



# Nebraska Library Commission

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Lincoln, Nebraska 68508-2023  
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## Nebraska Library Commission Highlights and Statistics July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025

- The Nebraska Library Commission circulated **15,172** items, with book club circulation representing **14,673**.
- The Library Commission served **423** customers on site.
- The Library Commission loaned **91** items to other libraries.
- The Library Commission borrowed **1,800** items from other libraries for Nebraska library customers.
- **18** federal documents were added to the Library Commission's collection, bringing the total to **47,668**.
- **2,292** state documents were added to the Library Commission's collection, bringing the total to **190,582** tangible items (paper and microfiche).
- **8,842** e-docs were added to the online document collection, including **1,380** in-house scans. E-docs were accessed **385,097** times.
- Nebraska Library Commission staff and guest trainers broadcast **44 NCompass Live** sessions, with **621** attending live and thousands viewing archived recordings.
- Nebraska OverDrive Libraries Consortium library customers (from **194** participating libraries) downloaded **830,198** audiobooks, **585,154** eBooks, and **146,268** magazines.
- The Library Commission's Nebraska Memories collection contains **11,485** images and audio files.
- **1,048** library staff enrolled and participated in the Nebraska Librarian Certification program.
- Nebraska library staff and board members attended one or more of **200** continuing education events sponsored by the Nebraska Library Commission (including the four regional library systems). A total of **4,122** attendances (by CE participants) were recorded at these events.
- Fifteen Basic Skills courses were provided throughout the year with **208** participants attending one or more of these courses.
- **183** public libraries are currently accredited, with **38** of them reaccredited during the fiscal year.
- The Nebraska Library Commission's Talking Book and Braille Service circulated **96,361** talking books, magazines, Braille materials, and videos with audio description to more than **2,631** customers.
- The Talking Book and Braille Service recorded **138** magazine issues and **12** books.
- The Talking Book and Braille Service duplicated **10,148** digital cartridges.
- Talking Book and Braille Service customers downloaded **26,586** audio books, **440** audio magazines, **2,102** Braille materials, and **526** music instruction pieces.

Your guide to the  
Nebraska Library  
Commission  
July 1, 2024–  
June 30, 2025  
Annual Report  
FY2025  
Vol. 30 No. 1

# NCompass

N E W S L E T T E R



## Talking Book and Braille Service Receives Next-Generation Machines

In early 2025, the National Library Service (NLS) began training network libraries on the new generation of Talking Book players, the DA2 machine. After presentations detailing the device's features, a single unit was sent to the Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS) for staff to familiarize themselves with operating the machine. In July 2025, Nebraska received its first round of 168 DA2 machines to be distributed to eligible patrons.

The DA2 offers significant enhancements, including Wi-Fi connectivity and 28 GB of internal storage. DA2 users will be able to connect directly to Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) to download and listen to audiobooks and magazines. With a typical NLS audiobook averaging 120 MB, the DA2 can hold approximately 200 titles, making it a convenient option for users who prefer listening on the go.

In addition to its built-in speaker, the DA2 also has Bluetooth capabilities for use with Bluetooth-enabled speakers or headphones. There is also a standard headphone jack for wired listening.

Due to limited availability, patrons must meet specific criteria to be eligible for a DA2 player. Borrowers must be in good standing with the TBBS, which includes:

- no more than one Library of Congress talking book player in your possession,
- not demonstrated a pattern of lost or damaged TBBS materials or equipment in

any format, and

- borrowed at least one book or one magazine in the past twelve months.

Additional requirements include:

- access to an in-home Wi-Fi,
- a valid email address, and
- downloaded at least one book or one magazine via BARD in the past six months.

Preference is given to borrowers who have been honorably discharged from the armed forces of the United States. To request a DA2 player, patrons must call or email TBBS to be placed on a waitlist. Once a device is prepared for loan, staff will reach out to confirm interest and explain next steps.

As of now we have loaned out 31 DA2 players and received positive feedback from patrons. One borrower wrote, "This one player meets all of my reading needs, and I can't be happier with it. I love the layout of the buttons, the clear, easy to read braille markings, etc."

We anticipate more patrons to shift towards the advanced player as time progresses.

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



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### From the Director...

The Nebraska Library Commission is pleased to present this report highlighting activities, events, and initiatives from the past fiscal year. In addition to the ongoing services the Commission provides in support of its statutory mission to promote, develop, and coordinate library services statewide, new initiatives also contributed to Nebraska residents' quality of life.

In the past year, more public libraries upgraded their broadband service through fiber installations. Libraries also benefited from Nebraska Universal Service Fund E-rate matching funds provided by the Nebraska Public Service Commission. Broadband initiatives supported by federal and state appropriations included benefits for libraries. In addition, a Community Engagement Fund contribution from Medica provided \$53,500 in support for the Library Commission to assist libraries in need of networking equipment to improve broadband connections.

Ebook and audiobook loans continued to increase, as shown by the lending activity of Nebraska libraries. The Commission's book club collection also experienced significant and growing use. While conditions in recent years have led to more online delivery of services, in-person library events have also increased over the past year. 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 to our partner organizations – the Regional Library Systems, Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Library Association, and Nebraska School Librarians Association. Library services in Nebraska are strongest when these organizations work together for mutual benefit and in service to Nebraskans.

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

Rod Wagner

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Director: Rod Wagner

Editorial: Tessa Timperley, Janet Greser, Bailee Juroshek

Graphic Design: Tessa Timperley

#### Nebraska Library Commissioners July 2024 – June 2025

- Alan Wang, Omaha
Tim Rolfes, Lincoln
Terry Cunningham-Swanson, Plattsmouth
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, 2024 through June 30, 2025

Table with 2 columns: Fund Source, Amount. Rows include State of Nebraska Funds (\$4,644,540), Federal Funds (\$1,903,059), Cash Funds (\$14,959), Other Funds (Medica Grant) (\$31,121), and Total (\$6,593,678).

#### Projects Funded through the Nebraska Library Commission July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025

Table with 2 columns: Project Name, Amount. Rows include ARPA Grant (\$126,597), Braille Services (\$3,740), Collaborative Summer Reading Program (\$11,957), Continuing Education & Training (\$8,194), Electronic Information Resources (\$571,420), Interlibrary Loan (\$81,335), Library Improvement Grants (\$69,752), Motion Picture Licensing (\$22,161), OverDrive Downloadable Books (\$338,144), Public Library Statistical Reporting Software (\$4,750), Regional Library Systems (\$652,268), Scholarships, Stipends, Internships (\$21,000), State Aid to Public Libraries (\$409,775), United for Libraries (\$20,659), Youth Grants for Excellence (\$36,279), and TOTAL (\$2,251,434).

