

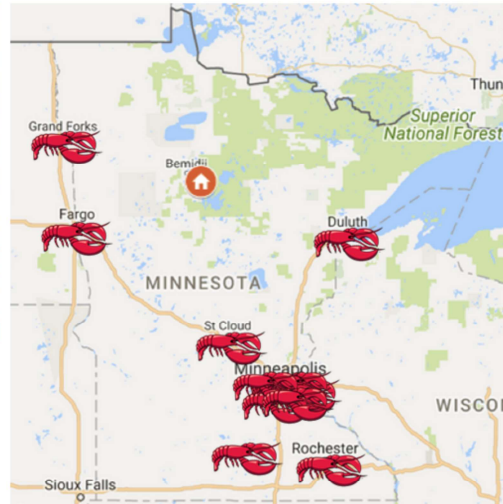


## Public Libraries & the 2020 Census

Hannah Buckland | State Library Program Specialist

March 19, 2020

## Background Information

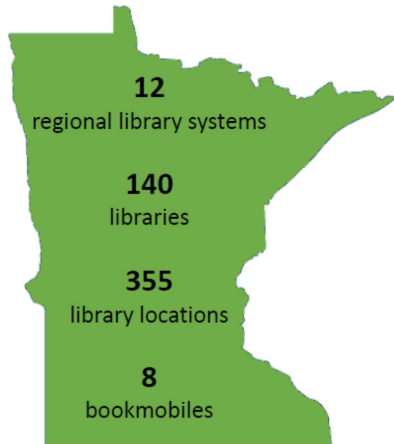


### State Library Services:

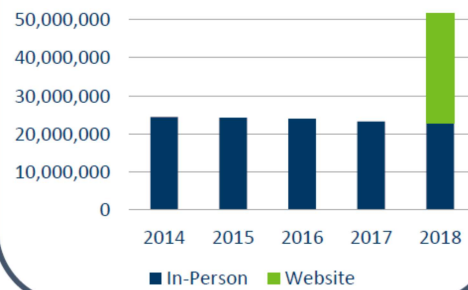
- Dept. of Education
  - 5 staff in Roseville
  - 9 staff in Faribault at MN Braille & Talking Book Library
- Administer federal and state aid to support libraries of all types

I spent 4.5 years as the Director of Library Services at Bezhigoogahbow Library on the Leech Lake Tribal College Campus in Leech Lake Nation in the town of Cass Lake. Cass Lake is rural, and by “rural,” I mean it’s over 100 miles from the nearest Red Lobster restaurant. I current work as a State Library Program Specialist with State Library Services. State Library Services is a division of the MN Department of Education responsible for administering federal and state aid to support all types of libraries.

# Minnesota's Public Libraries



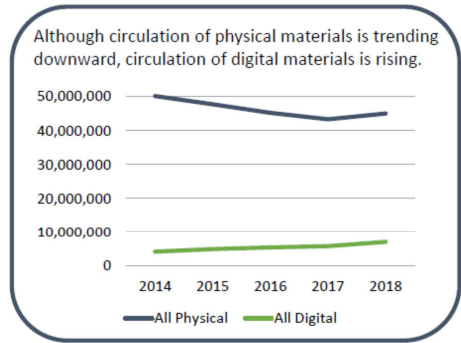
As in-person visits to libraries decrease, library website visits offer a different look at how patrons are accessing library services.



This data is from the 2018 annual public library reports. The decrease in in-person visits we're seeing in Minnesota is a national trend.

# Books & More

 7 out of 10 Minnesotans have library cards.



Here's what they can borrow:



13,571,178 print items  
751,202 ebooks



1,066,321 videos  
35,784 digital videos



800,990 audio items  
202,363 digital audiobooks



...and 143,900+ other things, like  
hotspots, cake pans, and kits

Minnesota has a higher proportion of residents with library cards than most states.

