holli Duggan, Nebraska Library Commission, Continuing Education Coordinator, holli.duggan@nebraska.gov, 402-471-2694, 800-307-2665.



FASTER INTERNET, LOWER COSTS!



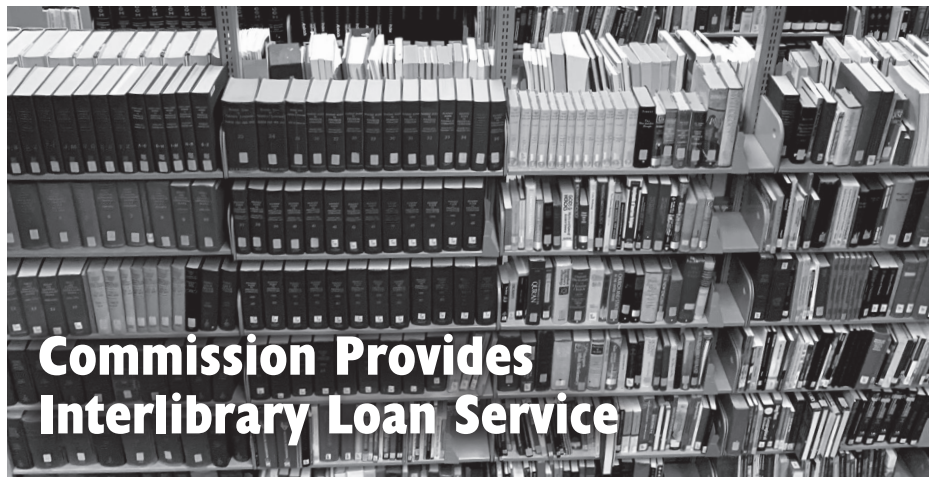
E-rate Discounts Support Technology Access

Nebraska schools and libraries received over \$20.6 million in discounts on telecommunications costs during E-rate Funding Years 2020 (July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021) and 2021 (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022) through the Universal Service Fund (E-rate) program.

Nebraska libraries were awarded \$482,901 in discounts. Discounts ranged from 50 to 90 percent, with 69 of the state's public libraries participating, including the Regional Library Systems. 66 libraries were awarded discounts on Internet Services, 6 libraries were awarded discounts on Fiber Special Construction, and 12 libraries were awarded discounts on Internal Connections.

Discounts are awarded on a sliding scale based on the percentage of students in the local school district who are eligible for the free and reduced school lunch program, an indicator of the local level of need, and the County's Rural or Urban status as determined by the U.S. Census.

The Nebraska Library Commission provides education, training, and consultation services to Nebraska public library staff to assist with E-rate applications. For more information about E-rate support in Nebraska, see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/erate/> or contact Christa Porter, Nebraska Library Commission Library Development Director, 402-471-3107, 800-307-2265 or christa.porter@nebraska.gov. For more information about the E-rate program, see www.usac.org/sl/e-rate/



Commission Provides Interlibrary Loan Service

Libraries in Nebraska without available funding or staff access to provide Interlibrary Loan (ILL) service for their customers (using shared national networks like the one provided by OCLC) continued to rely on the Nebraska Library Commission to find and borrow materials from other libraries for them and their patrons. This allowed even the smallest public libraries and school libraries in our state to meet the needs of their customers, supplying materials for everything from serious research, to keeping up on their favorite fiction series, to books for family reading. In times of diminishing acquisition budgets, ILL services helped libraries that did not have the funds to buy every book their customers wanted. Public libraries used ILL services to supplement book club selections with additional copies, including large print and audio versions.

During the pandemic, many Nebraska libraries continued to provide services to their communities whether or not their facilities were open to visitors. Nebraska Library Commission ILL Services never stopped connecting these libraries with materials for their patrons. On a national level, the ILL Resource Sharing community had to communicate effectively about dramatic changes in availability and response time, and the Library Commission was a part of that conversation. The Library Commission informed ILL service customers of adjusted expectations in item availability and delivery time, and worked with

libraries to resolve any issues with returns. We were pleased to be able to continue to provide a service that gives comfort even in difficult times. As libraries around the nation resumed more regular operations, we were able to resume borrowing items from libraries nationwide.

