Lexington Public Library
Report to the Lexington City Council
March 2026

FY2025 was eventful at the Lexington Public Library. From travelling to library conferences and hosting community events and receiving a national grant, to a broken sprinkler head and the dissolution of a long-time book vendor, the library and its staff kept calm and carried on. Baker & Taylor, book vendor and statistical report platform curator, went out of business in October of 2025. The Nebraska Library Commission then created its own statistical report survey and made it available on January 26, 2026. It is normally available in November. Nebraska state statute 51-213 states: **The library board shall, on or before the second Monday in February in each year, make a report to the city council or village board or to the county or township board of the condition of its trust on the last day of the prior fiscal year.** However, the delay in the release of the survey also delayed this report.

Library Services

More than statistics, the stories of the past year help to define the services and resources the Library provides to the community. Weekly story time is a favorite program of Children & Family Services Librarian, Rocio Casanova. With a core group of families, the littles are comfortable in the library and moms find a time to socialize and to engage with their kiddos. Offering free hugs, smiles and laughter, the littles love Rossy. One mom specifically requested Wednesdays off so that she can attend story time with her child. From singing a favorite song to listening to stories and practicing with glue sticks and scissors, story time is not just a favorite of library staff, but a favorite of our patrons, too.

A popular adult program was the Creative Aging Arts Program held in May and June This 6-week program focuses on older adults and emphasizes a social and an art component. Rose Mapel taught participants pottery while also engaging each other in conversation and learning. A final event/art show was held where participants could show off their artistry and visit with friends and family. It's a powerful statement for someone who is 97 to start a new venture. It isn't just about the project itself-it's about curiosity, dignity, and possibility. Participants are saying essentially, "I'm still learning. I'm still growing. I'm still here." The fact that the library can spark that is a reminder that the Lexington Public Library is much more than a building full of books. It's a launchpad for exploration, learning, and community.

In June 2025 the Library was notified of its $5000 award of the NEA-Big Read grant. This federal grant derives 100% of its funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. Along with the federal funds, the Lexington Community Foundation's Library Initiative Grant matched another $5000. The grant subsidizes a variety of programs, book clubs, and a community art project centered around the Big Read and One Book, One Lexington title, *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck.

A Few Statistics

The library had 31,425 visits in 2025 and circulated 25,376 physical items, an increase of 6,463 items. Electronic circulation also saw an increase from 11,159 to 11,262 in FY 2025. The Library held 363 programs in which 6,974 people attended. The Library received $19,167 in grants and other revenue which provided for the purchase of system upgrades, programming, and book purchases for the Golden Sower Book Club, as well as other library initiatives.

Collections

YEAR	BOOKS	AUDIO	PERIODICALS	VIDEO	DOWNLOADABLE	OTHER	TOTAL
2023	41,694	3,522	34	2,147	69,790	652	117,839
2024	43,171	3,520	32	2,192	71,173 + BSU	655	120,743
2025	34,910	2,419	32	1,504	77,786 + BSU	657	117,308
2025-2024	**-8,261**	**-1,101**	**0**	**-688**	**+6,613**	**+2**	**-3,435**

Successes & Challenges

With the many challenges facing Lexington as a result of the Tyson closure, the Library remains a vital and trusted City entity. Library staff, especially our talented bilingual staff members, have been on the front lines helping people try to navigate unemployment, to explore training opportunities, and by just being a listening ear. The Library was the site of several potential employers in the months of December and January, offering hope and a way forward to people who lost their jobs. Community partners have utilized the Library for appointments with clients seeking help with medical insurance, food aid, and other resources. Hundreds of former Tyson employees showed up at the Library one afternoon when rumor that Senator Theresa Ibach was going to be at the Library. With professionalism and aplomb, Rocio conveyed that the Senator was not, in fact, at the Library while other staff handed out surveys asking about most immediate needs and shared information about the Community Relief Fund.

The Lexington Public Library was recognized with the 2025 Friend of Tourism Award by the Lexington Area Chamber of Commerce. We were surprised and truly honored by the acknowledgement. Additionally, the Library received a $10,000 gift from the Carnegie Foundation of New York as part of their America 250 celebration. Patrons and the Friends of the Library would like to use the funds to create a Story Walk® in a local park.

Looking Forward

More programs and workshops are scheduled for this spring associated with the Big Read project along with several America 250 programs. The Library will continue to serve the community's needs to the best of its ability. Whether by making the building more accessible for people with disabilities or reaching an underserved community, the Lexington Public Library is driven to be a vital resource and a place for everyone. Because "Welcome to the Library. We're glad you're here.", isn't just a slogan, it's who we are.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Norton
Lexington Public Library
Director