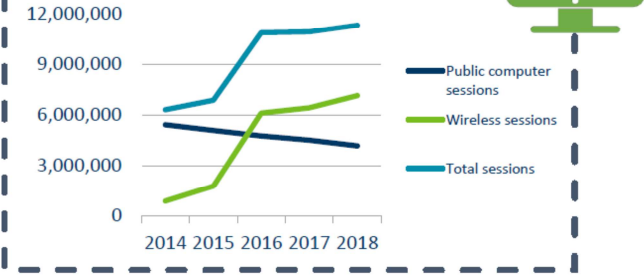
# Digital Inclusion



### What's Available?

- ✓ 5,739 public computers
- ✓ 963 mobile devices
- ✓ 99% have free wifi
- ✓ 215 locations with download speeds of 50+ Mbps

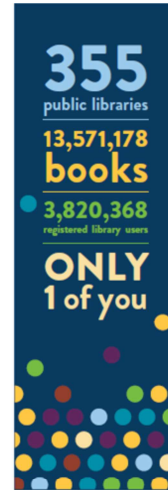
More patrons are using their own devices to access libraries' Internet connections.



Along with providing access to computer and the internet, libraries also answer a very wide range of patron questions about using technology.

## State Library Services & State Demographic Center

1. Provided in-person Census workshops to 250+ librarians and Adult Basic Education instructors
2. Shipped 49,200 bookmarks
3. Registered libraries as Questionnaire Assistance Centers
  - Designated locations where people can complete their census and receive assistance as needed
  - Basic training and resource guide provided to all



### Be counted in the 2020 Census

Starting mid-March 2020

Census data determines funding for community programs, including support for your local library.

Complete the census online, over the phone, or by mailing in your paper form. For help with your form, please find the closest questionnaire assistance center at: [mn.gov/2020census/QAC](http://mn.gov/2020census/QAC)

For questions, text 662020 / MN2020 or visit [mn.gov/2020census](http://mn.gov/2020census)



State Library Services and State Demographic Center began working together in November 2019.

# Communication: Great River Regional Library



**GRRL** Great River Regional Library  
March 12 at 7:25 AM · 📍

Census invitations will begin arriving this week. Check your mail and be counted! Learn more: <https://griver.org/library-news/complete-the-census-here>



**#COUNTONLIBRARIES**  
U.S. Census 2020

GRIVER.ORG  
**Complete the Census Here | Great River Regional Library**

Leading for educational excellence and equity, every day for every one. | [education.mn.gov](http://education.mn.gov)

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Great River Regional Libraries consists of 32 libraries located in 6 counties in Central Minnesota. The system is headquartered in Saint Cloud. The ability to communicate with a large audience is a strength public libraries bring to Census operations.

## Professionalism: Anoka County Library



**2020 CENSUS**  
**DID YOU KNOW?**  
**Anoka County LIBRARY Staff**  
are trained to offer assistance.



Anoka County Library consists of 9 branches. Professionalism is another strength of libraries in this work. Librarians have training in providing customer service and in helping people find the information they need. All libraries registered as QACs received Census training.

## Trust: Grand Marais Public Library



### Library Is Census Questionnaire Assistance Center

Mar 09, 2020 03:26PM • By Editor

Minnesota Public Libraries are cooperating with the Minnesota State Demographic Center to create a network across the state to provide Minnesotans with the resources and assistance they need to submit their 2020 Census form. Commented Grand Marais Public Library Director Amanda St. John, "Library staff are not Census Bureau employees. Our aim is ensuring everyone who wants to access the survey can."

Grand Marais Public Library is the only public library in Cook County. Public libraries are trusted community organizations. People may be wary of completing the Census due to federal government distrust. Trust on a very local level – between a community member and a library worker – is more likely, and this trust can help encourage a person to complete their Census form.

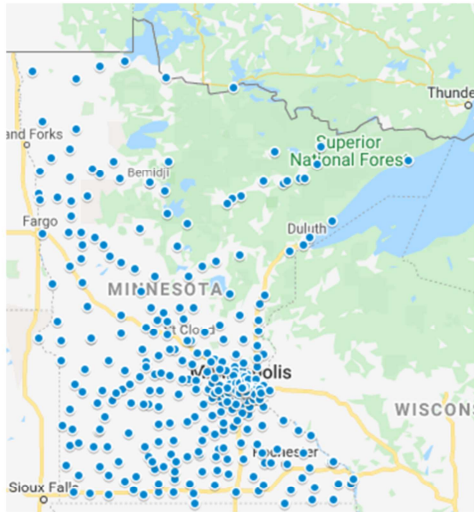
## Local Pride: Tracy Public Library



*Beginning on March 12, 2020, you'll be invited to respond to the 2020 Census. Visit this website to complete the questionnaire. Tracy Public Library is proud to be a Question Assistance Center for the Census.*

Tracy Public Library is located in a town of about 2,000 people. By participating as a QAC, they can demonstrate the value of the library in connecting their rural community to a larger, nationwide cause.

