

Minnesota's Reciprocal Borrowing Compact extends library privileges statewide

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by [Zach Miller](#)



QUICK SUMMARY

Nearly every public library in Minnesota is a member of the Minnesota Library Reciprocal Borrowing, which allows all Minnesotans with a public library card to borrow materials from any member library. The Compact was first executed in 2001, and reaffirmed in 2015.



Minnesotans are famously proud of their state, and our libraries are one of the major reasons why. Each library reflects the positive qualities and local needs of its home community.

Libraries work together, too, in ways that stretch their public funding while at the same time providing more and better services to their patrons. Minitex services like [eLibrary Minnesota](#) and [MNLINK](#) are evidence of that collaboration. The same goes for the [Minnesota Library Reciprocal Borrowing Compact](#), which allows Minnesotans with a member library card to borrow materials from any other library that has signed on to the Compact. That's a long list that leaves out just five public libraries in the entire state.

Grand Rapids Area Library director Will Richter summed up his perspective in a recent email. "Librarians want to say, 'Yes, we can,' and agreements like the RBC allow us to do that. It should give library card holders confidence they can walk into any Minnesota library and get help."

Jeanne Anderson, of [Lake Agassiz Regional Library](#) (LARL), laid out the details of how the Compact works in her library system in northwest Minnesota.

How does it work at LARL?

Customers coming into our locations with their home library cards in hand (from participating members), can easily have their card registered within our LARL system. We ask that they provide the card and proof of address at registration time. If a reciprocal resident comes in without a card from one of our neighboring systems, they can easily apply online using one of LARL's public computers to fill out that application. Once they receive that card in the mail from their home library, they can bring it back into any LARL location, and staff can set them up as a reciprocal customer in our system.

How does reciprocal borrowing benefit patrons?

Customers can come in with a library card from another Minnesota reciprocal location and register it for use in LARL locations. This will give them instant access to our physical collection. It also allows them access to ILL services. Any items checked out from a participating Minnesota library can also be dropped off at any LARL location and will be returned to their home library. These services are crucial for assisting folks that may be visiting the LARL region for a variety of reasons such as, vacation homes, visiting or caring for family, etc. It also helps us provide service to individuals that reside very close to our border regional systems, such as individuals residing in Rothsay, where half of the town is a part of LARL and the other half, [Viking Library System](#).

How does reciprocal borrowing help Minnesota's library system work better, over all?

The goal of course is to help provide service to as many Minnesota residents as possible. Meeting their needs where they are. Having this program in place not only allows us to assist customers in the process of signing up for library cards for their designated regional system, it also allows us to help fulfill their needs while they are visiting our LARL locations, making access to such a wide variety of materials across the state possible.

TAGS:

Reciprocal Borrowing

Lake Agassiz Regional Library

Grand Rapids Area Library

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