School libraries used ILL services to obtain books in languages other than English, to help teach students whose first language is not English. School libraries also used ILL services to obtain multiple copies of books for classes, as well as books for individual research papers. Home-school families use ILL services through their public libraries to give their children as many educational options as possible. The Library Commission also provided ILL services for Nebraska state government agencies, which allowed them more flexibility with their journal subscription decisions, while still ensuring access to up-to-the minute, mission-critical information. State agencies used ILL services to keep up on the latest general research and recent discoveries in their field, and to do their own research for a variety of proposals, projects, and problem solving. Advances in electronic article-sharing (Article Exchange) helped libraries and agencies receive articles more quickly and streamlined permissions and licensing concerns.

For more information on ILL services, contact Lynda Clause, Nebraska Library Commission Interlibrary Loan Staff Assistant, lynda.clause@nebraska.gov, 402-471-4018, 800-307-2665

\$59,040 in Internship Grants Awarded to Nebraska Public Libraries

Nebraskans once again reaped the benefits of the energy and creativity of Nebraska young people as they served as interns in their local public libraries. During the Biennium, the **Nebraska Library Commission** awarded **Nebraska Library Internship Grants** totaling \$59,040 to thirty-eight Nebraska public libraries. These internship grants supported public library interns, who contributed to the scope and value of the diverse programs and activities in Nebraska's public libraries.

"The internships are a great opportunity for students to get involved in library work. Beyond earning money and gaining valuable work experience, the student is exposed to the broad range of library services and programming. Internships provide an opportunity for the student to view the library as a viable and satisfying career choice. In addition, interns bring a fresh perspective and their own unique talents to the library," said Nebraska Library Commission Director Rod Wagner.

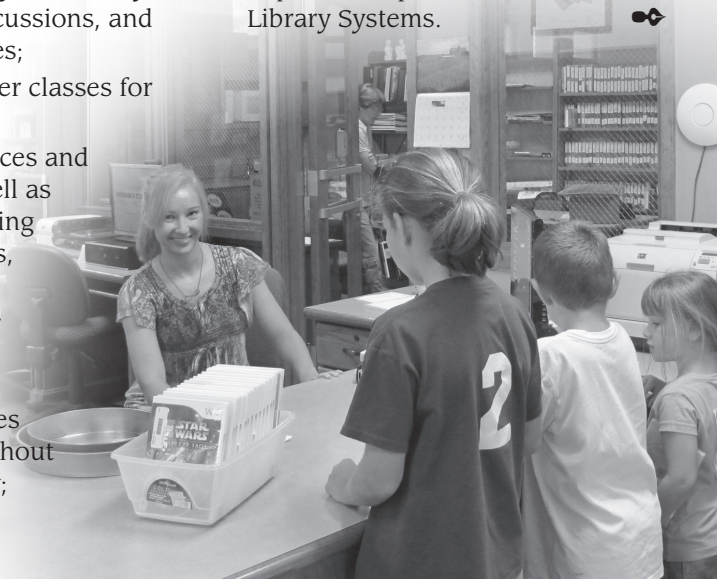
Student interns learned about library work as they shadowed staff, assisted with day-to-day library operations, and implemented special projects. Some of the activities that students participated in include:

- plan and implement programs such as summer reading programs for all ages, bilingual story time, story time sessions, book discussions, and teen/tween activities;
- assist with computer classes for adults and seniors;
- organize Makerspaces and Maker Clubs, as well as other STEAM learning activities, programs, and crafts;
- work with Summer Youth Outreach Services to provide Bookmobile services at locations throughout the city and county;

- facilitate partnerships with Doane University, the Bassett Old Feed Store Art Center, the Ponca State Park, Merrick County Extension Agency, Merrick County Child Development Center, Central City Senior Center, Madison County Historical Society Museum, and UNL Extension;
- assist with outreach events outside the library;
- updating library's Community Needs Response Plan for the Public Library Accreditation process
- update the library's website and social media sites (Facebook, Pinterest, blogs, etc.) or in some situations designing and coding a new website;
- assist with circulation activities, book selection, and collection management; and
- work on newspaper digitization projects.

