



LINCOLN

City Libraries

## Director's Report for January 2026

Vision: *LCL: Literacy, Community, and Lifelong learning*

Mission: *Lincoln City Libraries provides access to information, ideas, books and lifelong learning opportunities that inform, enrich and empower every individual in our diverse community.*

Priorities:

1. *Maximizing Access*
2. *Communicating our Offerings*
3. *Strengthening our Potential*
4. *Growing our Support*

The **new bookmobiles** arrived on February 9, and they are stunning! Thanks to the team including Rebecca Hueske and Lisa Olivigni for their work over the years in planning for the new vehicles. For the next two months, they'll be stored at Eiseley's garage until we're fully ready for service. A Mayor's press conference is tentatively set for April 7 to announce them and promote their upcoming routes and activities.



Every year, all public libraries in Nebraska submit an annual report of financial information and activity statistics to the Nebraska Library Commission. This data is compiled and then made available on their website at: <https://nlc.nebraska.gov/stats/statlist.aspx>. The site has past year's reports as well, and it's a great resource to identify trends and get a pulse on library service across the state. We comply in submitting the report on time in order to also receive our annual state aid payment, which for us is applied to purchase of library materials, technology, and staff attendance at conferences. The Library Board allocates that payout every summer preceding the new FY. Administrative Aide, Sarah Dale, does a very nice job of coordinating the compilation of data and meeting the filing deadline.

LinkedIn Learning will soon be available for patron use—most likely within the next couple months. We are thrilled to be able to offer it to patrons and know it will be a popular and well-used resource. It's the premier on-demand site for video learning. Patrons can create their own accounts and use the service for access to trainings on software and technology, certifications, business, and creative design courses.

We are excited to begin the Resource Care Worker partnership with CenterPointe, starting February 18 at Bennett Martin Library. A CenterPointe employee will be on hand for public service at Bennett Martin for 20 hours per week, providing resource help for patrons who may be in need of food, housing, mental health-related, etc). This position is funded by the Woods Foundation and CenterPointe.

Central Library Update: I'll provide a more substantial report at the February Board Meeting, however, here are some items of note:

- The surplus process at 1111 O Street is nearly complete, and unfortunately quite a number of items are still remaining. Other departments and local governments have been active in pulling items over the past 2 months, and will continue to rely on City Purchasing to guide next steps. Our goal is to distribute and recycle all remaining contents by the end of March.
- We've officially begun the design development phase recently and will be very busy over the next few months arriving at final plans by late May. There are many people involved with this including a staff team and our Board reps. Along the way, we'll identify the details for all spaces and functions. We've begun working with the Mill Coffee & Tea to plan out their process of designing their space, and we're still working with other potential space partners in an effort to establish a goal of opening-day readiness. I think we'll see more movement with our potential partners over the next few months.
- After some value engineering, we have decided to keep the "central core" opening in the future library similar to the current dimensions, and the rooftop auditorium has been slightly reduced in size, yet there's a good chance the interior program space will remain close to the 250 seats we've been planning on. As a result of the "core" staying the same size, we've recaptured more square footage on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors for library activities.

Examples of the Strategic Plan in action:

- Carrie K. (BMPL) said, "I was working at the front desk when a man approached and asked if I'd tell him why we had removed the display featuring books with deaf connections. I explained that we change those out every so often and asked if there was a book there he was looking for. He said he just wanted to let us know that he found a book there that changed his life, he's a "child of deaf adults" and grew up speaking and signing at the same time. He said he found so many books there he didn't know existed and wouldn't have known how to look for."
- Walker D. (BMPL) relayed that he "helped a patron with printing a document from her phone. When we got to the print preview step, I noticed that she was printing tax documents. I informed her that tax documents were free to print and did a staff override for her. She was effusively grateful for the printing and said that the libraries in this city need more funding because they contribute so much to the community."
- Cindy K. (BMPL) said, "A regular patron came and asked me if I would help him on the computer. He needed to scan and document and then asked if I would show him how to attach it to an email and

send it. I demonstrated how to locate the file after we scanned it. After he opened his email (which was not in English) I helped him locate where to find the paperclip to attach the file. I then showed him how he could view the attached file and make sure it was the correct one. As I was showing him, he made small notes and said now he would attempt to do it on his own and ask me if he had trouble. He was then able to repeat the steps on his own and thanked me on the way out for teaching him a new skill.”

