

Your guide to the
Nebraska Library
Commission
July 1, 2022–
June 30, 2024
Biannual Report
FY2022 & FY2023
Vol. 29 No. 1

Compass

N E W S L E T T E R

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
The Nebraska Library Commission's **Tech Kits Through the Mail** initiative exists to prepare Nebraska communities for the jobs of the future. Amanda Sweet, Nebraska Library Commission's Technology Innovation Librarian has 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. The collection consists of 18 different kit types, with most kits including 15 copies of the kit. 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 by either a school or public library and they only have to pay return shipping. This allows

libraries and schools with lower budgets and fewer staff resources to access and explore new technology. During the biennium, July 1, 2022-June 30, 2024, the Tech Kits circulated 732 times across Nebraska.

Tech Guides & Try it Before You Buy

The same Tech Guides used to expand library services also help libraries make informed purchasing decisions about how to use grant funding and other limited resources. Libraries can check out Tech Kits Through the Mail to experiment with technology hands-on before making the decision to buy. Purchasing equipment is not a requirement to use the Tech Kits Through the Mail service.

For more information about Tech Kits, contact Amanda Sweet, Nebraska Library Commission Technology Innovation Librarian at amanda.sweet@nebraska.gov, or 402-471-3106, 800-307-2665. 

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.

Completed in 2023, federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds received through the Institute of Museum and Library Services resulted in added support for statewide library services and sub-grants to hundreds of Nebraska libraries for local needs and use. The \$2.4 million added library resources, programming, technology upgrades, furnishings, and more. In the past year, more public libraries upgraded broadband service with fiber installations. Libraries were also aided by Nebraska Universal Service E-rate matching funds provided by the Nebraska Public Service Commission. Broadband initiatives supported with federal and state appropriations included benefits for libraries. A Community Engagement Fund award from Medica provided \$53,500 in funding for public libraries in need of networking equipment to improve broadband connections.

Publishing and reading were not slowed by pandemic conditions of recent years. 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 and growing use. Conditions over the past several years have transitioned to more online delivery of services, but in-person events have steadily increased as well during the past two years.

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

(continued on page 4)

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Nebraska Library Commissioners
July 2022– June 2024

Vernon J. Davis, Lincoln
Arunkumar Pondicherry, Lincoln
Lois Todd-Meyer, Lincoln
Beth Kabes, Creston
Tiffany Carter, Omaha
Diane Downer, Gering

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.

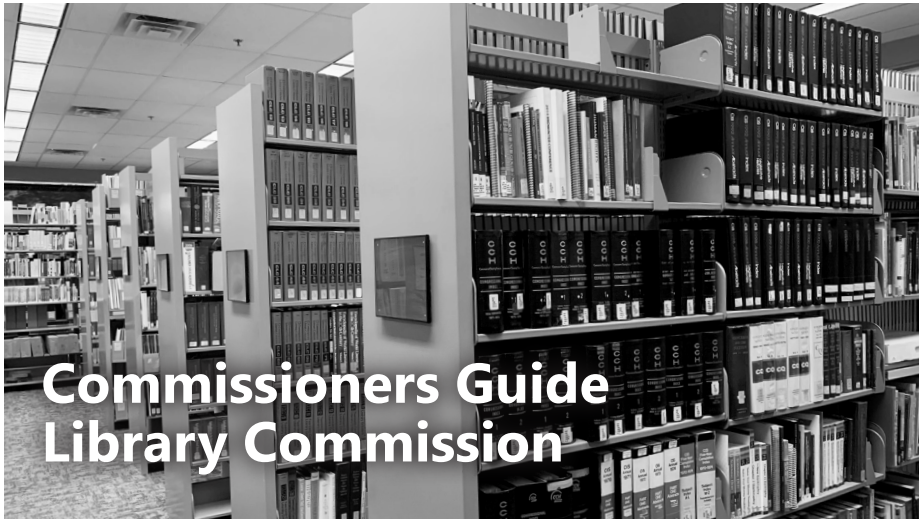
Nebraska Library Commission Funding July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2024

State of Nebraska Funds	\$8,667,295
Federal Funds	\$3,538,905
Cash Funds	\$26,894
Total	\$12,233,093

Projects Funded through the Nebraska Library Commission July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2024

ARPA Grant	\$126,597
Braille Services (Utah State Library)	\$8,160
Collaborative Summer Reading Program	\$4,520
Continuing Education & Training	\$35,672
Electronic Information Resources	\$1,015,192
Interlibrary Loan (Lender Compensation)	\$185,666
Library Improvement Grants	\$103,015
Motion Picture Licensing for Public Libraries	\$45,016
OverDrive Downloadable Books	\$519,350
Public Library Statistical Reporting Software (Bibliostat)	\$8,250
Regional Library Systems	\$1,240,370
Scholarships, Stipends, Internships	\$53,127
State Aid to Public Libraries	\$800,717
United for Libraries (ALA Membership)	\$50,281
Youth Grants for Excellence	\$62,643
TOTAL	\$4,258,558

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-Newsletter**. Fill out the form at 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.




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 up-coming trends, issues, and activities. During the past two fiscal years, commissioners received reports and discussed the Commission's 2023-25 state biennium budget request, rural library broadband service initiatives, and grant programs for libraries funded by the 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 the past two fiscal years were Arunkumar Pondicherry (Commission Chair 2023-2024), Lincoln; Lois Todd-Meyer (Commission Vice-Chair 2023-2024), Lincoln; Tiffany Carter, Omaha; Diane Downer (Commission Vice-Chair 2024), Gering; Beth Kabes, Clarkson (Commission Chair 2024); and Vernon J. Davis, Papillion. Commission meetings are held the second Friday of every other month. Exceptions to that schedule are in consideration of holidays and special events.

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

Excellence in Leadership Award Recipients 2022 & 2023



2022 Matt Hier
Nebraska Library
Commission
Talking Book and
Braille Service
Audio Production
Studio Manager



2022 Amanda Sweet
Nebraska Library
Commission
Technology
Innovation Librarian



2023 Jerry Breazile
Nebraska Library
Commission
Business Manager



2023 Tessa Terry
Nebraska Library
Commission
Communications
Coordinator

Library Commission Staff Transitions, July 2022 – June 2023

Arrivals

- Laura Mooney – Government Services Administrative Technician (9/19/2022)
- Andrew Sherman – Library Technology Support Specialist (1/17/23)
- Trey Porter – Office Specialist (5/22/2023)
- Bailee Juroshek – Office Specialist (2/12/2024)
- Johanna Mezger – Library Reader's Advisor (3/11/2024)
- Kim Ramsey – IT Infrastructure Support Analyst (5/31/2024)
- Elizabeth Macias-Villegas – Office Specialist (6/20/2024)

Departures

- Eric Saxon – Office Specialist (11/28/2022)
- Shoshana Patocka – Librarian (12/1/2023)
- Holly Woldt – IT Infrastructure Support (12/1/2023)
- Kay Goehring – Library Reader's Advisor/Sr (12/1/2023)
- Kayla Henzel – Office Specialist (12/20/2023)
- Annette Hall – Administrative Technician (3/5/2024)
- Trey Porter – Office Specialist (3/15/2024)

Reassignments

- Andrew Sherman – IT Infrastructure Support Analyst/Senior (12/4/23)
- Hollin Attendola – Library Reader's Advisor/Sr (12/19/2023)

From the Director...

