# NEBRASKA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
# LIBRARY CONNECTION GRANTS

Nebraska is filled with abundance! Every day, more than 1,500 volunteers across the NCF network generously share their time, talent, and treasure with their hometowns, creating communities where new ideas ignite and fresh possibilities take shape. To help bring those possibilities to life, Nebraska Community Foundation is excited to offer Library Connection Grants, designed to unleash local creativity while connecting NCF affiliated funds and Greater Nebraska Libraries. **We are the people we've been waiting for!**

**Library Connection Grant Contact**

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**What is a Library Connection Grant?**

In 2025, Nebraska Community Foundation was selected as a Civic Hub by the Trust for Civic Life. This designation acknowledges NCF's efforts to advance civic health and weave a strong social fabric across our state. This partnership creates an opportunity for NCF to offer local support and funding to help unleash more opportunities throughout the NCF network. *Please see the FAQs below for examples of Library Connections.*

The purpose of Nebraska Community Foundation's Library Connection Grants is to support collaboration between NCF affiliated funds and Greaer Nebraska libraries. By providing guidance, funding, and a collaborative framework, these grants are designed to help support local imagination, possibility, creativity and collaboration. Through this process, NCF hopes to inspire experimentation, celebrate community ingenuity, and champion local FACs who want to co-create robust opportunities with libraries throughout Greater Nebraska.

We invite NCF Affiliated Funds and their library partners to take an asset-based approach, with emphasis on the following:

- **Abundance,** not scarcity; **assets**, not needs
- **Opportunities**, not deficiencies
- **Invite** people into the conversation and **co-create**
- Incremental progress creates **change that sticks**
- Community-**led** and community-**owned**
- **Build relationships** before you need them
- **People belong** through having their gifts and talents received and appreciated
- **Volunteer associations** (i.e. community-based affiliated funds) are **very powerful** and are **essential to build community**

At the heart of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is belonging. While developing your big idea for a Civic Experiment, please seek abundant opportunities to extend belonging to others.

**Here's the basics**

- NCF Library Connection Grant applications may be submitted beginning September 15, 2026
- Funding is available exclusively to funds in the NCF Network who wish to partner with a Greater Nebraska library
- A total of $100,000 is available
- NCF affiliated funds can request funding between $1,000 and $10,000 for their experiment
- NCF Library Connection Grants **require a 1:1 cash match from the participating affiliated fund**
- All funds must be expended prior to September 1, 2027
- NCF Library Connection Grants participant communities may be invited to share their ideas, discoveries, and outcomes
- NCF Library Connection Grants must be filled out by both an affiliated fund representative and a representative from the partnering library

**How do we apply?**

NCF is taking an iterative, relational, and asset-based approach to the process. Here's what interested funds can expect:

**Step One:**

We invite you to connect with your local library to imagine possibilities. Share your ideas, dreams, and imagine what's possible together. This is an invitation to look at your community together with fresh eyes and imagine what additional abundance could be unleashed together!

Once you have an idea to explore, please fill out this simple inquiry form. **To be considered for this grant, we ask that both an affiliated fund representative and a representative of the participating library submit the form together.**

Library Connection Grant Interest Form

**Step Two: Share your idea with NCF**

After you submit your idea, we'll invite both the affiliated fund and library representative to an informal conversation so you can share what you're dreaming about. At that time, we can begin to work together to:

- Identify the level of support and resources that will help your idea take shape
- Estimate the time needed to bring your experiment to life
- Explore ways to enhance and strengthen your idea using local assets and community strengths
- Articulate some of the outcomes you hope to achieve through your experiment
- Consider how your experiment can connect, unleash, and inspire others across the NCF Network

**Step Three:**
Once approved, NCF issues a 1:1 matching grant to the local affiliated fund to move forward on their project with the partnering library. Then the real fun begins!

The funding range for Library Connection Grant is between $1,000 and $10,000.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

Q: Is there a grant application for us to fill out?

A: No. While there is no formal application, we do ask that you begin by filling out this brief application form. Steps one, two, and three replace a more traditional grant application.

Q: Is there a deadline to apply?

A: We recommend reaching out to share your idea any time before March 1, 2027, however, we cannot guarantee that funds will be available later in the year

Q: What if our idea fails?

