

MEMORANDUM:

To: Winnefox Library System Trustees
From: Clairelynn Sommersmith, Assistant Director
Subject: Report of System Activities
Date: March 18, 2022

The following is an update of activities since our last meeting. I would be happy to provide further details at our meeting, or feel free to give me a call, 920-569-2179, or send an email.

Library use reimbursements across county lines: I have provided the rural resident usage and reimbursement figures across adjacent counties lines to all Winnefox libraries. They are in the process of deciding which counties to ask for reimbursement. Final numbers are due to me in May so I can submit the billing to those counties in June.

Tales from the Fox: Winnefox's monthly newsletter, *Tales from the Fox*, has returned. All trustees should receive a copy in their emails monthly. Written by Angela Schneider it gives trustees, legislators, and library supporters a glimpse into the work, service, and achievements of member libraries.

Library Legislative Day: 9 Winnefox representatives attended Library Legislative Day on Tuesday February 7 highlighting the collaborative, innovative, efficient and effective services libraries has provide along with requested support for an increase in System State Aid.

Conferences: The Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries (WAPL) spring conference will be from April 27- 28 and will be held in Oshkosh! Librarians, friends, and trustees are all invited to attend the conference; interested parties can registered for the whole conference or for one day attendance. With the support of the Continuing Education Scholarship funded with LSTA, Winnefox is hoping for significant attendance by Winnefox member library staff.

Affordable Connectivity Program Outreach Grant: The **Affordably Connectivity Program (ACP)** is a program of the federal government that gives low-income residents a discount of \$30/month for internet service. In tribal lands the discount is \$75/month. In addition, the program provides a \$100 discount for portable internet-connected devices such as tablets, Chromebooks, and laptops. Households are eligible if they: have an income below 200% of the federal poverty line, or anyone in the household uses: SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, Pell Grant or other qualifying federal programs, or has a student eligible for free or reduced-price meals or attends a Community Eligibility Provision school. Since it's inception, libraries have been encouraged to promote this program and assist households in enrolling.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction coordinated an application to the **Affordable Connectivity Program Outreach Grant** on behalf of several library systems and networks, including NEWI: Northeastern Wisconsin CE Partnership (OWLS, NFLS, MCLS, Winnefox). The goal of the grant is to provide financial support to hire staff to reach more households and promote the ACP program directly to eligible community members not utilizing the program. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) awarded a total \$66 million dollars in funding

across the country for this grant program. The Wisconsin DPI was awarded \$353,000. \$119,000 will go toward the NEWI project. The project will run for a minimum of 12 month, longer if funds allow. Winnefox will act as the contractor with the enrollment guides, hiring and compensative guides, assisting in coordination of activities, and supervising staff. DPI staff will oversee training, reporting, and grant documentation.

Using grant funding allocated for NEWI libraries, Winnefox Library System will coordinate the hiring of multiple ACP enrollment guides to work throughout our service area to: 1) Assist as many people as possible in signing up for the ACP by holding enrollment events at our member libraries and community-based organizations in our region, 2) Teach staff at libraries and community-based organizations to provide residents with assistance in signing up for the ACP and internet service, and 3) coordinate area-wide marketing and outreach communication. The project will run for a minimum of 12 month, longer if funds allow. It is our intention that each community served by a NEWI library will have the opportunity to host 4-5 ACP Enrollment events coordinated and led by the guides.

Library News: Gretchen Raab, Neenah Public Library Director, retired at the beginning on March. Nicole Hardina-Wilhelm, past Deputy Director of Neenah, has taken on the role as director.

Winnefox has increased their support of system-wide electronic resources and has purchase Kanopy for all 29 libraries of WALs. This Kanopy purchase will allow all WALs patrons to have access to around 600 streaming movie titles. With Kanopy there is no waiting for holds, and patrons are not limited to checkout limit.