

Your guide to the
Nebraska Library
Commission
July 1, 2022–
June 30, 2023
Annual Report
FY2022
Vol. 28 No. 1

Compass

N E W S L E T T E R

▲ In this Issue

From the Director
page 2

**Tech Kits Through
the Mail**
page 4

**Council Advises
Commission**
page 5

**Putting a Spotlight on
Book Club Kits**
pages 7

**That All May Read:
TBBS**
pages 9

**The State of
Public Libraries
in Nebraska**
pages 10-11

**Commission
Provides Interlibrary
Loan Service**
page 14

**Commission Makes
Government
Information Accessible**
page 17

**Library Commission
Supports Regional
Library Systems**
pages 18-19



Preparing Nebraska Libraries for Digital Equity Training

In December of 2022, Nebraska was allocated \$598,746 to develop a state digital equity plan. The Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC)/Office of the CIO will be leading the planning effort with the assistance of the state's regional economic development districts and the Nebraska Library Commission, among other stakeholder groups.

NLC staff has spent the first half of 2023 engaging with other statewide digital equity stakeholders through participation in webinars, conferences and listening sessions across the state. The goal of this group is to develop a Nebraska Digital Equity Plan to be funded using money allocated to the state from the federal Digital Equity Act, Competitive Grant program beginning in fall of 2024. Nebraska libraries with fiber (digital-broadband access) and a robust network infrastructure will play a key role accommodating flexible digital equity programming and training environment.

Libraries have continued to connect to fiber providing reliable internet in their communities. Two current programs offering state funding for fiber connectivity, the Remote Access Rural Broadband Grant program, administered by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) and the Nebraska Public Service Commission's E-Rate Special Construction Matching Grant Program (NUSF-117) enabled five fiber installations to libraries this past year: Arthur, Fairmont, Kimball, Lodgepole, and Springfield. Currently 96 of 273 public libraries in Nebraska are not connected to fiber. The NLC continues to encourage Nebraska Public Libraries to connect to fiber.

In April, 2023 the Nebraska Public Service Commission issued Progression Order #1 for the purpose of revisiting Nebraska's E-Rate program (NUSF-117) to determine whether any changes to the program were warranted. The NUSF-117 Program is a four-year program with

(continued on page 4)

From the Director...

Continuing this past year, 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.

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 use. And educational activities transitioned to primarily online delivery.

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

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

Rod Wagner 

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Nebraska Library Commissioners July 2022– June 2023

Debby Whitehill Bloom, Omaha

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.

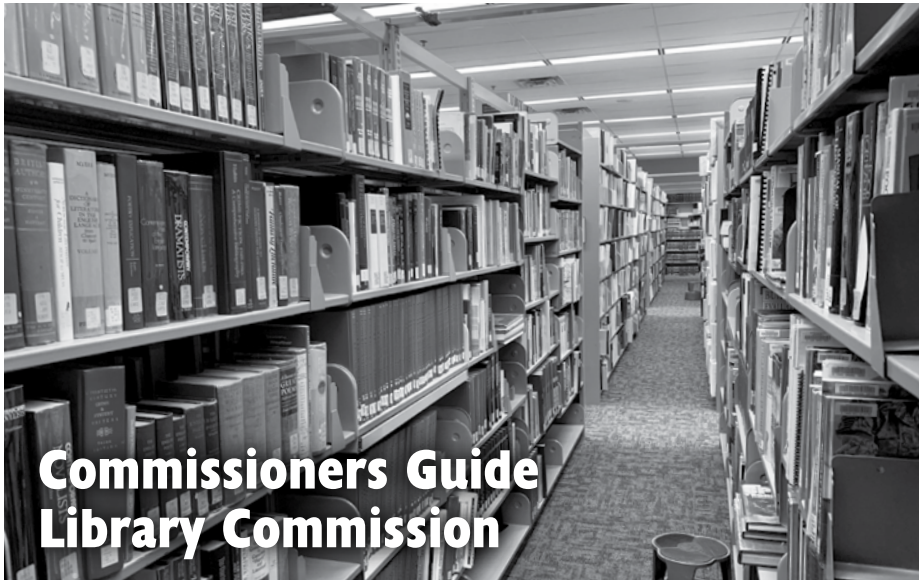
This publication was supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provision of the Library Services and Technology Act.

Nebraska Library Commission Funding July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023

State of Nebraska Funds	\$4,338,185
Federal Funds	\$1,692,252
Cash Funds	\$13,217
Total	\$6,043,653

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

ARPA Grant	\$126,597
Braille Services (Utah State Library)	\$4,165
Continuing Education & Training.	\$12,677
Electronic Information Resources	\$479,456
Interlibrary Loan (Lender Compensation).	\$90,348
Library Improvement Grants	\$50,521
Motion Picture Licensing for Public Libraries.	\$21,871
OverDrive Downloadable Books	\$265,026
Public Library Statistical Reporting Software (Bibliostat)	\$4,125
Regional Library Systems.	\$606,439
Scholarships, Stipends, Internships	\$34,127
State Aid to Public Libraries	\$262,642
United for Libraries (ALA Membership)	\$6,400
Youth Grants for Excellence	\$28,868
TOTAL	\$1,993,263



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 fiscal year, 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 by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Review of the Commission's major service programs, federal library programs, agency budget, and personnel updates are regular agenda items.