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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.

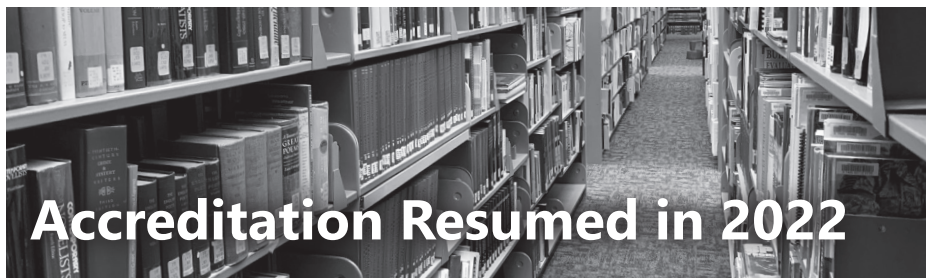
Rod Wagner 

Performers Database Expanded for Authors

The Nebraska Library Commission's Performers Database has been expanded to include authors. Responding to survey feedback from Nebraska librarians, the Nebraska Library Commission is working to solicit authors to add their contact information to the database if they are willing to visit libraries for programming or accompany book club discussions. Previously the database consisted of mainly children's focused performers such as musicians, songwriters, magicians, and scientists for Summer Reading Programming. Performers and authors are only included upon the recommendation of one or more Nebraska librarian. You can search the database at nlc.nebraska.gov/youth/performers/

Authors who would like to be included are invited to add their contact information at nlc.nebraska.gov/scripts/youth/performers/authoreditadd.asp?mode=add

For more information contact Lisa Kelly, Information Services Director at lisa.kelly@nebraska.gov, or 402-471-4015, 800-307-2665. 



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. The process resumed in July 2022.


Sixty seven Nebraska Public Libraries were accredited or reaccredited this biennium, including three libraries earning accreditation for the very first time, bringing the total to one hundred eighty three accredited public libraries. Public libraries in Nebraska are accredited for a five-year period.

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, 402-471-3107, 800-307-2665. 

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 the biennium, 92 episodes of NCompass Live were broadcast with 1478 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 organizations and companies; and public, academic, and school libraries in Nebraska;

as well as from Auckland, New Zealand; Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, and Washington.

More than 770 archives sessions are recorded and available for viewing at nlc.nebraska.gov/ncompasslive/NCArchivist.asp.

For the list of upcoming sessions, see nlc.nebraska.gov/ncompasslive/. To suggest a topic for NCompass Live, contact Christa Porter, contact information above. 

NCompass  live

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 met six times during the past two fiscal years ending June 30, 2024. 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. Reports and discussion topics included state legislation related to libraries, the Commission’s LSTA Five-Year Plan, American Rescue

Plan Act (ARPA) grant projects, and the Commission’s 2023-2025 State Biennium Budget Request. March Council meetings each year coincide with Nebraska Library Advocacy Day. The Council’s November meetings include a review of events, activities and issues during the year and a look ahead to up-coming trends and issues for the coming year.

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 library supporters.

State Advisory Council members serving during July 2022-June 2024 included:

Cali Biaggi, Doane University, Crete

Michael Burris, Holdrege Area Public Library, Holdrege

Jessica Chamberlain, Norfolk Public Library (Council Chair 2022), Norfolk

Scott Childers, Southeast Library System, Lincoln

Dixie Codner, Learning Resources Center, Central Community College, Grand Island

Shanna Crosby-Wilson, Boys Town Library Services, Omaha

Holli Duggan, (NLA Liaison 2023, 2024), Lincoln

Laura England-Biggs, Keene Memorial Library, Fremont

David Graber, Conn Library, Wayne State College, Wayne

Pat Gross, Bayard

Joy Harvey (NSLA Liaison 2023-2024), Lincoln

Gail Irwin, Ainsworth Public Library, Ainsworth

Lisa Irwin, Youth Rehab & Treatment Center, Kearney

Lori Long, Gothenburg Jr/Sr High School, Gothenburg

Dana Morgan, Bridgeport Public Schools, Bridgeport

Joanne Neemann, Beatrice Public Library, Beatrice

Jennifer Norton, Lexington Public Library, Lexington

Stephanie O’Connor, Alliance Public Library, Alliance

Lisa Olivigni, Lincoln City Libraries-Eiseley Branch, Lincoln

Mandy Peterson, Shelby-Rising City Public Schools, Shelby

Allison Reisig, Western Nebraska Community College, Scottsbluff

Michael Sauers, Do Space, Omaha

Sky Seery, North Platte Public Library, North Platte

Rachel Steiner, Omaha Public Library, Omaha

Michael Straatmann, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, (Council Chair 2023-2024)

Celine Swann, Grand Island Public Library, Grand Island

Amber Sweetland, Kimball Public Library, Kimball

Tammi Thiem, Three Rivers Library System, Omaha

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 that can be checked out by



NLC’s Library Technology Blog

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 nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/category/pretty-sweet-tech/ or contact Amanda Sweet, Nebraska Library Commission Technology Innovation Librarian at amanda.sweet@nebraska.gov, or 402-471-3106, 800-307-2665.



Improving Technologies at Public Libraries



Internet filtering, out-of-date networking equipment and computers, and the lack of reboot/restore software on library computers used by the public were identified as impediments to E-Rate participation, high-speed Internet broadband and WiFi networking, and cyber security at Nebraska's libraries in 2024 according to our annual Bibliostat Survey. NLC staff have spent 2024 engaging with Nebraska's libraries to ensure they are prepared to acquire funding for and install networks and computers that can support faster and more secure broadband Internet service and WiFi.

The federal E-Rate program and Nebraska Public Services Commission provide funding to libraries that pays for the construction cost to install a high-speed Internet connection. The federal E-Rate program will also pay a portion of the ongoing monthly cost for the Internet connection and the network equipment needed to support it. To be eligible, the library must have in place a "technology protection measure that protects against access by adults and minors to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or – with respect to use of computers with internet access by minors – harmful to minors." This required technology is referred to as DNS filtering. However, E-Rate doesn't cover the cost of a DNS filtering service and many libraries don't have the technology skills to implement it. At the end of 2023, the NLC began providing libraries with the filtering technology provided by DNSFilter to promote E-Rate adoption. The NLC covers the cost, assists libraries with its implementation, and manages the platform. If libraries were to implement it themselves, they would be paying the minimum fee of \$50/month each, rather than the NLC paying one fee for the 35 libraries using it by June 30, 2024. By using a NLC managed account, we save these libraries significant money since these small libraries have such low DNS request volume. Between July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024 the NLC performed 65 Technol-

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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

United for Libraries

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



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, visit United for Libraries at ala.org/united/ or contact Rod Wagner, Nebraska Library Commission Director, rod.wagner@nebraska.gov, 402-471-4001, 800-307-2665. 

Prairie STEM Partnership

The Nebraska Library Commission partnered with Prairie STEM, a nonprofit in Omaha that offers STEAM kits and training opportunities to schools and libraries. To kick off the partnership, the NLC and Prairie STEM raffled off 42 Library Packs to different communities across the state. Each Library Pack has 12 kits with step-by-step instructions, career exploration information, and all the materials needed for assembly. While kits through the raffle are geared towards 5th – 8th grade, Prairie STEM offers kits and activities for all K-12 grade levels. Some kits are available for purchase while a growing collection of activities can be accessed for free by anyone on Prairie STEM's website.

