

Minitex

FY25 Annual Report



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

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Our Mission:
To strengthen libraries, cultural institutions,
and the communities they serve.



As we reflect on a remarkable year, I am grateful for your ongoing partnership. FY25 was defined by our efforts to build a stronger, more connected library ecosystem. The achievements we highlight in this annual report were not the result of a single program or initiative, but a testament to how we, as a community, work together to connect people to information, resources, lifelong learning, and to connect people to people. This collective spirit was demonstrated when 31 Minnesota library boards, cities, and counties passed resolutions in support of Minitex library services, affirming the value of our shared work.

A special thank you to the Minitex Policy Advisory Council for their efforts to launch our strategic priorities this past year. I look forward to building on this momentum as we continue to advance our shared mission.

Minitex Policy Advisory Council

Deanna Munson
Anoka Technical College

Chris Anning
Department of Revenue Library

Tami Lee
Minnesota State Library Services

Lisa German
University of Minnesota Libraries

Rachel Milani
Minnesota North College, Hibbing

Mary Soucie
North Dakota State Library

Beth Clausen
Metro State University

Keri Youngstrand
University of Minnesota, Crookston

Dan Daily
University of South Dakota

Ashley Dress
Southeast Library System (SELS)

Scott Duimstra
Hennepin County Library

George Seamon
South Dakota State Library

Allison Hackenmiller
Champlin Park High School

Stacey Lunsford
Traverse des Sioux Library System

Laura Benson
Minnesota Office of Higher Education

Madeline Jarvis
Two Harbors Public Library

Kim Dickson
Leech Lake Tribal College

Megan FitzGibbon
Minnesota Office of Higher Education

Emily Waitz
Northwestern Health Sciences
University

Johnna Horton
PALS

In Minnesota, thanks to funding from the federal government and the Minnesota State Legislature, we have a library system that benefits all our communities: urban, rural, and everywhere in between. That is because today, more than ever, Minitex excels at leveraging public funding to improve library services. By collaborating with libraries statewide and coordinating their work, we stretch hard-earned public funding to make them greater than the sum of their parts. Thanks to this central coordination, Minnesota boasts highly efficient library services that are recognized as a leader in the nation. These and other resources are available, at no direct cost, to all Minnesotans and Minnesota libraries. **This includes:**

- **MNLINK**, a single, integrated interlibrary loan system that sends resources to patrons wherever they are, be it Minneapolis or Pipestone.
- **eLibrary Minnesota (ELM)**, a core set of online databases for academic research that sets the foundation for academic success at all academic levels.
- **Ebooks Minnesota**, an online ebook collection for readers of all ages.
- **Minnesota Digital Library (MDL)**, a digital collection of historical and cultural materials from cultural heritage organizations across the state.

Minitex is entering its 55th year of operations, but we aren't sitting still. Over the past year, we significantly enhanced our services. **Major achievements consist of:**

- Transitioning **MNLINK** to a new, user-friendly platform.
- Increasing the reach and usage of **Ebooks Minnesota**, especially in schools.
- Celebrating 20 years of preserving the state's heritage with **MDL**, with its collection now exceeding 60,000 items.
- Responsibly integrating artificial intelligence features into **ELM** and offering new professional development opportunities to library staff on the topic of AI.
- Coordinating the launch of the **Minnesota Libraries Learning Network (MLLN)** to further support the continuing education of library workers
- Inaugurating the **Minitex Network for Open & Affordable Practices (MNOP)** in order to promote accessible educational resources.

Other key initiatives included the Shared Digital Collections for Schools program, successful Electronic Resources Minnesota and Upper Midwest Digital Collections conferences, and the expansion of the AskMN reference service.

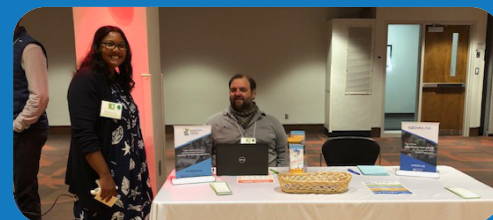
We would like to thank our principal funders: the U.S. Institute of Library and Museum Services, the Minnesota State Legislature, the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, and the Minnesota Department of Education; our administrative partners at the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Historical Society; and the more than 800 Minnesota libraries and cultural heritage organizations with whom we collaborate. Without these organizations, as well as our state-level partners in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin, our work would not have been possible.