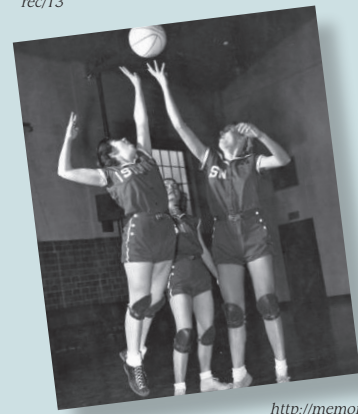
Additionally, three public libraries participating in the Library Innovation Studios: Transforming Rural Communities (LIS) project also received 2021 internship grant funding. The interns hired in these libraries primarily worked with the LIS makerspace grant.

Funding for the project is supported and administered by the Nebraska Library Commission, in partnership with the Nebraska Library Systems.



Bertrand High School basketball team, Phelps County Historical Society Collection

<http://memories.ne.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/pchs/id/15/rec/13>



Immanuel Nursing School basketball players, Alegent Health Immanuel Medical Center Collection

<http://memories.ne.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/ahimc/id/100/rec/1>

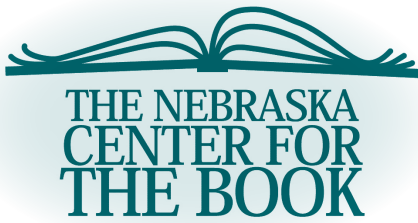
Nebraska Memories at Play

Nebraska Memories offers access to digitized Nebraska-related primary source materials, including glass-plate negatives, photographs, postcards, stereoscopes, sheet music, maps, manuscripts, documents, and oral histories at <http://memories.nebraska.gov>. The images show a variety of activities, architecture, and life in Nebraska.

Over 670 pages of transcriptions were loaded to make musical scores, books, and other documents in Nebraska Memories fully searchable. Web search engines are indexing these transcriptions and bringing in more users. And for those who find some of the handwritten messages unreadable, we have deciphered them!

Library Commission staff will work with Nebraska cultural institutions to scan and describe their collections. Private donations of materials are also scanned and added to this online database. For more information or to consult on materials for inclusion, contact Devra Dragos, Nebraska Library Commission Technology & Access Services Director, 402-471-4335, 800-307-2665, devra.dragos@nebraska.gov

Library Commission Hosts Center for the Book



The Nebraska Library Commission provided financial and staff assistance to the Nebraska Center for the Book, which brings together the state's readers, writers, booksellers, librarians, publishers, printers, educators, and scholars to build the community of the book—supporting the following projects:

Celebration of Nebraska Books. Each fall, the Celebration features the current One Book One Nebraska book selection; honored winners of the Jane Geske, Mildred Bennet, and Nebraska Book Awards; and announces the choice for next year's One Book One Nebraska reading program. In 2020 the Celebration was a virtual event, with videos of speakers and authors posted over the week of October 19- 23rd. In 2021 the Celebration was back in person, hosted at the Nebraska History Museum in Lincoln on October 22.

Jane Geske Award. The Center for the Book selected UNL Center for Digital Research in the Humanities in 2020, and the Kearney Literacy Council was the 2021 award recipient. The award pays tribute to Jane Pope Geske, former director of the Nebraska Library Commission, founding member of the Nebraska Center for the Book, and long-time active member of many Nebraska library and literary activities.

Mildred Bennett Award. The award was presented to Kimberly Verhines in 2020, and Rebecca Faber was the 2021 award recipient. Awarded for service in support of Nebraska's writers and readers—following in the footsteps of Mildred Bennett, the charismatic founder and long-time President of the