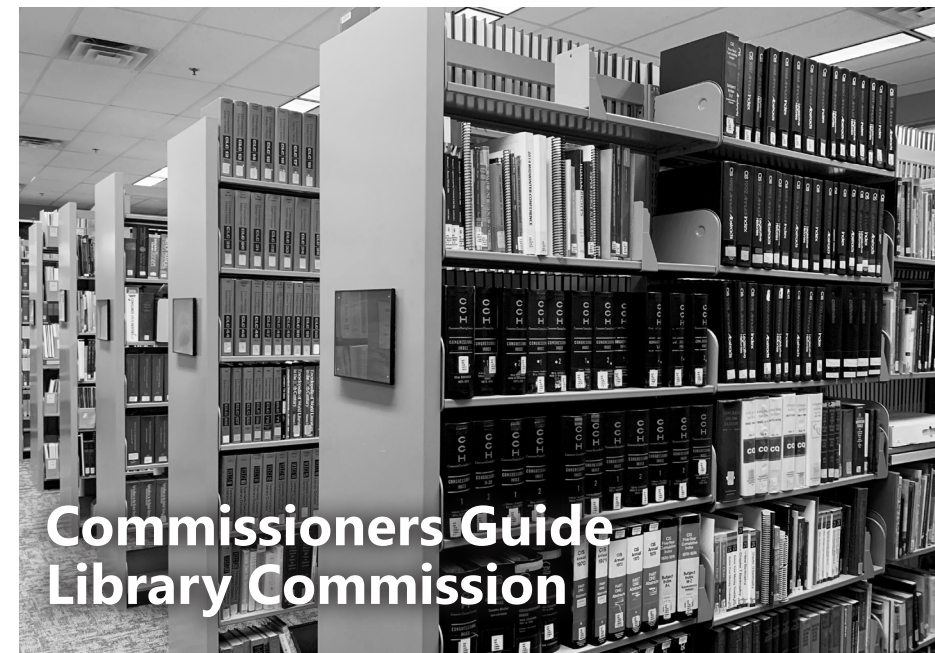
### Excellence in Leadership Award Recipients 2024



Andrew Sherman
Nebraska Library Commission
Library Technology Support Specialist



Laura Stueck
Nebraska Library Commission
Accountant



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 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 year, commissioners received reports and discussed the Commission's

2025-27 state biennium budget request, rural library broadband service initiatives, Commission grant programs, and Nebraska Center for the Book programs. 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 fiscal year are Tiffany Carter, Omaha; Teri Cunningham-Swanson, Plattsmouth; Diane Downer, Gering; Tom Rolfes, Lincoln; and Alan Wang, Omaha. One position remained vacant during the year. Commission meetings are held the second Friday of every other month. Exceptions to that schedule are in consideration of holidays and special events.

Advertisement for NCompass E-Newsletter. Text: Are you missing out on important library information? Subscribe to the Nebraska Library Commission's NCompass E-Newsletter for weekly access to information about Nebraska library activities. nlc.nebraska.gov/news. A weekly news sheet from the Nebraska Library Commission, 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

### Staff Transitions, July 2024 – June 2025

#### Arrivals

- Veronica Powell – Cataloging Librarian (07/15/2024)
Bailey Mooney – Marketing & Communications Specialist I (07/22/24)
Miranda Shreves – Marketing & Communications Specialist I (10/28/24)
Ethan Nelson – Senior Librarian (05/01/2025)

#### Departures

- Bailey Mooney – Marketing & Communications Specialist I (08/05/2024)
Mary Sauers – Senior Librarian (03/11/2025)
Cynthia Osborne – Senior Librarian (04/30/2025)


#### Reassignments

- Mackenzie Marrow – Library Curator Assistant (08/01/24)
Aimee Owen – Senior Librarian (03/03/2025)


## Performers Database Expanded for Authors

The Nebraska Library Commission's Performers Database was expanded in 2024 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 a Nebraska librarian. You can search the database at [nlc.nebraska.gov/youth/performers/](http://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](http://nlc.nebraska.gov/scripts/youth/performers/authoreditadd.asp?mode=add)

For more information contact Lisa Kelly, Information Services Director at [lisa.kelly@nebraska.gov](mailto:lisa.kelly@nebraska.gov), or 402-471-4015, 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 \$22,161.00 for 267 libraries in FY2024. This license allowed covered Nebraska public libraries to show a wide variety of motion pictures as part of library services and programming. For more information see [nlc.nebraska.gov/discounts/motionpicture.aspx](http://nlc.nebraska.gov/discounts/motionpicture.aspx) or contact Susan Knisely, Nebraska Library Commission Online Services Librarian, 402-471-3849, 800-307-2665. 



## Empowering Libraries Through Innovation

Nebraska's Technology Innovation Librarian, Amanda Sweet, has spent the past year helping libraries across the state modernize their services, build digital skills, and expand access to emerging technologies. Her work has been instrumental in transforming libraries into hubs of innovation and digital empowerment.

### Tracking Trends & Sharing Insights

To keep libraries ahead of the curve, Sweet regularly attends national and regional conferences such as Computers in Libraries, Internet Librarian, and the American Library Association Conference. She distills the latest trends into actionable insights through webinars, curated resource collections, and blog posts.

The monthly "Pretty Sweet Tech" webinar series on *NCompass Live* has become a trusted source for exploring makerspace tools, Industry 4.0 technologies, and digital skills training. Complemented by the Pretty Sweet Tech blog posts, these resources help libraries integrate technology that adds real value to their communities.

### Building Digital Skills

In the fiscal year, Sweet has led workshops across Nebraska's four library systems, covering topics from makerspace gadgets to workforce development tools. These sessions not only count toward CE credits for librarian certification but also empower staff to deliver relevant tech services.

She also teaches the Tech Basic Skills course required for Public Librarian Certification and maintains a Digital Skill Resource Repository that supports both staff and patrons in mastering essential digital competencies—from cybersecurity to computer basics.

### Service Design

Recognizing that many libraries lack the time or resources to develop tech services, Amanda offers one-on-one and group consultations to help design makerspaces, STEAM clubs, and digital


literacy programs. Her *Tech Guides* and *Digital Literacy Guidebook* provide blueprints for launching impactful services tailored to community needs.

### Expanding Tech Access

Libraries on limited budgets struggle to consistently update computer equipment or gain access to technology tools like robotics kits and virtual reality headsets that may be viewed as a luxury. *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. These services provide access to new and emerging tech tools to expand opportunities across communities.