Commission members serving this past fiscal year were Arunkumar Pondicherry (Commission Chair), Lincoln; Lois Todd-Meyer (Commission Vice-Chair), Lincoln; Tiffany Carter, Omaha; Diane Downer, Gering; Beth Kabes, Clarkson; and Vernon J., Lincoln. 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 <http://nlc.nebraska.gov>, search on Commission Meetings. ➡

Excellence in Leadership Award Recipients 2022



2022 Matt Hier

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



2022 Amanda Sweet

Nebraska Library Commission Technology Innovation Librarian

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

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** – Studio and Book Circulation Support, (5/22/2023)

Departures

- **Eric Saxon**, (11/28/2022)

Preparing Nebraska Libraries for Digital Equity Training

(continued from page 1)

one million dollars available to library applicants that do not currently have a fiber internet connection. Nebraska public libraries are able to apply for up to 10% of the total fiber build-out construction cost with these grant funds. The E-Rate Program will provide up to an additional 10% to match any state funding for fiber special construction. The result of this collaboration between the State of Nebraska and the federal government reduces the average cost for Nebraska public libraries to only 10% of the total cost for fiber construction. All comments and replies to comments related to the proposed changes in Order NUSF-117 were submitted by the June 16 deadline. A decision on modifications and/or continuation of the Order NUSF-117 is to be announced later this year.

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

Public Library Accreditation Resumed in 2022

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Public Library Accreditation renewal process was suspended for 2020 and 2021. The accreditation expiration dates for all accredited public libraries was extended by 2 years. The process resumed in July 2022.

Twenty nine Nebraska Public Libraries were accredited or reaccredited this fiscal year, including two libraries earning accreditation for the very first time, bringing the total to one hundred eighty four accredited public libraries.

The purpose of Nebraska Public Library Accreditation is to encourage excellent library service in Nebraska communities. The guidelines used to

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

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



Tech Kits Through the Mail

The Nebraska Library Commission's Tech Kits Through the Mail initiative exists to prepare Nebraska communities for the jobs of the future. Amanda Sweet, NLC's Technology Innovation Librarian, curated a collection of tech kits to represent the major technology shaping the world of work, including robotics, virtual and augmented reality, the internet of things, drones, and artificial intelligence. Kits range in difficulty, starting with robots like the Ozobot Evo, which uses screen-free techniques to introduce basic robotics coding concepts to kids. Kits like the Finch 2.0 robot and the Databot 2.0 sensor box take it up a notch to explore artificial intelligence and data science. The Tech Kits are paired with information resources and career concepts for each major technology type. Kits can be checked out

for 30 days at a time and libraries only have to pay return shipping. This allows libraries with lower budgets and fewer staff resources to access new technology. Over 300 kits went out in 2023, and interest is growing. For more information about Tech Kits, contact Amanda Sweet at amanda.sweet@nebraska.gov, or 402-471-3106. ➡



Are you missing out on important library information?

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

nlc.nebraska.gov/enews

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

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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 three times during FY 2022-2023 – in August, November, and March. Meetings included discussion topics related to current and emerging trends and issues. In addition, meetings included updates from Commission staff and from Nebraska Library Association and Nebraska School Librarians Association representatives. The council's August 2022 meeting included a discussion of 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. The November 2022 meeting included a report on ARPA grant project funding, library staffing shortages, and library related state and federal legislation. The March 2023 meeting was held following Nebraska Library Advocacy Day activities and included discussion of state legislation, library content challenges, the 2023-2025 State Biennium Budget,

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 2023 included:

Cali Biaggi, Doane University, Crete

Laura England-Biggs, (NLA liaison 2021-22, appointed member 2022), Keene Memorial Library, Fremont

Michael Burris, Holdrege Area Public Library, Holdrege

Jessica Chamberlain, Norfolk Public Library, Norfolk (Council Chair, 2021-22)

Scott Childers, Southeast Library System, Lincoln

David Graber, Conn Library, Wayne State College

Pat Gross, Bayard

Joy Harvey, (NSLA Liaison 2021-22)

Gail Irwin, Ainsworth Public Library

Lisa Irwin, Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment Center, Kearney

Kimberly Endicott, Wayne

Lori Long, Gothenburg Jr/Sr High School

Dana Morgan, Leyton High School, Dalton

Emily Nimsakont, (NLA Liaison 2022)

Stephanie O'Connor, Alliance Public Library, Alliance

Lisa Olivigni, Lincoln City Libraries, Eiseley Branch

Allison Reisig, Western Nebraska Community College, Scottsbluff

Sky Seery, North Platte High School, North Platte (Council Chair 2020-21)

Michael Straatmann, (NLA Liaison 2020, appointed member 2021, Council Vice-Chair 2021)

Rachel Stiner, Omaha Public Library, Omaha

Holli Duggan, NLA Liaison

Jennifer Norton, Lexington Public Library

Mandy Peterson, Shelby-Rising City Public Schools

Michael Sauers, Do Space, Omaha

Celine Swan, Grand Island Public Library

Tammi Thiem, TRLS ➡

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



NLC's Library Technology Blog

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

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

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



Fund & Implement Better Broadband

NLC staff has spent the first part of 2023 engaging with Nebraska libraries to ensure they are prepared to acquire funding for and have networks that can support faster broadband Internet service. E-Rate Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) compliance and out-of-date networking equipment that can't support faster Internet service were identified as two major roadblocks to E-Rate and faster broadband Internet adoption by Nebraska libraries.

The federal E-Rate program provides



funding to libraries that pays for the majority of the cost to install a high-speed Internet connection, 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 even though it requires it.

DNS filtering utilizes the Domain Name System (DNS) protocol, referred to popularly as the "phonebook of the internet". When applications make domain-name requests, these requests are sent to "filtering" DNS servers where they are matched against threat feeds and policy

(continued on page 17)

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

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

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

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 \$21,871.00 for FY23 (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023). With this

license, motion pictures were shown as part of library services and programming at Nebraska public libraries. For more information see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/discounts/motionpicture.aspx> or contact Susan Knisely, Online Services Librarian, 402-471-3849, 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 are raffling 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: <https://prairiestem.org/> or contact Amanda Sweet at amanda.sweet@nebraska.gov, or 402-471-3106.



Putting a Spotlight on Book Club Kits

The Book Club Spotlight is a biweekly book review posted to the Nebraska Library Commission Website. Started in April of 2022, there have been 28 individual titles spotlighted between June 2022 and July 2023.