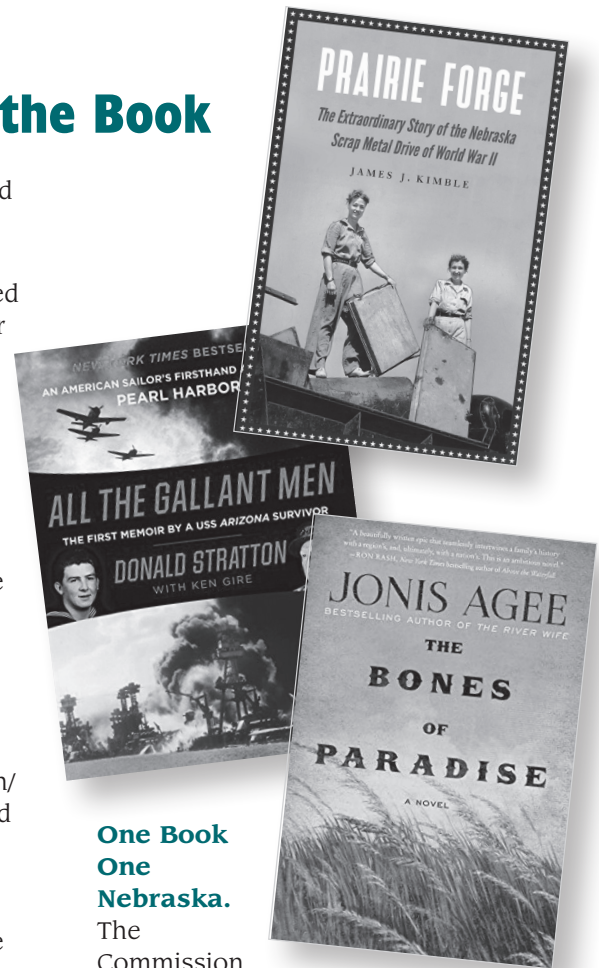
Willia Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation.

Letters about Literature.

Nebraska students were recognized by Governor Pete Ricketts for their letters to authors that influenced their lives. In this national reading/ writing contest, young readers wrote letters to an author explaining how his or her work changed their way of thinking about the world or themselves. For a complete list of winners, see centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/LAL.html.

Nebraska Book Awards.

Nebraska books were honored in the Biennium in the categories of children/young adult, cover/design/illustration, fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. These books were written by Nebraska authors, published in Nebraska, or set in Nebraska. For a complete list of winners, see centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/awards/winners/nebook.html.



One Book One Nebraska.

The Commission supported the One Book One Nebraska program—assisting with selection and promotion of titles for Nebraska citizens to read to celebrate the literary richness of our state. The 2020 One Book One Nebraska selection was *All the Gallant Men: An American Sailor's Firsthand Account of Pearl Harbor* by Donald Stratton with Ken Gire. The 2021 selection was *Prairie Forge: The Extraordinary Story of the Nebraska Scrap Metal Drive of World War II* by James J. Kimble. The 2022 selection is *Bones of Paradise: A Novel* by Jonis Agee. Nebraska libraries and other literary and cultural organizations across the state hosted events to encourage all Nebraskans to read and discuss the same book, see <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/onebook.html>.

For more information about Center for the Book activities, see centerforthebook.nebraska.gov and www.facebook.com/NebraskaCenterfortheBook, or contact centerforthebook@nlc.state.ne.us NebraskaCenterfortheBook, or contact centerforthebook@nlc.state.ne.us

Refreshed Library Science Collection

The Library Science Collection at the Nebraska Library Commission provides professional and reference materials for Nebraska librarians and library science programs. This year, the collection was refreshed using LSTA funds, adding new titles across multiple subject areas, including

library outreach, cataloging, copyright, digital literacy, disaster planning, archives, virtual services, and more. A weekly email from our acquisitions staff highlights a certain subject area or newly purchased materials. A large number of our new books have already circulated among librarians across the state, with great feedback. ➡

License Allows Libraries to Show Movies

Public viewing of motion pictures in Nebraska public libraries was made possible by the statewide license funded by the Nebraska Library Commission through Movie Licensing USA, at a cost of \$17,298.00 for FY20-21 and \$22,029.00 for FY21-22. With this license, motion pictures

were shown as part of library services and programming at Nebraska public libraries. For more information see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/discounts/motionpicture.aspx> contact Susan Knisely, Online Services Librarian, susan.knisely@nebraska.gov, 402-471-3849, 800-307-2665. ➡

Book Clubs adapt to COVID-19

As Libraries began to close to the public in March of 2020, we asked each of our book club leaders if they would be cancelling their discussions and reservations for our book club kits. In the early days of the pandemic, several clubs discontinued meeting but as the weeks and months went on, many club members wanted and needed the community from their groups and asked their librarians to find a way to accommodate gatherings. Some groups opened the library and met with social distancing and masks and others moved to virtual gatherings. As various library directors shared their experiences with me, I invited Kay Schmid, Hruska Public Library David City; Chuck Reichwein, Hebron Secrest Library; and Dana Still, Hastings Public Library, to talk about

their stories for an NCompass Live presentation on May 5, 2021: <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/scripts/calendar/eventshow.asp?ProgID=20600>.

