

Your guide to the
Nebraska Library
Commission
July 1, 2018–
June 30, 2020
Biennium in Review
FY2018/FY2019
Vol. 25 No. 1

Compass

N E W S L E T T E R

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Nebraska Library Commission Expands Services throughout Pandemic

When the reality of the pandemic set in, we knew it would impact libraries of all kinds throughout Nebraska, as well as businesses and individual citizens. To help, we created pages of resources tailored to libraries, families, business owners, and individuals needing information and assistance.

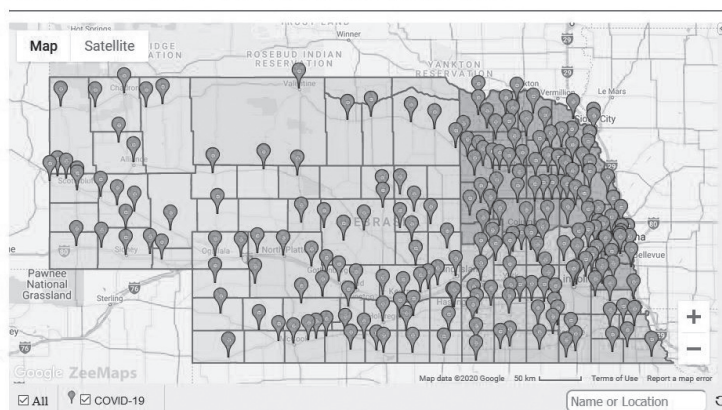
For libraries, we created a Google spreadsheet to track public libraries that were closing and/or restricting or modifying services. Some libraries closed outright; others offered curbside services and online programming, etc. We posted a form on our website where they could add their information and we also kept track via social media and the news. As time went on, we also tracked openings, changes in restrictions and services, and re-closings as needed. Our library resource pages included information on sanitizing procedures, best practices for keeping staff and patrons safe, examples of policies other libraries were using, and online programming resources. We created a phased reopening plan that libraries could modify to fit their needs. We dedicated a page to sources of free ebooks and audiobooks, loosened permissions from publishers for online storytimes, and celebrity read-alouds.

For businesses, we compiled a list of assistance programs, national

and local guidance, and safety guidelines. Similarly, for individuals, we pulled together links to current unemployment assistance programs, training opportunities, and other financial aid resources.

A page was also created for families during the school shutdown. This page started as a way to teach and entertain kids throughout the spring and summer, but as fall approached, we modified it to include more formal homeschooling sites and guidance to prepare for the upcoming school year.

Library Data Services - COVID-19 Changes to Library Services



For more information, contact
Aimee Owen, Nebraska Library
Commission Information Services
Librarian, aimee.owen@nebraska.gov,
402-471-3217, 800-307-2665.

From the Director...

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

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

Among the Commission's activities this past year, the Library Innovation Studios project completed the third year of the three-year federal grant. The Commission was offered an opportunity to extend the project for an additional year with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The added funding allows more libraries to participate. Appreciated are the libraries, librarians, volunteers, and community members that have hosted the project, served as trainers, and those that have used makerspace devices to create a variety of items. The project has had many successes. Those successes are the result of the contributions of the project team. Their creativity, dedication, and hard work have demonstrated results beyond those of the project's original goals. Notable are the contributions and support from project partner organizations – Nebraska Extension, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nebraska Innovation Studio, and

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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, 2018 through June 30, 2020

State of Nebraska Funds	\$7,582,778
Federal Funds	\$2,641,006
Cash Funds	\$24,028
Total	\$10,247,812

Projects Funded through the Nebraska Library Commission July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2020

Braille Services (Utah State Library)	\$1,105
Collaborative Summer Reading Program	\$8,816
Continuing Education & Training	\$8,816
Electronic Information Resources	\$899,063
Interlibrary Loan (Lender Compensation)	\$125,454
Library Improvement Grants	\$16,033
Library Innovation Studios	\$322,889
Motion Picture Licensing for Public Libraries	\$42,928
Nebraska Center for the Book	\$2,491
OverDrive Downloadable Books	\$447,220
Public Library Statistical Reporting Software (Bibliostat)	\$8,250
Regional Library Systems	\$828,561
Scholarships, Stipends, Internships	\$67,900
State Aid to Public Libraries	\$723,179
United for Libraries (ALA Membership)	\$23,910
Youth Grants for Excellence	\$43,524
TOTAL	\$3,567,569

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 federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funded Library Innovation Studios project grant, rural library broadband service initiatives, response to the COVID-19

pandemic, and development of a grant program for libraries funded by the federal CARES Act (as administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services). Review of the Commission's major service programs, federal library programs, agency budget, and personnel updates are regular agenda items.

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

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

Library Commission Staff Transitions, FY2018/FY2019

Arrivals

- **Holly Atterbury**, Library Reader's Advisor (8/15/2018)
- **Jan Jolliffe**, Western Library System Director (10/1/2018)
- **Sue Bilcroft**, Accountant (12/01/2018)
- **Kayla Henzel**, Staff Assistant I (12/10/2018)
- **Shoshana Patocka**, Librarian (4/08/2019)
- **Amy Irons**, Office Clerk III (Book Circulation Technician) (8/08/2019)
- **Laura Stueck**, Accountant I (9/30/2019)
- **Matt Hier**, Audio Production Studio Manager (10/28/2019)
- **Chelsea Lemburg**, Staff Assistant I (1/27/2020)
- **Cindy Osborne**, Western Library System Director (2/10/2020)

Departures

- **Mary Jo Ryan**, Communications Coordinator (9/10/2018)
- **Allison Badger**, Librarian (10/9/2018)
- **Tan Ngo**, Accountant (12/01/2018)
- **Nicholas Westra**, Book Circulation Technician (6/21/2019)
- **Scott Scholz**, TBBS Director (6/7/2019)
- **Jan Jolliffe**, Western Library System Director 7/12/2019
- **Diane Wells**, Information Technology Infrastructure Support Technician (8/01/2019)
- **Sue Bilcroft**, Accountant (9/15/2019)
- **Lori Sailors**, Staff Assistant II (1/31/2020)
- **Cynthia Nigh**, Information Technology Infrastructure Support Technician (9/27/2020)

Reassignments

- **Tessa Terry**, Communications Coordinator (9/17/2018)
- **Gabe Kramer**, Talking Book and Braille Service Director (6/16/2019)
- **Cynthia Nigh**, Information Technology Infrastructure Support Technician (12/09/2019)

Excellence in Leadership Award Recipients

2018



Tan Ngo
Nebraska Library
Commission
Accountant



Cynthia Nigh
Nebraska Library
Commission
Library Innovation
Studios Project
Assistant

2019



Christa Porter
Nebraska Library
Commission
Library
Development
Director



Lynda Clause
Nebraska Library
Commission
Interlibrary Loan
Staff Assistant

Ed. Note:

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

From the Director...

(continued from page 2)

Nebraska's Regional Library Systems. The public libraries selected for project participation are key to the project's success. Results from the participating libraries reflect the enthusiasm, effort, and creativity of library staff, volunteer trainers, local project partners, and community members.

The Library Commission contributed to the work of the Nebraska Rural Broadband Task Force this past year. Created by state legislation, the task force conducted research, held public meetings, deliberated and developed recommendations for presentation to the governor and state legislature. The task force's recommendations included provisions supporting efforts to improve broadband services for rural public libraries. Significant among these recommendations is action that followed from the Nebraska Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission sought input for the creation of an E-rate Special Construction State Matching Grant Program, a four-year program with one million dollars available for grants to provide fiber installation financing for public libraries and schools.

