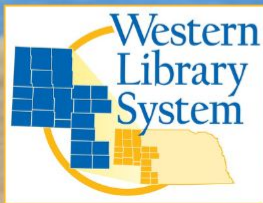


October 2025

The Western Sun

The Western Library System's Monthly Newsletter



Joint Youth Services Retreat Wrap-Up

I attended the [31st Annual Joint Youth Services Retreat](#) on August 28–29 at the picturesque Camp Carol Joy Holling in Ashland. Hosted by Nebraska's Regional Library Systems, the retreat promotes excellence in library services for children and youth.

It was inspiring to learn about the creative and impactful programs libraries are offering to young people across the state. Keynote speakers Mitchell Roush and Dr. Suzi Yokley-Busby shared powerful messages about building hope and sharing your library's story.



A big thank-you to Scott Childers and Todd Schlechte from the Southeast Library System, and Tammi Thiem from the Three Rivers Library System, for inviting me and making me feel so welcome.

The Western Library System is happy to support anyone interested in attending next year's retreat! You can apply for a WLS scholarship to cover the cost of attendance. You can also carpool with us in the system's vehicle if you need travel assistance.

-Ethan Nelson, WLS Director

ESU Media Specialist Days

The Western Library System was invited to present at ESU 13 and ESU 16 for their Media Specialist and Librarian Training Days! Richard Landreth, WLS Assistant Director, and I had the opportunity to



talk about one of my favorite topics—**weeding!**

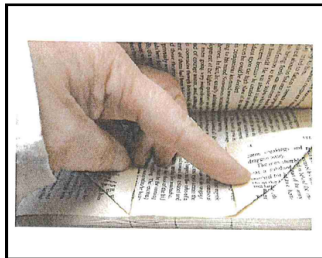
Did you know that the Western Library System offers on-site support for weeding projects and collection evaluations? We would be happy to visit your school's library and help refresh your collection—just reach out to schedule a visit!

Craft Corner



Here's a quick and easy Jack O' Lantern book craft. Thanks to Cheryl Hamilton from Western Nebraska Community College for designing this craft. Stop by the Scottsbluff WNCC Library in October to make a Jack O' Lantern book craft!

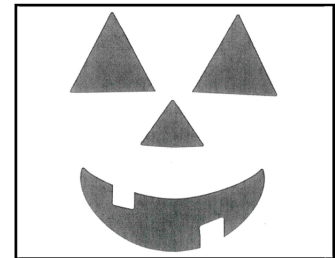
1. Using a paperback book, measure halfway from top to bottom.



2. Measure an inch on each side of the middle and mark these two measurements.



3. Fold each corner along the marks. You can use the word lines as guides.



4. After folding the entire book, you can cut a Jack O' Lantern face out of black paper and tape it on the book. You can also draw it with a black marker.

Talking Book and Braille Service Digital Marketing Kit

The Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS) is excited to announce that our digital marketing kit is now available!

Our kit is in the form of a PDF, which contains customizable Canva templates, ready-to-use social media copy, and general promotional



content. This is the first installment of our digital marketing materials, created to help libraries across the state spread the word about TBBS to eligible patrons.

For those who haven't heard of us, TBBS provides free audiobooks, audio magazines, and braille materials to Nebraskans with print disabilities. Eligibility is broader than many realize and includes:

- Visual impairments such as glaucoma, macular degeneration, or cataracts
- Physical conditions such as arthritis, traumatic brain injuries, or stroke
- Reading disabilities such as dyslexia or specific reading comprehension deficit

TBBS offers access to a collection of over 300,000 titles, with no waitlists for audiobook checkouts. Much of our collection contains books that public library patrons will find enjoyable. Our goal is to support libraries in increasing accessibility and connecting more Nebraskans with the joy of reading.

Libraries play a vital role in connecting eligible patrons to our service. In addition to using the marketing materials provided in our kit, we encourage you to sign up for a TBBS Demo Account. This lets your library receive a sample Talking Book machine and gain access to our BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) online platform to demonstrate the service in person.

Please fill out the application for a Demo Account here: bit.ly/tbbsdemoapp

If you have any questions about our service or the digital marketing kit, please reach out to nlc.talkingbook@nebraska.gov, or call us at 402-471-4038 or our toll free number 800-742-7691.

Marketing Kit

This digital marketing kit provides resources to help promote the Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS), a free service that offers audiobooks, audio magazines, and braille to individuals with visual or physical impairments, or reading disabilities.

Included in this kit are links to our Canva-based social media graphics, promotional photos, and TBBS logos. Sample social media captions that libraries and partner organizations can use to promote the service are also included.

- The link to the Canva template of square, banner, and story graphics is located here: <https://bit.ly/tbbsgraphics>.
- The link to the Canva template showcasing TBBS promotional photos is located here: <https://bit.ly/tbbsphotos>.
- The link to the Canva template featuring the TBBS logo in multiple color options is located here: <https://bit.ly/tbbslogos>.