### Looking Ahead

As Nebraska rolls out its statewide Digital Equity Plan, the Commission's work will evolve to support broadband access, workforce development, and inclusive digital skill training. Her commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion will shape future resources and services, ensuring that every Nebraskan has the opportunity to thrive in a digital world.

For more information about Library Technology in Nebraska, contact Amanda Sweet at [amanda.sweet@nebraska.gov](mailto:amanda.sweet@nebraska.gov), 402-471-3106, 800-307-2665. 



## Council Advises Commission

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

The Council met three times during the past fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. Meeting discussions covered current and emerging trends and issues, along with updates from Commission staff and from representatives of the Nebraska Library Association and the Nebraska School Librarians Association. Reports and discussion topics included state legislation related to libraries, the Commission's LSTA Five-Year Plan, current and emerging library service trends,

and the Commission's 2025–2027 State Biennium Budget Request. The Council's March meetings each year coincide with Nebraska Library Advocacy Day. The November 2024 meeting included a review of the year's events, activities, and issues, as well as a look ahead to upcoming trends and priorities for the year ahead.

Council meetings include time for members to share successes and challenges from their libraries, organizations, or communities. Council members' input is important for gaining insight into issues, conditions, and trends across Nebraska. The Library Commission appoints Council members to represent all types of libraries and regions of the state, including librarians, library trustees, educators, and library supporters.

### State Advisory Council members serving during July 2024-June 2025 included:

**Cali Biaggi**, Doane University, Crete

**Shanna Crosby-Wilson**, Boys Town Library Services, Omaha

**Holli Duggan**, (NLA Liaison 2025), Lincoln

**Kimberly Endicott**, Wayne Public Library, Wayne

**Laura England-Biggs**, Keene Memorial Library, Fremont

**Christine Fullerton**, University of Nebraska-Omaha, Omaha

**David Graber**, Conn Library, Wayne State College, Wayne

**Joy Harvey** (NSLA Liaison 2025) Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln

**Gail Irwin**, Ainsworth Public Library, Ainsworth

**Lisa Irwin**, Youth Rehab & Treatment Center, Kearney

**Shannon McDonald**, Central Community College, Gothenburg 

**Joanne Neemann**, Beatrice Public Library, Beatrice

**Jennifer Norton**, Lexington Public Library, Lexington

**Mandy Peterson**, Shelby-Rising City Public Schools, Shelby

**Allison Reisig**, Western Nebraska Community College, Scottsbluff

**Michael Sauers**, Do Space, Omaha

**Sharon Schluterbusch**, Bayard Jr./Sr. High School, Bayard

**Rachel Steiner**, Omaha Public Library, Omaha

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

**Celine Swann**, Grand Island Public Library, Grand Island

**Amber Sweetland**, Kimball Public Library, Kimball


**Tammi Thiem**, Three Rivers Library System, Omaha 

**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 [nlc.nebraska.gov/enews](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.

## Accreditation Encourages Excellence

Nebraska Library Commission helped facilitate the accreditation of thirty-eight public libraries across Nebraska during FY2025.

Public libraries in Nebraska are accredited for a five-year period. The purpose of public library accreditation is to encourage excellent library service in Nebraska communities. It is a measure of community pride in the library and the services it offers to its citizens. Accreditation is the standard by which the services are offered, as evidenced by measuring the library against guidelines developed by a task force of professional librarians.

Accredited libraries are eligible for State Aid to public libraries, they may apply for Nebraska Library Commission grants, and Community Development Block Grants from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. To learn more about this process and to see a complete list of all accredited Nebraska public libraries, go to [nlc.nebraska.gov/LibAccred/Standings.asp](http://nlc.nebraska.gov/LibAccred/Standings.asp). For more information about Public Library Accreditation in Nebraska, contact Christa Porter, [christa.porter@nebraska.gov](mailto:christa.porter@nebraska.gov), 402-471-3107, 800-307-2665. 



## Staff Book Reviews Posted Weekly

Starting with an idea to share the books that Commission staff are reading, staff posted 52 “Friday Reads” reviews on the Nebraska Library Commission blog during the fiscal year. 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 blog post series highlighting titles found in the Commission’s book club collection was started in April 2022 and had 26 reviews during the fiscal year. 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 2,000 individual titles in the book club collection, this review series has no shortage of material for the foreseeable future.

Check out the #FridayReads and #Book-ClubSpotlight reviews on the Commission blog at [nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/](https://nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/) or on the Commission Facebook page at [facebook.com/NebraskaLibraryCommission](https://facebook.com/NebraskaLibraryCommission).

## 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 membership provides access to these resources at no charge to libraries. Resources include:

- **eLearning**
- **The Voice for 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/](https://ala.org/united/) or contact Rod Wagner, Nebraska Library Commission Director, [rod.wagner@nebraska.gov](mailto:rod.wagner@nebraska.gov), 402-471-4001, 800-307-2665.

### United for Libraries

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



## Downloadable Materials for Public Libraries

Usage of downloadable materials through the Nebraska Libraries OverDrive consortium remains strong. Two public libraries joined the consortium bringing the total member libraries to 194. Circulation of materials grew with customers downloading 830,198 audiobooks, 585,154 eBooks, and 146,268 magazines. That is a 12% increase for audiobooks and 14% increase for magazines over last year.

Nebraska eReads funding, approved by the Legislature for the Nebraska Library Commission’s biennium budget, provided Nebraska OverDrive Libraries with an additional \$105,116 for content purchases. The total Nebraska eReads funding of \$238,145 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 [nlc.nebraska.gov/overdrive](https://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](mailto:susan.knisely@nebraska.gov) or Devra Dragos, Nebraska Library Commission Technology & Access Services Director, 402-471-4335, 800-307-2665, [devra.dragos@nebraska.gov](mailto:devra.dragos@nebraska.gov).

## Strengthening Nebraska Libraries: Upgrades in Internet Access, Cybersecurity, and Public Technology

In FY2025, Nebraska libraries faced several challenges that hindered their ability to participate in the federal E-Rate program and provide fast, secure internet access to patrons. According to the annual Bibliostat Survey, key barriers included outdated computers and networking equipment, lack of reboot/restore software on public-use machines, and missing internet filtering technology required for compliance.

To address these issues, Nebraska Library Commission (NLC) staff worked closely with libraries across the state throughout, helping them prepare to secure funding and install modern networks and devices that support high-speed broadband and WiFi. Between July 2024 and June 2025, NLC staff conducted 65 Technology Reviews and made 100 on-site visits to support these efforts.

### Expanding E-Rate Participation

The federal E-Rate program, along with support from the Nebraska Public Service Commission, helps libraries cover the cost of installing high-speed internet and subsidizes monthly service fees and necessary equipment. However, to qualify, libraries must implement a “technology protection measure” that blocks access to obscene or harmful online content—especially for minors. This requirement is known as DNS filtering.