The Book Club Spotlight aims to highlight titles in the Commission's Book Club Collection that aren't as popular or well known, with particular attention paid to books from diverse cultures and communities, and Nebraska authors. The goal of the Spotlight is to be a resource where Book Club leaders can get a real feel for what a title is about and how their group might respond to it rather than just a synopsis. A particular spotlighted book might not be familiar to a group or a topic they know about, so the review and associated hyperlinks lay out important background information so readers aren't going in uninformed.

The Spotlight is arranged in three parts: Firstly, an introduction to this month's theme (usually a cultural holiday or celebration) that led to the choice of title, the author's background, and any relevant awards the book or the author has achieved. Second is a short but detailed story



summary, including anything a hesitant reader might want to know before diving in. And the third, and final paragraph explores the book's central themes and highlights the benefits of reading and discussing it in a Book Club Group.

Past reviews can be found by searching "Book Club Spotlight," by visiting the Book Reviews page (<https://nlc.nebraska.gov/ref/BookReviews.aspx>), or in system newsletters. For more information see <https://nlc.nebraska.gov/ref/bookclub/> or contact Mackenzie Marrow, Nebraska Library Commission Information Services Technician, mackenzie.marrow@nebraska.gov, 402-471-4019, 800-307-2665.



Making Art from Cover Art

Visitors to the Commission website and social media pages were treated to 52 "Bookface Friday" posts during the fiscal year. Starting as an idea to help promote the Nebraska 150 book list titles in 2017, staff have continued to create a new bookface weekly using covers from the book club kit, state document, library science, and OverDrive collections. Each post contains not only the cover art creation, but also details about the title and the collection it belongs to, and how patrons can access that collection. Bookface models include Commission staff, family, and visitors. Social media posts regularly receive rave reviews from followers, often mentioning that they visit our pages just to see the latest Bookface. Check out the #BookFaceFriday posts on the Commission Blog at www.nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/ or on the Commission Facebook page at www.facebook.com/NebraskaLibraryCommission. For more information, contact Tessa Terry, Communication Coordinator, terry@nebraska.gov, 402-471-3434, 800-307-2665.



Library Commission Provides State Aid to Libraries

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Nebraska Library Commission awarded Library Improvement Grants for 2023 totaling \$60,000 to twenty-five 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 include: 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, and an Owl 3 Conference Camera.

For more information, contact Christa Porter, Nebraska Library Commission Library Development Director, christa.porter@nebraska.gov, or 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 FY2022-2023, 48 episodes of NCompass Live were broadcast with 801 live attendees. Audience members watched from across the United States and Canada.

NCompass Live sessions were presented by Nebraska Library Commission staff and guest speakers from public, academic and school

libraries in Nebraska, as well as from California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, and Washington.

More than 730 archives sessions are recorded and available for viewing at <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/ncompasslive/NCArchivist.asp>. For the list of upcoming sessions, see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/ncompasslive/>. To suggest a topic for NCompass Live, contact Christa Porter, contact information above. 

NCompass ▶ live

That All May Read: Talking Book and Braille Service Provides Braille-Enhanced StoryWalk

Visitors to the Wilson Public Library in Cozad and to the Wahoo Public Library in Wahoo were treated to a special StoryWalk experience this year thanks to the Nebraska Library Commission's Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS). A 'StoryWalk' is an interactive way for parents and children to engage in literacy and physical activity. Frames, each holding two pages of a children's book, are placed along an outdoor walkway. Readers walk from frame to frame in order to finish the story. In this case, the book was *A Gift for Goose* by Tad Hills, chosen to complement the Summer Reading Challenge theme: All Together Now.

The Talking Book and Braille Service wanted to put an inclusive and accessible spin on the StoryWalk by adding braille alongside the print text. To do so, TBBS partnered with Custom Metal Supply in Manhattan, Kansas, to fabricate metal shelves to add to the StoryWalk's display frames. Custom Metal Supply had experience making such shelves for other Talking Book libraries'



own StoryWalk experiences. TBBS embossed pages of braille text that corresponded to the book's print text and fixed those pages to the metal shelves. TBBS clamped the shelves to the StoryWalk's display cases. This allowed readers to interact with the braille while they read the print. TBBS also provided braille alphabet cards and an additional copy of *A Gift for Goose* to both libraries for use in indoor activities.

The braille-enhanced StoryWalk was displayed in Cozad in June and in Wahoo in September.

For more information about the braille-enhanced StoryWalk, please contact TBBS Director Gabe Kramer at gabe.kramer@nebraska.gov or Volunteer Coordinator Annette Hall at annette.hall@nebraska.gov.



Braille E-Readers Expand Access

In 2012, the Talking Book Library Service's (TBBS) analog cassette collection was rendered obsolete when the Library of Congress's National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) switched to the digital distribution of library materials. This caused TBBS to permanently shelve its locally-recorded cassette collection, which was composed of about 500 titles. The plan was to digitize this collection, but because of numerous unforeseen circumstances, including rising costs and the Covid-19 pandemic, TBBS was not able to do so.

However, in early 2022, TBBS began contract negotiations with the National Audio Company (NAC) in Springfield, Missouri. The book, *It's Not the End of the Earth, but You Can See it from Here* by Roger Welsch was selected to test the digital conversion process. The conversion was a success. *It's Not the End of the Earth* was then successfully uploaded to NLS's BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) site and made available for Nebraska and national TBBS patrons to borrow on April 28, 2022.

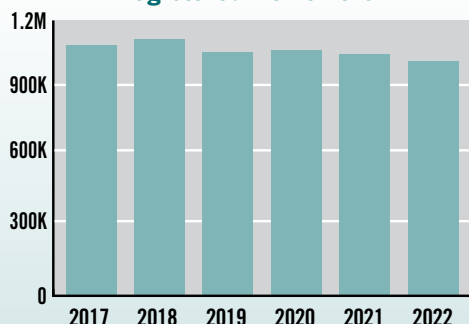
This year, thanks to the support of generous donors, TBBS was able to fully hire the National Audio Company (NAC) in Springfield, Missouri to digitize a portion of the cassette collection. Roughly one-half of the cassette titles had already been digitally archived by TBBS since 2012. The other half of those books still exist solely on cassette.

