

Minnesota Public Library Annual Report Snapshot

The following are statewide totals for public library resource and service measures during 2024.

In 2024...

Minnesota had twelve regional library systems, 144 public libraries, 358 library locations, and ten bookmobiles.

There were almost 3 million registered public library customers — 2.7 million people were registered at their local libraries, and almost 300,000 took advantage of reciprocal borrowing privileges at other libraries.

Public libraries employed 2,205 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members, including 901 FTE in librarian roles, and 1,304 FTE in other staff positions.

Minnesotans Came to the Library

In 2024, the average public library in Minnesota was open to the public almost 40 hours each week. During those hours, people visited libraries 17.5 million times in 2024.

Librarians engaged with customers 2 million times to provide information, readers' advice, technology help and referrals in-person, by phone and online.

All but one public library location in Minnesota offer wireless internet service. In 2024, people logged 17.8 million wireless sessions at the library. Public libraries offered 5,000 computers and mobile devices for use in the library; those computers and devices were used over 2 million times.

Libraries offered 59,000 programs such as author visits, book clubs, storytimes, and arts and culture events as well as training on digital literacy, starting a business, basic job skills, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programs for kids. Library programs attracted 1.2 million individuals of all ages.

- Over 30,000 children's programs, attended by an average of 23 children and caregivers
- 17,500 adult programs, attended by an average of 11 people
- 5,000 young adult programs, attended by an average of 10 teens

Seventy percent of library locations have rooms available for public meetings or study space. The public used those rooms to hold 175,000 meetings in public libraries across Minnesota in 2024.

Minnesotans Brought the Library Home

Minnesotans borrowed or downloaded public library materials 53.5 million times in 2024. That equates to about 9 checkouts per person.

Minnesotans brought home books, DVDs, and other physical items 37.5 million times, choosing from 14 million items to lend (not including over 14,000 magazines to browse):

- Libraries owned 12.3 million print materials, mostly books; over 1 million videos, mostly DVDs; about 600,000 physical audio materials, mostly audiobooks and music CDs; and 142,000 other materials like tools, cookware, sports equipment, mobile devices and mobile hotspots
- Children’s materials were checked out over 18 million times.

At home, at the library, or on the go, Minnesotans downloaded digital resources 16 million times, with an additional 4 million uses of research databases, newspapers, and other online information sources.

Minnesota public libraries provided 1 million interlibrary loans to other libraries and received 1.1 million interlibrary loans from other libraries nationwide.

Minnesotans Supported Their Local Libraries

Public libraries received \$282 million, or \$48.59 per capita, in operating revenue, mostly from local government, including:

- \$235 million from cities, counties, and other local government
- \$23.6 million from the state
- \$1.2 million from the federal government
- \$21.9 million from other sources

Public libraries spent \$270 million, or \$46.61 per capita, in operating expenditures.

- \$181.8 million for staff salaries and benefits, or 67.2% of total operating costs
- \$28.3 million for library collection materials, or 10.5% of total operating costs
- \$60.2 million for other operating expenses, or 22.3% of total operating costs

Public libraries received \$36.8 million in capital revenues.

- \$23 million from counties
- \$13 million from cities
- \$425,600 from other sources

Public libraries spent \$33.5 million in capital expenditures.

Minnesota Public Libraries – Five-Year Snapshot

	2020 ¹	2021	2022	2023	2024
Population Size Served ²	5,680,337	5,706,494	5,742,036	5,801,769	5,800,386
Number of Public Library Systems ³	140	141	141	145	144
Number of Public Library Branches (Outlets)	355	356	357	357	358
Number of Bookmobiles	10	9	9	9	10
Public Library Staffing					
Number of Full-Time Equivalent Librarians	860	860	867	880	901
Number of Full-Time Equivalent Staff	2,185	2,179	2,171	2,215	2,205
Staffing (FTEs) per 25,000 People	9.62	9.54	9.45	9.54	9.50
Librarians (FTEs) per 25,000 People	3.78	3.77	3.77	3.79	3.88
Operating Expenditures Per Person					
Staffing	\$26.55	\$26.95	\$27.75	\$29.14	\$31.34
Collections	\$4.60	\$4.72	\$4.79	\$4.82	\$4.89
Other	\$11.03	\$9.36	\$9.82	\$10.02	\$10.38
Public Library Financial Health					
Total Operating Revenue per Person	\$47.48	\$43.20	\$43.36	\$45.89	\$48.59
Total Operating Expenditures per Person	\$42.18	\$41.03	\$42.36	\$43.98	\$46.61
Resources, Service, and Usage¹					
Circulation per Person	5.65	7.59	8.45	8.85	9.22
Library Visits per Person	1.18	1.69	2.35	2.66	3.01
Reference Transactions per Person	0.23	0.27	0.32	0.34	0.35
Public-Access Computers per 5,000 People	4.80	3.60	3.57	3.41	3.40
Public-Access Computer Sessions per Person	0.19	0.22	0.30	0.34	0.37
Wireless Sessions per Person	0.51	1.02	1.54	2.30	3.08
Total Programs Offered per 1,000 People	4.12	4.10	7.29	9.61	10.21
Total Program Attendance per 1,000 People	64.62	81.61	141.41	188.22	208.73

¹ Measures of service and usage were deeply affected in 2020 by restrictions to public movements due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

² State population totals are based on the previous year (for example, FY2024 data pairs with state population estimate for 2023) due to timing delay between when public library data is collected and state demographer's totals are released.

³ Previous snapshots have not included Metropolitan State Library Agency (MELSA), Plum Creek Library System (PCLS), Traverse des Sioux (TdS), Southeastern Library Cooperating (SELCO), which are not included on the Public Libraries Survey.