## March 11: Libraries as QACs



345 libraries total are QACs

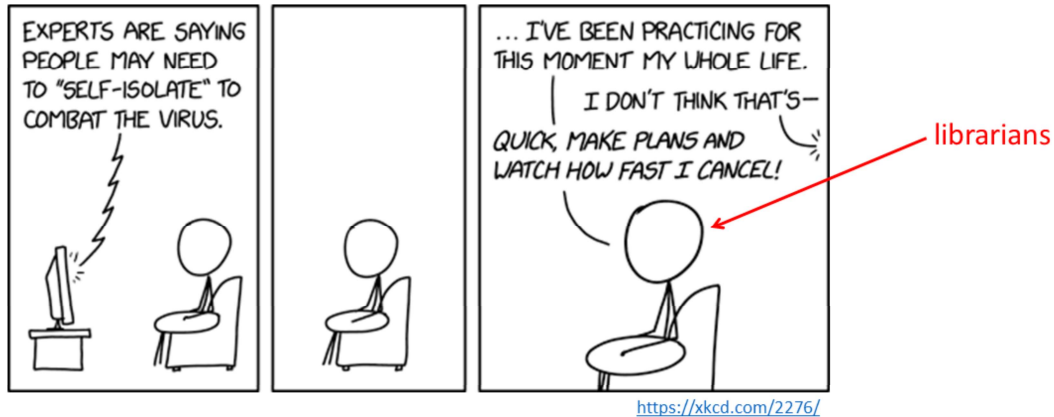
- 330 public libraries are QACs
- 15 academic libraries are QACs
- At least 1 in each of MN's 87 counties

89% (345/389) of all QACs are libraries

- Libraries represent 74% (109/148) of all Metro QACs
- Libraries represent 98% (236/241) of all Greater MN QACs

This data was current as of March 11. So, so proud of all our libraries!

## March 15 – 18: An Important Change of Plans



<https://xkcd.com/2276/>

On March 15, in response to the exponential spread of confirmed COVID-19 cases, Governor Walz issued an executive order closing K12 schools. To protect library workers and community members, over 340 of Minnesota's 355 public library locations temporarily closed. Closure – especially long-term, indefinite closure – is a very difficult decision for libraries to make. When I worked at Bezhigoogahbow Library, we always tried to ground our work in the 7 Anishinaabe values: humility, wisdom, courage, trust, honesty, respect, and love. I see these values reflected in the decision public libraries are making to close. Despite my use of a comic on this slide, the COVID-19 pandemic is incredibly serious. Closing public libraries reduces the availability of public gathering spaces, which in turn reduces the likelihood of COVID-19 being transmitted. Librarians are demonstrating courage and wisdom and humility and love as they help protect their communities by temporarily closing libraries.

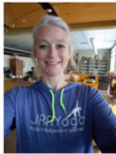
## All East Central Regional Library locations are closed.

The digital library is open 24/7.



Bemidji Public Library  
March 17 at 1:09 PM

The Library will be open on a limited basis for curbside book pick up only starting on Thursday! Please check our facebook page for more information tomorrow!



### Pipestone

If you come to our door to pick up your curbside delivery of materials, you may find our staff dressed very casually.

Just know that business casual doesn't mean lack of professionalism. In fact, we are dedicated to helping our community navigate these challenging times in any way we can. Some of us just prefer to do so in ponytails and yoga gear.

gear.

Library Staff are here to help!  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18 THRU MARCH 30,  
THE COMMUNITY BUILDING WILL BE  
CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.