Since the success of that first book, TBBS has sent cassettes to NAC in small batches of four or five titles. As of the writing of this article, NAC has digitized 45 of TBBS's analog titles. TBBS plans to continue to partner with NAC for the duration of this project.

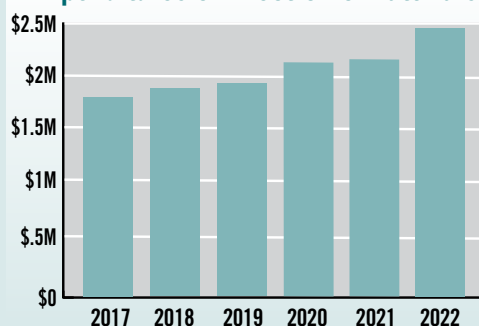
If you would like to support the work of Nebraska's Talking Book and Braille Service, please contact the Talking Book and Braille Service at nlc.talkingbook@nebraska.gov and inquire about the Talking Book Trust Fund.

Nebraska Public Library Statistical Survey

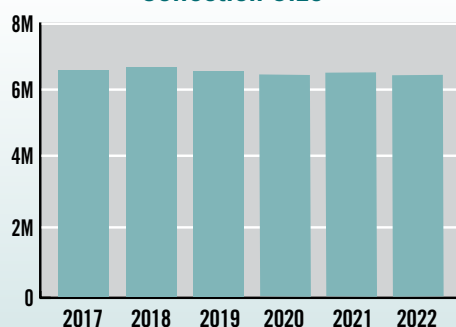
Registered Borrowers



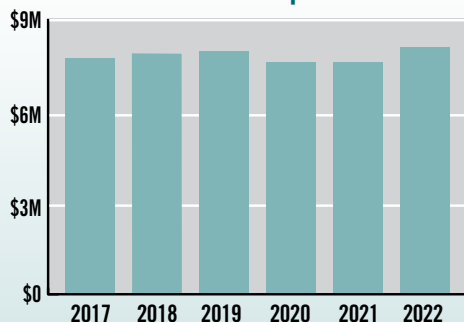
Expenditures on Electronic Materials



Collection Size



Total Collection Expenditures



The State of Public Libraries in Nebraska



According to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), there are 9,245 public libraries in the United States. In Nebraska, there are 273 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 2022 *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 191 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, 70% of Nebraska libraries meet or exceed the FCC definition of broadband (24 MBPS, created in 2015). 61% met this standard in 2022. 95 libraries (41%) reported fiber optic internet connections.

Overall, circulation of material has decreased more than 29% between 2020 and 2022, and increased 7.24% between 2021 and 2022. Uses of electronic materials continued to increase at a steady pace, by 17% between 2020 and 2022, and over 9% from 2021 to 2022. Library programs and attendance increased, as

libraries offered 57% more programs in 2022 (compared to 2021), and over 61% increase in program attendance.

Other trends revealed by the results of the 2022 *Nebraska Public Libraries Survey* include the following:

- 194 Nebraska Public Libraries loaned eBooks and Audiobooks
- Number of total resources in Nebraska public libraries: 6,638,930 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: 2,332
- Public libraries loaned 12,282,739 items in FY2022
- Number of registered library users: 970,447
- Number of public library visits in 2022: 4,602,192
- Libraries providing wireless Internet access: 224, or 97% of reporting libraries
- Libraries delivered 28,482 programs, attended by 550,053 people
- Nebraskans paid only \$45 per capita in 2022 for public library service
- 17 Nebraska public libraries were recognized as "Star Libraries" in the 2022 *Library Journal Index of Public Library Service*.

(continued on page 11)

The State of Public Libraries in Nebraska *(continued)*

Selected Library Statistics, FY 2020 through FY 2022

	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	3-Year Change	1-Year Change
Registered Borrowers	1,043,276	994,663	970,447	-6.98%	-2.43%
Total Visits	3,587,788	3,680,256	4,602,192	28.27%	25.05%
Items Borrowed	9,470,979	11,453,859	12,282,739	29.69%	7.24%
Items Borrowed per Capita	5.94	7.19	7.5	26.88%	4.78%
Internet Computers for Public Use	2,506	2,381	2,332	-6.94%	-2.06%
Libraries Providing Free Wi-Fi	216	222	223	3.24%	0.45%
Number of Programs Offered	20,033	18,047	28,482	42.18%	57.82%
Library Program Attendance	479,354	341,392	550,053	14.75%	61.12%
Number of Books in Collection	5,418,610	5,420,590	5,398,764	-0.37%	-0.40%
Number of Print Subscriptions	8,369	7,869	6,650	-20.54%	-15.49%
Number of Audio Materials	231,050	231,781	211,336	-3.06%	-3.36%
Number of Video Materials	415,309	423,457	430,636	3.69%	1.70%
Total Materials held	6,656,143	6,669,325	6,645,580	-0.26%	-0.46%
Annual Hours Open	322,809	425,959	441,992	36.92%	3.76%
Legal Service Area Population	1,595,049	1,592,274	1,630,349	2.21%	2.39%
Local Government Revenue	\$63,100,097	\$65,432,396	\$68,682,439	8.85%	4.97%

NEBRASKA PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE EQUALIZERS

There are more than **4.6 million** annual visits to Nebraska Public Libraries (not including virtual and online library visits).¹ That's more than **53 sellouts** at Memorial Stadium.

