

NEWS

Grand Rapids passport service benefits community members as well as the library

[Jump to News Section](#)

Sep 13, 2024, 8:32 am

by [Zach Miller](#)

QUICK SUMMARY

Libraries offer their communities much more than the books on their shelves. In Grand Rapids, Minnesota, they even offer passport applications and renewals.



If there's no traffic whatsoever, driving to Duluth and back from Grand Rapids takes three hours. To Minneapolis, it's six hours. That's the travel time Grand Rapids residents used to have to invest to get to a passport. Now all they have to do is head downtown to their public library. That's because the Grand Rapids Area Library is a U.S. Department of State-endorsed Passport Acceptance Facility. That means the library has passport application and renewal forms for first-time applicants and minors, who can submit them to library staff.

"Library staff are natural helpers, and they're really good at guiding people through a complicated process," says Will Richter, the library's director. "Also, some people are hesitant to interact with the government, and the library can feel more

see the library's value and what it offers beyond the passport service.

Even the mayor of Grand Rapids, Tasha Connelly, has taken notice. "Having a Passport Acceptance Facility located in our library is a significant community asset! In fact, my family and I got our passports there just this year. We didn't have to travel far, the service was expeditious and efficient, and the staff were highly knowledgeable on the whole process. Now I can't imagine *not* having this service available in our out-state community."

To become a Passport Acceptance Facility, a library has to apply and be cleared by the Department of State, which then sets a requirement for the number of staff the facility will need to serve their area. In Grand Rapids, four library staff are trained Passport Acceptance Agents. Their training took about eight hours, and was offered online or in-person through the Department of State.

The library charges an Acceptance Fee for the service, set at \$35 and mandated by Congress. The monies collected do constitute a small benefit to the library budget, but the service's real value, according to Richter, is "that it allows library staff to have a positive experience with people who might not otherwise come in."

If you think your library is ready to offer this service, [email Customer Service Manager Benjamin Calderon-Voas](#) at the Minneapolis Passport Agency to get started.

TAGS: Grand Rapids Area Library

WRITTEN BY

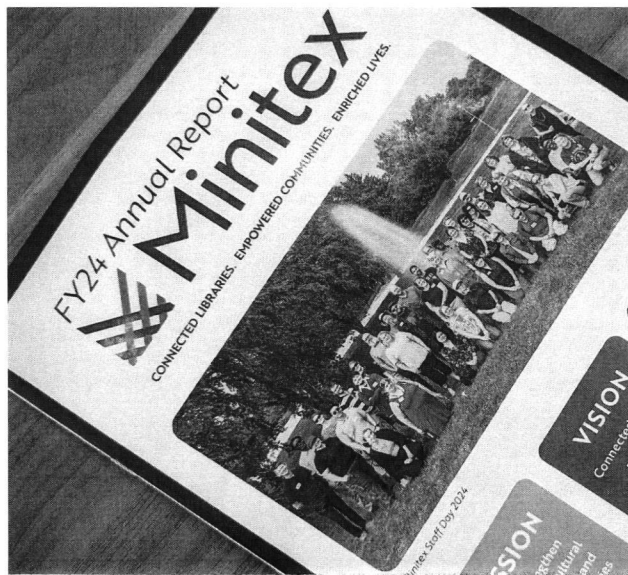


Zach Miller
Head of Communications

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Subscribe

RELATED ARTICLES



Three questions with new Policy Advisory Council representative Will Richter

by Zach Miller

Minitex releases annual report for fiscal year 2024

by Zach Miller, Jesus Maldonado Sanchez

Subscribe to our newsletter

Get the latest Minitex News in your inbox every week

Subscribe

Minitex

University of Minnesota
Wilson Library, Room 60
309 19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55455

📞 Phone: [612-624-4002](tel:612-624-4002)
📞 Toll-Free: [800-462-5348](tel:800-462-5348)
📠 Fax: [612-624-4508](tel:612-624-4508)
✉ [Contact Us](#)

Quick Links

- » [About Minitex](#)
- » [MyMinitex](#)
- » [Logos & Images](#)
- » [Staff Directory](#)
- » [Payments & Billing](#)
- » [Order Promotional Materials](#)



Minitex is an information and resource sharing program of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and the University of Minnesota Libraries.