

DIRECTOR'S REPORT
Northern Lights Library Network
Kathy Brock Enger, M.L.S., Ph.D., Executive Director
September 21, 2024



FY2024 Audit

The fiscal year 2024 audit is complete, following a review by Carpenter, Evert, and Associates. Policies reviewed and approved by the NLLN Governing Board: Conflict of Interest, Whistleblower, Fund Balance, Document Retention and Destruction.

Report of Results for Fiscal Year 2025

Northern Lights Library Network's (NLLN) Report of Results for fiscal year 2025 is completed and will be sent to State Library Services, Minnesota Department of Education, by October 1.

Strategic Plan

NLLN will be completing the strategic plan this fiscal year. It will begin with qualitative interviews by stakeholders and culminating with a survey for members. The survey will be based on the results of the qualitative interviews. Executive Director, Kathy Enger, is facilitating the process.

Special Projects

A form and policy for designing guidelines for special projects for libraries in the region is underway.

Destiny Training

A Destiny training will be held on November 2nd in the union on the campus of Minnesota State University Moorhead. There is no charge for the training and a free lunch will be served, along with 3 continuing education credits (CEUs).

Communities Collaborative Brain Development Conference

550 people attended the 20th Annual Communities Collaborative Brain Conference from August 13 – 15. NLLN sponsored Dr. J., Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership at Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM) for a keynote and breakout session. Her son, Sage, also presented the breakout that focused on autism and indigenous cultural practices. NLLN gave Sage a hand sewn quilt for his participation. NLLN has been on the planning committee since the conference's inception.

MCMT Appropriation to Increase the Number of Licensed Library Media Specialists in Minnesota

Counting Opinions conducted the census and data analysis, with work commencing January 2024. During May 2024 the data collection ended, with 70% of public and charter schools in Minnesota completing the survey. An Executive Summary was completed June 2024 and submitted to the MCMTs from Counting Opinions. Since the data and report included significant errors, completion of the data was moved from Counting Opinions to Wilder Research, which will include data cleaning and analysis, an executive summary, report, and data portal. An executive summary and report will be submitted to the Minnesota Legislature at the beginning of the 2025 Legislative Session. The remaining funds will be used to fund scholarships for licensed teachers to obtain media specialist licensure, along with a public relations campaign targeted at parents to inform them about what a media specialist is and why they are essential contributions to every school.

Minnesota Library Association (MLA) 2025 Legislative Priorities Draft

To be presented to the MLA Board the Week of September 16, 2024 and the membership at the Annual Meeting at the MLA Conference, October 24, 25.

- **Capital Investment**

\$10M appropriation for Library Construction Grant funding. Allow flexibility in matching funds. Raise grant cap to \$2 million.

Support improvement of higher education library facilities, including exploring the dedication of Higher Education Asset Preservation and Replacement (HEAPR) funds for such purposes.

- **Education Finance**

\$2M per year increase for eLibrary Minnesota resources.

Link multicounty multitype (MCMT) funding to the forecasted increases for the Basic Education Allowance.

Support efforts to strengthen use of school library aid to improve school library media programs that are staffed by licensed media specialists as defined in 124D.991.

- **Education Policy**

Modify 134.351 to add two governance structures for multicounty multitype library systems and describe and expand the services MCMTs may provide to their members.

- **Higher Education**

\$1.5M per year increase for Minitex operational funding.

\$9M per year in new and ongoing funding to create and sustain the Minnesota eHealth Library within the Minitex organization.

- **Legacy**

\$3M per year appropriation in Arts & Cultural Heritage Funding for regional public library systems. Extend the spending deadline for FY2025 funds by one year and ensure that future allocations allow for consistent carryover spend down time.

- Public Safety

Support efforts to authorize local governmental units to prohibit or restrict possession of dangerous weapons, ammunition, or explosives in public facilities, including public libraries.



Funded by the Minnesota Legislature through the Minnesota Department of Education, Northern Lights Library Network (NLLN) is one of seven Minnesota multicounty, multitype library cooperative systems. NLLN is comprised of two hundred eighty academic, public, school, and special libraries in twenty-three counties in North-Central, Northwest, and West-Central Minnesota. NLLN works at the grassroots level to bring together all types of libraries and collections in the region to discover, enhance, and share resources through administrative, technological, and educational support.

Northern Lights Library Network covers a geographic region of 26,950 square miles (Minnesota is comprised of 86,939 square miles), and includes the following twenty-three counties: Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Kittson, Mahnomon, Marshall, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Red Lake, Roseau, Stevens, Traverse, Wadena, and Wilkin.

The Northern Lights Library Network system consists of four regional public library systems; academic libraries on two campuses of the University of Minnesota at Crookston and Morris; Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System institutions on four campuses, including Minnesota State University Moorhead, Bemidji State University, Northland Community College, Minnesota State Community and Technical College, all located across the region in Moorhead, Bemidji, Thief River Falls, Wadena, and Fergus Falls; numerous private colleges; three tribal colleges, including Leech Lake, Red Lake, and White Earth; the Maamigin Achigaazo Community Library at White Earth; one hundred-eighty-five school libraries in seventy-nine school districts, including public and charter schools, Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, and private schools; and a rich variety of special libraries in museums, county law libraries, hospitals, churches, and early childhood programs.

Northern Lights Library Network reduces duplication of services by enhancing coordination among libraries. As resources are shared among libraries, services are expanded, and efficiency is improved. As a result, libraries offer services or programs they may not otherwise be able to afford.

All of the work performed by Northern Lights Library Network affects the direct service of its members, and has an exponential effect on its client base. Northern Lights Library Network exists to recognize the kinds of library services people need at the local level and to determine

the supporting structures required for local library systems to function successfully, taking into account the unique needs of people at the local level and the different types of libraries served.

A primary goal of Northern Lights Library Network is to bring resources from the state and national level to the local level. Another goal is to discover resources within the region and to share them universally.

Northern Lights Library Network is one of seven multi-county, multi-type library systems in Minnesota mandated by Minnesota Statute 134.351 to develop and maintain services including, but not limited to, “referral of users, intra-system reciprocal borrowing, cooperative collection development, cooperative reference services, staff development, research and development, cooperative storage facilities, and publicity and community relations.”

The five goals outlined in Minnesota Statute 134.351 for multi-county, multi-type systems include:

- Sharing Resources Among all Participating Libraries*
- Providing Long-range Planning for Cooperative Programs*
- Developing a Delivery System for Services and Programs*
- Developing a Bibliographic Database*
- Maintaining a Communications System Among all Cooperating Libraries*

The seven multi-county, multi-type systems perform the following functions: Develop library staffs professionally; improve local library collections; sponsor and support funding for libraries; champion libraries; create, develop, and maintain library programs that enrich the lives of Minnesotans; move the discipline of Library and Information Science forward; and lead and administer their own nonprofit agencies. The seven systems are governed by regional boards.

There are twelve regional public library systems in Minnesota that serve public libraries, while the seven multi-type systems serve all types of libraries.