Nebraska Public Libraries are Technology Equalizers

- **91%** offered **FREE** public internet access
- **97%** offered **FREE** Wi-Fi
- **2,790,598** uses of Electronic Materials (eBooks and Audiobooks) in 2021-2022FY
- **16,373** Children's Programs offered, with **349,819** attendees
- **2,583** Young Adult Programs offered, with **30,529** attendees
- **7,280** Adult Programs, with **77,177** attendees²

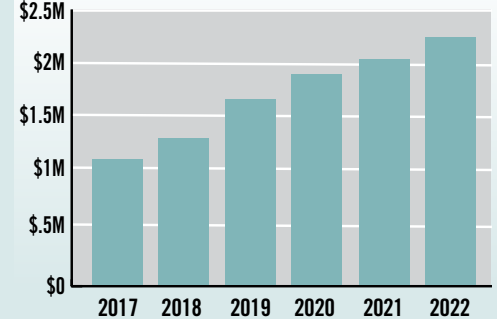
SOURCES:

- 1) 2021-2022 Nebraska Public Library Survey (93% reporting)
- 2) 2021-2022 Nebraska Public Library Survey (93% reporting)

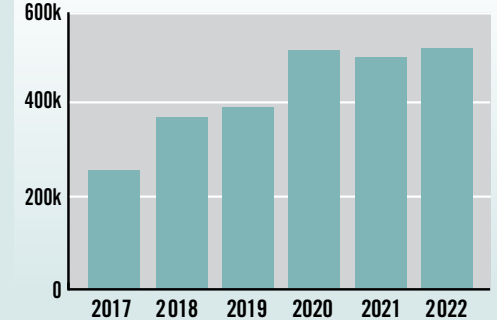


Nebraska Public Library Statistical Survey

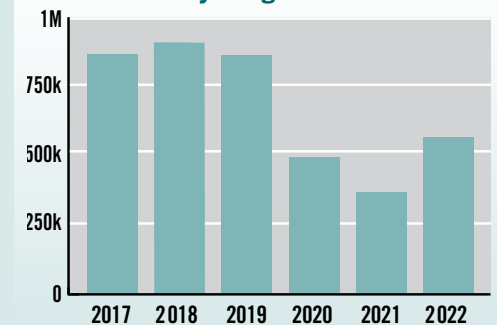
Circulation of Adult Downloadable Materials



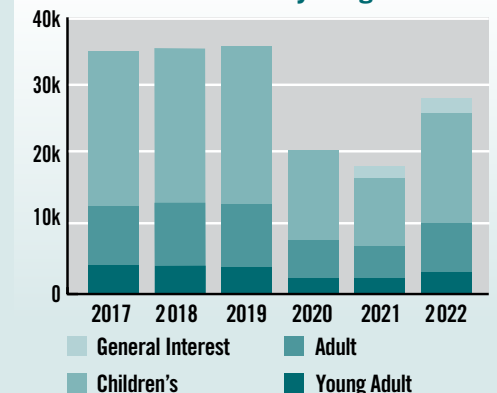
Circulation of Childrens Downloadable Materials



Total Library Program Attendance



Number of Library Programs



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 <https://nepioneer.com> or contact Christa Porter, Nebraska Library Commission Library Development Director, christa.porter@nebraska.gov, or 402-471-3107, 800-307-2665. 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. ♦♦



Updates 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

new school year. New content, MAS Complete 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.

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

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

Number of searches undertaken in the statewide subscription databases between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023:

Biography Reference Bank & Center	4,233,453
Consumer Health Complete	469,290
FirstSearch/WorldCat Discovery	873,638
Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia	1,098,900
GreenFILE	1,190,315
Legal Information Reference Center	907,913
MAS Complete	822,651
MasterFILE Complete	3,154,383
Middle Search Plus	744,822
MyHeritage	208,992
NoveList Plus & K-8	55,622
NoveList Plus K-8	26,873
Point of View Reference Center	909,319
Primary Search	1,801,866
Psychology and Behavioral Sciences	1,256,399
Science & Technology Collection	1,210,418
Small Business Reference Center	687,606

Support for Children's Services a Priority



The Nebraska Library Commission continued to support library services to children and young adults. During FY2022-23 the Commission supported the statewide Summer Reading Program with training and materials. The Library Commission supported statewide workshops, organized by the Regional Library Systems. Sally Snyder, Nebraska Library Commission Children and Young Adult Library Service Coordinator, gave book-talks in-person and via Zoom to librarians across the state.

The Library Commission supplied manuals, booklists, and material on the Library Commission website to complement the themes, 2022: "Oceans of Possibilities" and 2023 "All Together Now." 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.

The Nebraska Library Commission and Regional Library Systems invited children and teens across the state to read and discuss the same book, providing Book Club Kits to facilitate group reading and

activities. The 2023 **One Book for Nebraska Kids** was *The Birchbark House* (Hyperion Books for Children, 1999) by Louise Erdrich. The 2023 **One Book for Nebraska Teens** was *Not If I Save You First* (Scholastic Press, 2018) by Ally Carter. See <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/youth/OBOK> for information and activities.

