

2024 Annual Report

Dakota County Library

Dakota County Library now has 10 locations. In February 2024, we opened Kaposia Library with a spectacular celebration acknowledging the indigenous ties for the city. As the year progressed, it has been great to see how enthusiastically the community has adopted the new county library.

Self-Service Hours now offered at all 10 locations. This program, which gives registered users access to the building from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. seven days a week, allows people to use the library when it is convenient for them. I had the opportunity to observe Self-Service Hours following a community meeting and witnessed a family in the children's area choosing books, two people each using a computer and one person sitting in a chair reading a book. It was exactly what we had envisioned.

Much of last year was focused on developing the new strategic plan for the library. We gathered input from both staff and the community using several different methods. Reviewing what we learned led us to develop a plan with three goals around improving customer and staff experience in the library, continuing to develop a diverse collection of materials and raising the awareness of the library. I'm excited to begin working on the strategies we identified to drive us toward achieving these goals.

It is always an honor to welcome a new artist to our artist-in-residence program as it gives us a chance to explore and learn about an artist and their work. We had our second artist in residence in 2024, Marlena Myles. Through a series of events, we learned more about the Dakota people past, present and future.

Last year, we also received a Library Services and Technology grant to help us connect with specific communities in the county and offer bilingual story times. The grant made it possible to develop three bilingual story trails and 10 cultural play spots. All this work enabled us to connect in a culturally authentic way with the community and help foster a sense of belonging at Dakota County Library.

At Dakota County Library, inclusivity is built into everything we do. You can see it in the materials on the shelves, the events we offer and even how we design our spaces. Everyone should feel welcome at their library.

Sincerely,
Margaret Stone, Library Director



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



2024 by the numbers

Resources & Expenditures

- Staff: 130.2 FTE
- Budget: \$17,295,124
- Personnel: \$12,490,818
- Library Materials: \$2,478,175
- Technology, Programs, & Services: \$2,326,131



5.9 million
Wi-Fi sessions



5.8 million
checkouts



1.59 million
visits to the library website and catalog



1.58 million
in-person visits



501,336
uses of online research tools



160,480
library card holders used their card in the past two years



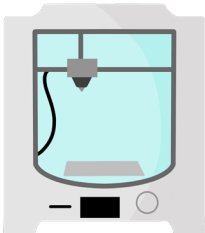
145,611
internet computer sessions



76,487
people attended **2,401** events



18,287
meeting room reservations



8,490
iLAB Creative Space reservations



7,170
books given out at Summer Discovery



5,456
Self-Service Hours Customers

2024 highlights

New Strategic Plan

We are thrilled to share the library's Strategic Plan with a vision for the next three years that will enhance library services, introduce fresh initiatives and strengthen our community impact.

The Dakota County Board of Commissioners provided direction, and community and staff feedback shaped goals and strategies. More than 11,500 community members provided input through a survey and library staff facilitated one-on-one and small group conversations about our planning at 35 events.

The plan has three goals:

GOAL ONE

Cultivate belonging by creating equitable and joyful experiences.

GOAL TWO

Deliver accessible and enriching collections that are responsive to people's diverse interests and needs.

GOAL THREE

Increase awareness about the library's many offerings.

The full Library Strategic Plan, along with information about the process and community input, is available at www.dakotacounty.us/library, search strategic plan.

2024 highlights

Kaposia Library Opening

On Feb. 20, 2024, we celebrated the grand opening of the new Kaposia Library, the county's first new library location in 15 years and the Library's 10th location.

During the celebration, Dakota County Board Chair Joe Atkins recognized former Commissioner Kathleen Gaylord, South St. Paul Mayor Jimmy Francis and city council members for their years-long pursuit of a new library, along with support from South St. Paul Public Schools and federal partners.

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar applauded Dakota County and cities like South St. Paul for meeting the community's needs. "Every time a kid reads a new book or gets interested in reading and gets off their phone and actually learns new things, you've got to remember that's our purpose as citizens — to continue this tradition and pass on this torch of learning," she said.

U.S. Rep. Angie Craig thanked city and county leaders for supporting public libraries, especially for children in the community.

Andy Vig, a member of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community and director of the tribe's cultural center, Hocokata Ti, welcomed visitors to the library in the Dakota language. The name Kaposia honors the Mdewakanton Dakota people and their seasonal village along the Mississippi River in the area of South St. Paul and St. Paul.