While E-Rate does not fund DNS filtering services, many libraries lack the technical expertise and budget to implement them independently. To bridge this gap, NLC began offering DNSFilter technology at no cost in late 2023. The Commission not only pays for the service but also assists with setup and ongoing management. By June 30, 2025, 60 libraries were using DNSFilter through the NLC’s shared account—saving each library at least \$50 per month and improving cybersecurity and compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

### Upgrading Equipment and Securing Public Computers

In April 2024, the NLC secured a grant from Medica to help 79 libraries upgrade outdated network equipment and install reboot/restore software on public-use computers. Through Technology Reviews, NLC staff helped libraries identify and replace aging hardware and install DeepFreeze software, which automatically wipes all user data and malware from public computers upon reboot. This protects patron privacy and strengthens cybersecurity.

As part of this initiative, NLC staff also audited library computers to assess their compatibility with Windows 11. Microsoft will end support for Windows 10 in October 2025, meaning libraries must replace incompatible machines to maintain security.

Libraries with funding for new computers received hands-on support from NLC staff to ensure proper setup and security. Those without funding were encouraged to apply for Library Improvement grants to cover the cost of replacements.

### Looking Ahead

With continued support from the NLC, more Nebraska libraries are expected to take advantage of E-Rate funding, upgrade to faster internet service, and improve cybersecurity. These efforts aim to eliminate key barriers and ensure that libraries remain safe, connected, and accessible to all.

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

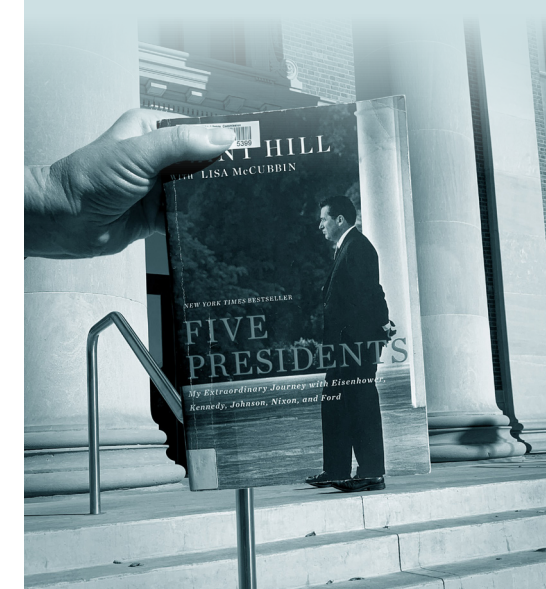


## Bookface Friday Features Collections

Still going strong after over 8 years and more than 425 posts, the Nebraska Library Commission’s weekly “Bookface Friday” blog series takes care to highlight titles from all Nebraska Library Commission collections. These collections range from the Library Development collection lent to library staff across the state to Nebraska OverDrive Libraries eBooks and Audiobooks collection, to Book Club Kits, and State Documents.

Check out the #BookFaceFriday posts on the Commission Blog at [nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/](https://nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/) or on the Commission Facebook page at [facebook.com/NebraskaLibraryCommission](https://facebook.com/NebraskaLibraryCommission).

For more information, contact Tessa Timperley, Communication Coordinator, [tessa.timperley@nebraska.gov](mailto: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 \$409,775 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, 182 public libraries received state aid payments (183 in 2023) and 150 of these libraries earned additional payments to acknowledge their achievement of Gold or Silver accreditation status (150 in 2023).

**Incentive Payments.** Additional direct state aid payments, based on the amount of funds received from another public entity, were made to 78 libraries in 2024 (79 in 2023).

**Dollars for Data.** The Library Commission awarded \$9,000 in payments of \$200 to 45 (46 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. ➡

## \$60,000 in Library Improvement Grants Awarded to Nebraska Public Libraries

During the fiscal year, the Nebraska Library Commission awarded Library Improvement Grants totaling \$60,000 to twenty-seven Nebraska public libraries and institutions.

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 include: desktop computers, laptops, monitors, printers, Microsoft software, bookcases/shelving, tables, chairs, makerspace equipment, self-checkout stations, staff desk, a 3D scanner, an Infinity Game Table, cell phone charging lockers, a book return, a bike rack, solar lights, Experience Kits for adults, and AWE Early Learning Literacy Workstations.

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



## Expanding Access to Emerging Technology Across Nebraska

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 fiscal year, the Tech Kits circulated over 300 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. ➡

## 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. The raffle allowed libraries to try the kits out without risking limited budgets on a previously unknown service. Prairie STEM was also able to improve their instructional design and STEM kit distribution processes with direct feedback from libraries. Libraries

statewide can now leverage Prairie STEM's free lesson plans and work directly with the nonprofit for targeted staff training. The Three Rivers Library System also brought in Prairie STEM for a staff training workshop to help introduce more communities to the technology that is changing the way we all live, work and play. Prairie STEM has become a valuable resource to expand the NLC's professional development capabilities, and grow library service options for school and public libraries across Nebraska.

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. ➡

## New Position Created for TBBS

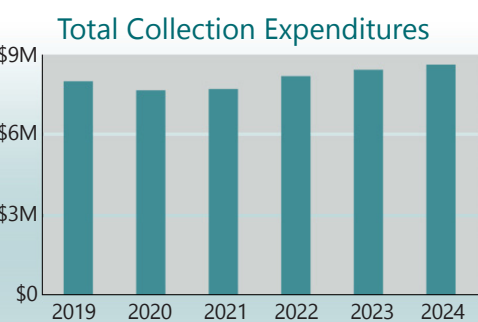
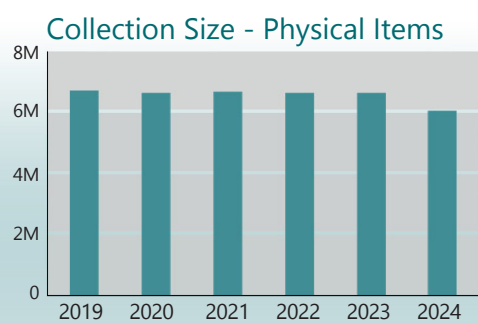
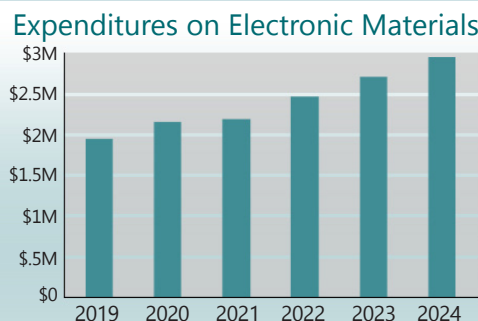
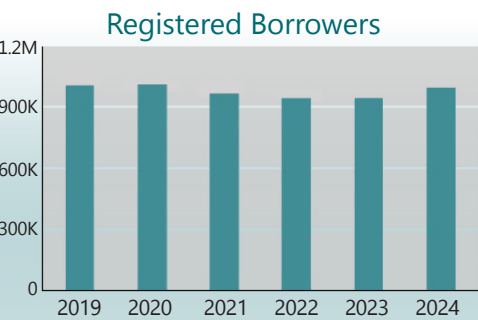
The Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS) is excited to introduce our new Marketing and Outreach Coordinator, Miranda Shreves. Her role was created in late 2024 to increase promotion of TBBS to new patrons, libraries, schools, etc.