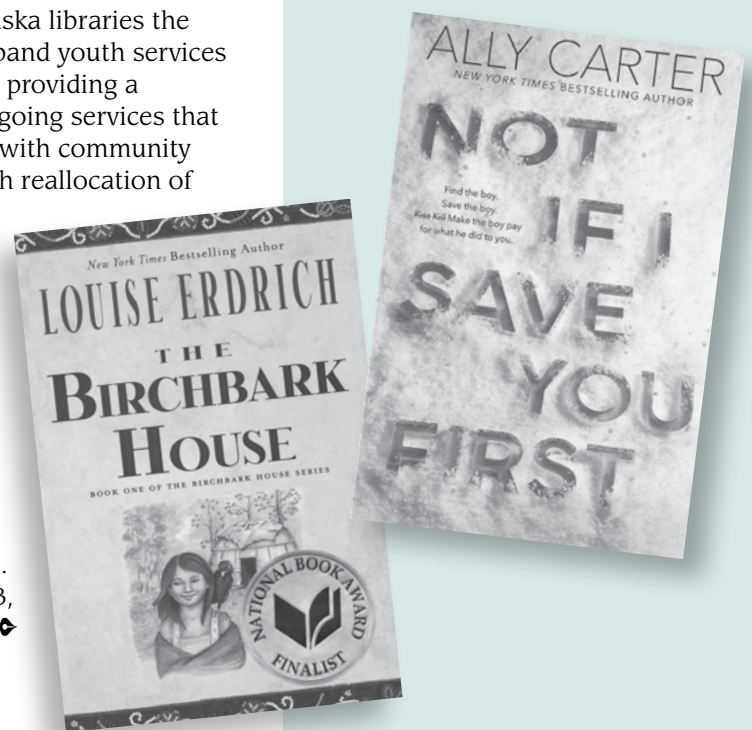
\$31,466 was awarded to public libraries in Youth Grants for Excellence, using funding provided by the State of Nebraska. Funded projects provided Makerspace tools, early literacy programming, the "100 Books" Reading challenge for teens, a "1000 Books Before Kindergarten" program, STEM/STEAM-focused 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 185 events, which were attended by 3,646 Nebraska library staff and board members during the fiscal year. These training activities included the annual "Big Talk from Small Libraries" online conferences, thirty-five Basic Skills courses (with multiple sections), NCompass Live webinars, and training for the Cataloging Certificate program. Seventeen Basic Skills courses were provided throughout the year with 204 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, 402-471-2694, 800-307-2665. ♦



**FASTER
INTERNET,
LOWER
COSTS!**



E-rate Discounts Support Technology Access

Nebraska schools and libraries received over \$13.2 million in discounts on telecommunications costs during E-rate Funding Year 2022 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023) through the Universal Service Fund (E-rate) program.

Nebraska libraries were awarded \$370,126 in discounts. Discounts ranged from 60 to 90 percent, with 65 of the state's public libraries participating, including the Regional Library Systems. 64 libraries were awarded discounts on Internet Services, 3 libraries were awarded discounts on Fiber Special Construction, and 4 libraries were awarded discounts on Internal Connections.

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

The Nebraska Library Commission provides education, training, and consultation services to Nebraska public library staff to assist with E-rate applications. For more information about E-rate support in Nebraska, see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/erate/> or contact Christa Porter, Nebraska Library Commission Library Development Director, 402-471-3107, 800-307-2665 or christa.porter@nebraska.gov. For more information about the E-rate program, see <http://www.usac.org/sl/>



Commission Provides Interlibrary Loan Service

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

We continue to learn from our collective experiences of the last few 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. 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.

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

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



\$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 2022-2023 fiscal year, the **Nebraska Library Commission** awarded **Nebraska Library Internship Grants** totaling \$20,000 to twenty 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:

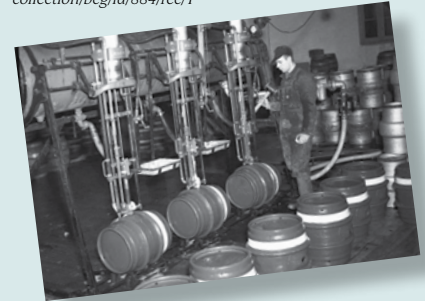
- Summer Reading Programs for youth, teens, and adults
- Public relations: websites, social and print media, designing and posting flyers, and other forms of marketing
- Basic library duties: circulation, shelving, weeding, processing acquisitions
- Assist with Early Literacy Programs
- Create and organize new Teen Space
- Assist with the genrification process in the library
- Partnerships with schools and daycare centers
- Creating new Teen Programming
- Assist with 'Under the Microscope' Youth program

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



**A to Z Dress Shop,
Butler County Gallery**

<http://memories.ne.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/bcg/id/884/rec/1>



**Brewery employee filling kegs with beer,
The Durham Museum**

<http://memories.ne.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/dwhm/id/105/rec/41>

Nebraska Memories at Work

Nebraska Memories offers access to digitized Nebraska-related primary source materials, including glass-plate negatives, photographs, postcards, stereoscopes, sheet music, maps, manuscripts, documents, and oral histories at <http://memories.nebraska.gov>. The images showcase life in Nebraska from the late 19th century to the mid-20th century.

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



**Inside a butcher shop,
History Nebraska**

<http://memories.ne.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/nshs/id/378/rec/169>

Library Commission Hosts Center for the Book



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

Celebration of Nebraska

Books. Each fall, the Celebration features the current One Book One Nebraska book selection; honored winners of the Jane Geske, Mildred Bennet, and Nebraska Book Awards; and announces the choice for next year's One Book One Nebraska reading program. In 2022 the Celebration was hosted at the Nebraska History Museum in Lincoln on October 22.

Jane Geske Award. The Center Center for the Book selected the Nebraska Writers Collective in 2022 as the award recipient. The award pays tribute to Jane Pope Geske, former director of the Nebraska Library Commission, founding member of the Nebraska Center for the Book, and long-time active member of many Nebraska library and literary activities.

Mildred Bennett Award. The award was presented to Lois Todd-Meyer in 2022. 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.

Letters about Literature.

Nebraska students were recognized 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 <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/LAL.html>.

Nebraska Book Awards.

Nebraska books were honored in FY2022 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 <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/awards/winners/nebook.html>.

