

## Nebraska Library Commission Report – April 2021

- **NLC Office Update**

As of Monday, July 6, our offices and the TBBS are open by appointment only. Appointments can be made by calling 402/471-2045, 800/307-2665, or emailing [nlc.ask@nebraska.gov](mailto:nlc.ask@nebraska.gov). Staff will be wearing masks to protect you, and we ask that you wear a mask to protect staff. If you do not have a mask, one will be provided. Use of hand sanitizer is required of all visitors upon entry. Public restrooms and water fountains will be unavailable to visitors so please plan accordingly. All pickups and drop offs can be transacted at a designated table near the front door. We will still be available by phone, email, and fax. Our passport service remains suspended – we are not making any appointments during this time. Many of our staff are still working from home, so if you reach our voicemail please leave your name, number, and question and we will get back with you as soon as possible.

- **COVID-19 and Pandemic Resources for Libraries**

If your library is looking for information on pandemic preparedness, including the current COVID-19 outbreak, check out our page of resources: <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/libman/pandemic.aspx> We have pinned a blog post on our site: <http://nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/2020/03/10/covid-19-and-pandemic-resources-for-libraries/> We are maintaining a list of library closings, accommodations, and openings. Please contact [nlc.ask@nebraska.gov](mailto:nlc.ask@nebraska.gov) to let us know of updates at your library. We are always updating our pages, so if you notice that we are missing a crucial resource, please reach out to us.

- **Biennium Budget Request**

The legislature's appropriations committee presented its 2021-2023 state biennium budget recommendations to the full legislature on April 1. The appropriations committee's preliminary budget included state funds matching the Library Commission's budget request for regional library systems (a 2.75% overall increase each year of the 2021-23 biennium). However, the committee's recommendations for database subscription fees (NebraskAccess) and ebook and audiobook purchases (Nebraska OverDrive Libraries consortium and the Lincoln, Omaha, and Ralston libraries) were below the Commission's request. Fortunately, the committee included the Library Commission's full request amount in its budget proposal. The legislature will debate and approve appropriations bills during the remaining months of the legislative session.

- **LSTA Appropriations**

The Institute of Museum and Library Services sent information about state allocations under the LSTA Grants to States program. The Nebraska Library Commission grant award for the current federal fiscal year is \$1,518,108, a 4.3% increase over last year's grant. In mid-December, Congress enacted appropriations for federal agencies and programs through the end of the federal fiscal year (September 30, 2021). Appropriations included a \$2 million increase in the Library Services and Technology Act Grants to States program, increasing the base amount for states and U.S. territories.

- **Build America's Libraries Act**

From the American Library Association – Introduced on January 28, 2021 by Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI), along with Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Ron Wyden (D-OR), the Build America's Libraries Act would fund upgrades to the nation's library infrastructure to address challenges such as natural disasters, COVID-19, broadband capacity, environmental hazards, and accessibility barriers. This legislation would assist in supporting new and improved library facilities in underserved communities. The proposal would provide one-time appropriations for funding through state library agencies with three years for expenditures. Each state would receive a minimum amount of \$10 million. The total available to each state would be determined on the basis of state populations.

- **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**

- Emergency Connectivity Fund – \$7.2 billion for E-rate to address the homework gap, but connecting students, teachers, and library patrons to broadband connections off-campus. The funding will reimburse 100 percent of the costs associated with advanced telecommunications and information services, and eligible equipment, which includes wi-fi hotspots, modems, routers, and connected devices – laptops and tablets. The FCC is accepting comments on the application process through April 23.
- IMLS received \$200 million in ARPA funds for libraries and museums, of which \$178 million will go to the Grants to States program. It will be divided among states and territories based on population, with a \$2 million base for states. The NLC will be receiving \$2.4 million. We are working on how we will use that funding, keeping to the IMLS instructions on the use of these funds:
  - a. First, to enable libraries to reach residents with internet hotspots, accessible Wi-Fi, and other digital inclusion efforts, particularly in support of education, health, and workforce development needs.
  - b. Second, to provide rapid emergency relief to libraries across the country, allowing them to safely respond to the pandemic and implement public health protocols;
  - c. Third, to support library services that meet the needs of communities throughout the U.S., including costs such as personnel, technology, training, materials, supplies, equipment, and associated indirect costs; and
  - d. With respect to (a), (b), or (c), reach tribal and museum partners best positioned to assist with pandemic response efforts, in addition to traditionally eligible library entities, where appropriate.

- **Library Innovation Studios Project**

Installation and training for the LIS project has been done in Randolph, McCook, and La Vista. Bellevue is being done this month. The number of people being trained is greatly reduced. So more equipment videos and recorded webinars have been produced for library staff and volunteers to watch.

- **NLC Grants for 2021**

Youth Grants for Excellence, Continuing Education/Training, and Internship Grants have been awarded for 2021.

Youth Grants for Excellence: \$18,500 to 22 libraries.

Continuing Education/Training: \$14,348 to 13 applicants.

Internship: \$25,000 to 27 libraries, including 3 for Library Innovation Studio participants. In addition, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 5 libraries (including 4 Lincoln City Libraries branches) were unable to complete their 2020 Internship Grants, so they were given extensions to complete their Internships in 2021.

Due to budget limitations, we have decided not to offer Library Improvement Grants in 2021. They will be available for 2022 – applications will open in Fall 2021.

- **Big Talk From Small Libraries 2021**

The 10<sup>th</sup> annual Big Talk From Small Libraries conference was held on Friday, February 26, 2021 and was a huge success. There were 989 pre-registrations and 670 logins throughout the day. However, there were multiple locations hosting groups, and when we add in those numbers, our total attendance this year was 701. This was the highest registration and attendance in the 10 year history of the conference! Recordings of all sessions have been posted to the conference website. The next conference will be on February 25, 2022. For details go to <http://nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/bigtalk/>

- **NCompass Live Schedule**

For more detailed information and registration go to <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/NCompassLive/>

- April 14 - Easier Than It Looks: A Simple Approach to Strategic Planning
- April 21 - The Nebraska Book Awards Competition: Honoring Nebraska Literature
- April 28 - Pretty Sweet Tech - Computers in Libraries 2021: Highlights, Tips, & Tricks
- May 5 - Adult Book Clubs During the Pandemic: Reports from the Field
- May 19 - Going Solo in the Library

- **Basic Skills 2021 Schedule**

Class	Start Date	Instructor
Communication	1/1 - 1/31	Self- paced
Customer Service	2/8 - 2/19	Christa
Library Governance	3/8 - 3/19	Denise
Library Technology	3/22 – 4/2	Holli
Introduction to Cataloging (Organization of Materials)	4/1 – 4/30	Self-paced
Library Finance	4/19 – 4/30	Holli
Intellectual Freedom/Core Values	5/10 – 5/21	Holli
Readers’ Advisory	6/7 – 6/18	Sharon

Reference	7/5 - 7/16	Christa
Library Policy	7/26 - 8/6	Sharon
Collection Management	8/16 - 8/27	Denise
Programing & Outreach	8/30 - 9/10	Christa
Community & Library	9/20 – 10/1	Sam
Management/Supervision	10/18 – 10/29	Holli
Leadership	11/1 - 11/12	Holli
Library Service to Children & Teens	11/29 - 12/10	Sally