

# Gov. Ricketts Unveils Library Innovation Studios Makerspace Partnership

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## Media Contacts:

**Luke Robson, Governor's Office, 402-471-1967**

**Mary Jo Ryan, Nebraska Library Commission, 402-471-3434**

**LINCOLN** – Today, Governor Pete Ricketts announced that 18 Nebraska libraries will be the initial local participants in Nebraska's Library Innovation Studios: Transforming Rural Communities project to create library makerspaces. The Nebraska Library Commission was recently awarded a National Leadership Grant of \$530,732 by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for this partnership project with the University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL), Nebraska Innovation Studio, Nebraska Extension, Regional Library Systems, and local public libraries.

"This partnership demonstrates how our Nebraska communities can use technology and education to empower community residents to create, learn, and invent," said Governor Ricketts. "By expanding the skills of the workforce in our communities, supporting entrepreneurs, and encouraging lifelong learning, this partnership reinforces our vibrant business climate and supports community development."

The project uses Library Innovation Studios makerspaces hosted by public libraries to support community engagement and participatory learning experiences by providing access to technology and innovative learning tools not readily accessible locally. This is expected to stimulate creativity, innovation, and the exchange of ideas to facilitate entrepreneurship, skills development, and local economic development.

The Nebraska Innovation Studio—the UNL makerspace—is the creative and collaborative hub of UNL’s Nebraska Innovation Campus, where makers and builders team up to conceptualize, prototype, and iterate projects that solve problems and influence change. The primary focus is on creativity, interdisciplinary collaboration, entrepreneurship, and education.

Nebraska Extension is one of three components of UNL’s land-grant mission. It is a dynamic educational organization that puts research to work in local communities, businesses, and individuals’ lives. Extension professionals are recognized for subject matter competence, excellent teaching skills, and community presence. They live and work in Nebraska communities across the state and engage with local and state partners in educational program delivery to address critical issues identified by constituents.

The initial local library partners that will host one of the four rotating makerspaces are:

- Ainsworth Public Library
- Ashland Public Library
- Bridgeport Public Library
- Broken Bow Public Library
- Central City Public Library
- Crete Public Library
- Geneva Public Library
- Loup City Public Library
- Nebraska City, Morton-James Public Library
- Neligh Public Library
- Norfolk Public Library
- North Platte Public Library
- Plattsmouth Public Library
- Ravenna Public Library
- Scottsbluff, Lied Scottsbluff Public Library
- Sidney Public Library, Special Model Program Partner
- South Sioux City Public Library
- Wayne Public Library

Twelve additional libraries will be selected in 2018 to host makerspaces in 2019/20. This project began July 1, 2017 and will conclude June 30, 2020. For more information about the project or equipment that will be featured in the rotating makerspaces, see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/grants/InnovationStudios> (<http://nlc.nebraska.gov/grants/InnovationStudios>).

“Nebraska’s public libraries are the natural gathering points for people to come together to share materials, knowledge, and experiences,” said Nebraska Library Commission Director Rod Wagner. “Whether the materials and tools are high tech or low tech, digital or analog, art or science, the focus is to create, invent, tinker, explore, and discover using the tools, materials, and knowledge available. Libraries have always been dedicated to community partnership, collaboration, and the free exchange of ideas—makerspaces are the next step in that progression.”

“UNL and Nebraska Innovation Studio are extremely excited to be partnering with the Nebraska Library Commission and libraries across the State of Nebraska to help bring hands-on learning experiences to Nebraskans of all ages,” said UNL Nebraska Innovation Studio Founder Shane Farritor. “I think it is very important to provide the opportunity to be creative and this partnership is going to create new opportunities,”

“As centers of learning and catalysts of community change, libraries and museums connect people with programs, services, collections, information, and new ideas in the arts, sciences, and humanities,” said IMLS Director Dr. Kathryn K. Matthew. “They serve as vital spaces where people can connect with each other. IMLS is proud to support their work through our grant making as they inform and inspire all in their communities.”

As the state library agency, the Nebraska Library Commission is an advocate for the library and information needs of all Nebraskans. The mission of the Library Commission is statewide promotion, development, and coordination of library and information services, bringing together people and information. The most up-to-date news releases from the Nebraska Library Commission are always available on the Library Commission website, <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/publications/newsreleases> (<http://nlc.nebraska.gov/publications/newsreleases>).

Nebraska’s Regional Library Systems are four non-profit corporations governed by boards representative of libraries and citizens in the region. Systems provide access to improved library services by facilitating cooperation among all types of libraries and media centers within the counties included in each System area.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is celebrating its 20th Anniversary. IMLS is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. Their mission has been to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and

cultural and civic engagement. For the past 20 years, their grant making, policy development, and research has helped libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit [www.imls.gov](http://www.imls.gov) (<http://www.imls.gov>) and follow them on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. (Grant #LG-95-17-0046-17)

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