I believe it was a success as we had several librarians watch and several from other states participate in our discussion. Many Nebraska authors who were not able to do their presentations in person were happy to meet with groups virtually and at no cost. What was a challenge turned into opportunity and a renewed understanding of what book clubs provide. It's clear that book clubs continue to be an important part of library programming.

For more information see nlc.nebraska.gov/ref/bookclub/ or contact Lisa Kelly, Nebraska Library Commission Information Services Director, lisa.kelly@nebraska.gov, 402-471-4015, 800-307-2665. ➡



Pandemic Preparedness

Library commission staff collected resources for libraries across the state on disaster planning, disinfection techniques, virtual services, loosened copyright restrictions for virtual story times, and other information related to the ongoing pandemic. Many libraries in Nebraska closed their doors for a time, or modified services to protect the health of their patrons and staff. The Commission tracked these closings and services, and provided guidance on reopening and alternate services models. These resources have been updated as conditions and information needs change, and have been available to all Nebraskans on the Nebraska Library Commission's main web page throughout the pandemic. For more information on the resources available see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/libman/pandemic.aspx> or contact Aimee Owens, Information Services Librarian, aimee.owens@nebraska.gov, 402-471-3217, 800-307-2665. ➡

Better Broadband for Nebraska Libraries

(continued)

provide up to an additional 10% to match any state funding for fiber special construction. The result of this collaboration between the State of Nebraska and the federal government reduces the average cost for Nebraska public libraries to only 10% of the total cost for fiber construction.

In 2022 three public libraries were awarded Special Construction State Matching Grant funding to build-out fiber to the library: Fairmont, Kimball and Lodgepole.

For year 2022 twenty-five libraries connected to fiber either through a State program, Federal program with matching grant funds or independently with their local internet service provider.

For more information contact Holly Woldt at holly.woldt@nebraska.gov, 402-471-4871. ➡

Library Commission Supports Regional Library Systems

System Highlights included:

Central Plains Library System (CPLS)

- Consulted via telephone, email, and in person on a variety of topics.
- Coordinated 18 virtual and in-person workshops for school and public librarians, including Completing the Bibliostat Survey; Summer Reading Program (both years); and Reading for Resilience.
- Participated in cooperative projects including Youth Services Retreat, Reader Zone Online Record-keeping, Golden Sower Nominee Selection, and NLA Speakers. Ordered 229 puppets for libraries state-wide.
- Awarded \$3,735.95 in scholarships to 17 librarians to attend conferences and continuing education opportunities.
- Cleaned 458 audio, video, and game discs and repaired 28 book bindings to keep items circulating from member libraries' collections.
- Circulated 68 Professional Journals and provided 42 journal articles through electronic delivery.
- Circulated 1,636 audio books, 90 book kits with cutting equipment being used 19 times, Cricuts and Heat Presses were used 29 times, and the button machines being used 24 times. The Mobile Computing Lab consisting of 12 laptops was utilized 7 times.
- Provided 34 S.T.E.A.M. project ideas as well as 6,776 individual S.T.E.A.M. kits to 30 participating libraries.
- Furnished 15,221 die cut shapes for Summer Reading Program crafts in addition to other craft supplies.
- Provided a week-long Balloon Artist Tour during Summer Reading, stopping at 23 libraries.
- Conducted weekly Zoom Meetings for Library Directors and Staff Members to discuss current or relevant topics that were weighing on their minds. Many of our librarians use this forum to ask questions about policies,

programming, and other pertinent topics.

- Distributed 12 newsletters.
- Maintained a website, a Pinterest account, and a Library Thing account for member libraries' information.
- Established a YouTube Channel to hold the recordings of our Virtual Workshops.

