

LIBRARIES MINNESOTA TRANSFORM™

Support for HF1382/SF1033

Minnesota faces a series of challenges affecting future economic health, including but not limited to:

1. A statewide educational achievement gap between white students and students of color
2. An increase in the number of jobs requiring at least a high school diploma
3. An aging population

These are challenges that Minnesota's libraries are uniquely positioned to address and solve. In the last year, services provided by Minnesota public libraries include:

- Free story time programs, typically based upon principles and practices identified with development of pre-literacy skills, occur in public libraries throughout the entire state and are available to all.
- In collaboration with State Library Services, Minnesota public libraries are implementing the principles of the ConnectED program – automatically linking students, staff, and faculty in many school districts with public library resources in their area.
- Through the efforts of regional public library systems, Minnesota public libraries offer summer reading programs that help students in retain literacy skills over summer months. Over half of these programs now include math, science, art and history-focused activities. These programs help students sharpen critical thinking skills during the summer months.
- Public libraries hosted over 69,000 public events in 2016. Two-thirds of public libraries in Minnesota maintain public meeting spaces for community organizations and groups.

In the last year, libraries have seen:

- Overall growth in number of Minnesotans using state library services.
- Over four million more individual uses of the internet in public libraries between 2015 and 2016. These involve both use of library equipment and library wireless networks for connecting personal devices.
- The addition of nearly 150 public computers to accommodate this growth in demand. Public libraries services include the staff resources necessary to help people use this technology.
- Nearly 100,000 more people attending over 69,000 different library programs in 2016 than in 2015.

While the need and demand for library services have grown, funding hasn't kept pace. Overall funding of libraries across the state needs to increase.

State funding is essential. Stable state-wide systems make it possible for libraries to be more efficient and effective.

The 12 Regional Public Library System Governing Boards in Minnesota have unanimously endorsed this funding increase and formula change. The proposed \$3 million increase would provide the appropriate amount of money to meet the rising costs of services, along with the growing and changing needs of library patrons. The formula change is essential because it will result in a stable source of funding for all Minnesota's libraries.