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 

Nebraska Library Commission Announces Public Library Accreditation

Nebraska Library Commission announced the accreditation of 124 public libraries across Nebraska during FY2018/FY2019. Christa Porter, Nebraska Library Commission's Library Development Director stated, "We are dedicated to helping Nebraska libraries meet Nebraskans' information needs, opening up the world of information for citizens of all ages. The Library Commission continues to work in partnership with Nebraska libraries and the regional library systems, using the Public Library Accreditation program to help public libraries grow and develop."

Public libraries in Nebraska are accredited for a three-year period. Accreditation of public libraries is a cyclical process, with approximately one-third of all libraries scheduled to apply for re-accreditation each year.

The **Nebraska Library Commission** congratulates the public libraries as they move forward toward the realization of this vision for the future: "All Nebraskans will have improved access to enhanced library and information services, provided and facilitated by qualified

library personnel, boards, and supporters with the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes necessary to provide excellent library and information services."


The **Nebraska Library Commission** would like to congratulate the following libraries on earning accreditation for the very first time. Those libraries are:

Accredited through December 31, 2021

Arlington Public Library
Bayard Public Library
Sioux County Public Library (Harrison)
Scotia Public Library & Heritage Center
Maltman Memorial Public Library (Wood River)
Lied Winside Public Library

Accredited through December 31, 2022

Garfield County Library (Burwell)
Plymouth Public Library


For more information on public library accreditation in Nebraska, contact Christa Porter, Library Development Director, christa.porter@nebraska.gov, 402-471-3107, 800-307-2665. 

NCompass Live Webinars Remain Popular

The Nebraska Library Commission continues to offer free online webinars broadcast live every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. CT. During the biennium 99 episodes of *NCompass Live* were broadcast with 2,256 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 Arizona, California, Colorado,

Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Washington.

More than 580 archived sessions are recorded and available for viewing at <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/ncompasslive/NCArchivist.asp>. For the list of upcoming sessions, see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/ncompasslive/>. To suggest a topic for *NCompass Live*, contact Christa Porter, contact information above. 

NCompass ▶ live

Council Advises Commission

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

The council met three times during FY2018/FY2019 – in July, November, and March. Meetings included discussion topics related to current and emerging trends and issues. In addition, meetings included updates from Commission staff and from Nebraska Library Association and Nebraska School Librarians Association representatives. The council’s November 2019 meeting included a discussion of library service marketing strategies and techniques, and libraries and the 2020 Census. The Council met in

March 2020 following Nebraska Library Advocacy Day morning activities and included a report and discussion regarding the Nebraska Rural Broadband Task Force report and recommendations and the LSTA Grants to States Program - \$1 Per Capita Campaign.

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 areas of Nebraska and including librarians, library trustees, educators, and library supporters. ➡

State Advisory Council members serving during FY2018/FY2019 included:

Jessica Chamberlain, Norfolk Public Library (Council Vice-Chair 2019-2020)

Scott Childers, Southeast Library System, Lincoln

Susan Franklin, Perkins Library, Hastings College

David Graber, Conn Library, Wayne State College

Pat Gross, Bayard

Joy Harvey (NSLA Liaison 2019-2020)

Gail Irwin, Ainsworth Public Library

Joann Jackson, Fairmont

Lori Long, Gothenburg Jr/Sr High School

Laura Marlane, Omaha Public Library

Rebecca McCorkindale, Gretna (NLA representative 2018-2019)

Dana Morgan, Leyton High School, Dalton

Lisa Olivigni, Lincoln City Libraries, Eiseley Branch

Tom Pfeifer, Nebraska State Penitentiary, Lincoln

Julie Pinnell, Cochrane-Woods Library, Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln

Charlene Rasmussen, Wayne

Allison Reisig, Western Nebraska Community College, Scottsbluff

Angie Richeson, (NSLA representative 2018)

Sky Seery, North Platte High School (Council Chair 2019-2020)

Michael Straatmann (NLA Liaison 2019-2020)

Noelle Thompson, Scottsbluff Public Library

Matthew Williams, Kearney Public Library ➡



NLC’s Library Technology Blog

A Sweet take on Library Technology

Pretty Sweet Tech is an NLC blog covering the technology and digital skills necessary to thrive in the 21st Century. It is written by Amanda Sweet, the Technology Innovation Librarian at the Nebraska Library Commission. She recognizes that people should always come before technology. Technology is a tool designed to help people solve real problems. However, you cannot use a tool if you don’t know it exists. The goal of this blog is to open the door to what is possible, and provide the tools necessary to make technology happen in your community.


For some, technology means resume and career assistance using online tools and resources. Others may wish to start a makerspace or host a code club to introduce people to new and emerging technologies. There is no one-size fits all solution to connect communities with technology that matters. The important thing to keep in mind is that technology cannot exist without people. Whether you’re using precision agriculture to measure crop health, or augmented reality to stock retail shelves, technology can help. 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. ➡

Libraries Stay Viable with Downloadable Reading

In this biennium, the Nebraska OverDrive Libraries consortium included 173 member libraries with 117 of those libraries serving populations of less than 2,000, the smallest serving 136. Library customers downloaded 747,037 audiobooks and 862,185 eBooks. Nebraska eReads funding, approved by the Legislature for the Nebraska Library Commission's biennium budget, provided Nebraska OverDrive Libraries with an additional \$183,654 to purchase materials. The total Nebraska eReads funding of \$407,220 was divided between the consortium, Omaha Public Library, Ralston Public Library, and Lincoln City Libraries based on the size of their legal service areas.

OverDrive now allows Advantage libraries, those that purchase copies of items for their customers use, to share those items with customers from other libraries within the consortium. During this biennium, shared items from twenty-five Advantage libraries checked out 209,159 times.

While usage of the Nebraska OverDrive Libraries collection increases regularly every year, its importance was highlighted during the closure of libraries during the COVID-19 pandemic. Circulation increased nearly 30% over the same period the previous year, and twice as many new users signed up for the service.

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) is invited to participate. For more information see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/overdrive> or contact Susan Knisely, Nebraska Library Commission Online Services Librarian, 402-471-3849, 800-307-2665, susan.knisely@nebraska.gov or Devra Dragos, Nebraska Library Commission Technology & Access Services Director, 402-471-4335, 800-307-2665, devra.dragos@nebraska.gov. 

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:




United for Libraries

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

- **eLearning**
- **The Voice of America's Libraries newsletter**

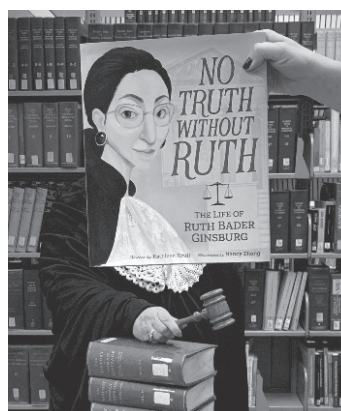
- **Discussion Forums** for tips, questions, advice, and more – Friends (public, school, academic), Trustees, Foundations
- **Publications** (books, fact sheets for Friends and Foundations, Library Board Practical Guides, Tip Sheets, Toolkits, and more)
- **Trustee Academy 2.0** (five online courses)
- **Short Takes for Trustees** (series of 10 short videos (8-10 minutes each))
- **Webinars** (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. 

Making Art from Cover Art

Visitors to the Commission website and social media pages were treated to 104 "Bookface Friday" posts during the Biennium. Starting as an idea to help promote the Nebraska 150 book list titles in 2017, staff have continued to create a new bookface weekly using covers from the book club kit, state document, library science, and Overdrive collections. Each post contains not only the cover art creation, but also details about the

title and the collection it belongs to, and how patrons can access that collection. Bookface models include Commission staff, family, and visitors. Social media posts regularly receive rave reviews from followers, often mentioning that they visit our pages just to see the latest Bookface. Check out the #BookFaceFriday posts on the Commission Blog at www.nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/ or on the Commission Facebook page at www.facebook.com/NebraskaLibraryCommission. 