Southeast Library System (SELS)

- Sponsored or cosponsored 36 continuing education sessions for a total of 868 CE hours earned by 739 attendees on topics such as Policies, Youth Services, succession planning, state law for public libraries, giving and receiving feedback, collection development, Accreditation, social media, fair use and copyright, tax aid programs, open meeting laws, preparing for severe weather, ADA compliance, and more.
- Conducted on-site training or consulting appointments with 15 member libraries, providing orientation to new library directors on resources available to them through the system and the Commission, weeding assistance, training for boards on topics such as library governance, assistance to foundations of friends groups, help with certification and accreditation, and policy assistance.
- Published 24 issues of the newsletter, with articles and updates from more than 63 libraries of all types.
- Supplied 47 member libraries with more than 3067 pages of professional literature on librarianship, municipal activities, and non-profit planning.
- Provided 36 book kits to public, school, and institutional libraries.

Three Rivers Library System (TRLS)

- TRaiLS serves 600 libraries: 94 public libraries, 436 school libraries, 23 academic libraries 47 institutional and special libraries.
- Of the 94 public libraries, 81 are accredited - 7 at the Bronze level; 47 at the Silver level; 27 at the Gold level.
- TRaiLS serves 21 counties; population

of 1,014,608; and 11,199 square miles.

- TRaiLS has 9 board members, and they meet quarterly.
- TRaiLS provided 122 virtual SKILLS Meetings, 5 in-person workshop, 15 in-person SKILLS Meetings, and 86 library visits.
- Communication is done via the Facebook page, Facebook groups, email, website, and phone.
- Presentations were provided to several public library boards about their roles and responsibilities.
- Breakout Box Challenges were conducted for library boards as a training method.
- The recorded versions of the Virtual SKILLS Meetings and workshops average about 35 views per YouTube recording.
- TRaiLS provided \$5,078.24 in scholarships for system librarians.
- TRaiLS has 146 Book Sets and 49 STEAM Kits available for checkout.
- 1,254 book copies and 27 STEAM items were checked out to 47 member libraries.
- Twelve newsletters shared information to all member libraries. Views of these newsletters averaged 72 per issue.
- The TRaiLS website was viewed 8,077 times over the last two years.

Western Library System (WLS)

"Supporting Libraries Serving Their Communities"

- Covers 21 counties in Western Nebraska serving 3 academic, 3 special, 40 public and 95 school libraries.
- The Western Library System used the ARPA funds to update and add to the professional collection books, books for the Author Tour in Fiscal Year 2022-2023. Makerspace equipment and audio-visual equipment, a replacement laptop and office furniture.
- The WLS Board met twelve times. By-laws, policies and procedures are continually reviewed and updated as needed.
- Circulated the *All the Gallant Men*, *Prairie Forge*, and *Bones of Paradise*

(continued on page 19)



Commission Supports Regional Library Systems (continued)

- One Book One Nebraska book kits.
- Annual Meetings with all the libraries in the WLS were held in July. The Knight Museum in Alliance hosted the 2020 meeting. The new Kathleen Lute Public Library in Ogallala was the selected venue in 2021. The meetings included a business session and an opportunity for library staff to network and tours.
- Communication channels included phone, website using WordPress through "Nebraska Libraries on the Web," the WLS listserv, and Facebook.
- Circulated journals to member libraries.
- The professional collection of books and bookkits expanded significantly. Golder Sower nominated books from 2020 to the present were purchased for circulations to libraries. The most popular bookkits were those for the One Book One Nebraska, All the Gallant Men, Prairie Forge and Bones of Paradise.
- Cosponsored events with the Regional Systems. The Joint Youth Services Retreat and the Nebraska Library Association's (NLA) presentation by John Chrastka on EveryLibrary Advocate to Activist.
- The Western Sun Newsletter was issued 12 times, providing information on libraries and library trends regionally, state-wide and nationally. Continual communication to WLS libraries is achieved through E-mail, phone, online calls, social media and visits to the libraries.
- Distributed updated publicity to libraries for the Cradle Catcher program.
- Promoted grants and training through the Nebraska Library Commission. The Systems received money to participate in the Readers Zone Tracking System made available to all libraries courtesy of the NLC. Assisted libraries with pursuing CARES act money.
- Repaired CD/DVD discs for libraries in the system.
- Highlighted workshops include the ESU 13 Midwinter All-Day Training ~ Librarians Track.
- Technology Plan was updated and approved by the Board that authorized the purchase of new equipment and to utilize Bytes Managed IT for network hosting and expertise. ➡

Commission Makes Government Information Accessible

The Nebraska Library Commission Government Information team continues to provide a variety of government information services throughout the Biennium. These services are provided in many different forms, such as research projects, answering reference questions, collection development, promotion, and inter-agency cooperation. For example, we answered reference questions about fiber optic lines in Omaha, historical streetcar lines in Omaha, elder care and genealogical resources; provided information and contacts for various legal aid and immigration resources; and connected patrons with the appropriate Nebraska state agencies, such as the Secretary of State, the Public Service Commission, and local passport offices.