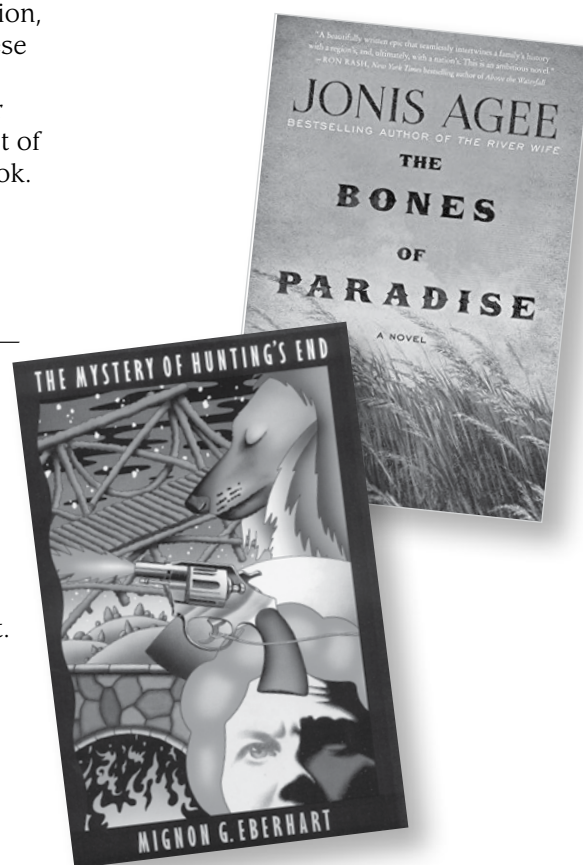
One Book One Nebraska.

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 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. Nebraska libraries and other literary and cultural organizations across the state hosted events to encourage all Nebraskans to read and discuss the same book, see



<http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/onebook.html>.

For more information about Center for the Book activities, see <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov> and <https://www.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, research projects, collection development, promotion, and inter/intra-agency cooperation. For example, we answered frequent reference questions for patrons with landlord-tenant concerns, genealogical search information, requests for permission to use historical pictures and information from the Commission website, and connected patrons with the appropriate Nebraska agency. Research projects this year included a history of LB 567 (1975) prisoner legislation, historically banned books in Nebraska, and the demographics of Nebraska and 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. The State Documents collection includes more than 189,000 items in paper, over 19,000 items online, over 1,500 items added online, and online documents were accessed as many as 9,300 times per month. The Federal Documents collection includes more than 47,000 paper items, with almost 600 titles accessible online. As these collections grew, we worked closely with various organizations to fill in gaps and provide documents needed for research. For example, we received items from Nebraska Game

and Parks, the Seward Public Library, and the Nebraska Department of Education that were not previously in the collection. We continued to work on the redesign of the Nebraska Public Documents website, and hope to have that website going live early in 2024. Staff took every opportunity to “scan on demand” any public document that was not available online and add it to our online collection. We also continued retrospective scanning of older state documents (with almost 3,000 items to date) and added those to our online collection as well.

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 available to citizens, state agencies documents, information resources, webinars, information services for libraries and their customers, and special events, are just a few examples of how we kept the public informed. Web pages with updated resources for topics such as the release of the 1950 Census records, also aided the public in finding up-to-date information.

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

Fund & Implement Better Broadband

(continued from page 6)

settings. If a request is to a harmful/malicious domain, the request is blocked. This ensures that unwanted activity is cutoff at the root because the request never makes it to the blocked domain.

In April, the NLC began evaluating multiple DNS filtering technologies. DNSFilter was found to be the best for price/performance and ease of implementation. The NLC will offer this DNS filtering solution to Nebraska libraries at no cost to them and will assist in its implementation and ongoing management. The NLC will be ready to launch DNSFilter in time for the July 1st opening of the E-Rate filing window. Even Libraries that choose not to utilize E-Rate can still gain a significant cybersecurity benefit by implementing DNSFilter.

While engaging with Nebraska libraries about their need for assistance in implementing DNS filtering, it was discovered that the networking equipment utilized by these libraries tended to be end-of-life, unable to implement DNSFilter, and/or unable to support Internet connections faster than 100Mbps. The NLC staff will be conducting Technology Reviews at Nebraska libraries to assist them with identifying network equipment that needs to be upgraded and calculating the cost to do so.

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

Library Commission Supports Regional Library Systems

System Highlights included:

Central Plains Library System (CPLS)

- Consulted via telephone, email, and in person on a variety of topics including E-Rate, programming, policies, certification of staff and accreditation of libraries, library board certification, cataloging, weeding, grant writing and reporting, and collection arrangement.
- Coordinated virtual and in-person workshops for school and public librarians titled Bibliostat Training with Sam Shaw; The Heat is On Cricut Workshop; Backward Design with Erica Rose; Sticker Obsession (Cricut); All Together Now Summer Reading Workshops (2 sessions); What Would You Do With \$1,000 (STEAM and Makerspace); April Showers Bring May Flowers (Cricut); and Mental Health Mondays in May (5 programs).
- Participated in cooperative projects including Youth Services Retreat, Reader Zone Online Record-keeping, and NLA Speakers.
- Awarded \$5,197.12 in scholarships to 22 librarians to attend conferences and continuing education opportunities.
- Cleaned 131 audio, video, and game discs and repaired 12 book bindings to keep items circulating from member libraries' collections.
- Circulated 68 Professional Journals and 29 Professional Books.
- Circulated 590 audio books, 85 book kits with cutting equipment being used 6 times, Cricuts and Heat Presses were used 22 times, and the button machines being used 14 times. The Mobile Computing Lab consisting of 12 laptops was utilized 8 times.
- Provided 10 copies of BookPage each month to 15 Libraries.
- Established a Tabletop Game Collection and loaned 26 games.



- Furnished 4,856 die cut shapes for Summer Reading Program crafts.
- Provided Humanities Nebraska Speakers to 26 libraries.
- Sponsored a System-wide Month of Weeding. Over 2,100 outdated items were removed from library shelves. Eight public libraries and two school libraries reported their results.
- Conducted weekly Zoom Meetings for Library Directors and Staff Members to discuss current or relevant topics that were weighing on their minds. Many librarians have stated that this meeting has been something that helped them return to normal after the initial COVID crisis. 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. 569 participants attended 34 Thursday Morning Meetings.
- Distributed 7 newsletters.
- Maintained a website, a Pinterest account, and a Library Thing account for member libraries' information.