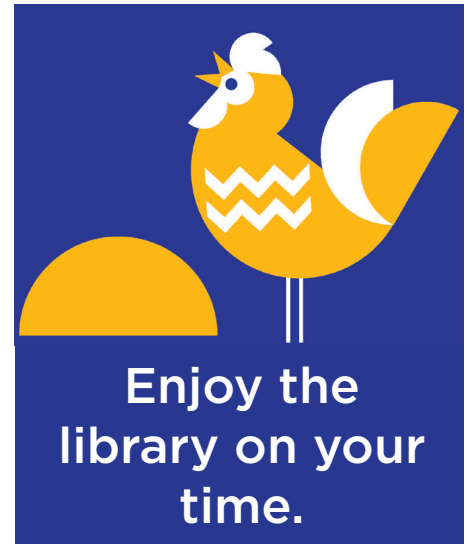


2024 highlights

Self-Service Hours

By the end of summer 2024, all library locations offered Self-Service Hours. Registered customers can access library spaces from 6 a.m.–11 p.m., before and after staffed hours, seven days a week, including holidays. More than 5,000 customers registered to use the library.

Many customers reported a benefit to using the library on their schedule, whether for studying, group meetings or picking up materials. A particularly impactful outcome of Self-Service Hours is benefit to individuals with autism spectrum disorder, sensory processing disorders and other disabilities who benefit from using the library in a quiet, less-crowded environment.



Inver Glen Library Wins City Sustainability Award

The City of Inver Grove Heights selected the Inver Glen Library for special recognition for the Sustainable Inver Grove Heights awards. The city council and the city's Environmental Advisory Commission recognized the library's commitment to developing and partnering with other local organizations to host free and low-cost events and services promoting sustainability. The library worked with partners to offer Puzzle and Board Game Swaps, Fix-It Clinics, Organics Drop Off location, Friends of the Library second-hand books sales and more.



First annual Flag Day Celebration

The library partnered with Dakota County Veterans Services for a Flag Day celebration at the Kasposia Library featuring a flag training, free flags and musical performance by Charlie Maguire. More than 30 participants learned more about services provided by Dakota County Veterans Services and the Northern Dakota County Beyond the Yellow Ribbon.

2024 highlights

Our Heritage, Our Library LSTA Grant

Dakota County Library worked on fostering a sense of belonging and representation for Somali, Latinx and Indian families through a Library Sciences and Technology Act grant, which funded culturally meaningful play spaces, bilingual storytimes and bilingual Story Trails.

Over the grant period, the library hosted 18 bilingual storytimes in English, Somali, Spanish and Bengali languages led by community storytellers who tailored their sessions to be welcoming and culturally and linguistically relevant. An estimated 25 percent of the attendees were first-time library visitors, and all of the event survey respondents felt welcomed — indicators of success of this inclusive approach.

The grant also supported the creation of three bilingual Story Trails and 10 culturally informed play kits featuring a paleta truck, a tuktuk, tea house, bakery and tailor. The kits rotate among all 10 library locations ensuring children and families see themselves and can learn about their neighbors in library spaces.



Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon

Minnesotans have always understood that elections truly matter, and our state has consistently been a national leader in voter turnout, election reform and ballot integrity. Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon spoke at the Burnhaven Library in August about his commitment to protecting and strengthening the security and fairness of our elections process. The event was sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Dakota County and Dakota County Elections. More than 50 people attended.

2024 highlights

Library Locations Become Naloxone Access Points

Dakota County Public Health partnered with the Steve Rummler Hope Network to launch naloxone access points at five library locations: Burnhaven, Kaposia, Farmington, Pleasant Hill and Wentworth. These locations provide anonymous access to naloxone and fentanyl test strips, helping combat opioid overdoses and save lives.

Library staff play a simple yet vital role — distributing kits upon request to those in need and tracking distribution. This partnership is one demonstration of the library's commitment to community well-being by leveraging its role as a trusted public space.

Artist in Residence Marlena Myles

We were pleased to host 2024 Artist in Residence events featuring critically acclaimed Dakota artist Marlena Myles. Participants learned about the past, present and future of the Dakota people through events centered on the themes of connectedness and hope for the future.

Myles will create an artistic map of the Dakota County area and a cradleboard art piece symbolizing well wishes for the next generation. It will be permanently displayed at Kaposia Library.



Over \$2.1 million in value to local businesses

The library provided more than \$2.1 million in value to Dakota County entrepreneurs and small businesses in 2024. That support came through workshops, research services, access to work and meeting spaces, and technology. The library used the Urban Library Council's Business Value Calculator to identify the value.