Nebraska Library Innovation Studios Makerspace Partnership

On July 1, 2017 the Nebraska Library Commission kicked off their Library Innovation Studios project, initially funded by a National Leadership Grant of \$530,732 through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The project was originally going to span a 3-year period, working with public libraries in 30 rural and small Nebraska libraries and wrap up on June 30, 2020.

In July 2019, IMLS contacted project leadership to invite the Nebraska Library Commission to apply for a one-year extension and additional funding to expand the project. A proposal was submitted in August 2019 and accepted for \$85,000 to serve an additional nine libraries (up to two in communities larger than \$25,000). The total grant is now \$715,732 with a new scheduled completion date of June 30, 2021.

The project was designed to use makerspaces, installed at public libraries, to support community engagement and participatory learning experiences by providing access to technological and innovative learning tools not readily accessible locally. Our hope was that strengthening the maker culture in rural areas would stimulate creativity, innovation, and the exchange of ideas to facilitate entrepreneurship, skill development, local economic development, and encourage the local community to invest in a permanent makerspace.

The multi-faceted project features:

- Community Action Teams established in the 35 to 40 communities;
- Equipment maker kits, procured and maintained for four rotating studios;

- The development of instructional materials and user certification processes;
- The use of sustainability strategies for permanent studios;
- Train-the-trainer Instructional training on the use of the equipment;
- Marketing efforts, programming, and events (open houses & maker showcases);
- Annual Makers Showcases – twice held at the Nebraska State Fair, and
- A fact-finding networking event held near the end of the final year.

Maker equipment, with accompanying computers and design software, that made up the studios include:

- Laser Cutter
- Audio/Music Recording Kit
- Embroidery/Sewing Machine
- CNC Router
- 3D Printer
- Camera/Video Green Screen Kit
- Vinyl Cutter
- Heat Press
- Sublimation & Pigment Ink Printers
- Sparkfun Kit
- Arduino Starter Kit
- Lego Mindstorms Robotics Kit
- Makey Makey
- Laminator/Label Maker
- Button Maker/Craft Metal Punch

In the last biennium (the first year of the project), public libraries in Plattsmouth, Ainsworth, Ashland, Crete, and Loup City all completed their 20-week hosting periods.

During this biennium, public libraries that completed (or started) their hosting periods serve the

following communities:

South Sioux City	North Platte
Neligh	Ravenna
Broken Bow	Scottsbluff
Bridgeport	Wayne
Norfolk	Geneva
Central City	Verdigre
Kimball	Nebraska City
Beatrice	Blue Hill*
Hastings	Nelson*
Chadron	Grant*
Laurel	Pierce*
Plainview	

During the final year of the grant, the project team will serve public libraries in Cambridge, St. Paul, Superior, La Vista, McCook, Bellevue, and Randolph.

Due to Covid-19, many Nebraska libraries closed for a period of time. For this reason, three installations were postponed for several months. The postponement meant only 34 or 35 libraries would be able to host for the original 20-week period. Instead we used this time and travel funds to produce training videos on the various machines. We now have online trainings hosted on Niche Academy that use the new videos along with knowledge checks and online handouts. These tools assist us in training local trainers and are available for local trainers to use to prepare makers for shorter, more socially distant in-person trainings.

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




State Aid to Libraries Distributed by Commission

The Library Commission supported public libraries during the biennium with total payments of \$366,838 (2019: \$354,873; 2018: \$363,927) - 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. Nine additional libraries attained accreditation status and became eligible to receive state aid this year.

Direct State Aid. In 2020, 179 public libraries received state aid payments (178 in 2019) and 147 of these libraries earned additional payments to acknowledge their achievement of Gold or Silver accreditation status (144 in 2019).

Incentive Payments. Additional direct state aid payments, based on the amount of funds received from another public entity, were made to 81 libraries in 2020 (85 in 2019).

Dollars for Data. The Library Commission awarded payments of \$200 to 46 (47 in 2019) unaccredited libraries that completed and submitted the annual *Public Libraries Survey* online. Providing public library data is an important activity for all libraries so that the Library Commission and the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) have an accurate picture of public library service throughout Nebraska communities. Since submitting the annual survey is a necessary step toward meeting the standards of service outlined in the *Guidelines for Public Library Accreditation*, these libraries are closer to achieving accredited status.

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

Kreutz Bennett Grants Focus on Empowering Small-Town Libraries

A partnership between the Nebraska Library Commission and Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF) resulted in twenty two grants to twenty public libraries, thanks to the generosity of a lifelong educator, the late Shirley Kreutz Bennett of Lincoln. Each year the Kreutz Bennett Donor-Advised Fund, an affiliated fund of the Nebraska Community Foundation, accepts proposals for matching grants for public libraries in communities with populations of fewer than 3,000.

During the biennium, \$155,438 was distributed. **Facilities Grants** supported construction of new or expanded library buildings and renovation or restoration work, **Enhancement Grants** allowed for improvements in library services, and **Planning for Accreditation Grants** covered activities and expenses associated with earning Public Library Accreditation from the Library Commission.

The Nebraska Community Foundation and the Nebraska Library Commission screened applicants for eligibility and provided guidance for those invited to submit proposals. Each year, the Kreutz Bennett Donor-Advised Fund advisory committee, made up of Kreutz Bennett's nieces and nephews, reviewed applications and awarded funding to match every local dollar raised. For more information, contact Christa Porter, Nebraska Library Commission Library Development Director, christa.porter@nebraska.gov, 402-471-3107, 800-307-2665

Funds were used to purchase STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, math) related equipment, software, supplies and improve facilities in the

following libraries:

- **Bridgeport Public Library:** \$8,000
- **Central City Public Library:** \$10,000
- **Clay Center Public Library:** \$7,191
- **Kimball Public Library:** \$10,030
- **Lied Pierce Public Library:** \$1,100
- **Ravenna Public Library:** \$10,000



Grants were awarded to the following libraries for program enhancement, facilities improvement,

or work leading to accreditation:

- **Axtell Public Library,** \$20,000: renovation
- **Crawford Public Library,** \$700: Community Needs Response Plan
- **Garfield County Library, Burwell,** \$3,750: exterior updates
- **Geneva Public Library,** \$20,000: renovation
- **Genoa Public Library,** \$1,000: elementary programming; \$1,000: children's programming; \$10,000: renovation
- **Hruska Memorial Public Library, David City,** \$6,000: renovation
- **Lied Randolph Public Library,** \$2,900: equipment
- **Logan County Library, Stapleton,** \$500: accreditation activities
- **Paxton Public Library,** \$10,000: renovation
- **Rising City Public Library,** \$2,500: accreditation activities
- **Rock County Public Library, Bassett,** \$20,000: renovation
- **Shelby Public Library,** \$3,000: programming
- **Sutton Memorial Library,** \$6,767: computers
- **Yutan Public Library,** \$1,000: materials 

Talking Book and Braille Service Responds to Pandemic

The Covid-19 Pandemic has changed all aspects of normal life, including the operations at the Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS). The Talking Book and Braille Service had to make some big decisions to protect the health and safety of the staff as well as continue the dedicated service to our patrons.

With staff health in mind, the Talking Book and Braille Service instituted a multitude of safety measures. TBBS closed the doors to the public from March through June. While patrons could still order books via phone or electronically, they could no longer enter the Nebraska Library Commission office to check out or return materials in person. Our team of volunteer narrators, who generously spend hours each day reading books and magazines, could not come in to record. Without those volunteers, studio manager Matt Hier had to take on the responsibility of recording all of our publications himself.