Over the last year of her working with TBBS she has attended multiple outreach events, created marketing kits, and generated new social media content. During the last fall season she ran a back-to-school campaign that prompted multiple schools to apply for an account with the service. She also partnered with her coworkers to rebuild the TBBS summer reading program, which ended up being a success due to over doubling the participation numbers from the prior year. Looking toward the future, she hopes to partner more with local libraries across Nebraska. She also aspires to discover new avenues of outreach and identify different ways to keep existing patrons reading talking books.

Miranda Shreves is a recent graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a degree in Advertising and Public Relations. She enjoys all forms of storytelling, whether that be through reading books, watching movies, or playing video games. Originally from a small town named Johnson, she now lives in Lincoln with her very energetic dog Noah. For more information, please contact Miranda Shreves at miranda.shreves@nebraska.gov, or 402-471-4033, 800-742-7691. ➡



# Nebraska Public Library Statistical Survey



# The State of Public Libraries in Nebraska



According to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), there are 9,248 public libraries in the United States. In Nebraska, there are 245 public libraries plus 6 bookmobiles and 22 branch facilities. Five libraries in the state are combined with public schools and three are combined public/academic libraries. The 2024 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 195 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, 128 libraries (56%) reported fiber optic internet connections in FY2024, up from 119 (52%) in FY2023.

Overall, circulation of material has increased by 3.65% from 2023 to 2024. Uses of electronic materials continued to increase at a steady pace, by over 19% compared to 2023. Library programs and attendance increased, as libraries offered 32% more programs in 2024 (compared to 2022), and over 31% increase in program attendance.

Other trends revealed by the results of the 2024 Nebraska Public Libraries Survey include the following:

- 194 Nebraska Public Libraries loaned eBooks and Audiobooks.
- Number of total resources in Nebraska public libraries: 6,093,994 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: 2,170.
- Public libraries loaned 13,340,246 items in FY2024.
- Number of registered library users: 1,022,499.
- Number of public library visits in FY2024: 5,418,450.
- Libraries providing wireless Internet access: 222, or 98% of reporting libraries.
- Libraries delivered 37,766 programs, attended by 724,872 people in 2024.
- Nebraskans paid only \$47.72 per capita in FY2024 for public library service.

(continued on page 11)

# The State of Public Libraries in Nebraska (continued)

## Selected Library Statistics, FY2022 through FY2024

	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	3-Year Change	1-Year Change
Registered Borrowers	970,447	959,843	1,022,499	5.36%	6.53%
Total Visits	4,602,192	4,856,579	5,418,450	17.74%	11.57%
Items Borrowed	12,282,739	12,870,898	13,340,246	8.61%	3.65%
Items Borrowed per Capita	7.5	7.87	8.1	8.00%	2.92%
Internet Computers for Public Use	2,332	2,221	2,170	-6.95%	-2.30%
Libraries Providing Free Wi-Fi	223	222	222	0.45%	-0.00%
Number of Programs Offered	28,482	32,363	37,766	32.60%	16.69%
Library Program Attendance	550,053	657,687	724,872	31.78%	10.22%
Number of Books in Collection	5,398,764	5,393,055	5,367,068	-0.59%	-0.48%
Number of Print Subscriptions	6,650	4,394	6,434	-3.25%	46.43%
Number of Audio Materials	211,336	207,258	197,469	-6.56%	-4.72%
Number of Video Materials	430,636	440,113	426,599	-0.94%	-3.07%
Total Materials held	6,638,930	6,653,204	6,093,994	-8.21%	-8.41%
Annual Hours Open	441,992	442,085	445,052	0.69%	0.67%
Legal Service Area Population	1,630,349	1,635,483	1,643,681	0.82%	0.50%
Local Government Revenue	\$68,682,439	\$72,101,463	\$77,851,326	13.35%	7.97%

## NEBRASKA PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE EQUALIZERS

There are more than *5.4 million* annual visits to Nebraska Public Libraries (not including virtual and online library visits).<sup>1</sup> That's more than *63 sellouts* at Memorial Stadium.

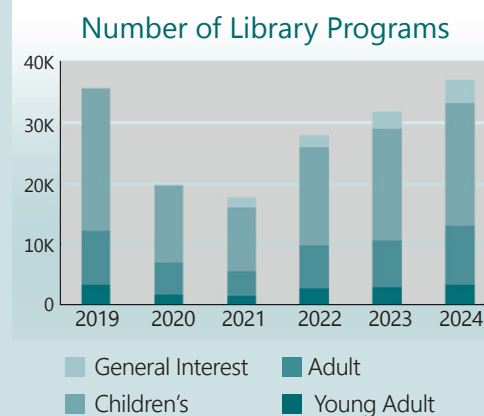
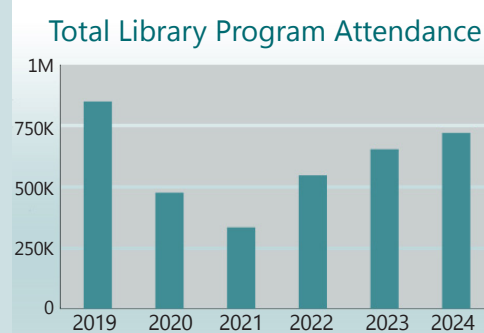
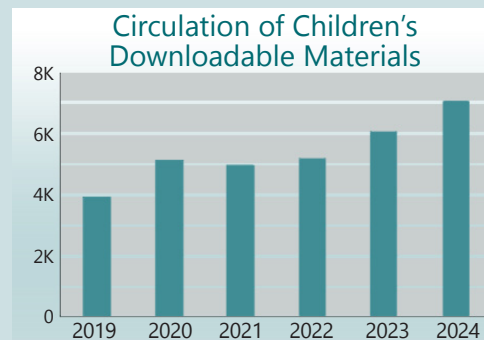
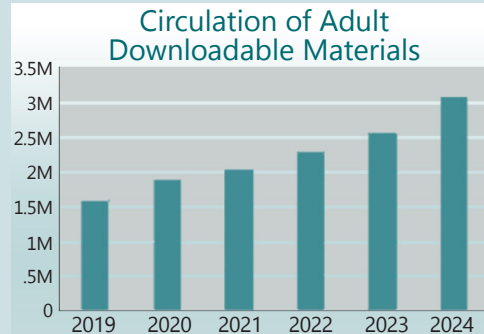
### Nebraska Public Libraries are Technology Equalizers

