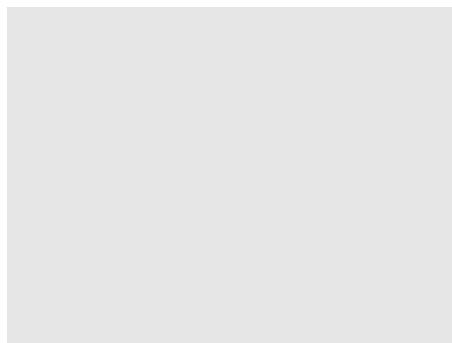


https://www.southernminn.com/northfield_news/opinion/northfield-library-state-and-federal-funding-for-libraries/article_dab5dc20-fe87-11ef-9dcf-b381d349a22a.html

NORTHFIELD LIBRARY: State and federal funding for libraries

By NATALIE DRAPER Guest Columnist

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Draper

A question I have been hearing a lot lately is "How does state and federal funding affect our library?" And after spending Library Legislative Day at the Capitol with colleagues and elected officials last month, it seemed like a good time to address this.

While the Northfield Public Library is not entirely dependent on direct state or federal funds for operations, there are several ways state and federal funding supports library services to the benefit of our community. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a federal agency, provides LSTA funds to Minnesota through the Grants to States Program.

The annual allotment is based on population, and is currently \$2.9 million. If you've ever borrowed an item from our library of things — a sewing machine, DSLR camera, or OSMO coding kits for instance — you've accessed resources provided by a federal grant made possible by IMLS. The first year of our paid summer internship offered to TORCH and NCCC students was also made possible by LSTA funds.

LSTA Grants to Minnesota also help support Minitex. Minitex is a state-funded information and resource sharing program of the Minnesota Department of Higher Education and the University of Minnesota Libraries. Although Minitex itself is state-funded, federal grants directly support a number of its programs. Minitex is responsible for managing statewide resource sharing, ELM Instruction and Ebooks MN — all of which directly impact Northfield Public Library's services to our patrons.

Managing resource sharing through MNLink facilitates the statewide Interlibrary Loan (ILL) system, which circulated 343,770 items in the last reporting period. MNLink makes it possible for a patron in Northfield to request and receive materials not owned by a member of our regional system, Southeastern Libraries Cooperating (SELCO), from any participating library in Minnesota. Northfield patrons have requested an average of 200-300 items per month through MNLink, and more than 3,000 total in 2024.

ELM (eLibrary of Minnesota) instruction is performed by the Minitex Outreach and Instruction Librarians to provide free instructional sessions on eLibrary Minnesota for local libraries to help their patrons access an expansive and vital online

information resource collection, which includes Job and Career Skill Building, Student Research materials including SAT/ACT and AP prep courses, and reliable medical information.

Minitex also utilizes state-distributed LSTA funds for the Ebooks MN budget to maintain a collection of electronic and audiobooks free to anyone residing in Minnesota, and assists with a variety of other efforts to support local libraries throughout the state leverage partnerships and collaboration to provide efficient and effective service to all Minnesotans, regardless of where in the state they reside.

Federal funding also helps Minnesota provide MN Braille and Talking Book Library's customer service support. The MN Braille and Talking Book Library provides direct library service to Minnesotans with print disabilities. Now is the perfect time to remind your elected officials of the importance of these funds. For more information go to [MLA's website](#) or ask a librarian.

Natalie Draper is the Northfield Public Library executive director.