The partnership also helps libraries gain access to specific kits at very reasonable rates. Prairie STEM is available to schools and libraries to offer educator training for other technology tools like drones and virtual reality as well, expanding the ability of libraries to offer STEM activities across communities.

Find additional resources on Prairie STEM's website: prairiestem.org/ or contact Amanda Sweet, Nebraska Library Commission Technology Innovation Librarian at amanda.sweet@nebraska.gov, or 402-471-3106, 800-307-2665. 

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 Swank Movie Licensing USA, at a cost of \$45,016.00 for the biennium (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2024). With this license, motion pictures were

shown as part of library services and programming at Nebraska public libraries. For more information see nlc.nebraska.gov/discounts/motionpicture.aspx or contact Susan Knisely, Nebraska Library Commission Online Services Librarian, 402-471-3849, 800-307-2665.



Book Club Kits Partner with Nebraska Public Media

In partnership with Nebraska Public Media, the Nebraska Library Commission has added 30 copies of *Great Plains Bison* to our book club collection. Book club kits with 10 copies each are also owned by: Bellevue Public Library, Kearney Public Library, Lincoln City Libraries, and the Regional Library Systems.

This book club kit explores the themes of conservation, restoration, and respect. What can we learn from the stories of bison and the Pawnee seed keepers? How can conservation be practiced today? The book club guide includes discussion questions, additional reading suggestions and organizations to explore, and two recipes from Chef Anthony Warrior.

Great Plains Bison, written by buffalo rancher Dan O'Brien (also featured in *The American Buffalo*), traces the history and ecology of this American symbol from the origins of the great herds that once dominated the prairie to its near extinc-

tion in the late 19th century and the subsequent efforts to restore the bison population. A project of the Center for Great Plains Studies and the School of Natural Resources, University of Nebraska; published by Bison Books.

Seed Warriors, directed by Rebekka Schlichting (Ioway Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska), follows a group of seed keepers in their ancestral homelands of Nebraska as they seek to regain sovereignty over the food system. By reclaiming their sacred corn seeds, they work to return to the healthy, traditional lifeways of the Pawnee people. Learn more at PawneeSeed.org.

Ken Burns's newest documentary, *The American Buffalo*, tells the dramatic story of the near extinction and improbable rescue of America's national mammal. It premiered October 16 on PBS. Learn more at PBS.org/americanbuffalo.

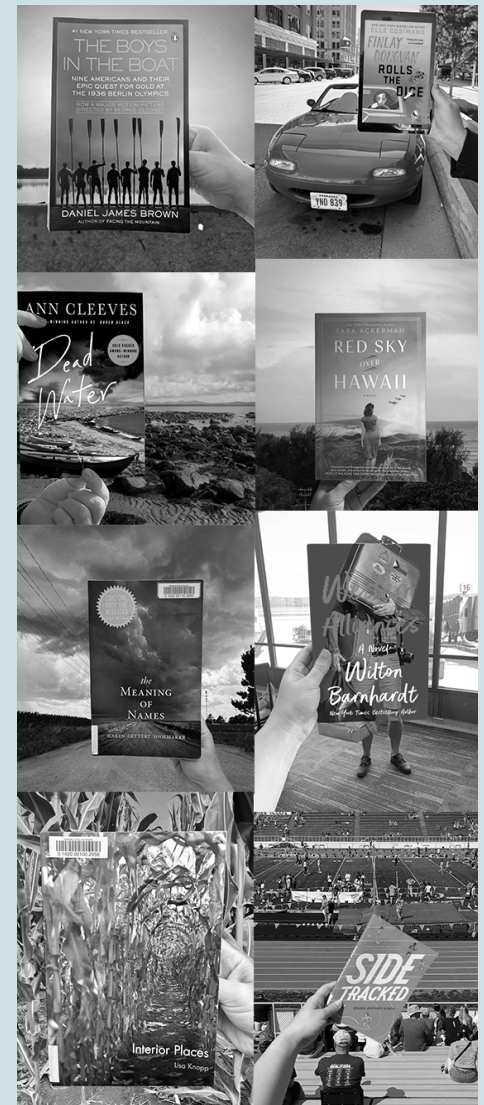


Bookface Fridays, On Location

Still going strong after over 7 years and more than 375 posts, the Nebraska Library Commission's weekly "Bookface Friday" blog series has even "hit the road." Staff have volunteered to take book covers with them on their travels, both personal and professional. From local cornfields to the nation's capital, all the way to the shores of Scotland and Hawaii, commission staff have captured some excellent photos to highlight titles in our various collections.

Check out the #BookFaceFriday posts on the Commission Blog at nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/ or on the Commission Facebook page at facebook.com/NebraskaLibraryCommission.

For more information, contact Tessa Timperley, Communication Coordinator, tessa.timperley@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 \$400,753 (2023: \$396,920; 2022: \$378,467) - 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 2024, 183 public libraries received state aid payments (also 183 in 2023) and 150 of these libraries earned additional payments to acknowledge their achievement of Gold or Silver accreditation status (149 in 2023).

Incentive Payments. Additional direct state aid payments, based on the amount of funds received from another public entity, were made to 79 libraries in 2024 (79 in 2023).

Dollars for Data. The Library Commission awarded payments of \$200 to 46 (44 in 2023) 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. 

\$120,000 in Library Improvement Grants Awarded to Nebraska Public Libraries

During the biennium, the Nebraska Library Commission awarded Library Improvement Grants totaling \$120,000 to thirty-eight Nebraska public libraries.


These competitive grants were funded with federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) monies from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). These Library Improvement Grants help to facilitate growth and development of library programs and services by supplementing local funding with federal funds designated for these purposes. In order to be funded, projects had to meet one or more of the following LSTA Purposes listed in the Commission's long-range plan:

- Facilitate access to resources... for the purpose of cultivating an educated and informed citizenry;
- Encourage resource sharing among... libraries for the purpose of achieving economical and efficient delivery of library services to the public;
- Promote literacy, education, and lifelong learning and to enhance and expand the services and resources provided by libraries, including those services and resources relating to workforce development, 21st century skills, and digital literacy skills;

- Ensure the preservation of knowledge and library collections in all formats and to enable libraries to serve their communities during disasters;
- Promote library services that provide users with access to information through national, state, local, regional, and international collaborations and networks.

Local libraries also had to provide at least a 25% match in order to receive the funds.

The projects and services planned included: Touch screen kiosks, a microfilm and newspaper digitization project, indoor and outdoor furniture/shelving/cabinets, laptops/tablets/PC computers, outdoor book returns, a hydroponics tower, wireless printing/copying systems, certified career coaching classes, storytime materials, a Virtual Reality headset, telescopes, an Owl 3 Conference Camera, CD audio books, Teen and Children's area improvements, a Glowforge 3D laser printer, migration to a new Biblionix cataloging system, library cards and barcode scanners, a WiFi capable copy machine, games, puzzles, Legos, book trucks, Cubelets Robot Blocks, STEM makerspace equipment, and an AWE Early Learning Literacy Workstation.

For more information, contact Christa Porter, Nebraska Library Commission Library Development Director, christa.porter@nebraska.gov, or 402-471-3107, 800-307-2665. 



Improving Technologies at Public Libraries

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ogy Reviews and 32 on site visits. As of June 2024, 35 libraries are using DNSFilter for CIPA compliance and better cyber security.