- 98% offered **FREE** public internet access on 2,170 public computers
- 98% offered **FREE** Wi-Fi
- 3,172,894 uses of Electronic Materials (eBooks and Audiobooks) in FY2025
- 20,717 Children's Programs offered, with 463,350 attendees
- 3,334 Young Adult Programs offered, with 33,777 attendees
- 9,755 Adult Programs, with 90,473 attendees<sup>1</sup>

SOURCES:  
1) 2023-2024 Nebraska Public Library Survey (93% reporting)



# Nebraska Public Library Statistical Survey



NCompass ▶ live

## NCompass 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 fiscal year, 44 episodes of NCompass Live were broadcast with 621 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 Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

More than 811 archives sessions are recorded and available for viewing at [nlc.nebraska.gov/ncompasslive/NCArchivist.asp](http://nlc.nebraska.gov/ncompasslive/NCArchivist.asp).

For the list of upcoming sessions, see [nlc.nebraska.gov/ncompasslive/](http://nlc.nebraska.gov/ncompasslive/). To suggest a topic for NCompass Live, contact Christa Porter, [christa.porter@nebraska.gov](mailto:christa.porter@nebraska.gov), 402-471-3107, 800-307-2665.



## Searching in NebraskaAccess

NebraskaAccess 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 a password from their local public, K-12 school, or academic library. They used this service to complete work or school assignments, research health and medical topics, keep up on current events, trace family his-

tories, make personal and business economic decisions, and explore hobbies and other topics of personal interest.

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

*NebraskaAccess 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, 2024 and June 30, 2025:

Biography Reference Bank & Center	3,968,038
Consumer Health Complete	437,977
FirstSearch/WorldCat Discovery	842,047
Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia	840,069
GreenFILE	983,387
Legal Information Reference Center	714,078
MAS Complete	1,054,658
MasterFILE Complete	2,809,394
Middle Search Plus	983,850
MyHeritage	120,836
NoveList Plus	53,151
NoveList Plus K-8	24,698
Point of View Reference Center	754,256
Primary Search	1,300,949
Psychology and Behavioral Sciences	1,029,590
Science & Technology Collection	978,498
Small Business Reference Center	987,368

## 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 200 events, which were attended by 3,512 Nebraska library staff and board members. These training activities included two annual "Big Talk from Small Libraries" online conferences, fifteen Basic Skills courses (with multiple sections), NCompass Live webinars, and training for the Cataloging Certificate program. Fifteen Basic Skills courses were provided throughout the fiscal year with 208 participants attending one or more of these courses.

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



## Support for Children's Services a Priority

The Nebraska Library Commission continued to support library services to children and young adults. During the fiscal year 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, 2024: "Adventure Begins at Your Library." and 2025: "Color Our Wold." 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

2024 Kids selection was *Parachute Kids* by Betty C. Tang, the 2025 selection is *Lions & Liars* by Kate Beasley. The 2024 Teens selection was *Between the Lines* by Nikki Grimes, and the 2025 selection is *Where You See Yourself* by Claire Forrest. See [nlc.nebraska.gov/youth/OBOK](http://nlc.nebraska.gov/youth/OBOK) for information and activities.

During the fiscal year, \$29,976 was awarded to public libraries in Youth Grants for Excellence, using funding provided by the State of Nebraska. Funded projects provided early literacy programming, "1000 Books Before Kindergarten" program, LEGO activities, 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](mailto:sally.snyder@nebraska.gov), 402-471-4003, 800-307-2665.



**FASTER  
INTERNET,  
LOWER  
COSTS!**



## E-rate Discounts Support Technology Access

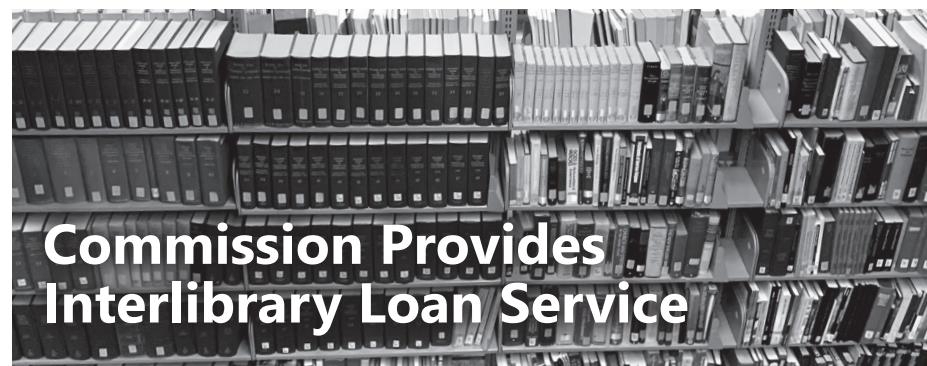
Nebraska schools and public libraries received over \$11.2 million in discounts on internet service costs during E-rate Funding Year 2024 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025) through E-rate, a federal program that provides discounts to schools and public libraries on the cost of their Internet Access and Connections to make these services more affordable. This includes Broadband, Fiber, and Wi-Fi Internet access as well as Internal Connections, such as wiring, routers, switches, and other network equipment.

Nebraska public libraries were awarded \$302, 873 in discounts. Discounts ranged from 40 to 90 percent, with 75 of the state's public libraries participating. All 75 libraries were awarded discounts on Internet Services, 2 libraries were awarded discounts on Fiber Special Construction, and 2 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 National 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/](http://nlc.nebraska.gov/erate/) or contact Christa Porter, Nebraska Library Commission Library Development Director at [christa.porter@nebraska.gov](mailto:christa.porter@nebraska.gov), or 402-471-3107, 800-307-2265.

For more information about the E-rate program, see [usac.org/sl/](http://usac.org/sl/).



## Commission Provides Interlibrary Loan Service

Interlibrary Loan (ILL), also known as Resource Sharing, is the name for the process by which libraries check out physical items (like books, audio discs, and DVDs) to other libraries outside their service base, and then the borrowing library lends those physical items to their patrons. When it comes to ILL, both the record keeping and the physical handling of objects require great attention to detail, and clear communication, from all parties involved.