Below is some copy that can be used for social media captions when posting about TBBS. Feel free to swap wordage to make the caption work best for you, but please try to maintain the general message:

- Did you know? Nebraskans who find it difficult to read print materials because of blindness, low vision, or a reading disability can receive FREE audiobooks and braille materials through the Nebraska Library Commission's Talking Book and Braille Service! Learn more at www.bit.ly/tbbsweb #Accessibility #Audiobooks #Braille #LibraryService
- Reading is for Everyone! That's why we're proud to promote the Talking Book and Braille Service from the Nebraska Library Commission! This free service provides audio and braille

books to those who are blind, have low vision, cannot comfortably hold a book, or have a reading disability. Stop by your local library to learn more and apply! #Accessibility #TalkingBook #Audiobooks #LibraryService

- If you or someone you know has trouble reading standard print due to a visual, physical, or reading disability, the Talking Book and Braille Service offers thousands of free audiobooks—delivered right to your door or downloaded straight to your smartphone or iPad! Learn more and apply today at www.bit.ly/tbbsweb.

If you have any feedback on this digital marketing kit, or suggestions for future kits, please fill out this form: bit.ly/digitalkitsurvey.

If you have any questions about the digital marketing kit, trouble with accessing links, or would like to request more promotional material, please reach out to Miranda Shreves by email at miranda.shreves@nebraska.gov or call at 402-471-4033.



TBBS Digital Marketing Kit

Download

113.6 KB

Call for Speakers for Big Talk From Small Libraries 2026



The Call for Speakers for [Big Talk From Small Libraries 2026](http://nclcblogs.nebraska.gov/bigtalk/call-for-speakers/) is now open!

Submit your proposal by Friday, December 12, 2025 at

<http://nclcblogs.nebraska.gov/bigtalk/call-for-speakers/>

This free one-day online conference is tailored for staff from small libraries; the smaller the better!

Small libraries of all types - public, academic, school, museum, special, etc. - are encouraged to [submit a proposal](#).

We're looking for seven 50-minute presentations and four 10-minute "lightning round" presentations.

Big Talk From Small Libraries 2026 will be held on Friday, February 27, 2026 between 8:45 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (CT) via the GoTo Webinar online meeting service. Speakers will present their programs from their own desktops. The schedule will accommodate speakers' time-zones.

2025 NLA Conference: Keynote Spotlight

Allen Eskens will deliver the morning keynote session at the 2025 Nebraska Library Association conference on Wednesday (10/22) at 10:00am! He will also join us for a discussion of his book "The Life We Bury" during the "One Book, One Librarian" session at 4:00!



[Register for the NLA conference here](#)



See you at NLA!

Richard and Ethan will be attending the 2025 Nebraska Library Association Conference: Soaring to New Heights, held on October 22-23. We hope to see you there! Ethan will be presenting "Board at the Library: How to Start a Library Board Game Group."

Celebration of Nebraska Books Literary Festival



The [2025 Nebraska Celebration of Books](#) will take place on **November 15** on the second floor of the UNL Union and Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center.

This year's Book Awards Celebration will be a combined event with the Nebraska Book Festival, called "The Nebraska Celebration of Books" which aims to celebrate Nebraska's literary heritage and contemporary authors. The event will feature several Nebraska authors, and presentation of the Nebraska Center for

the Book's **Nebraska Book Awards, Mildred Bennett Award and Jane Geske Award.**

The 2025 [Nebraska Book Awards](#) will honor authors and publishers of books with a Nebraska connection published in 2024.

The [Jane Geske Award](#) will be presented to honor an organization that exemplifies exceptional contributions to literacy, books, reading, libraries, or literature in Nebraska. The annual Jane Geske Award commemorates Geske's passion for books, and was established in recognition of her contributions to the well-being of the libraries of Nebraska. Jane Pope Geske was a founding member of the Nebraska Center for the Book, former director of the Nebraska Library Commission, and a long-time leader in Nebraska library and literary activities.

The [Mildred Bennett Award](#) recognizes an individual who made significant contributions to the fostering of the literary tradition in Nebraska. This annual award reminds us all of the literary and intellectual traditions that enrich our lives and mold our world.

This year marks the 21st year of the [One Book One Nebraska](#) program. The announcement of the **2026 One Book One Nebraska** book choice will conclude the festivities.

Grant Opportunities



Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC): Accessible Small and Rural Communities Grant

The American Library Association invites applications from small and rural libraries for the final application period of the [Libraries Transforming Communities \(LTC\): Accessible Small and Rural Communities](#) grant.

Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities is offering grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$20,000 to small and rural libraries to increase the accessibility of facilities, services, and programs to better serve people with disabilities.

Applications will be accepted through December 11, 2025 at <http://ala.org/LTCAccess>.

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2026 NLC Grants are Open for Applications!

Nebraska Accredited Public Libraries and State-run Institutions! Do you have an idea for a program or project you would like to see funded? Apply for an NLC Grant!



Applications are now open for NLC Grants for 2026. Don't let your library miss out on these opportunities!

The Nebraska Library Commission has made funding available for four [grants for 2026](#): Continuing Education & Training, Internship, Library Improvement, and Youth Grants for Excellence.

Grant applications for these 2026 NLC grants are due November 14, 2025.