- Kim J. (BMPL) said, “I helped a customer locate the grave of her great-grandmother using Ancestry, Find-a-Grave and windyprairie.com. I found the grave in the Fairbury Cemetery where the patron’s grandmother is buried. The great-grandfather was buried in the Evergreen Cemetery in Beatrice, so the family had tried to find her grave there. The family was very happy to finally resolve this mystery.”
- Karrie S. (NESU) shared, “In January we kicked off an Early Readers child-parent Bookgroup at Anderson Branch Library on Wednesday evenings. Kate H., the Read Aloud Librarian from Bennett Martin leads this group and each week she lets me know what books and supplies she needs. We have had a great response to this group with attendance of 24, 15, and 22 (61 total) over the three weeks they have met. I appreciate Kate’s willingness to come out to Anderson Branch and give up an evening to provide quality literary programming to our families.”
- With a lot of help from Michelle P. in Support Services, and a lot of scanning by numerous employees at NESU, all materials at Bethany Branch Library were inventoried during the months of December 2025 and January 2026. This project ensures that library holdings are accurately reflected in the LCL catalog, and it helps customers and staff locate materials quickly and easily.
- NESU Librarian Karrie S. shared this story: “There’s a teen on my advisory board that doesn’t show a lot of emotions. I am not sure if they enjoy volunteering, but they show up every month. We’ve known for a while now that the family is moving abroad for second semester. So, I was pretty shocked when the teen emailed to ask when I was working so they could come in to say goodbye. It meant a lot to me. While they were visiting, the dad pulled me aside and thanked me for accepting their child and giving them a place to thrive here at the library. It was a great reminder that what we do here is so important. In so many different ways.”
- Karrie S. shared, “Toward the end of the month (January 22nd), Norwood Park and Brownell Elementary Schools co-hosted a School Night at Anderson Branch Library. Ninety people came to enjoy the library, free pizza, crafts, a scavenger hunt, and free books to take home. “
- Andrea C. (Walt) wrote, “A patron called to learn how to suggest titles be added to the collection. After I explained how she could request titles, the patron shared that she wanted the library to add additional audiobooks so children like her son who has a disability would have access to books. She said she was disappointed about the number of books available at LPS and she was ready to go to the school board to advocate for greater access for children with disabilities. I explained she may want to apply for the Talking Books program for her son. I gave her their number and said NLC was eager to spread the word about Talking Books for children with educational plans.”
- Jessica S. (Walt) wrote, “A customer was looking for a DVD copy of the movie, *A Thomas Crown Affair*, either the 1968 or 1999 version. Our library system did not own a DVD of the title, but both movies were on our Hoopla App. She seemed genuinely shocked this was an option. I had shown her the flyer listing our favorite apps and she began perusing those as well and said, ‘Oh! Transparent Languages. You even have a language one!’ I let her know she could call us or bring her laptop in if she had any difficulties and we would walk her through the process. She left the desk

and appeared content with her option to watch the movie. I then heard her explaining Hoopla to her husband, who seemed equally surprised."

- Meagan M. (Walt) shared, "A tween patron came in with her father and I overheard him encouraging her to come to the desk to ask for assistance. A bit reticent, she asked if I could help her find resources about anxiety, stress, and their effects on the human body. We chatted a bit as I was interviewing her for more info while I did some research and I found that she was also interested in learning about coping mechanisms. After finding her some likely titles, I directed her towards the youth and adult non-fiction sections, as she wanted to look on her own first. She set off and her father thanked me for my assistance before a bit sheepishly asking if I might help him find some resources, as well. I was able to direct him towards some parenting books on the same subjects, as well as about landscaping and lawn care. Both left with several resources in hand."
- Lisa W. (Walt) reported, "The inaugural birthday storytime was a great success with 50 participants. Children with January birthdays received a round Happy Birthday sticker, wrote their names on stars, and placed them on the month poster. Since there was only one January birthday, I invited that child to place the flannel chocolate cake on the board. I distributed colored felt candles to all the children and called them up by color to add their candles to the cake. It was a bit chaotic, but it worked well! Birthday Storytime will continue on the Second Saturday of each month at Family Storytime when storytimes are in session."
- Laurie J. (Walt) shared that six attended the 3D Printer Training. "The first half hour was a couple who had recently bought a 3D printer and had questions about using it and upkeep. Halfway through, a parent and three kids showed up and from there I did the usual introduction to 3D printing."
- Jessica S. (Walt) reported, "A man came to the Adult Reference Desk with an elementary aged boy. He asked if they could look at the rock collection and one of our robots in the Collaborative Learning Lab. As we were walking into the lab, the man advised he was mentoring the young boy through Big Brothers Big Sisters of America and had looked into our Collaborative Learning Lab resources about two months prior while he was going through the mentorship application process. They stayed in the lab for about two hours looking at the rock collection and putting together the coding robot."
- Kayla L. at Eiseley-Williams shared this: A very impressive group of crossworders showed up at Eiseley for Coffee and Crosswords on January 25. Working together, we were able to finish the NYT Sunday crossword in 38:29!! Everyone enjoyed themselves and was ready to bring more minds together for another chance to solve the puzzle it even faster! Thanks to Scooters for providing coffee for participants on a cold day.
- Susan S. (Eiseley-Williams) has a possible future librarian in her toddler storytime: I have a little girl who comes to Tuesday night storytime; her name is Lily and she's very quiet and shy but her parents tell me that when she gets home, she pretends she's Ms. Susan and does storytime. They told me she even comments on the end pages which is part of print awareness and how books function.
- Jackie S. (Eiseley-Williams) shared this: At Williams, one of our patrons who comes in regularly always chats with me about books while she picks up her holds. One day when she stopped in, she had some picture books on hold and she mentioned wanting to find more. I told her about some of my favorite authors and pulled some books for her. The next time I saw her, she told me she loved the books I pulled for her. She liked them so much that she convinced some friends, who have children, to get them to read to their kids.