Libraries in Nebraska without available funding or staff access to provide 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.

The Commission's ILL service 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.

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 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—public libraries often hear how important ILL service is to home-school families.

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. (ILL can also be used for digital content, but the licensing and rights make lending digital content more complex; partly because of that complexity, digital lending is mostly used for journal articles and academic book chapters.) 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

(continued on page 17)

## \$20,000 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 \$20,000 to sixteen 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
  - Local history archive cataloging and preservation
  - 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 and Tween Programming
  - Assist with cataloging Czech music collection
  - Help plan and conduct makerspace classes, STEAM activities, story time, computer classes, Pioneer Days events
  - Assist with ADA shelving re-configuration
  - Partner with local historian to work in the Heritage Room
- 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](mailto:christa.porter@nebraska.gov), or 402-471-3107, 800-307-2265.



**A moving truck parked at the corner of 15th & Howard Streets in Omaha, 1942**  
[memories.nebraska.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/dwhm/id/292/rec/1](http://memories.nebraska.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/dwhm/id/292/rec/1)

## Nebraska Memories on the Move

Staff designed a new online platform in-house and started moving over the digital items in Nebraska Memories. When it goes live in the next fiscal year, users will have more browsing options and be able to optimally view images and information on any type of device.

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](http://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](mailto:devra.dragos@nebraska.gov), or 402-471-4335, 800-307-2665.



**Wesleyan students moving books to the Cochrane-Woods Library, 1970**  
[memories.nebraska.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/nwu/id/18/rec/5](http://memories.nebraska.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/nwu/id/18/rec/5)



## 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:

### Nebraska Celebration of Books

**Literary Festival (NCOB).** In 2024, the Nebraska Book Festival combined with the Celebration of Nebraska Books to feature authors, book award winners, the current One Book One Nebraska book selection, poetry SLAM showcase, memoir writing workshop, honored winners of the Jane Geske and Mildred Bennett awards, and announced the choice for next year's One Book One Nebraska reading program. The NCOB festival was on October 12th, 2024 at the UNL Union in downtown Lincoln.

**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 Lincoln Literacy in 2024 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 Matt Mason in 2024.

**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](http://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](http://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 2024 selection was *Dancing with the Octopus* by Debora Hardi. The 2025 selection was *The Long March Home: A World War II Novel of the Pacific* by Tosca Lee and Marcus Brotherton. 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](http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/onebook.html).

For more information about Center for the Book activities, see [centerforthebook.nebraska.gov](http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov) and [facebook.com/NebraskaCenterfortheBook](https://facebook.com/NebraskaCenterfortheBook), or contact [centerforthebook@nlc.state.ne.us](mailto:centerforthebook@nlc.state.ne.us) 📧



## Commission Makes Government Information Accessible

The Nebraska Library Commission Government Information and the Nebraska Library Commission's Government Information Services team provides public access to state and federal publications and information through reference and research assistance, digitization of older documents, and promotion of our collections to both state government agencies and the general public. During the 2024-25 fiscal year, the team had one major staff change, with Government Information Services Librarian, Mary Sauers, retiring after 12 years in the role. Aimee Owen took over this role in March 2025, and is excited to join such a knowledgeable and experienced staff.

### State Documents

Since its founding by the Nebraska Legislature in 1972, the Nebraska Publications Clearinghouse has worked with all state agencies to collect and preserve Nebraska government publications. This year we made a concentrated effort to update our list of publication contacts in all state agencies. We periodically contact agency directors to remind them of the Clearinghouse and their statutory obligation to provide print and digital copies of their documents, as well as the benefits of having their current and historical publications preserved in a central location for their own, and the public's, access. At the end of the 2024-25 fiscal year, the tangible collection of state documents was up to over 190,000 items in paper and microfiche.

We continue to scan older state documents, collected before digitization was the standard. Laura Mooney is working shelf-by-shelf to find these publications and make them available online. If a requested document has not yet been scanned and linked to in our online catalog, we offer scan-on-demand services to provide access as needed. Our collection of electronic documents (e-docs) is up to nearly 41,000 items, with over 8800 e-docs added this fiscal year alone.

### Donations

Occasionally, we receive donations of older documents that we use to fill in gaps in our collection. A notable donation this year was a set of Attorney General Reports from former Nebraska AG and State Treasurer, Don Stenberg.

### Federal Documents

There was a significant reduction in the number of incoming federal documents due to the Government Publishing Office's shift to a limited print distribution model. This change was implemented in the middle of the 2023 fiscal year, so the full impact was not felt until FY 2024. The Library Commission received 18 federal documents for the last fiscal year, down from around 300 the prior FY, and between 400 and 500 for previous years. The Library Commission remains a selective depository, receiving only 2% of available federal publications, and the GPO will continue to make all publications available online, so the public should not see a reduction in access.

### Promotion

The Government Information Services team promotes our collections and services through regular posts on the Library Commission's NCompass blog, including a bimonthly list of newly received documents and a more detailed listing of newly received titles from the Nebraska Press, as well as posts highlighting upcoming events, training opportunities, and resources of interest, both new and old.

Government Information reference services are available at [nlc.ask@nebraska.gov](mailto:nlc.ask@nebraska.gov), 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665. For more information see [nlc.nebraska.gov/govdocs/resources.aspx](http://nlc.nebraska.gov/govdocs/resources.aspx) or contact Aimee Owens, Nebraska Library Commission Government Information Services Librarian, [aimee.owens@nebraska.gov](mailto:aimee.owens@nebraska.gov), 402-471-4017, 800-307-2665 or Bonnie Henzel, Nebraska Library Commission State Documents Staff Assistant, [bonnie.henzel@nebraska.gov](mailto:bonnie.henzel@nebraska.gov), 402-471-6285, 800-307-2665. 📧

## Interlibrary Loan Service

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(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 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. 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](mailto:lynda.clause@nebraska.gov), 402-471-4018, 800-307-2665. 📧



## Library Commission Supports Regional Library Systems

### System Highlights included:

#### Central Plains Library System (CPLS)

- CPLS serves 71 public libraries, 165 school libraries, 7 academic libraries, and 10 special libraries.
- CPLS serves 31 counties in rural Nebraska, with a population service area of 300,794.
- Distributed 6 newsletters.
- CPLS offered 12 workshops during the fiscal year, both in-person and virtual, with 156 attendees, for a total of 1,043 Continuing Education Units earned.
- Co-sponsored programming with the other regional library systems to host the Joint Youth Services Retreat with 50 attendees, took part in Nebraska Library Association Conference panel.
- Participated in cooperative projects with Nebraska Regional Library Systems including Youth Services Retreat, Reader Zone Online Record-keeping, and NLA Speakers.
- Awarded \$6,720.12 in scholarships to 22 librarians to attend conferences and continuing education opportunities.
- CPLS facilitated a state-wide purchase of Folkmanis Puppets. We purchased a total of 62 discounted puppets for 15 libraries.
- Loaned 45 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.