For more information about these grants, watch the recording of the *NCompass Live* webinar, [NLC Grants for 2026](#).

[Continuing Education & Training](#) to assist Nebraska libraries in improving the library services provided to their communities through continuing education and training for their library personnel and supporters. Successful applications will show how the continuing education and/or training proposed will support the library's mission. For this round of CE and training grants, applications should be **for events happening before June 2026**.

[Internship](#) grants work to introduce high school and college students to the varied and exciting work of Nebraska libraries. The internships are intended to function as a recruitment tool, helping the student to view the library as a viable career opportunity while providing the public library with the finances to provide stipends to the student interns.

Library Improvement grants facilitate growth and development of library programs and services in Nebraska public and institutional libraries, by supplementing local funding with state funds designated for these purposes.

Youth Grants for Excellence are available specifically for innovative projects for children and young adults in your community. The program encourages creative thinking, risk-taking, and new approaches to enable youth librarians to begin needed programs and try projects which they have been unable to undertake, and to offer an opportunity to expand youth service capabilities in new and different directions.

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Creative Aging Arts Program (CAAP)

APPLY NOW!

The Nebraska Arts Council (NAC) is announcing special funding for CAAP in Nebraska public libraries beginning in summer 2025.

NAC's Creative Aging Arts Program (CAAP) provides older adults with creative and educational activities along with opportunities for socialization. CAAP's core programming involves interactive artist residencies that are comprised of sequential workshops for participants who are 55 or older. Residencies are led by CAAP artists (painters, printmakers, writers, musicians, etc.) who have completed training in creative aging program development.

Apply for CAAP grants at least six weeks ahead.

Grants cover most or all expenses. Funds are limited, and grants are processed first-come, first-served.

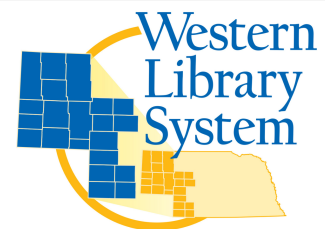
Find complete information here:

[Creative Aging Arts Program - Nebraska Arts Council](#)

Scholarships

Western Library System Scholarships

The Western Library System (WLS) created a scholarship fund to support and encourage the professional development of library staff in the system. Member library staff may use the money for professional membership association dues and meetings, classes, workshops, or other professional development activities. Funding may also be used for presenters at your library. Upon approval, funds will be dispersed.



[Apply for a WLS Scholarship](#)

Free Training Opportunities

Education & Training | Nebraska Library Commission Blog

CONTINUING EDUCATION
UPCOMING WEBINARS & EVENTS

[Here](#) is a list of free training opportunities coming up this week and some recently recorded webinars! There is also a monthly list of free training resources which is compiled each month by the Maine State Library and WebJunction.

Upcoming NCompass Live Shows

NCompass Live is broadcast live, every Wednesday, from 10am - 11am Central Time.



[Discovering New Grants for Your Library: Think Outside the Box](#)

- **Date:** 10/15/2025
- **[Register](#) by:** 10/14/2025

[Nebraska Celebration of Books 2025](#)

- **Date:** 10/29/2025
- **[Register](#) by:** 10/27/2025

[From Rotary to the Local Bar: Unexpected Allies in Library Outreach](#)

- **Date:** 11/5/2025
- **[Register](#) by:** 11/3/2025

[Summer Reading Program 2026: Unearth a Story](#)

- **Date:** 11/19/2025
- **[Register](#) by:** 11/17/2025

[Pretty Sweet Tech: Internet Librarian 2025 Highlights](#)

- **Date:** 11/26/2025
- **[Register](#) by:** 11/24/2025

The [shows are recorded](#) for anyone who may want to watch again or who cannot attend at the **scheduled time**. Registration for a live show is not required to view the archived recording.

Basic Skills Courses

Class: [Management/Supervision](#)

- **Class Dates:** 10/20 - 10/31
- **Registration Dates:** 9/8 - 10/10

Class: [Leadership](#)

- **Class Dates:** 11/3 - 11/14
- **Registration Dates:** 9/15 - 10/24



Class: [Library Services to Children & Teens](#)

- **Class Dates:** 12/1 - 12/12
- **Registration Dates:** 10/20 - 11/21

Upcoming Events

October 5-11

- Banned Books Week, "Censorship is so 1984. Read for Your Rights."



Save the Date

Oct. 22-23

- Nebraska Library Association Conference, Holthus Conference Center, York

Nov. 4-5

- Makerspace Conference, Nebraska Innovation Campus Conference Center, Lincoln

November 7

- Read Aloud Nebraska Workshop, Seward Memorial Library, 8am - 4pm

November 13

- WLS Board Meeting, Riverside Business Plaza and Zoom, 10am

November 15

- Nebraska Celebration of Books, UNL Union and Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center, Lincoln

November 20

- Quarterly Systems Meeting with the NLC, Lincoln, 10am
-



Western Library System

<http://libraries.ne.gov/wls/>



Western Library System

615 S. Beltline Highway West

Scottsbluff, NE 69361

Subscribe to the WLS Mailing List: <https://nlc.nebraska.gov/lists/>