As one MLAC era ends, another begins in a new state-of-the-art facility



Minnesota's revamped interlibrary loan service offers unparalleled access



Minitex Network for Open & Affordable Practices website now live

Maintaining access to Minnesota's library resources for years to come

FY25 saw the completed transition of MNLINK, Minnesota's statewide interlibrary loan service, to a new, user-friendly platform, integrating over 500 libraries and 25 library systems into a single, cost-effective resource-sharing system. The revamped MNLINK platform allows patrons to easily borrow millions of items, including books, movies, and articles, from across the state. The successful completion of this transition was a testament to the dedicated staff at Minitex and within the broader library community who collaborated on this complex project.

Increasing usage of a vital resource for Minnesotans

The Ebooks Minnesota service experienced another year of impressive growth, particularly in schools, where checkouts surged by 23% this year, building on last year's 25 percent rise. Ebooks Minnesota enriched its offerings over the past year by including Minnesota Book Award Winners and Minnesota Youth Reading Award titles. The program's unlimited simultaneous use model continues to benefit book clubs, facilitating widespread access to titles for readers of all ages while avoiding checkout limits.

Connecting people to Minnesota's history and culture for two decades

The Minnesota Digital Library (MDL) proudly celebrated its 20th anniversary in FY25, marking two decades of dedicated work preserving and sharing Minnesota's rich cultural and historical heritage. Since its inception in 2005, MDL's digital collection has grown to surpass 60,000 unique items, contributed by 209 organizations across 72 of Minnesota's 87 counties. MDL empowers students, researchers, genealogists, and curious citizens to connect with their local history and the broader story of Minnesota. Collaboration with contributors and expert digitization by staff at the University of Minnesota Libraries and the Minnesota Historical Society has enabled MDL to achieve its long-lasting success.

Embracing AI in library services

Minitex actively and carefully embraced the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into library services this year. New AI features were introduced in eLibrary Minnesota (ELM) databases, with Minitex assessing and testing tools from vendors like Britannica and EBSCO. A robust system is in place to monitor these developments, with a focus on patron privacy and ethical use. In addition, Minitex launched the "AI Knowledge Bytes: Artificial Intelligence in Libraries Lunch 'n Learn Series". This webinar series explored tangible applications and implementations of AI across all types of libraries in the Minitex region. Minitex is committed to monitoring technological advancements on behalf of the library community and equipping staff with the knowledge they need to take advantage of them.



FACT!

Via MNLINK, Minitex brings together the collections of more than 500 Minnesota libraries, including the University of Minnesota, into a single, searchable, online collection for all Minnesotans.

Launching the Minnesota Libraries Learning Network

FY25 saw the introduction of the Minnesota Libraries Learning Network (MLLN). This new collaborative initiative brings together workers from public, academic, school, and special libraries across Minnesota to share learning opportunities. MLLN coordinates training and builds essential skills and knowledge in Minnesota's library workforce. MLLN's training calendar offers free learning opportunities from local as well as national sources, and includes an asynchronous online course catalog.

Expanding access to affordable library resources

The Minitex Network for Open & Affordable Practices (MNOP) platform launched in FY25 to provide resources and information to support libraries as they adopt open educational resources (OER) and other affordable content initiatives. This new program reflects Minitex's dedication to making information more accessible and cost-effective for students and lifelong learners.

In addition, Minitex kicked off the Shared Digital Collections for Schools program in Fall 2024. This new project allows K-12 schools to pool their buying power to expand their ebook and audiobook collections.

Growing Minitex-curated resources and digital collections

Minitex and Minnesota Digital Library (MDL) staff continued their work curating new resources for Minnesota students and communities in FY25. Their work yielded eight new K12 Curriculum Resource Packs, joining six others from FY24 that align with Minnesota school standards on topics like STEM, elections, and much more. Meanwhile, MDL also published three primary source sets, five online exhibits, and an online map, and added or expanded 19 digital collections from contributing organizations.

