

## **Report from the State Librarian Catherine Delneo to the Vermont Board of Libraries**

October 8, 2024

### **Department Staffing Update**

On October 21<sup>st</sup>, the Department will welcome a new Grants Specialist who will support the capital projects.

The Department is recruiting for a Program Technician II for the ABLE library and hopes to welcome a new staff member to that team within the next month.

October 15<sup>th</sup> will be April Shaw's final day with the Department. April has done great work in providing reference services and support for State of Vermont staff in her role as Government Services Consultant. During her time in that role, April has also grown and shepherded the interlibrary library loan and courier program and served as the lead on the courier grants to public libraries. April will be missed by the whole team, who wish her well as she moves to a new role in the Agency of Digital Services.

### **Public Library Capital Projects Update**

The Department announced the recipients of \$15.9 million dollars in competitive grant monies to 14 public libraries in Vermont with funding from the U.S. Department of the Treasury through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) on September 30, 2024. The awards are spread across 11 of Vermont's counties and will support public libraries in communities of different sizes in providing internet access for the purposes of work, education, and telehealth.

The press release issued by the Department garnered the attention of numerous media outlets.

[https://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/documents/Treasury\\_Capital\\_Projects\\_Fund\\_Press\\_Release.pdf](https://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/documents/Treasury_Capital_Projects_Fund_Press_Release.pdf)

In the upcoming weeks the Capital Projects staff will build out reimbursement and reporting mechanisms, then will train subrecipients of these federal funds to requesting reimbursements for program costs and to report per the federal requirements. The team is supported by Guidehouse as it develops these materials and implements this phase of the grant program.

Following that effort, the Department will begin building out the \$10M Public Facilities Preservation Initiative Grants administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Department plans to launch the application for that capital grant program in 2025.

The Department plans to create distinct webpages for the Treasury and HUD grant programs later this month.

### **Capital for a Day: Washington, Caledonia, and Orleans Counties**

State Librarian Delneo, Assistant State Librarian Janette Shaffer, and Consultant for Youth Services Jonathan Clark visited the Brown Public Library in Northfield on August 7<sup>th</sup>.

State Librarian Delneo and Joy Worland, Consultant for Small and Rural Libraries and Continuing Education, visited Davies Memorial (Lower Waterford), Peacham, and Barnet public libraries in Caledonia County on August 27<sup>th</sup>. Davies Memorial Library is notable as it is an “honor system” library, where community members frequently access the building when it is unstaffed and check out materials. State Librarian Delneo and Assistant State Librarian Tom McMurdo visited the Haskell (Derby Line), Rand Memorial (North Troy), Barton, and Glover public libraries in Orleans County September 26<sup>th</sup>. McMurdo and Delneo and also visited the North Country High School, including the small school library.

Capital for a Day events in other counties will be announced by the Governor’s Office.

### **ABLE Library**

The staff of the ABLE Library are engaged in an outreach effort to update patron records. The ABLE library has close to 1,000 patrons, all of whom have been asked to confirm their patron privacy choices in writing. Patron privacy choices include whether they wish to share their library records with the National Library Service, whether they wish to have their reading history retained, and whether they wish to authorize other individuals to have access to their ABLE library record. Most of the roughly 320 respondents who have returned their forms to the ABLE library have opted in to sharing their records with NLS and retaining their reading history.

The Department is also focused on protecting the right to privacy of all ABLE patrons, including youth. The NLS recently issued a directive that a parent or guardian signature is required for all youth under age 18 to use their service. This directive conflicts with Vermont’s library patron records statute (22 V.S.A. § 171-173). The Department is committed to serving Vermonters who qualify for service through the ABLE Library and NLS and is in dialog with NLS to find a resolution that conforms with state law.

### **Budget Preparation**

The Department’s budget fiscal year 2025 budget comprises 56% General Funds, and 38% federal funds through the Library Services Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to States to States program of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and donor designated funds (most significantly the Smith Fund, which supports youth services).

Department leadership is working with Agency of Administration Finance staff to develop the Department’s fiscal year 2026 budget. Departments have been instructed to build a budget with 3% growth. Given the rising costs of staff salaries and benefits, work orders with other departments, and contracts, this is proving to be a challenging exercise.

Vermont’s exact LSTA allocation will not be known in time for budget preparation, so is projected based on recent allocations. Unfortunately, the overall Grants to States allocation has *decreased* slightly in the past year, from \$1,247,111 in federal fiscal year 2023 to \$1,244,357 in federal fiscal year 2024. The funds from IMLS are support the Department’s efforts as articulated in its 2023-2027 Five-Year Plan.

<https://www.ims.gov/grants/grants-state/state-profiles/vermont>