In April 2024, the NLC secured a grant from Medica to upgrade the network equipment and provide reboot/restore software for the public use computers at Nebraska's libraries. The NLC staff have conducted numerous Technology Reviews at these libraries to assist them with identifying network equipment that needs to be upgraded, purchasing the new equipment, and installing it. The NLC has also assisted with the purchase and installation of DeepFreeze reboot/restore software on the computers used by the public to protect the computers and the privacy of the patrons who use them by wiping all traces of use from a public computer after it is rebooted. This provides a significant cyber security benefit as any possible malware/virus infections are deleted, as well as any sensitive information left on the computer after use by patrons.

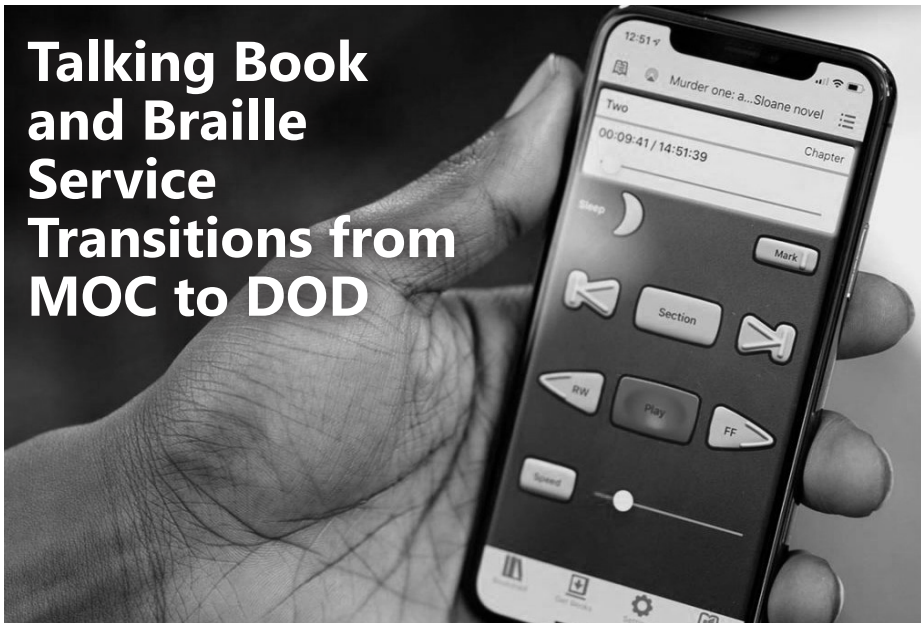
As part of the Technology Reviews for the Medica grant funding, NLC Staff have also been doing audits of the libraries' Windows computers to ensure that they can run the Windows 11 operating system. Microsoft has announced that Windows 10 will be EOL (End-of-Life) in October 2025, meaning Microsoft will no longer provide critical security updates for Windows 10 after this date. These audits have identified how many computers libraries will need to replace prior to this deadline.

For libraries that have had funds for new computers, NLC staff have assisted with their installation to ensure they are set up properly and securely. Libraries lacking the funds for new computers can apply for Library Improvement grants with the NLC to help pay for new computers.

It is hoped that more Nebraska libraries will take advantage of E-Rate funding, upgrade to faster Internet service, and have better cyber security with the NLC's assistance to eliminate these two roadblocks.

For more information please contact Andrew Sherman, Nebraska Library Commission Library Technology Support Specialist at andrew.sherman@nebraska.gov, or 402-471-4559, 800-307-2665.

Talking Book and Braille Service Transitions from MOC to DOD



In March 2024, the National Library Service (NLS) implemented the transition from Magazines on Cartridge (MOC) to Duplication on Demand (DOD), streamlining the process of supplying patrons with issues of their favorite audio magazines. The Nebraska Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS) was one of the first NLS regional libraries to transition to this new system.

Before this update, patrons received the nationally distributed magazines through the MOC program. The MOC program relied on third-party contractors to create and mail audio magazine cartridges nationwide. However, this process was plagued by delays and technical issues. TBBS had no oversight of cartridge production or check-ins. TBBS staff could not quickly notice issues, and had no power to resolve them.

Now, nationally distributed audio magazines are managed through the same onsite duplication process as audiobooks. This degree of local control means that patrons can receive the latest issues of audio magazines quickly and efficiently. It also affords our library a greater degree of standardization; patrons now receive nationally distributed audio magazines in the same format as their audiobooks. Additionally, back issues are now available to our patrons on demand. Patrons also have the freedom

to request custom cartridges with issues from different audio magazines.

Patrons welcomed this change with enthusiasm. Library staff are equally pleased, and have seamlessly integrated workflows with the new system.

Another welcome change is on the horizon. Locally produced publications – such as the Nebraska magazines produced in TBBS's in-house studios – are still being duplicated on a one-to-one basis. This means only one issue of a single magazine can be loaded onto a cartridge. This process occurs outside of our main ILS system, and creates more work for staff.

In the near future, NLS will integrate these locally produced publications into the DOD system.

In the meantime, TBBS anticipates the addition of more nationally distributed audio magazines. We will continue to provide excellent service to our patrons across Nebraska, and we will continue to seek out new opportunities to further improve TBBS – so that all may read.

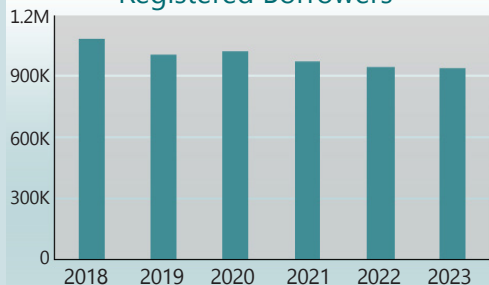
For more information, please contact Talking Book and Braille Services Director Gabe Kramer at gabe.kramer@nebraska.gov, or 402-471-6242, 800-742-7691.



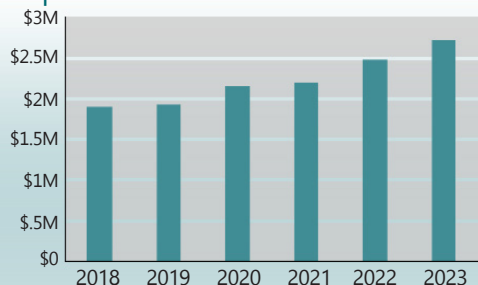
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Nebraska Public Library Statistical Survey

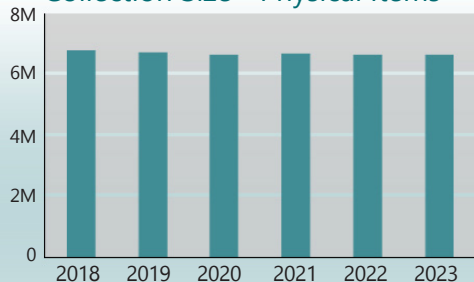
Registered Borrowers



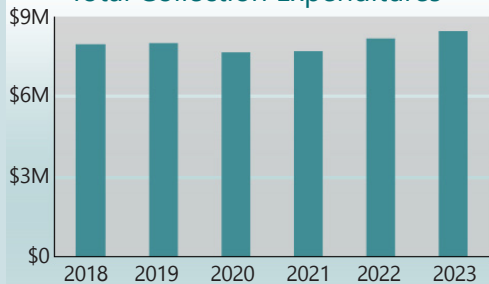
Expenditures on Electronic Materials



Collection Size - Physical Items



Total Collection Expenditures



According to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), there are 9,248 public libraries in the United States. In Nebraska, there are 272 public libraries plus 6 bookmobiles and 23 branch facilities. Five libraries in the state are combined with public schools and three are combined public/academic libraries. The 2023 Public Libraries Survey in Nebraska was completed by 93% 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 194 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, 86% of Nebraska libraries meet or exceed the FCC definition of broadband (24 MBPS, created in 2015). 70% met this standard in 2022. 119 libraries (52%) reported fiber optic internet connections.