Minitex-hosted conferences continue successful runs

The fifth edition of the Electronic Resources Minnesota (ERMN) Conference was a resounding success, attracting over 200 registrants from 25 states and two countries. This free, virtual event, hosted by Minitex in collaboration with the University of Minnesota Libraries, provides opportunities for professionals who acquire and manage e-resources to network, share best practices, participate in workshops, and learn from their peers.

Minitex also hosted the Upper Midwest Digital Collections Conference (UMDCC) for the sixth time since 2014. Program highlights included a keynote on augmented and virtual reality from Craig Stevens of Northwestern University, a hands-on digital preservation workshop, and a number of engaging sessions on a wide range of topics of interest to over 140 digital collections experts in the region and beyond.

Enlarging the AskMN network

Minitex's AskMN service, a 24/7 online reference service staffed by librarians, experienced considerable growth in FY25, expanding its network to 45 participating libraries. The expansion shows libraries' increasing need for reference support and the value such a service offers to the many Minnesotans seeking timely and expert assistance every day.

Creating a brand new hub for library data enthusiasts

FY25 also saw the development of a new group dedicated to Minnesota library data. The Minnesota Library Data Group brings professionals together to connect, share insights, and collaborate on projects, while fostering a data-informed approach to library services and planning in the state.

Shaping the eLibrary Minnesota selection process through community input and volunteers

Although the contracts for the current eLibrary Minnesota (ELM) portfolio run through June 2026, the selection process for the future ELM database collection began in FY25 with a community input survey. To begin ELM's process of renewal, Minitex sought feedback from library staff members on the existing databases and unmet needs. Minitex also solicited volunteers for a Shared E-Resources (SER) Task Force and is planning focus groups, conference sessions, and more in order to maintain ELM's status as a relied upon and essential collection of information resources.

Retiring the MN Writes MN Reads and Minnesota Libraries Publishing Project brands

In a strategic move to address branding confusion and simplify service delivery, Minitex retired these two brands in FY25. In both cases, although the brands themselves were phased out, their component services, including Minitex's statewide Pressbooks subscription and the free-to-access "Indie Minnesota" and "Indie Author Project Select" collections, remain available.

Transitioning the Minnesota Library Access Center storage to a new facility

FY25 was the end of an era for the Minnesota Library Access Center (MLAC), but a new one also began. Since 2001, MLAC has housed 1.5 million rarely circulating volumes in a high-density storage facility 90 feet below the University of Minnesota's Andersen Library. Now, MLAC's cavern will become a storage space for the University of Minnesota's Archives and Special Collections, while MLAC's collection moves to a state-of-the-art above-ground successor facility.

True stories from Minnesota libraries

Book Clubs

MNLINK allows our patrons to access materials on specialized subjects and interest areas that may not be available in our system. For example, one of our book clubs recently read a nonfiction book that was not held by any of the libraries in our own system. Through MNLINK we were able to get copies for everyone to read.

- Public Library, Northeast Minnesota

Community Colleges & Tech Schools

This story stands true for us and Minitex: That we offer the best for our students, and Minitex goes above and beyond to make sure we can do that.

-Academic Library, Northwest Minnesota

Healthcare

We obtain medical journal articles all the time that assist health providers in caring for patients.

- Public Library, Northeast Minnesota

Cost Savings: Public Library Collections

Some of our patrons have very unique tastes, and Minitex has enabled me to access materials for them that would strain my budget for a single use or two.

- Public Library, Northeast Minnesota

AskMN

Online reference service staffed by librarians 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

- Minnesota librarians answered 37,542 questions.
- 3 new Minnesota libraries joined the AskMN network this year, bringing the total to 45.



eLibrary Minnesota

Encyclopedia, magazine, journal, and newspaper articles, plus multimedia, primary sources, and more

- Minnesotans found over 12.4 million full-text items in ELM last year.
- Curious Minnesotans searched ELM over 50.5 million times.



Ebooks Minnesota

Minnesota's statewide ebook collection for readers of all ages

- The collection was viewed 297,197 times, an all-time high.
- Student checkouts rose 23% over the previous year.



Minnesota Digital Library

Historical content from Minnesota's cultural heritage organizations, all in one place

- MDL's digital collection topped 60,832 items, comprising 344,375 digital files.
- The collection represents 209 cultural heritage organizations from across Minnesota.