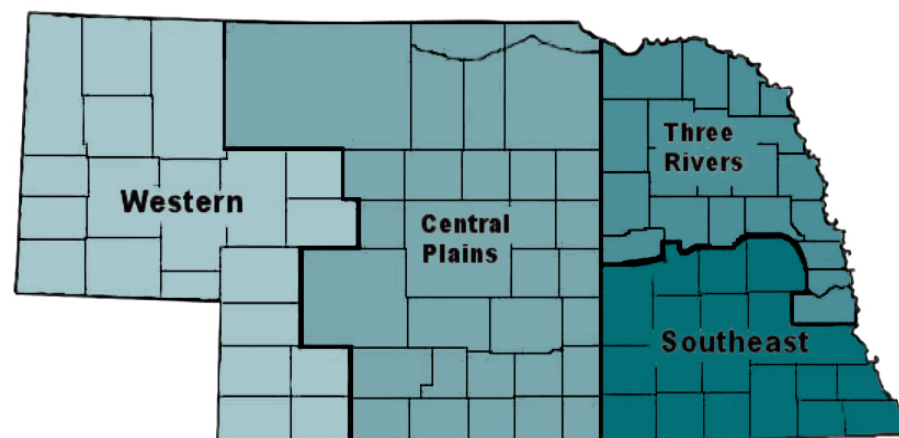
- Circulated 376 audiobooks, and 173 book kits.
  - CPLS's Tabletop Game Collection loaned 57 games.
  - Furnished 22,636 die cut shapes for Summer Reading Program crafts and year round preschool projects.
  - Conducted "Thursday Morning" Zoom Meetings for Library Directors and Staff Members to discuss current or relevant topics. During the fiscal year 297 individuals participated.
  - CPLS provides an assortment of items that may be borrowed including: Breakout EDU kits, loaned 3 times; Button Makers, loaned 18 times; STREAM Kits, loaned 8 times; Mobile Laptop Lab, loaned 3 times.
- #### Southeast Library System (SELS)
- The Southeast Library System supports 63 public libraries serving their communities in the 20 county corner of southeastern Nebraska, with a service area population of 442,619.
  - Sponsored or co-sponsored 19 continuing education sessions for a total of 1,336 CE hours earned by 315 attendees on topics such as Summer Reading programming, Golden Sower, policies, Youth Services, state law for public libraries, collection development, library advocacy, My Heritage databases, friends and foundations, open meeting laws, and more.
  - Published 12 issues of the newsletter, with articles and updates from more than 31 libraries of all types.
  - Received 80 journal article requests of more than 3,335 pages of professional

literature on librarianship, municipal activities, and non-profit planning to member libraries.

- Provided 16 book kits to public, school, and institutional libraries.
- Initiated a group subscription to BookPage to assist in collection development with 12 member libraries.

#### Three Rivers Library System (TRLS)

- TRaILS serves 98 public libraries, 39 special libraries, 444 school libraries/media centers, 23 academic libraries, and 8 institutional 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 1,059,449; and 11,315 square miles.
- TRaILS has 9 board members, and they meet quarterly.
- TRaILS had 259 Book Kits available, with 1,411 copies lent in the fiscal year.
- During the fiscal year TRaILS hosted or facilitated 30 Continuing Education events, with 378 attendees.
- TRaILS YouTube channel had 753 views for 128.2 hours.
- TRaILS paid return postage for borrowed kits that saved libraries \$1,172.39.
- TRaILS provided \$19,454.28 in scholarships for 26 librarians.
- TRaILS had 57 STEAM Kits available for checkout, with 56 items lent in the fiscal year.
- TRaILS reimbursed 10 libraries for a total of \$675.00 for Humanities Nebraska programming.
- Twelve newsletters shared information to all member libraries. Views of these newsletters averaged 129 per issue.
- The TRaILS website was viewed 4,806 times during the fiscal year.
- TRaILS facilitated a group purchase for Summer Reading materials, with five libraries taking part.
- Annual Meetings were moved to be held in May of each year with more focus on continuing education opportunities for attendees.



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## PIIONEER 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 seventeen libraries, including libraries in Alma, Arapahoe, Atkinson, Axtell, Bennington, Blue Hill, Columbus, 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.wordpress.com/](http://nepioneer.wordpress.com/) or contact Christa Porter. For membership information contact Robin Quinn, [hml@gpcom.net](mailto: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.



## Commission Supports Regional Library Systems (continued)

#### Western Library System (WLS) "Supporting Libraries Serving Their Communities"

The Western Library System supports 4 academic, 4 special, 40 public and 81 school libraries serving their communities in the 21 county area of Western Nebraska, with a service area population of 105,597.

- The WLS Board governs the budget, by-laws and policies and met 12 times. By-laws, policies and procedures are continually reviewed and updated as needed.
- *The Western Sun* newsletter was published 6 times during the fiscal year.
- WLS loaned 17 Book Club Kits, and 9 individual books.
- 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.
- The Western Library System funded four scholarships totaling \$1,200 and 23 libraries received summer reading scholarships totaling \$1,935.
- WLS held an Annual Meeting on August 5, 2024 with 65 library staff attending.
- During the fiscal year the WLS hosted several Continuing Education or training events, with 173 attendees.
- Libraries utilized the book binding repair service twice and used the CD/DVD disc repair service 80 times.
- The WLS continued to loan Breakout Boxes, a Cricut Maker, a Heat Press and Mug Press, and a Button Maker to member libraries.
- Continual communication with WLS libraries and their staff is achieved through E-mail, phone, online calls, social media, and visits to their locations.
- The journal article request service scanned and e-mailed 651 pages for 20 libraries during the fiscal year.
- The WLS granted Summer Reading money to libraries requiring additional funding for the success of their programs and services.
- The WLS Author Tour Committee selected bestselling author William Kent Krueger for the 2024 tour. Krueger's relatable, down-to-earth personality made him a favorite among attendees. He connected with readers through book signings and engaging presentations held at Lied Scottsbluff Public Library, the Midwest Theater in Scottsbluff, and the Kathleen Lute Public Library in Ogallala.
- Ethan Nelson began as the Western Library System Director on May 1, 2025.

Find out more about Nebraska's Regional Library Systems at [nlc.nebraska.gov/systems/](http://nlc.nebraska.gov/systems/)