Overall, circulation of material has increased by 4.79% from 2022 to 2023. Uses of electronic materials continued to increase at a steady pace, by over 12% compared to 2022. Library programs and attendance increased, as libraries offered 13% more programs in 2023 (compared to 2022), and over 19% increase in program attendance.

Other trends revealed by the results of the 2023 Nebraska Public Libraries Survey include the following:

- 194 Nebraska Public Libraries loaned eBooks and Audiobooks.
- Number of total resources in Nebraska public libraries: 6,921,203 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: 2,687.
- Public libraries loaned 12,282,739 items in FY2022 and 13,497,292 items in FY2023.
- Number of registered library users: 1,026,086.
- Number of public library visits in FY2022: 4,602,192, and FY2023: 4,856,579.
- Libraries providing wireless Internet access: 218, or 95% of reporting libraries.
- Libraries delivered 28,482 programs, attended by 550,053 people in FY2022; and 27,159 programs, attended by 686,531 people in FY2023.
- Nebraskans paid only \$46 per capita in 2023 for public library service.

(continued on page 11)

The State of Public Libraries in Nebraska (continued)

Selected Library Statistics, FY 2021 through FY 2023

	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	3-Year Change	1-Year Change
Registered Borrowers	994,663	970,447	959,843	-3.50%	-1.09%
Total Visits	3,680,256	4,602,192	4,856,579	31.96%	5.53%
Items Borrowed	11,453,859	12,282,739	12,870,898	12.37%	4.79%
Items Borrowed per Capita	7.19	7.5	7.87	9.45%	4.46%
Internet Computers for Public Use	2,381	2,332	2,221	-6.72%	-4.76%
Libraries Providing Free Wi-Fi	222	223	222	0.00%	-0.45%
Number of Programs Offered	18,047	28,482	32,363	79.33%	13.63%
Library Program Attendance	341,392	550,053	657,687	14.75%	61.12%
Number of Books in Collection	5,420,590	5,398,764	5,393,055	-0.51%	-0.11%
Number of Print Subscriptions	7,869	6,650	4,394	-44.16%	-33.92%
Number of Audio Materials	231,781	211,336	207,258	-10.58%	-7.47%
Number of Video Materials	423,457	430,636	440,113	3.93%	2.20%
Total Materials held	6,669,325	6,638,930	6,653,204	-0.24%	0.22%
Annual Hours Open	425,959	441,992	442,085	3.79%	0.02%
Legal Service Area Population	1,592,274	1,630,349	1,635,483	2.71%	0.31%
Local Government Revenue	\$65,432,396	\$68,682,439	\$72,101,463	10.19%	4.98%

NEBRASKA PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE EQUALIZERS

There are more than *4.8 million* annual visits to Nebraska Public Libraries (not including virtual and online library visits).¹ That's more than *57 sellouts* at Memorial Stadium.

Nebraska Public Libraries are Technology Equalizers

- 98% offered **FREE** public internet access
- 97% offered **FREE** Wi-Fi
- 3,172,894 uses of Electronic Materials (eBooks and Audiobooks) in 2022-2023FY
- 18,793 Children's Programs offered, with 414,673 attendees
- 2,909 Young Adult Programs offered, with 30,736 attendees
- 7,806 Adult Programs, with 85,572 attendees²

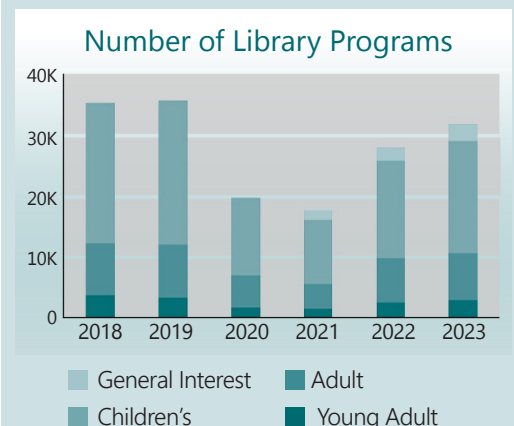
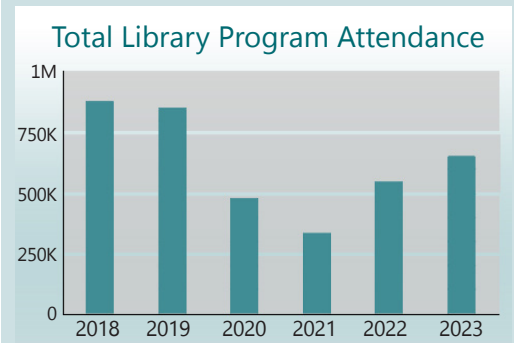
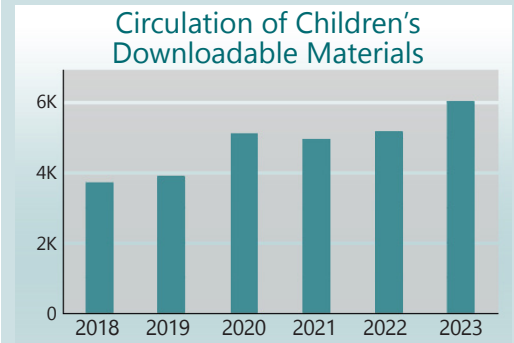
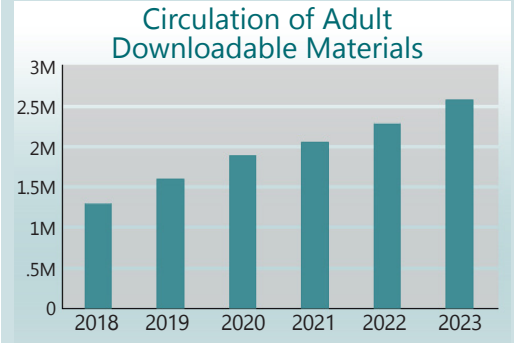


SOURCES:

- 1) 2022-2023 Nebraska Public Library Survey (93% reporting)
- 2) 2022-2023 Nebraska Public Library Survey (93% reporting)



Nebraska Public Library Statistical Survey




PIONEER

Commission Supports Pioneer Consortium

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

During the Fiscal Year the consortium included sixteen libraries, including libraries in Alma, Arapahoe, Atkinson, Axtell, Bennington, Blue Hill, David City, Dundy County, Franklin, Grant, McCook, 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.

For more information see 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. 

NebraskAccess



Changes 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.

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.