- January 11 – Melody S. (Eiseley-Williams) held a Scrappy Pet Toys program at Eiseley. She used the leftover t-shirts from her previous quilt making program to demonstrate how to craft toys for your pets. Twenty-nine patrons participated.
- Gyoung K. (Eiseley-Williams) has been qualified by the City of Lincoln to provide customer service to patrons whose first language is Korean. I have worked at the circ desk when she helped patrons who speak Korean and it is wonderful to see how welcome they feel when they interact with her in their own language.
- January 22 – Susan S. (Eiseley-Williams) assisted with the training of LPS high school students interested in providing story times at LCL as part of the celebration of African American Month. There were 52 patrons who participated in this Equity Cadre Training.
- Toni Y. (Gere-South) shared this interaction: “A patron came to me at the front desk inquiring about the use of Gere’s meeting rooms. She was with the Lincoln Quilt Guild’s new quilters group and needed a space to meet. Together, I helped her look on our website to reserve the correct date and walked her through all of the many steps. I am glad she came up to us for help, as she had neglected to bring her library card in, and had forgotten her pin # - both of which are required to reserve the room. I got her her card number and helped to reset the pin and when she left she had reserved it successfully.”
- Yoel S-T (Gere-South) shared this interaction: “Patron called very concerned. After checking out books, she got an email saying her library account was charged over \$200! After some clarifying questions and de-escalation, it turns out the "AI" summary feature of her email client interpreted the portion of her checkout receipt that lists how much you saved, as how much she was charged for using her library account. We verified on Sirsi that there were indeed no charges on her account. Goes to show, a little bit of good ol' fashioned human brain power can provide a lot of much needed clarity!”
- Ronda H. (Gere-South) shared this interaction: “I had an elder couple approach me at the circ desk. The wife told me that they were having trouble renewing books online. I smiled and asked her if she felt adventurous and was willing to try something new. She smiled and said, ‘Yes!’ I explained our Library LNK app to her. She downloaded it and we got it up and running on her phone. Her husband decided to download it as well. They left excited to have a new way to renew their library books.”
- Nora M. (Gere-South) shared this interaction: “A person who was visiting his college student daughters was looking for “The Unauthorized Biography of Lincoln, Nebraska” – he had heard the author interviewed on a local radio show and wanted to see the photographs. He didn’t have a library account, but I was able to refer him to the Heritage Room to view their copy (and it happened to be Tuesday, so they were open that afternoon).”
- Cally O. and Chad S. were at schools this month for Lunch in the Library which featured Shrinky Dinks and beads so kids could make their own charm bracelets or keychains. Cally shared: “I always love seeing the creativity that comes out with this project, with many kids having a signature drawing they want turned into a charm. Lots of aliens, cartoon characters, and doodles. When we visited Lefler on the 15<sup>th</sup> they had an adjusted schedule for MAP testing, which gave the kids an extended lunch period. This worked out for us, as we had 80 kids come through the library to make charm bracelet or keychain. When Chad and I arrived at Lefler, we were greeted by an 8<sup>th</sup> grader who said ‘Look, my favorite people are here.’” At Standing Bear on the 22<sup>nd</sup> there were 20 students

that stopped at the table, and Cally did two preschool storytimes with 30 students. Culler's program scheduled for the 29<sup>th</sup> was postponed to February due to slick roads.

- Leanne D. and Yoel S-T (Gere-South) completed 75 hours of 3-D print time this month with over 41 requests. Some of the items printed included a coffee press, board game piece organizer, Nintendo controller stand, and tank feeder. Leanne said they get an average of 2 requests per day.
- Toni Y. (Gere-South) shared this customer interaction: "At South, I was able to spend time with a regular patron helping her to update her resume and applying for a janitorial job on Indeed. She had found one she liked, and I helped walk her through the steps of editing her resume and applying. Even if the job doesn't pan out, I could tell that helping her figure out how to use Indeed's AI resume creator helped to make her feel proud of herself. She said, 'They make me sound pretty good' as she submitted the application. She thanked me numerous times."
- The Polley Music Library Show on KZUM had five episodes in December, which featured a show with some examples of creative music released in 2025, a new book from composer and guitarist Elliott Sharp, a new biography of legendary country music guitarist and record exec Chet Atkins, a memoir by Roddy Bottum, keyboardist of influential 80s/90s band Faith No More, and a book about the early days of electronic music.

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2.13.26