### CALL US!

- TO REQUEST AND PICK UP ITEMS, JUST CALL 218-685-6850. WE WILL GET THEM READY FOR YOU. PARK IN THE DESIGNATED SPOTS ON THE SOUTH FRONT SIDE OF THE BUILDING. CALL WHEN YOU ARRIVE, AND WE WILL COME PLACE THEM NEAR YOUR CAR FOR YOU TO GRAB.
- THE BOOK RETURN WILL REMAIN OPEN. PLEASE RETURN ITEMS THERE AND NOT AT CURBSIDE.
- WIFI WILL STILL BE AVAILABLE NEAR THE BUILDING.
- ALL ITEMS WILL CHECK OUT FOR 8 WEEKS. ALL ITEMS THAT WERE DUE BETWEEN 3/17/20 AND 4/6/20 HAVE BEEN RENEWED TO 5/12/20. OVERDUE AND HOPLA WILL BE EXTENDING THE # OF CHECKOUTS PER MONTH. MORE DETAILS TO COME.



Thorson Memorial Library  
library@elbowlakelibrary.org 218-685-6850

Elbow Lake

In support of the ongoing effort to fight the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the Rock County Community Library will be suspending inside services as of Wednesday, March 18th, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. until further notice.

The good news is we will be offering curbside pickup, with full-time staff on duty. To utilize this service do one of the following options:

- Place your own holds online via [www.plumcreeklibrary.org](http://www.plumcreeklibrary.org)
- Call (507) 449-5040 or email [rocklibrarystaff@gmail.com](mailto:rocklibrarystaff@gmail.com) with your requests

When your items are ready you will receive a call requesting your name and library card number, along with the date and time of pick up. Pick up will be on the south side by outside drop box. You may call, honk, or knock when you arrive and we will see that you get your items.

**\*Special delivery will be available for seniors only.\***

Please call the number above for an appointment, if you are registering for:  
-Unemployment  
-2020 Census Assistance

Thank you for your patience during these uncertain times. We hope everyone stays healthy!

Sincerely,  
The Rock County Community Library Staff

Photos from Rock County Community Library's post

Timeline Photos

Rock County

Already, libraries are responding to closure with resilience. Many are promoting their digital resources like ebooks and are seeing a sharp increase in circulation of digital materials. Some libraries are offering curbside delivery, so patrons can receive physical library materials without entering the library itself. Public libraries are keeping their wifi on 24/7 so that people can bring their own devices and use this connection from outside of the building. Phone and email assistance are still available at many libraries.

# Creativity



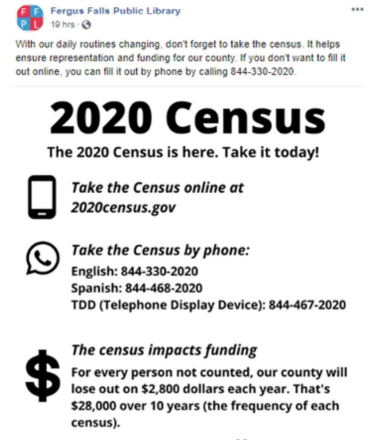
Saint Paul



Cannon Falls



Martin County



Fergus Falls

Libraries are developing creative solutions to engage with their communities. Saint Paul Public Library is hosting story times on Facebook. Cannon Falls Public Library is recording their weekly balance and chair cardio classes for seniors. Martin County Library is holding a virtual Lego challenge, encouraging patrons to share pictures of their Lego creations. Not long after announcing their temporary closure, Fergus Falls Public Library continued promoting Census completion via their Facebook page.

### Priorities:

1. Safety
2. Basic access
  - Curbside delivery
  - Hotspot lending
  - Digital materials
3. In-building services



These comments are based off only four days' worth of observation. In this evolving situation, everything is subject to change:

Safety is the top priority right now. Libraries cannot fully reopen until they can guarantee a safe space for staff and for patrons, i.e. a space where COVID-19 is unlikely to be spread between individuals. Once libraries can re-establish and maintain safe spaces for staff, they can begin offering basic services -- like curbside delivery, hotspot lending, and access to digital materials -- that don't require patrons to enter the library building. Once libraries can re-establish and maintain safe spaces for both staff and patrons, then they can reopen buildings to the public.

COVID-19 changes the mechanisms through which libraries will support Census completion. It does not change the values that libraries uphold. The solutions libraries devise will be grounded in these values.

# Thank you!

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