Collection development is always a continuous process and a major part of providing government information services. The Nebraska Publications Clearinghouse, established by the Legislature in 1972 to collect all Nebraska state agency publications released to the public, includes almost 185,000 items in paper, over 20,000 items online, over 3,000 items added online, and the online documents were accessed over 278,000 times over 2 years. The Federal Documents collection includes more than 47,000 paper items, with almost 700 titles accessible online. As these collections grow, we work closely with various agencies and organizations to fill in gaps and provide documents needed for research. For example, we received a large collection of Nebraska

state agency publications from the Omaha Public Library Clark Branch that we didn't have in our Clearinghouse collection, and we continue to fill in gaps in the Nebraska Public Documents Project. Staff takes every opportunity to "scan on demand" any requested public document that is not already available online and add it to our online collection. We also continue retrospective digitizing of older state documents (with almost 3,000 items to date) and add those to our online collection as well. We also provided temporary housing for the Lincoln-Lancaster County Genealogical Society research collection for 2½ years.

Promotion of government information is also an important part of what we do, mainly through blog posts and web pages. Blog entries, such as *What's Up Doc?* and *Book Briefs* about state agency documents, government information resource pages, information services for libraries and their customers, and special events, are just a few examples of how we keep the public informed.

Government Information reference services are available at nlc.ask@nebraska.gov, 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665. For more information, see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/govdocs/resources.aspx> or contact Mary Sauers, Nebraska Library Commission Government Information Services Librarian, mary.sauers@nebraska.gov, 402-471-4017, 800-307-2665 or Bonnie Henzel, Nebraska Library Commission State Documents Staff Assistant, bonnie.henzel@nebraska.gov, 402-471-6285, 800-307-2665. ➡



Nebraska Library Commission

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Nebraska Library Commission Highlights and Statistics July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2022

- ☞ The Nebraska Library Commission circulated **22,304** items, with book club circulation representing **20,857**.
- ☞ The Library Commission served **693** customers onsite. (We closed our doors to walk-ins from 3/23/20-7/6/21)
- ☞ The Library Commission loaned **119** items to other libraries.
- ☞ The Library Commission borrowed **4,953** items from other libraries for Nebraska library customers.
- ☞ Nebraska OverDrive Libraries Consortium library customers (from **189** participating libraries) downloaded **1,026,558** audiobooks, **972,849** eBooks, and **49,802** magazines.
- ☞ The Library Commission's Nebraska Memories collection contains **11,400** images and audio files.
- ☞ **1,051** federal documents were added to the Library Commission's collection, bringing the total to **46,951**.
- ☞ **4,276** state documents were added to the Library Commission's collection, bringing the total to **184,881**.
- ☞ E-docs were accessed **278,678** times.
- ☞ Nebraska Library Commission staff and guest trainers broadcast **99** *NCompass Live* sessions, with **1,875** attending live and thousands viewing archived recordings.
- ☞ The Nebraska Library Commission hosted and supported websites for **130** public libraries and **4** Regional Library Systems.
- ☞ The Nebraska Library Commission's Talking Book & Braille Service circulated **204,733** talking books, magazines, Braille materials, and videos with audio description to more than **2,569** customers.
- ☞ The Talking Book & Braille Service recorded **353** magazine issues and **37** books.
- ☞ The Talking Book & Braille Service duplicated **38,383** digital cartridges.
- ☞ Talking Book & Braille Service customers downloaded **41,304** audio books; **1,883** audio magazines; **7,509** Braille materials; and **830** music instruction pieces.
- ☞ **876** library staff were currently enrolled and participating in the Nebraska Librarian Certification program
- ☞ Nebraska library staff and board members attended one or more of **535** continuing education events sponsored or underwritten by the Nebraska Library Commission, with **842** total attendees. This includes **281** who participated in one or more of the **35** online Basic Skills sessions.
- ☞ **183** public libraries are currently accredited.