On the circulation side, our three reader advisors are rotating between working remotely and in the office. This has proven to be a successful strategy that allows increased social distancing while also continuing to assist patrons. We are quarantining all returned talking books for a minimum of one week before going

back into circulation. TBBS patrons have stated they appreciate the lengths we have gone to continue their service uninterrupted.

As our recording studios have slowly reopened to volunteers, we made several changes to help keep our narrators safe. We reduced the number of recording sessions per studio each day to allow ample time to clean and air out the studios between narrators. We have also purchased air purifiers to help filter the air in the studios. All of the volunteers and studio staff wear masks whenever they are not reading inside their enclosed recording booths.

Our two studio personnel have assigned studios which helps eliminate a shared working space and at the same time reduce the number of volunteers using the same studio. The sign-in book we previously used was retired to eliminate a common contact point between volunteers. Our studio manager now tracks volunteer hours in a spreadsheet. In addition, of course, TBBS continues to stress to narrators that under no circumstances should volunteers come in to read if they are not feeling well.

Throughout the pandemic, TBBS has strived to continue our services uninterrupted.

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



Lois Crandall of Beatrice, volunteering since 2016, narrates books and magazines for TBBS.

Narrating at TBBS

Volunteer narrators are the life-blood of the talking book program. From July 2019 to March of 2020, 23 unique volunteers read for a total of 832 hours. During the months of April, May, and June the volunteer narrator program was put on hold to keep both staff and volunteers safe during the pandemic.

Our volunteer narrators have a set schedule and read for 90 minutes per session either weekly or bi-weekly. We record about 25 magazines of local and regional interest and numerous books by Nebraska authors or books about Nebraska.

The Talking Book and Braille Service is always looking for volunteer narrators, although we are not currently holding auditions, we will happily put your name on a list to contact in the post-pandemic future.

To apply to be a volunteer narrator, contact our volunteer coordinator Annette Hall, annette.hall@nebraska.gov, or call: 402-471-4033. For more information about the recording process contact studio manager Matt Hier, matt.hier@nebraska.gov or 402-471-6553. 📞



Are you missing out on important library information?

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

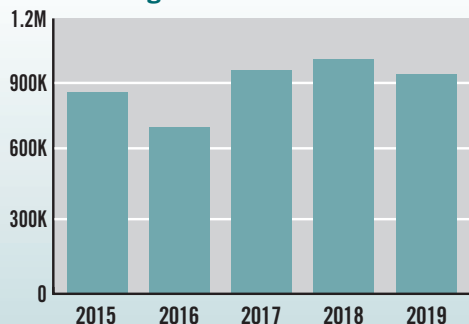
nlc.nebraska.gov/enews

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

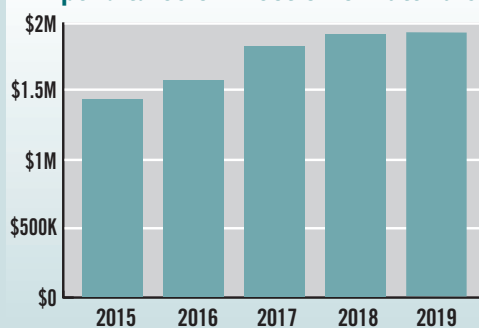
The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023, Phone: 402-471-2045 or 800-307-2665, Fax: 402-471-2083

Nebraska Public Library Statistical Survey

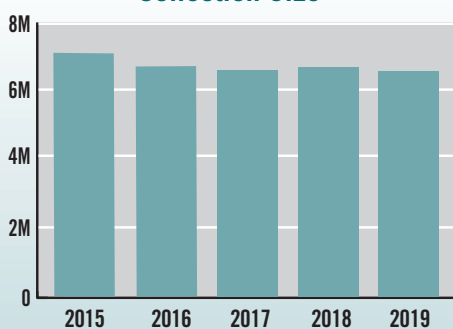
Registered Borrowers



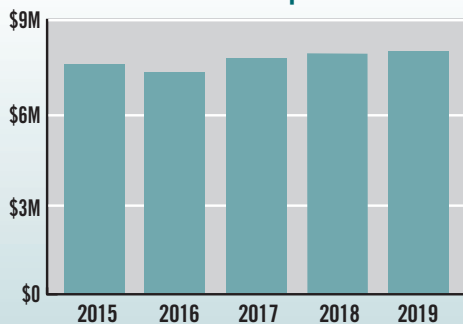
Expenditures on Electronic Materials



Collection Size



Total Collection Expenditures



The State of Public Libraries in Nebraska

According to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), there are 9,261 public libraries in the United States. In Nebraska, there are 273 public libraries plus 7 bookmobiles and 19 branch facilities. Five libraries in the state are combined with public schools and three are combined public/academic libraries. The 2019 *Public Libraries*

Survey in Nebraska was completed by 94% 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 173 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, the trend in Nebraska indicates an increase in the number of libraries with faster connections. Between 2018 and 2019, there was a 9.4% increase in libraries offering connection speeds in excess of 6 Mbps. While 113 Nebraska libraries meet or exceed the FCC definition of broadband (24 MBPS), there was a 45% increase in libraries meeting this standard in 2019 compared to 2018.

Overall circulation of material has increased slightly between 2018 and 2019 (5.3%), and uses of non-print resources have increased by 20%. About the same numbers of library programs were offered in 2019 (.7% increase from 2018), and attendance decreased 3.6% compared to 2018. Collections of video materials (physical) continued to increase, rising by 5.4% compared with 2018.

Other trends revealed by the results of the 2019 *Nebraska Public Libraries Survey* include the following:



- 176 Nebraska Public Libraries loaned eBooks – that's 64% of Nebraska public libraries. The population served by these libraries is 1,560,689 or 81% of all Nebraska residents.
- Number of total resources in Nebraska public libraries: 6,719,951 items (this does not include electronic items such as eBooks and Audiobooks that are leased)
- Number of Internet computers available to the public: 2,753
- Public libraries loaned 13,656,149 items in FY2019
- Public libraries that connect to their members through social networks: 81%
- Number of registered library users: 1,033,863
- Number of public library visits per year: 7,142,472
- Libraries providing wireless Internet access: 216, or 94% of reporting libraries
- Libraries delivered 36,223 programs, attended by 854,573 people
- Libraries with a website: 182 or 79% of reporting libraries
- Nebraskans paid only \$38 per capita in 2019 for public library service
- Thirteen Nebraska public libraries were recognized as "Star Libraries" in the 2019 *Library Journal Index of Public Library Service*.

(continued on page 11)

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

Selected Library Statistics, FY 2017 through FY 2019

	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	3-Yr Change
Registered Borrowers	1,089,599	1,106,944	1,033,863	-5.12%
Total Visits	7,705,428	7,441,203	7,142,472	-7.31%
Items Borrowed	12,397,754	12,968,382	13,656,149	10.15%
Items Borrowed per Capita	7.87	8.19	8.58	8.96%
Internet Computers for Public Use	2,875	2,817	2,753	-4.24%
Libraries Providing Free Wi-Fi	220	216	216	-1.82%
Number of Programs Offered	35,081	35,963	36,223	3.26%
Library Program Attendance	856,183	886,519	854,573	-0.19%
Number of Books in Collection	5,547,502	5,565,128	5,489,435	-1.05%
Number of Print Subscriptions	10,625	9,465	9,436	-11.19%
Number of Audio Materials	234,102	239,272	238,994	2.09%
Number of Video Materials	365,746	386,351	407,058	11.30%
Total Materials Held	6,739,329	6,787,454	6,719,951	-0.29%
Annual Hours Open	444,803	445,215	441,160	-0.82%
Legal Service Area Population	1,574,606	1,584,326	1,591,793	1.09%
Local Government Revenue	\$57,521,060	\$60,113,687	\$60,900,506	5.88%

NEBRASKA PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE EQUALIZERS

There are more than **7.1 million** annual visits to Nebraska Public Libraries (not including virtual and online library visits).ⁱ That's **4.5 visits per capita**, and more than **78 sellouts** at Memorial Stadium.