A: That's okay! This opportunity is meant to be experimental. Be bold! Take risks! The sky's the limit! What did we all learn that we can take into the next experiment together?

Q: What if our library has its own NCF Affiliated Fund?

A: That's great! Your library's FAC leaders can collaborate with library staff to apply for this grant. We also encourage you to reach out to your local Community-Based Affiliated Fund, if applicable, to maximize the partnership possibilities.

Q: What if our library has an account with an NCF Community-Based Affiliated Fund?

A: The matching funds can come from any account held by your Community-Based Affiliated Fund, including a library account, unrestricted endowment payout, general account, etc.

**Need some inspiration?**
Below are examples of some awesome work already happening between affiliated funds across the NCF network. We warmly invite you to propose your own bold, original ideas for consideration!

- Needle nights
- Maker space classes
- English and Spanish classes with childcare
- Game nights
- Story walks with art instillations
- Digital literacy initiatives

- Themed learning opportunities based on local assets
- Seed libraries
- Pen pal clubs
- Free theater camp
- Book clubs
- Summer reading camps
- Tool libraries or libraries of things
- Suffragist and other local historical exhibits

Keep scrolling to learn more about these examples.

**Needle Nights**

Arnold Hometown Intern Gracie Neth hosted needle nights at her local library this summer. Gracie and the library created a space where "intergenerational friendships can blossom over a shared love of handicrafts." Both experienced and novice fiber artists were invited, and Gracie and other attendees spent time teaching lessons in crochet and knitting.

**English and Spanish Classes with childcare**

In Perkins County, FAC member Rodolfo Aragon has started teaching English classes twice a week at the local library. Rodolfo's goal is that his neighbors can have the same feeling of belonging that he has come to appreciate in his community. He has also begun teaching Spanish to English speakers, giving more opportunities for community members to connect. These classes include free childcare to lower barriers to attendance.

**Digital inclusion initiatives** that provide technology training, internet access, and digital literacy support for all ages.

**Themed learning opportunities based on local assets**

Libraries offer a variety of opportunities in partnership with local museums, schools, and other community organizations. What local assets exist in your community that could come alive through the power of the local library?

**Seed libraries**

The Morton-James Public Library in Nebraska City has repurposed an old card catalog to create a Seed Library. Local growers can "borrow" seeds at any time, or they can bring seeds from their garden. The library has also hosted events for locals to learn how the Seed Library works and to connect with gardeners. This has the potential for intergenerational learning and expansion of the local food system!

**Pen Pal Clubs** connecting students from different Nebraska communities through letter writing, relationship-building, and learning about other places in our state.

**Free Theater Camp**

Gracie Neth in Arnold also developed a free Theater Camp for youth, held at the local library. This camp taught social-emotional learning through the experience of learning to be in and perform a play. The camp culminates in a performance that invites family members and friends to the local library to enjoy an arts experience together.

**Book Clubs and Summer Reading Camps**

Libraries across the country offer free opportunities to engage with literature for all ages, from book clubs to summer reading camps. These experiences make reading come alive through discussion and enrichment activities made available to all.

**Tool libraries or "Libraries of things"** with home and garden tools, hobby equipment, technology, and other specialty items. These libraries reduce barriers to participation and encourage resource sharing by allowing patrons to check out items just like they would a book.

**Local historical exhibits**

The Hebron Public Library hosts the Women's Suffrage Legacy of Courage Park to honor the role their community played in the Women's Suffrage movement. This monument is both a visual and audio outdoor exhibition, and the library also hosted the "Votes for Women: Hebron's Role in Nebraska's Suffrage Story" exhibit from the Nebraska State Historical Society. The library places great emphasis on preserving this story alongside the local Hebron History Committee.

**Any other idea you can dream up!**
Have you ever had an idea you've been excited to try but weren't quite sure how to begin? Is there a group in your community your FAC or library has been hoping to connect with but could use a little support to make it happen? Or is there something unfolding in your hometown where your FAC or library could step in as a convener, a connector, or simply a force for good?

These are exactly the kinds of ideas we'd love for you to share with us! We look forward to hearing from you soon.

**Library Connection Grant Interest Form**