The NebraskAccess website was totally revamped in time for the beginning of school in 2022. New content, MAS Com-

plete and Middle Search Plus, was added for the underserved middle and high school students. Databases now accessible through three sites provide access to materials best suited for elementary/middle school students, high school students, and academic/general public users. A new password system was introduced, and passwords are now changed just once a year instead of twice per year. See 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, 2022 and June 30, 2024:

Biography Reference Bank & Center	8,172,619
Consumer Health Complete	937,623
FirstSearch/WorldCat Discovery	1,780,782
Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia	2,030,104
GreenFILE	2,193,971
Legal Information Reference Center	1,657,102
MAS Complete	1,708,640
MasterFILE Complete	6,156,994
Middle Search Plus	1,569,037
MyHeritage	353,967
Novelist Plus & K-8	105,862
Novelist Plus K-8	57,422
Point of View Reference Center	1,668,315
Primary Search	3,155,010
Psychology and Behavioral Sciences	2,315,182
Science & Technology Collection	2,213,310
Small Business Reference Center	1,211,891





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 also 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 Summer Reading Program themes, 2022: "Oceans of Possibilities," 2023: "All Together Now," and 2024: "Adventure Begins at Your Library." 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. Children and teens also participated in the Summer Reading Program through the Library Commission's Talking Book and Braille Service.

Through the One Book for Nebraska Kids & Teens program, the 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 2023 Kids selection was *The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich, and in 2024 selection is *Parachute Kids* by Betty C. Tang. The 2023 Teens selection was *Not If I Save You First* by Ally Carter, and the 2024 selection is *Between the Lines* by Nikki Grimes. See nlc.nebraska.gov/youth/OBOK for information and activities.

During the biennium, \$61,466 was awarded to public libraries in Youth Grants for Excellence, using funding provided by the State of Nebraska. 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, outdoor musical instruments, 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 374 events, which were attended by 7,434 Nebraska library staff and board members. These training activities included two annual "Big Talk from Small Libraries" online conferences, thirty-three Basic Skills courses (with multiple sections), NCompass Live webinars, and training for the Cataloging Certificate program. Thirty-three Basic Skills courses were provided throughout the biennium with 315 participants attending one or more of these courses. A fully self-paced "Communication" course was added to the new NLC Niche Academy system in September 2023 which has been completed by 60 students.

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

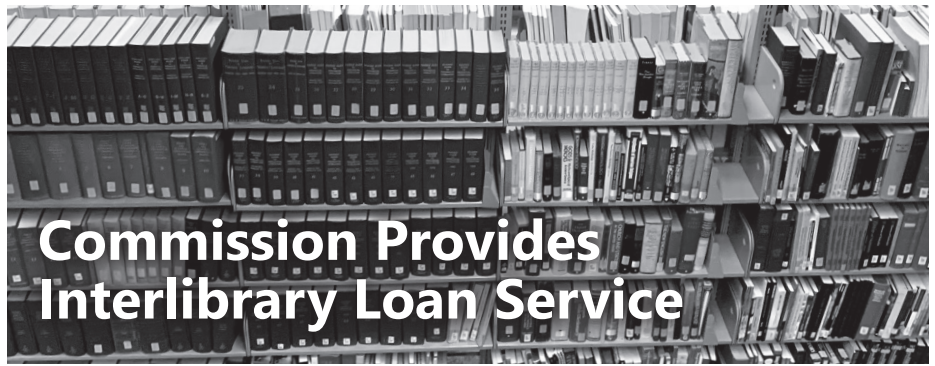
Nebraska schools and public libraries received over \$26.5 million in discounts on Internet access and Internal Connections costs during E-rate Funding Years 2022 and 2023 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2024) through the Universal Service Fund (E-rate) program.

Nebraska public libraries were awarded \$637,053 in discounts. Discounts ranged from 50 to 90 percent, with 71 of the state's public libraries participating. All 71 libraries were awarded discounts on Internet Services, 6 libraries were awarded discounts on Fiber Special Construction, and 8 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 nlc.nebraska.gov/erate/ or contact Christa Porter, Nebraska Library Commission Library Development Director at christa.porter@nebraska.gov, or 402-471-3107, 800-307-2265.

For more information about the E-rate program, see usac.org/sl/.



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 their staff and their patrons. This service allowed even the smallest public libraries and public 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.

Our role as a consortial ILL borrower requires excellent attention to detail and a commitment to best practices. We provide thorough customer service to our borrowers and assist in not only finding materials, but also in searching for materials that fit their patrons' needs, both in content and availability. Our role with the lenders in the state is just as important: we strive to be the most responsible stakeholders so that the ILL wheels keep turning smoothly—we want Nebraska lending libraries and Nebraska borrowing libraries to be satisfied with all ILL transactions.

Nebraska public school libraries and media centers used ILL services to obtain multiple copies of books for classes, as well as books and articles for individual research papers and honors projects. School libraries also used ILL services to obtain books in languages

other than English, to help connect with students whose first language is not English, as they learn. Teachers and staff at those schools used ILL to obtain materials to help improve their skills to help the students in their educational journeys. Home-school families use ILL services through their local public libraries to give their families as many educational options as possible, with an adaptable approach to meet their own needs.

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, in order to better serve the public in Nebraska. Advances in electronic article-sharing (Article Exchange) helped libraries and agencies receive articles more quickly and streamlined permissions and licensing concerns.

The Library Commission also lends materials to libraries and research institutions around the state and around the country. Collection materials produced in Nebraska, about Nebraska, or for Nebraskans are of interest to libraries and their patrons around the country, and we are happy to share materials with them.

We continue to learn from our collective experiences of the last several years. During the pandemic, many Nebraska libraries continued to provide services to their communities whether or not their facilities were open to visitors. Nebraska

(continued on page 17)

\$41,000 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 \$41,000 to thirty-six 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:

- Summer Reading Programs for youth, teens, and adults
- Public relations: websites, social and print media, designing and posting flyers, and other forms of marketing
- Basic library duties: circulation, shelving, weeding, processing acquisitions, attending library board and city/village council meetings
- Assist with Early Literacy Programs
- Create and organize new Teen Space
- Assist with the genrification process in the library
- Partnerships with Community Club, Library Foundation, 4-H, FFA, County Extension, schools, and daycare centers
- Creating new Teen Programming
- Assist with 'Under the Microscope' Youth program
- Help plan and conduct makerspace classes, STEAM activities, story time, computer classes, Pioneer Days events
- Assist with library outreach at the Farmer's Market
- Partner with local historian to work in the Heritage Room
- Filed trips to visit other public libraries

Funding for the project is supported and administered by the Nebraska Library Commission, in partnership with the Nebraska Library Systems. For more information about Library Grants contact Christa Porter, Nebraska Library Commission Library Development Director at christa.porter@nebraska.gov, or 402-471-3107, 800-307-2265. 



Ben Miller family outside of sod house, History Nebraska

memories.nebraska.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/nshs/id/270/rec/11




Chief High Hawk and wife, History Nebraska

memories.nebraska.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/nshs/id/578/rec/20

At Home with Nebraska Memories

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 memories.nebraska.gov. The images showcase life in Nebraska from the late 19th century to the early 1970s.

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 at devra.dragos@nebraska.gov, or 402-471-4335, 800-307-2665. 



Family in front of wooden house, History Nebraska

memories.nebraska.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/nshs/id/250/rec/42



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 Bennett, and Nebraska Book Awards; and announces the choice for next year's One Book One Nebraska reading program. The Celebration was on October 22nd, 2022 and October 23rd, 2023.

Jane Geske Award. 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. The Center for the Book selected the Nebraska Writers Collective in 2022, and Pat Leach & "All About Books" on Nebraska Public Media in 2023 as the award recipients.