Nebraska Public Libraries are Equalizers

- **97%** offered **FREE** public Internet access
- **94%** offered **FREE** Wi-Fi
- **1,993,123** uses of Electronic Materials (eBooks and Audiobooks) in 2019
- **23,979** Children's Programs offered, with **681,969** attendees. **11,695** of these programs were focused on early (pre-K) literacy, with more than **250,728** attendees
- **3,311** Young Adult Programs offered, with **41,577** attendees
- **8,933** Adult Programs, with **131,027** attendeesⁱⁱ

Nebraska Public Libraries are Providing Access to New Technologies and Help!

- **61** reported having a makerspace
- **193** offer color printing
- **191** offer document scanning
- **22** offer 3D printing
- **48** offer vinyl cutting
- **79** offer tablet computers
- **67** offer access to early learning technologies
- **46** offer access to recreational games
- **28** offer access to robotics
- **47** offer access to smart technologies
- **35** offer access to developmental technologies

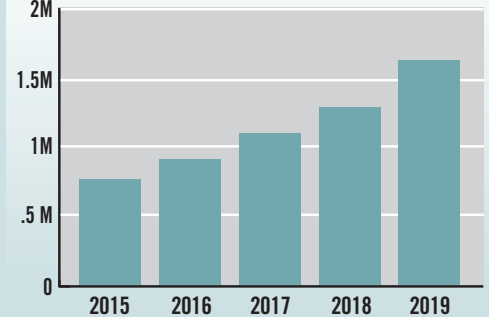
SOURCES:

ⁱ 2018-2019 Nebraska Public Library Survey (94% reporting)

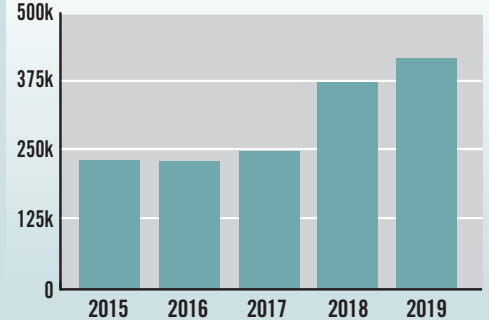
ⁱⁱ 2018-2019 Nebraska Public Library Survey (94% reporting)

Nebraska Public Library Statistical Survey

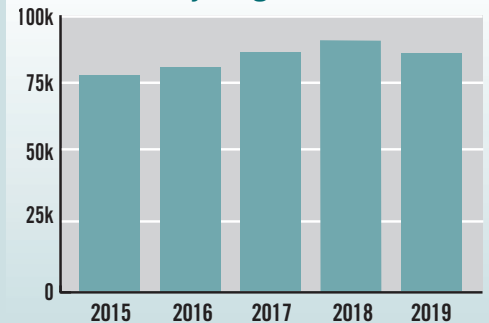
Circulation of Adult Downloadable Materials



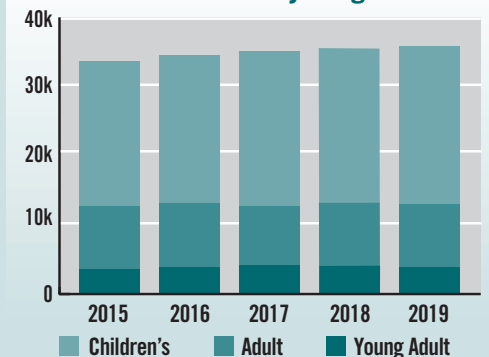
Circulation of Childrens Downloadable Materials



Total Library Program Attendance



Number of Library Programs



PIONEER

Commission Supports Pioneer Consortium

Pioneer, the open-source consortium of Nebraska libraries, continued to expand the cooperative catalog, as well as provide software improvements to facilitate the effectiveness of the catalog and cooperative activities among the members. During the biennium the consortium included twenty-four libraries, including libraries in Alma, Arapahoe, Atkinson, Axtell, Beatrice, Bennington, Blue Hill, Brunswick, Central City, David City, Dundy County, Franklin, Grand Island, Grant, Hildreth, Holdrege, McCook, St. Paul, South Sioux City, Stromsburg, Superior, Valley, Valparaiso, and Western Nebraska Community College. Libraries chose to join as an alternative to replacing current and stand-alone catalog systems with another proprietary system at greater cost.

The consortium employs the open source software Koha, a reasonably-priced Integrated Library System (ILS) that serves as the basis of a growing union catalog and could lead to a statewide catalog in the future. The consortium worked cooperatively with other library consortia across the country using the same software.

For more information see <https://nepioneer.com> or contact Christa Porter, contact information on page 8. For membership information contact Sara Lee, cc.library.ne@gmail.com, 308-946-2512.

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. ♦♦



Ever Available Information through NebraskAccess

NebraskAccess is the Nebraska Library Commission's public resource portal for Nebraskans leading to information databases, evaluated websites, government publications, and more. Timely information is provided through seasonal "Hot Topics" and "What's New" links, as well as "Nebraska FAQs" which are created when the Library Commission Information Services reference librarians receive the same Nebraska-related question more than once.

Free, 24/7, full-text access is available to thousands of magazines and journals, biographical information, and genealogical information. Nebraskans logged in outside of libraries with either a password from the library, their Nebraska driver's license, or State ID.

They used this service to complete work or school assignments, research health and medical topics, keep up on current events, trace family histories, make personal and business economic decisions, and explore hobbies and other topics of personal interest.

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, 900-307-2665.

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, 2018 and June 30, 2020:

Biography Reference Bank & Center	9,164,443
Consumer Health Complete	276,904
FirstSearch/WorldCat Discovery	3,397,551
Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia	3,439,148
GreenFILE	3,446,812
Legal Information Reference Center	2,942,052
MasterFILE Complete	6,272,073
MyHeritage	307,398
NoveList Plus	225,761
NoveList Plus K-8	60,231
Point of View Reference Center	2,774,126
Primary Search	3,358,786
Psychology and Behavioral Sciences	3,582,465
Science & Technology Collection	3,453,466
Small Business Reference Center	2,505,052
Topic Overviews K-5	79,028
Topic Overviews Public Libraries	247,190

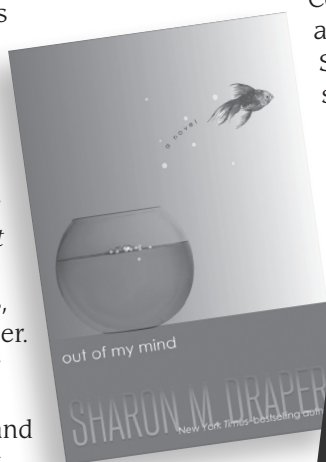
Support for Children's Services a Priority

The Nebraska Library Commission continued to support library services to children and young adults. During FY 2018-19 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 across the state. The Library Commission supplied manuals, booklists, and material on the Library Commission website to complement the themes, 2019: "A Universe of Stories" and 2020: "Imagine Your Story." As a member of the Collaborative Summer Library Program consortium (consisting of representation from all fifty states, the District of Columbia and five territories), the Library Commission contributed funding for development and distribution of Summer Reading Program materials to libraries across Nebraska, see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/youth/summerreading>. Children and teens also participated in the Summer Reading Program through the Library Commission's Talking Book and Braille Service.

The Nebraska Library Commission and Regional Library Systems invited children and teens across the state to read and discuss the same book, providing Book Club Kits to facilitate group reading and activities. The 2020 **One Book for Nebraska Kids** was *Out of My Mind* (Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2010) by Sharon M. Draper. The 2020 **One Book for Nebraska Teens** was *Girl, Stolen* (Henry Holt and Co., 2010) by April Henry. See <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/youth/OBOK> for information and activities.