Southeast Library System (SELS)

- Sponsored or cosponsored 20 continuing education sessions for a total of 1557 CE hours earned by 374 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 25 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 12 issues of the newsletter, with articles and updates from more than 29 libraries of all types.
- Supplied 10 member libraries with more than 3502 pages of professional literature on librarianship, municipal activities, and non-profit planning.
- Provided 23 book kits to public, school, and institutional libraries.

Three Rivers Library System (TRLs)

- TRaILS serves 600 libraries: 95 public libraries, 442 school libraries, 23 academic libraries, 40 institutional and special libraries.
- Of the 94 public libraries, 70 are accredited - 6 at the Bronze level; 49 at the Silver level; 15 at the Gold level.
- TRaILS serves 21 counties; population of 1,047,389; and 11,315 square miles.
- TRaILS has 9 board members, and they meet quarterly.
- TRaILS provided 40 virtual SKILLS Meetings, 7 in-person workshop, 15 in-person SKILLS Meetings, and 83 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.
- Many Breakout Box Challenges were conducted for library boards as a training method.
- The recorded versions of the Virtual SKILLS Meetings and workshops average about 22 views per YouTube recording.
- TRaILS provided \$4,579.45 in scholarships for system librarians.
- TRaILS has 157 Book Sets and 50 STEAM Kits available for checkout.
- 720 book copies and 37 STEAM items were checked out to 35 member libraries, and 7 libraries of other systems.
- Twelve newsletters shared information to all member libraries. Views of these newsletters averaged 92 per issue.

(continued on page 19)

Commission Supports Regional Library Systems

(continued)

- The TRAILS website was viewed 4,167 times over the last two years.

Western Library System (WLS)

“Supporting Libraries Serving Their Communities”

The Western Library System supports three academic, three special, forty public and ninety-five school libraries serving their communities in the 21-county area of Western Nebraska.

- The eleven-member Board governs the budget, by-laws and policies and met six times. By-laws, policies and procedures are continually reviewed and updated as needed.
- A redesigned logo was created and revised and modernized brochures were printed. In early December, each library received a new brochure along with a 2023 magnetic calendar.
- Brochures are distributed throughout the year.
- During the fall semester of the 2022-2023 school year, the System sponsored an intern from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. The intern updated the website, compiled bibliographies on diversity topics and prepared libguides for book clubs and after school programs. The duties included writing promotional articles for the Tosca Lee Author Tour.
- Brokered a lower rate for libraries subscribing to the Star Herald. Seven libraries took advantage of this offer.
- A survey of the Public Library Directors and Public Services Librarians was conducted.
- All forty public libraries received State Aid or Dollars for Data.
- Tables of Contents of professional library journals were scanned and e-mailed to libraries. The number of requested articles significantly increased this fiscal year.
- Purchased the Golden Sower nominees and added bookkits to the collection. Circulated the books to libraries as requested. The use of this service increased.
- Repaired CD/DVD discs for libraries in the system. Fewer discs were cleaned and/or repaired.
- Educated library staff, boards and the public on the intrinsic value of libraries. Public Libraries receive their individual libraries' most recent Return on Investment fact sheets prepared by the Nebraska Library Commission.
- E-mail, phone calls and in-person visits served as communication avenues to ensure library staff receive necessary and valuable information.
- The Western Sun newsletter was “published” six times a year.
- Questions, comments and concerns from library staff and the public were researched and answered.
- Community Action Response Plan Training
- Summer Reading Workshops for the “All together Now Theme” was held on February 21 at the Hastings Memorial Library in Grant and March 23 at the Alliance Public Library.
- Attended Association for Rural and Small Libraries Virtual Conference, Public Library Association Virtual Conference
- The Systems sponsored the Joint Youth Services Retreat at Camp Carol Joy Holling on September 1 and 2nd.
- Systems Directors served on a panel discussion at the Nebraska Library Association's Spring Workshop.
- Attended the ESU 13 quarterly meetings for Librarians and worked with ESU 15 and 16. 

Staff Reviews Posted Weekly, New Series Added

Starting with an idea to share the books that Commission staff are reading, staff posted 50 “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 new blog post series highlighting titles found in the Commission's book club collection was started in April 2022 and had 25 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 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 www.nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/ or on the Commission Facebook page at www.facebook.com/NebraskaLibraryCommission. 



Nebraska Library Commission

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Nebraska Library Commission Highlights and Statistics July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023

- ☞ The Nebraska Library Commission circulated **14,492** items, with book club circulation representing **13,816**.
- ☞ The Library Commission served **387** customers onsite.
- ☞ The Library Commission loaned **61** items to other libraries.
- ☞ The Library Commission borrowed **2,276** items from other libraries for Nebraska library customers.
- ☞ The Nebraska Library Commission hosted and supported websites for **110** public libraries and **4** Regional Library Systems.
- ☞ **581** federal documents were added to the Library Commission's collection, bringing the total to **47,195**.
- ☞ **5,707** state documents were added to the Library Commission's collection, bringing the total to **187,625**.
E-docs were accessed **112,153** times
- ☞ Nebraska Library Commission staff and guest trainers broadcast **48** *NCompass Live* sessions, with **801** attending live and thousands viewing archived recordings.
- ☞ Nebraska OverDrive Libraries Consortium library customers (from **191** participating libraries) downloaded **631,736** audiobooks, **531,105** eBooks, and **49,802** magazines.
- ☞ The Library Commission's Nebraska Memories collection contains **11,420** images and audio files.
- ☞ **949** library staff enrolled and participated in the Nebraska Librarian Certification program.
- ☞ Nebraska library staff and board members attended one or more of **185** continuing education events sponsored by the Nebraska Library Commission (including the four regional library systems). A total of **3,646** attendances (by CE participants) were recorded at these events.
- ☞ Seventeen Basic Skills courses were provided throughout the year with **204** participants attending one or more of these courses.
- ☞ **182** public libraries are currently accredited.