Mildred Bennett Award. 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 Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation. The award was presented to Lois Todd-Meyer in 2022, and Steven Shively in 2023.

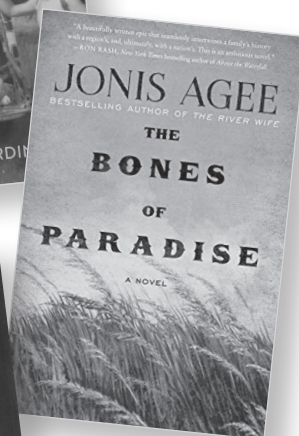
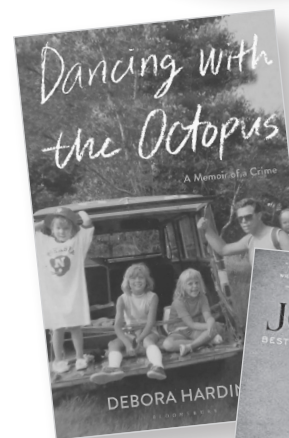
Letters about Literature. Nebraska students were recognized during the biennium by Governor Jim Pillen for

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 during 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 2022 One Book One Nebraska selection was *The Bones of Paradise* by Jonis Agee. The 2023 selection was *The Mystery of Hunting's End* by Mignon Eberhart. The 2024 selection was *Dancing with the Octopus* by Debora Harding. 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 centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/onebook.html.

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



Commission Makes Government Information Accessible

The Nebraska Library Commission Government Information and Reference teams continued to provide a variety of government information services throughout the year. Those services were provided in many different forms, such as answering reference questions, doing research projects, expanding the collections, promoting the collections, and inter/intra-agency cooperation. For example, we answered frequent reference questions for patrons about the Governor's executive orders, researchers looking for genealogical information, and connecting patrons with the appropriate Nebraska agency. Research projects this year included histories of several Nebraska public libraries, and the historical demographics of early Lincoln based on the U.S. Census.

Collection development is always a continuous process and a major part of providing government information services. The Nebraska Publications Clearinghouse was established by the Legislature in 1972 to collect all Nebraska state agency publications released to the public. Not only do we process and digitize all newly published documents, but since 2014, we have made a major push to digitize and make available online ALL state documents not previously digitized. As a result, the State Documents collection now includes more than 210,000 items in paper, over 45,000 items online, over 7,000 items added online just this year, and documents were accessed online as many as 25,000 times per month.

We also made a change to the Federal Documents collection this year. At the end of 2023 the Government Publishing Office (GPO) severely cut back the number of print copies of federal documents distributed to depository libraries around the country. Since the Library Commission collection was only a 2% selection of titles, we made the decision to keep everything we currently have in paper, but going forward have our

federal documents be online only. To date, the Federal Documents collection includes more than 47,000 paper items, which is just under 600 titles accessible online.

The other big project we did this year was to complete the Nebraska Public Documents Project. The Nebraska Public Documents is a set of bound volumes encompassing Nebraska state agency annual reports from the 1870's through 1956. Until 2007, the volumes were not widely available, often in fragile condition, and not indexed. Digitization of these documents was first proposed in 2006 by Jim Shaw, the Government Documents Librarian at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Several state agencies provided funding grants and manpower to digitize the collection and create an online database, but access was limited to searching only. In 2019, the Library Commission rescanned ALL of the volumes, using much updated technology, so that searching is much improved, and the documents can be printed, downloaded, and/or saved. The Library Commission also took over hosting of the database from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and you can visit the new website here: govdocs.nebraska.gov/publicdocuments/

As always, we also work closely with various organizations to fill in gaps and provide documents needed for research. For example, this year we received a huge group of documents from the University of Colorado-Boulder, as well as items from the Nebraska Department of Revenue and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services that were not previously in the collection. Promotion of government information is also an important part of what we do, mainly through blog posts and web pages. Blog entries about state and federal programs, state agency documents, information resources, information services for libraries and their patrons, and special events, are just a few examples of how we kept the public informed.

Commission Provides Interlibrary Loan Service

(continued from page 14)

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. Communication among ILL service providers improved during the pandemic, and that pattern thankfully continues.

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



Government Information reference services are available at nlc.ask@nebraska.gov, 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665. For more information see 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.



Library Commission Supports Regional Library Systems

System Highlights included:

Central Plains Library System (CPLS)

- CPLS serves 31 counties in rural Nebraska, consisting of 71 public libraries, 165 school libraries, 7 academic libraries, and 10 special libraries.
- Consulted via telephone, email, and in person on a variety of topics including E-Rate, programming, policies, certification of staff and accreditation of libraries, library board certification, cataloging, weeding, grant writing and reporting, and collection arrangement.
- Offered over 85 Continuing Education Units by providing a variety of educational opportunities via in-person and virtual workshops held throughout the biennium. Including Makerspace workshops, Library Programming workshops, Summer Reading Program Workshops, and Staff Development Days. Topics covered included library management, Public Library Survey Bibliostat training, public computers and filters, WordPress websites, book mending, and new library board member training.
- “Tools of the Trade.” A full-day of education attended by 70+ library staff and board members. Consisted of three sessions (Management, Programming, and Nebraska Library Commission Services) offered during each time slot of the day.
- Participated in cooperative projects with Nebraska Regional Library Systems including Youth Services Retreat, Reader Zone Online Record-keeping, and NLA Speakers.
- Awarded \$8,623.38 in scholarships to 37 librarians to attend conferences and continuing education opportunities.
- Cleaned 829 audio, video, and game discs and repaired 37 book bindings to keep items circulating from member libraries’ collections.
- Rolled out 15 Experience Kits for librarians to use to encourage patrons to try something new. These fully-loaded boxes allow everyone to try a craft with no pressure to make it perfect. The kits



can be used for programming or for passive activities.

- Circulated 1,144 audio books, and 233 book kits.
- Established a Tabletop Game Collection and loaned 41 games.
- Furnished 22,636 die cut shapes for Summer Reading Program crafts and year round preschool projects.
- Conducted twice-monthly Zoom Meetings for Library Directors and Staff Members to discuss current or relevant topics. Many of our librarians use this forum to ask questions about policies, programming, and other pertinent topics. Hearing from their fellow librarians about what has been happening around the System has helped unify our members.
- Distributed 13 newsletters.
- Maintained a website, a Pinterest account, and a Library Thing account for member libraries’ information.

Southeast Library System (SELS)

- Sponsored or co-sponsored 39 continuing education sessions for a total of 3026 CE hours earned by 785 attendees on topics such as Summer Reading programming, removal of weeded books, policies, Youth Services, state law for public libraries, collection development, Accreditation, open meeting laws, and more.
- Conducted on-site training or consulting appointments with 43 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 31 libraries of all types.
- Supplied 32 member libraries with more than 6,585 pages of professional literature on librarianship, municipal activities, and non-profit planning.
- Provided 23 book kits to public, school, and institutional libraries.

- Initiated a group subscription to BookPage to assist in collection development with 9 member libraries.