\$41,754 was awarded to public libraries in Youth Grants for Excellence. Funded projects provided early literacy programming, robotics technology and programming, STEM/STEAM-focused materials for activities for children and families, coding clubs, programming for elementary school children, establishing a Teen/YA Advisory Board, 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.



Commission Provides Interlibrary Loan Service

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

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

School libraries used ILL services to obtain books in languages other than English, to help teach students whose first language is not English. School libraries also used ILL services to obtain multiple copies of books for classes, as well as books for individual research papers. Home-school families use ILL services through their public libraries to give their children as many

(continued on page 16)

Better Broadband for Nebraska Libraries




Two developments occurred in 2018 that precipitated the formal launch of the Better Broadband for Nebraska Libraries project at the Nebraska Library Commission (NLC). One was the inclusion in the LSTA 5-Year Plan 2018-2022 of target internet speeds for Nebraska Public Libraries of 25 Mbps or higher. The plan included wording that the NLC will facilitate libraries' ability to install, enhance, and sustain effective broadband connectivity for customers to ensure the availability of high-speed broadband for libraries to meet the digital demands of the communities. The second development LB 994, introduced by Senator Curt Friesen, passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Ricketts on April 17, 2018, created the Nebraska Rural Broadband Task Force (RBTF). LB 994 charges the task force with reviewing "issues relating to availability, adoption, and affordability of broadband services in rural areas of Nebraska."

At the December 2018 meeting of the RBTF, Rod Wagner, director of the NLC, provided information on broadband availability in libraries in communities with populations less than 2,500 people. He stated most have service of less than 10 Mbps. He said that Nebraska public libraries, as community anchor institutions and homework hotspots could play a vital

role in providing broadband access in rural communities. During ongoing RBTF and Subcommittee meetings the NLC was asked to contribute personal stories about community libraries difficulty providing adequate broadband services at their libraries. In addition, data aggregated from the 2018 and 2019 Nebraska Annual Library Surveys was shared specifically with both the RBTF Homework Gap, and Nebraska Universal Services Fund (NUSF) Subcommittees to raise awareness of the NLC's commitment to help libraries increase their internet/broadband speeds. One of the results of NLC's engagement with the RBTF and its Subcommittees has been a four-year, one million dollar matching grant program funded by Nebraska Public Service Commission's NUSF funds in May of 2019. The grant provides matching funds for fiber construction to Nebraska public libraries.


To assist with the increased interest of libraries to take advantage of this new funding source for fiber construction a NLC job description of an existing vacant position was modified and filled in December 2019. This position focuses on technical assistance for libraries to apply for the Federal E-rate program and the NUSF Matching Fund Program.

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

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 library staff members. The Commission sponsored or underwrote 490 events, which were attended by 889 Nebraska library staff and board members during the fiscal year. These training activities included the annual "Big Talk from Small Libraries" online conference,

thirty-six Basic Skills courses, *NCompass Live* webinars, and training for the Cataloging Certificate program. Training also included a new trial subscription to Niche Academy which is being explored for the creation and expanded offerings of self-paced learning 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. 

E-rate Discounts Support Technology Access

Nebraska schools and libraries received over \$21.7 million in discounts on telecommunications costs during E-rate Funding Years 2018 and 2019 (July 1, 2018-June 30, 2020) through the Universal Service Fund (E-rate) program.

Nebraska libraries were awarded \$403,473 in discounts. Discounts ranged from 10 to 90 percent, with 67 of the state's public libraries participating, including the Regional Library Systems. All 67 libraries were awarded Internet Services discounts, 6 libraries were awarded Internal Connections discounts (services providing high-speed connectivity throughout the library building), and 3 libraries were awarded Voice Services discounts.

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

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



\$69,300 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 \$69,300 to fifty 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:

- planned and implemented programs such as summer reading programs for all ages, storytime sessions, book discussions, and teen/tween activities;
- facilitated partnerships with the Neihardt State Historic Site, Mid-Plains Community College, and YMCA;
- organized Makerspaces and Maker Clubs, as well as other STEAM learning activities;
- worked with Summer Youth Outreach Services to provide Bookmobile services at locations throughout the city and county;

- created book displays, bulletin boards, and craft activities;
- created a Local History Collection;
- assisted with outreach events outside the library;
- updated, designed, and coded the library's website and social media sites (Facebook, Pinterest, blogs, etc.);
- assisted with circulation activities, book selection, and collection management;
- taught technology classes and assisted library customers with electronic devices, research, and Coding Clubs;
- created flyers, newsletters, newspaper articles, and other promotional materials; and
- assisted with verbal and written Spanish/English communication.

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

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



Children in classroom

Source: The Durham Museum
<http://memories.ne.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/dwhm/id/271/rec/11>



Evening citizenship class, Hayward School

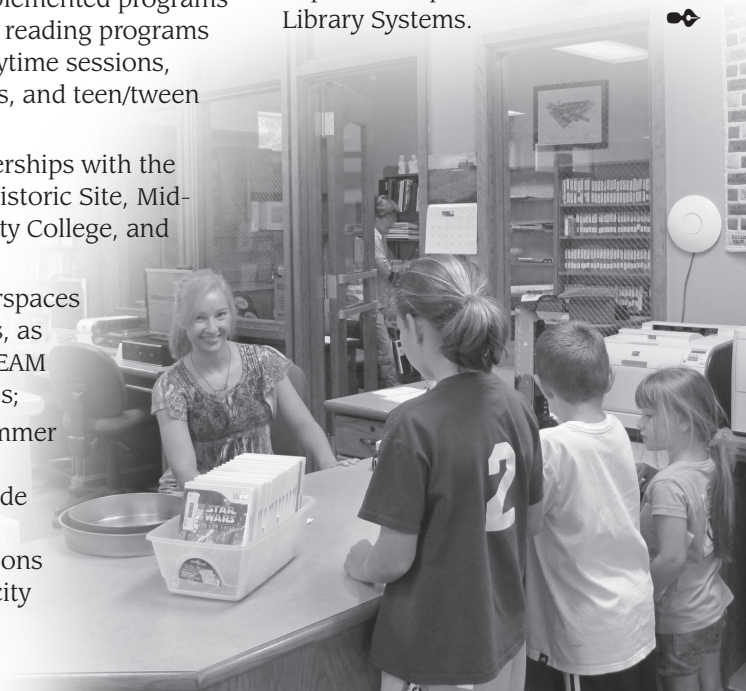
Source: Lincoln Public Schools
<http://memories.ne.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/lps/id/81/rec/2>

Nebraska Memories

Nebraska Memories offered 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>.

While working at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, several staff members transcribed text documents to make them searchable within the database.

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



Library Commission Hosts Center for the Book

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

Celebration of Nebraska Books. Each fall, the Celebration featured the current One Book One Nebraska book selection; honored winners of the Jane Geske, Mildred Bennet, and Nebraska Book Awards; and announced the choice for next year's One Book One Nebraska reading program. Winning authors read from their books and signed copies. The Nebraska Center for the Book Annual meeting was held just prior to the celebration, with a reception concluding the events.

Jane Geske Award. The Center for the Book selected **Humanities Nebraska Prime Time Family Reading Time** in 2018 and **Nebraska warrior Writers** in 2019. 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. In 2019 the Presidential Award for Literacy was presented to Laureen Reidesel.

Mildred Bennett Award. The award was presented to **Mary Jo Ryan** in 2018 and **Sharon Bishop** in 2019. 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 Pete Ricketts for their letters to authors that influenced their lives. In this national reading/writing contest, young readers wrote letters to an author explaining how his or her work changed their way of thinking about the world or themselves. For a complete list of winners, see <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/LAL.html>.