FACT!

In a typical year, Minitex supports more than 800 Minnesota libraries and cultural institutions.

Resource Sharing & Delivery

The rich resources of Minnesota libraries, available to patrons and libraries in every corner of Minnesota

- In many cases, filling or delivering a Minnesota library patron's loan request is only possible through Minitex.
- In FY25, Minitex staff filled a whopping 157,934 item requests and delivered over 370,374 items between Minnesota libraries and partners.



Cooperative Purchasing

Discounted prices on a wide variety of products for libraries

- Minnesota libraries saved \$3.02 million by purchasing electronic resources and library products, such as security systems, through Minitex.



Professional Development

Strengthening the knowledge, skills, and efficiency of staff in libraries throughout the Minitex region

- Minitex welcomed 5,858 attendees to 194 professional development opportunities in FY25.



Minitex Network for Open and Affordable Practices

Course materials support network

- Included 111 participants from 65 institutions in structured conversations about various topics related to open education resources.



Minnesota Library Storage

High-density storage for academic, public, and governmental libraries

- Minitex staff paged 10,534 items from the Minnesota Library Access Center (MLAC) to fill patron and participating library requests.



Connecting libraries, sharing resources, building community.

Our communications efforts serve as a bridge, connecting libraries and the communities they serve to essential resources, timely updates, and inspiring stories. Through social media, newsletters, and shared success stories, we amplify the voices of libraries, strengthen collaboration across our network, and help ensure that patrons everywhere have greater awareness and access to the resources enriching their communities.

A Snapshot



152,571 visits to our website
(~15% generated through social media)



11,327 followers across social media platforms
(Minitex specific: **1,229**, Minnesota Digital Library specific: **10,098**)



45,814 interactions across our platforms
(850,070 total accounts reached)



Launched an **Instagram account** @minitexmn
(97% of the way towards follower goal)



8,310 newsletter subscribers
(3,907 subscribed to the Minitex Messenger, 4,403 subscribed to the K12 Messenger)



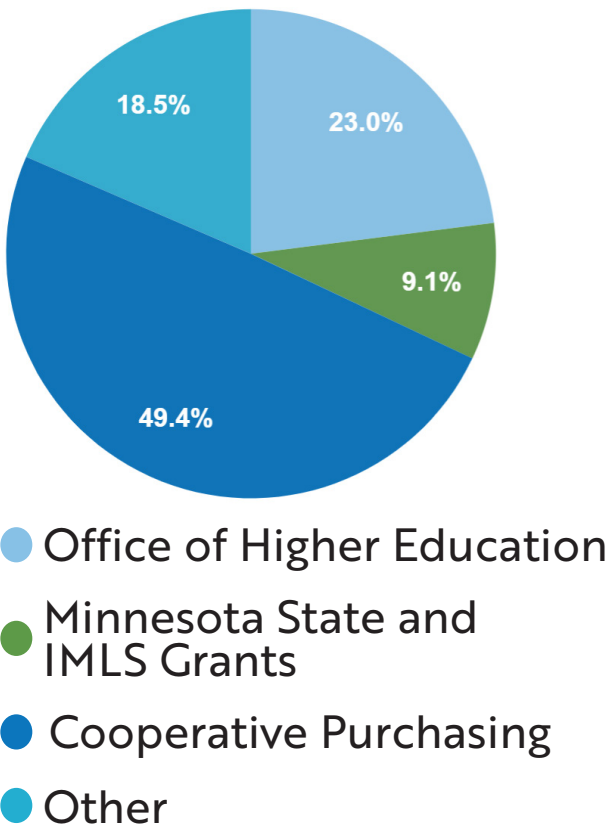
97,969 total newsletter opens
(47.2% open rate, 64,567 link clicks)

Minitex’s FY25 budget of \$24,974,887 was funded from multiple sources, including the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, grants administered by the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota Historical Society, partners in North Dakota and South Dakota, and the Minitex Cooperative Purchasing program. The State of Minnesota awarded an additional \$50,000 to offset the rising cost of e-resources, and a \$190,536 grant to fund special projects, including added professional development opportunities, increased accessibility to Minnesota Digital Library collections, equipment purchases, and MNLINK enhancements to support interlibrary loans. Minitex Cooperative Purchasing delivered cost savings of \$3.02 million for libraries and schools across Minnesota and \$4.3 million in total savings across the U.S.