Three Rivers Library System (TRLS)

- TRaiLS serves 610 libraries: 96 public libraries, 444 school libraries, 23 academic libraries, and 47 institutional and special libraries.
- Of the 96 public libraries, 82 are accredited - 8 at the Bronze level; 45 at the Silver level; 29 at the Gold level.
- TRaiLS serves 21 counties; population of 1,059,281; and 11,315 square miles.
- TRaiLS has 9 board members, and they meet quarterly.
- TRaiLS provided 52 virtual SKILLS Meetings, 17 in-person workshops, 22 in-person SKILLS Meetings, and 128 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 24 views per YouTube recording.
- TRaiLS provided \$26,984.45 in scholarships for system librarians.
- TRaiLS has 227 Book Sets and 55 STEAM Kits available for checkout.
- 1587 book copies and 96 STEAM items were checked out to 68 member libraries.
- Twelve newsletters shared information to all member libraries. Views of these newsletters averaged 112 per issue.
- The TRaiLS website was viewed 8,815 times over the last two years.

Western Library System (WLS)

“Supporting Libraries Serving Their Communities”

The Western Library System supports 3 academic, 3 special, 40 public and 93 school libraries serving their communities in the 21-county area of Western Nebraska.

- The WLS Board governs the budget, by-laws and policies and met 12 times.

(continued on page 19)

Commission Supports Regional Library Systems

(continued)

- By-laws, policies and procedures are continually reviewed and updated as needed.
- Riggs and Associates CPAs prepared two annual Independent Accountant's Compilation Reports with Statements of Financial Positions and tax form 990.
- A new logo was designed and debuted on the updated WLS informational brochures. Each library in the System received one of the new brochures. Brochures are distributed throughout the year.
- During the fall 2022-2023 semester, the System sponsored an intern working on their Masters in Library degree with the online University of Wisconsin at Madison program.
- Author Tour: A tradition of the WLS is to sponsor an Author Tour every two to three years. In 2022, Tosca Lee was selected to promote her duology *The Line Between* and *A Single Light*. Sections of the Systems' geographic area were instrumental in the storyline of *A Single Light*. Ms. Lee signed books and spoke about her writing experience in Alliance, Ogallala, and Sidney.
- The Western Library System funded scholarships for Library Association dues, conference attendance and continuing education classes.
- All forty public libraries received either State Aid or Dollars for Data for completing the Public Library Survey online.
- The professional collection of books and bookkits includes: The Golden Sower nominated books from 2020 to the present; bookkits from the One Book One Nebraska winners; and in 2024, the kits for the One Book for Kids and One Book for Teens.
- Libraries utilized the book binding and CD/DVD disc repair services.
- Ensured all public libraries received their current Return on Investment (ROI) fact sheet compiled by the Nebraska Library Commission.
- Continual communication with WLS libraries and their staff is achieved through E-mail, phone, online calls, social media, and visits to their locations.
- "The Western Sun" newsletter was "published" 12 times this biennium.
- Questions, comments and concerns from library staff and the public were researched and answered.
- The journal article request service scanned and e-mailed Tables of Contents from selected library journals to interested library staff. The recipients across the WLS identified the articles they wanted to read, and the office scanned the pages and e-mailed the information to the requester.
- The WLS granted Summer Reading money to libraries requiring additional funding for the success of their programs and services.
- Two Annual Meetings gathered library staff from the WLS. In addition to the meeting, each venue featured a speaker.
- The Brownstone Foundation donated and processed 100 children's books to the fifteen libraries in the WLS with the fewest resources
- The Western Library System is a member of the following: American Library Association (ALA), Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ASRL), Mountain Plains Library Association (MPLA), Nebraska Library Association (NLA), Nebraska School Library Association (NSLA), and Public Library Association (PLA). The Director maintained a personal membership in the Panhandle Partnership. Pertinent information from these organizations is dispersed to the libraries and library staff.

Find out more about Nebraska's Regional Library Systems at nlc.nebraska.gov/systems/



Staff Reviews Posted Weekly, New Series Added

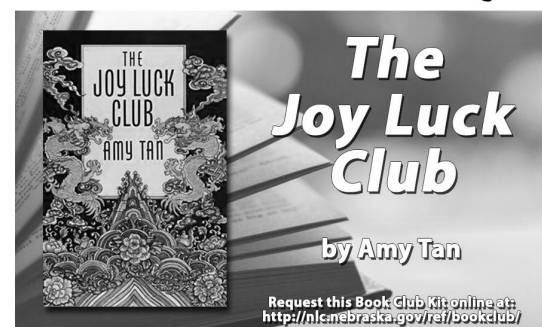
Starting with an idea to share the books that Commission staff are reading, staff posted 108 "Friday Reads" reviews on the Nebraska Library Commission blog during the biennium. They join the global community of readers who post what they are reading every Friday – a book, magazine, blog post, or bus schedule – staff share what they are reading to celebrate and promote reading. Since Nebraska Library Commission staff have varied tastes, the posts during this fiscal year covered nearly every genre: non-fiction, memoir/biography, mystery, science fiction, fantasy, horror, graphic novel, young adult, romance, historical fiction, self-help, thriller, classic, cookbooks, and more.

In addition to these weekly reviews, a new blog post series highlighting titles found in the Commission's book club collection was started in April 2022 and had 49 reviews during the biennium. The biweekly "Book Club Spotlight" focuses on older and/or lesser-known titles in that collection, to help reading groups explore titles they may not have considered previously. With more than 2000 individual titles in the book club collection, this review series has no shortage of material for the foreseeable future.

Check out the #FridayReads and #BookClubSpotlight reviews on the Commission blog at nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/ or on the Commission Facebook page at facebook.com/NebraskaLibraryCommission.



Book Club Spotlight





Nebraska Library Commission

The Atrium
1200 N Street, Suite 120
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508-2023
34-00-00

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Nebraska Library Commission Highlights and Statistics July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2024

- The Nebraska Library Commission circulated **28,841** items, with book club circulation representing **27,539**.
- The Library Commission served **923** customers on site.
- The Library Commission loaned **134** items to other libraries.
- The Library Commission borrowed **4,430** items from other libraries for Nebraska library customers.
- **741** federal documents were added to the Library Commission's collection, bringing the total to **47,650**.
- **3,802** state documents were added to the Library Commission's collection, bringing the total to **191,427**. E-docs were accessed **224,417** times.
- Nebraska Library Commission staff and guest trainers broadcast **92** *NCompass Live* sessions, with **1,478** attending live and thousands viewing archived recordings.
- Nebraska OverDrive Libraries Consortium library customers (from 194 participating libraries) downloaded **1,370,720** audiobooks, **1,104,673** eBooks, and **166,105** magazines.
- The Library Commission's Nebraska Memories collection contains **11,482** images and audio files.
- **996** library staff enrolled and participated in the Nebraska Librarian Certification program.
- Nebraska library staff and board members attended one or more of **374** continuing education events sponsored by the Nebraska Library Commission (including the four regional library systems). A total of **7,434** attendances (by CE participants) were recorded at these events.
- Thirty-three Basic Skills courses were provided throughout the year with **315** participants attending one or more of these courses.
- **183** public libraries are currently accredited.
- The Nebraska Library Commission's Talking Book and Braille Service circulated **192,430** talking books, magazines, Braille materials, and videos with audio description to more than **2,541** customers.
- The Talking Book and Braille Service recorded **338** magazine issues and **15** books.
- The Talking Book and Braille Service duplicated **29,074** digital cartridges.
- Talking Book and Braille Service customers downloaded **48,618** audio books, **1,138** audio magazines, **6,437** Braille materials, and **199** music instruction pieces.