National Book Festival. Library Commission staff members Tessa Terry and Devra Dragos were joined by volunteers from the Junior League of Washington, DC, to staff the Nebraska exhibit at the Pavilion of the States in Washington, DC. Each year they shared information about Nebraska literature with more than 5,000 visitors.

Nebraska Book Awards. Nebraska books were honored in the categories of anthology, 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>.

Nebraska Book Festival. The Nebraska Book Festival returned to Lincoln in Fall 2018 and 2019 with author presentations, vendors, Writing

and Publishing Workshops, and family programming. Presenters included several poets from the 2018 One Book One Nebraska selection *Nebraska Presence: An Anthology of Nebraska Poetry* and 2019 OBON author Ted Genoways.

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 2019 One Book One Nebraska

selection was *This Blessed Earth: A Year in the Life of an American Family Farm* by Ted Genoways. The 2020 One Book One Nebraska selection was *All the Gallant Men: An American Sailor's Firsthand Account of Pearl Harbor* by Donald Stratton with Ken Gire. 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 Provides Interlibrary Loan Service (continued from page 13)

educational options as possible. The Library Commission also provided ILL services for Nebraska state government agencies, which allowed them more flexibility with their journal subscription decisions, while still ensuring access to up-to-the minute, mission-critical information. State

agencies used ILL services to keep up on the latest general research and recent discoveries in their field, and to do their own research for a variety of proposals, projects, and problem solving. Advances in electronic article-sharing (Article Exchange) helped libraries and agencies receive

articles more quickly and streamlined permissions and licensing concerns.

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

Nebraska Library Commission and the 2020 Census

The Nebraska Library Commission helped get information out to libraries on the 2020 Census.

Beginning in May 2019, the Commission has been playing a key role in keeping Nebraska libraries informed

on how the 2020 Census will affect their libraries and communities, and how librarians could be involved. As the Census was conducted primarily online for the first time, libraries' technology resources, and library staff would likely need to assist people in participating in the Census.

Libraries AND THE 2020 Census



The 2020 Census also presented an opportunity to increase public awareness on the uses of Census data, and to best position libraries to support their communities to ensure that

libraries are informed and represented in the policy discussions

and planning process. NLC recognizes the roles libraries play in this vital civic effort. For more information contact Mary Sauers, Nebraska Library Commission Government Information Services Librarian, mary.sauers@nebraska.gov, 402-471-4017, 800-307-2665



New Digital Literacy Course

This Digital Literacy Course is designed to help library staff build a digital literacy plan that will meet the needs of their community. Digital skills are necessary at home, at work, and everywhere in between. The skills include everything from finding a job online to connecting with friends, family, and potential business opportunities through social media. In this course, we will dive into examples of the problems our communities face everyday, then explore the digital skills necessary to get the job done. With an idea of the necessary skills, library staff can determine the best information resources and assistance necessary for library customers to learn those skills.

For example, the job searcher must have the ability to:

1. Access a device connected to the internet (ie. computer, tablet, etc.)
2. Turn on, navigate, and use the device, keyboard & mouse
3. Access and use an internet browser
4. Assess quality websites and information resources
5. Fill in forms, save files, and upload documents
6. Use a word processor (ie. Microsoft Word or Google Docs)
7. Access and use email to communicate with potential employer

This course will provide a planning guide, resource options, and the opportunity to practice digital skills reference interview techniques.



License Allows Libraries to Show Movies

Public viewing of motion pictures in Nebraska public libraries was made possible by the statewide license funded by the Nebraska Library Commission through Movie Licensing USA, at a cost of \$42,928 for FY2018/FY2019. 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/motion_picture.aspx or contact Susan Knisely, contact on page 6.



Bigger and Better – Book Clubs Remain Strong in Nebraska

In the past two years, we began weeding our book club collection to make room for more current and popular titles. We purchased several titles to support Black Lives conversations. We added several Golden Sower winners and nomination titles that have been very popular with school librarians who have been grateful to have access due to budget constraints. We also continue to receive gifts from public and school libraries for which we are always grateful. Our new Read-Alike category has been helpful in diverting attention to other worthy selections while our popular titles remain in constant circulation with reservations well into 2021. While our circulation dipped in the past several months, communities and schools are still borrowing book clubs as a way to discuss important issues and to maintain a community conversation when members are all reading the same title. Creative solutions for meeting have emerged to overcome limitations for gathering indoors. In FY 2018 we loaned 15,267 book club copies to libraries and schools and in FY 2019 we loaned 16,806 copies. The desire to read and discuss books as a group remains a priority for librarians and teachers.

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



Library Commission Supports Regional Library Systems

The Library Commission provided \$828,561 in continuing financial support for Nebraska's Regional Library Systems during the Biennium. These nonprofit organizations, governed by boards representative of libraries and citizens in the region, worked to improve library services through cooperation among all types of libraries and school media centers within each system area.

Each system offered a variety of services including newsletters, library staff meetings, training resources, workshops, consulting, and planning assistance. With the support of the Library Commission, the Regional Library Systems provided to area libraries:

Resource Sharing. A wide variety of reading and learning formats were loaned or centrally provided.

Consultation. System directors consulted with member libraries in person, in print, and digitally.

Continuing Education (CE). The Systems coordinated training for Nebraska library staff and volunteers.

System Highlights included:

Central Plains Library System (CPLS)

- Consulted via telephone, email, and in person on many topics including E-Rate, programming, policies, certification of staff and accreditation of libraries, cataloging, weeding, and best practices for libraries during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Facilitated a group purchase of 250+ puppets, saving libraries 50% of the retail cost. Also arranged group purchases of 1,300 "stuff-your-own" characters that coordinated with the Summer Reading Program, 13 Sphero robots, and 30 Blocks Rock! Games at substantial savings for libraries across the state.
- Coordinated workshops for school and public librarians about makerspaces; book repair; e-rate discounts; completing the Public Library Survey on Bibliostat; Summer Reading Program; customer service;

library accreditation; serving the aging population; and providing S.T.E.A.M. programming.

- Participated in cooperative projects including Youth Services Retreats, School Librarians in the Digital Age, and Golden Sower Reading Day.
- Responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by establishing a Reader Zone (online tracking system for reading) account that was available to all Nebraska Libraries for the summer of 2020; held 13 informational Thursday Morning Zoom Meetings for 25-55 participants each week; provided a list of free resources that was updated weekly, and maintained a spreadsheet of System member libraries' status and services.
- Cleaned 381 audio, video, and game discs and repaired 40 book bindings to keep items circulating in member libraries' collections.
- Circulated 148 professional journals and provided 59 journal articles through electronic delivery.
- Circulated 1,399 audiobooks, 113 book kits, 12 Breakout EDU kits, and 52 S.T.E.A.M. kits, with makerspace equipment being used 46 times, cutting machines and dies being used 39 times and button machines being used 38 times.
- Distributed 9 newsletters.
- Maintained a website, a Pinterest account, and a Library Thing account for member libraries' information.
- Awarded \$7,830 in scholarships.

Southeast Library System (SELS)

- Sponsored or cosponsored 32 continuing education sessions for a total of 2805 CE hours earned by 580 attendees
- Conducted 61 on-site training or consulting appointments with member libraries, providing orientation to new library directors on resources available to them through the system and the Commission, weeding assistance, what to look for when purchasing or changing integrated library systems,

training for boards on topics such as library governance, assistance to foundations of friends groups, help with certification and accreditation, and policy assistance.

- Published 24 issues of the newsletter, with articles and updates from more than 35 libraries of all types.
- Supplied 55 member libraries with more than 1293 pages of professional literature on librarianship, municipal activities, and non-profit planning.
- Provided 45 book kits to public, school, academic and institutional libraries.