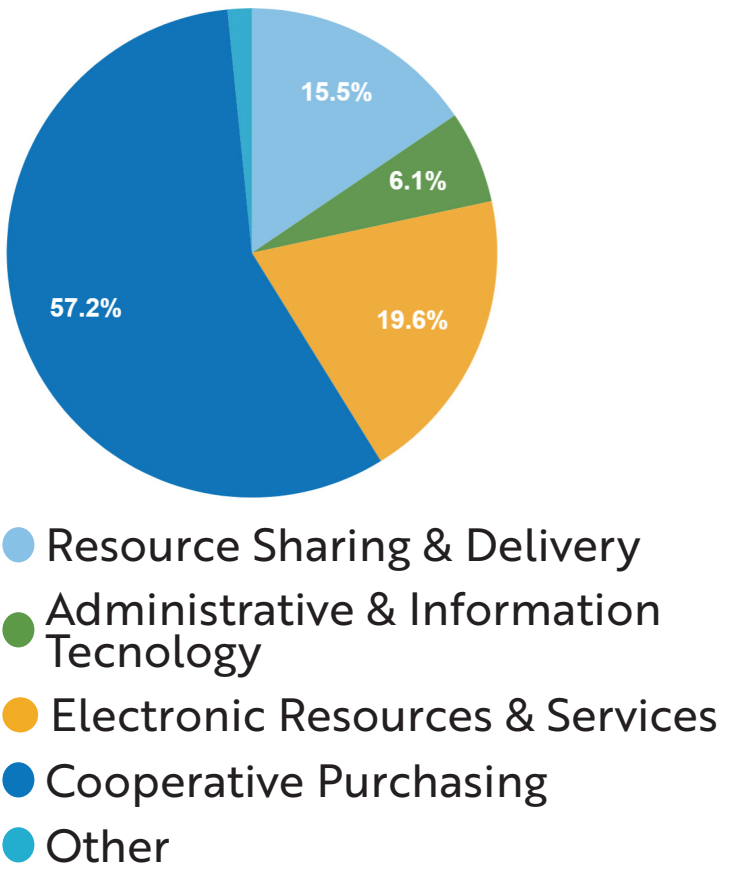
Funding

Minitex services are supported by funding from the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, the Minnesota Department of Education, and Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants administered by the State Library Services division of the Minnesota Department of Education. The U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) provides LSTA funds to the State of Minnesota through the Grants to States Program. Additional funding for Minnesota Digital Library comes from the people of Minnesota through an appropriation to the Minnesota Historical Society from the Minnesota Legacy Amendment’s Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Our Cooperative Purchasing program (CPERS) also funds the cost of databases and e-resources provided to the program participants, and provides a modest fee revenue. Minitex also maintains a healthy fund balance which helps to offset yearly increases in costs, and serves as a long-term strategic reserve to weather unexpected reduction in funding. Lastly, the University of Minnesota Libraries provided Minitex \$111,000 to provide interlibrary lending and borrowing of its resources.

Revenues



Expenses



Minitex

Strategic Priorities

Connect People to Information

We play a crucial role in promoting knowledge, creativity, and social interaction by demonstrating the value of public resources in fostering education and community development, personal productivity, and cultural engagement.



Books and Materials
Technology
Access

Connect People to Lifelong Learning

We support lifelong learning by building an active network of Minitex members to collectively provide services meeting educational needs of residents at every stage of life.



Student Success
Digital Equity
Continuing Education

Connect People to Resources

We ensure libraries have the capacity to respond to local needs and serve their communities by leveraging economies of scale.



Cooperative Purchasing
Outreach
Accessibility

Connect People to People

We create a more equitable environment for all by fostering collaboration, sharing resources, and promoting inclusivity.



Inclusiveness
Service
Partnership
Expertise

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

Phone: 612-624-4002
Fax: 612-624-4508

 OFFICE OF
HIGHER EDUCATION
 LIBRARIES
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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