Three Rivers Library System (TRLS)

- The System Peer Coordinator model has been in temporary hiatus. Rosa Schmidt from the Oakland Public Library accepted a position on the TRLS board as Vice President, and Tammi Thiem accepted the position of Executive Director for TRLS. Therefore, only Lisa Macke from the Creighton Public Library remains as an active SPC. She is an asset to the new TRLS Director during this transition period, and the model will regain focus after the pandemic.
- Library professionals in the TRLS region were awarded \$11,399 in continuing education grants. These events included the Nebraska Library Association/Nebraska School Library Association/Iowa Library Association Joint Conference, the 25th Annual Youth Services Retreat, the Public Library Association Conference, Computers in Libraries Conference, Equity in Action Online Training, the COSUGI users group training Harwood Public Innovators Lab for Libraries, the PLA Social Justice and public libraries symposium, and the Young Adult Library Services Association's Young Adult Services Symposium.
- TRLS offers the use of 90 book sets and 16 STEAM kits for the use of system school and public libraries. There were 37 library members that used this lending option, with 573 copies of books and two STEAM kits distributed.
- The TRLS newsletter is distributed six times a year and includes many key communication elements. The

(continued on page 19)

Commission Supports Regional Library Systems *(continued)*

newsletter highlights all training and learning options, grant opportunities, and all other relevant information. This is also an excellent platform for the local libraries to spotlight programs and events that they provide. These average about 140 views per issue.

- The monthly TRLS Communication Meetings held via Zoom turned into weekly events due to the pandemic. These meetings allow participants to share ideas, and they have the opportunity to learn from one another. This is also a great chance for them to gather information about events in the system. These are recorded and saved as unlisted videos on the TRLS YouTube channel, and the links are shared with the region's libraries.
- Ten in-person workshops were offered by the Three Rivers Library System. These included two Summer Reading Workshops, STEM in the Library Workshop, Wordpress Skills Workshop with the Nebraska Library Commission,

Customer Service Workshop, E-Rate Workshop with the Nebraska Library Commission, and two Transforming Teen Services: Computational Thinking, Connected Learning, and YOU! by Laura England-Biggs and Sally Snyder.

- The professional staff meets with directors and library board on several topics including developing foundations from the ground up, reviving and recovering a foundation. Other issues with directors included budgeting and library management.
- A Facebook group for public librarians and a Facebook group for school librarians were started to encourage sharing information. The goal of these is to promote interactive platforms that allows everyone to garner the same results when seeking information.

Western Library System (WLS)

- WLS communicated with library staff with; 12 issues of the Western Sun promoting the libraries in the System and providing information on libraries

and library trends regionally, state-wide and nationally; E-mail, phone, Zoom calls and in-person visits.

- Travelled 18,055.4 miles visiting locations and attending workshops and meetings. Travel was curtailed to a degree in 2020, due to Covid-19.
- The Board of Trustees met 10 times. The Board Manual was revised and expanded.
- Riggs and Associates CPAs performed two annual Independent Accountant's Compilation Report with Statements of Financial Positions.
- Circulation Activities included: 80 loans of the DVD-Blu-ray collection before it was discontinued on April 2, 2019: thirteen book kits; routed American Libraries, Booklist, Library Journal and School Library Journals. Makerspace equipment as requested.
- 661 DVD's were cleaned by the WLS Office.
- The Cover One Book Repair System was used 52 times.

Commission Makes Government Information Accessible

The Nebraska Library Commission Government Information team has had a very busy 2 years. The Nebraska Publications Clearinghouse, established by the Legislature in 1972 to collect all Nebraska state agency publications released to the public, now includes more than 180,000 items in paper and over 16,000 items online—with over 1,800 items added each year. The Federal Documents collection now includes more than 47,000 items, with almost 600 of those accessible online. All together, our state and federal documents are accessed online an average of over 10,000 items per month.

The biggest government information project of 2019 was the Nebraska Public Documents. In March 2019, Lori Sailors, one of our government information staff assistants, began to rescan all of the documents from the Nebraska Public Documents website. This website, originally created in 2007 and hosted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, is a database for Nebraska

state agency annual reports published from the 1870's through 1956. Only the first half of the original project was completed, so Lori also scanned the remaining documents to fill in the gaps, and converted every document into searchable .pdf format. In 10 months, Lori scanned 5,155 documents and 520,746 pages. The new website will be hosted by the Library Commission, and will allow for enhanced keyword searching, downloading, saving, and printing. After completing this project, Lori retired in January of 2020 after 40 years with the Library Commission. Her hard work and dedication to government documents services will be visible and appreciated for many years into the future.

The largest government information project for 2020 has been the Decennial Census. The process of conducting the Census has grown exponentially, along with the population of the U.S. This year, for the first time, the Census allowed for responding ONLINE, along

with mail, telephone, and in-person responses. The Library Commission partnered with the Census Bureau, and got the word out to libraries and the public through blog posts, emails, posters, and webinars. As a result, Nebraska helped bring in a 99.9% response rate nationwide, which is an extraordinary achievement.

All of these projects are of course, in addition to our day-to-day operations, reference questions, and research projects. For more information about our Government Information Services please visit <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/govdocs/resources.aspx>. We can be reached at nlc.ask@nebraska.gov, 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665 ; Mary Sauers, Nebraska Library Commission Government Information Services Librarian, mary.sauers@nebraska.gov, 402-471-4017; or Bonnie Henzel, Nebraska Library Commission State Documents Staff Assistant, bonnie.henzel@nebraska.gov, 402-471-6285.



Nebraska Library Commission

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Nebraska Library Commission Highlights and Statistics July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2020

- ☞ The Nebraska Library Commission circulated **33,460** items, with book club circulation representing **32,073**.
- ☞ The Library Commission served **1,643** customers onsite.
- ☞ The Library Commission loaned **141** items to other libraries.
- ☞ The Library Commission borrowed **6,930** items from other libraries for Nebraska library customers.
- ☞ Nebraska OverDrive Libraries Consortium library customers (from **173** participating libraries) downloaded **747,037** audiobooks and **862,185** eBooks.
- ☞ The Library Commission's Nebraska Memories collection grew to **11,487** images and audio files.
- ☞ **4,440** state documents were added to the Library Commission's collection, bringing the total to **180,605**. These state documents were accessed electronically **265,958** times.
- ☞ **953** federal documents were added to the Library Commission's collection, bringing the total to **46,362**.
- ☞ Nebraska Library Commission staff and guest trainers broadcast **99** *NCompass Live* sessions, with **2,256** attending live and thousands viewing archived recordings.
- ☞ The Nebraska Library Commission hosted and supported websites for **120** public libraries and **4** Regional Library Systems.
- ☞ The Nebraska Library Commission's Talking Book & Braille Service circulated **217,149** talking books, magazines, Braille materials, and videos with audio description to more than **3,056** customers.
- ☞ The Talking Book & Braille Service recorded **1,044** magazine issues and **7** books.
- ☞ The Talking Book & Braille Service duplicated **39,615** digital cartridges.
- ☞ Talking Book & Braille Service customers downloaded **46,727** audio books **1,234** audio magazines, **1,073** Braille materials, and **351** music instruction pieces.
- ☞ Nebraska library staff and board members attended one or more of **490** continuing education classes sponsored or underwritten by the Nebraska Library Commission, with **889** total attendees during the fiscal year. This includes participates in one or more of the **36** online Basic Skills sessions provided by the Commission.
- ☞ **968** library staff participated in the Nebraska Librarian Certification program, up from **934** in FY 2017-18.
- ☞ **180** public libraries are currently accredited, with **124** of them accredited or reaccredited during FY2018/FY2019.

