

			Project Requests for State Funds		
Project Title	Priority Ranking	Funding Source	2026	2028	2030
Mary C. Murphy Library Construction Grants	1	GO	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Total Project Requests			\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
General Obligation Bonds (GO) Total			\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000

(\$ in thousands)

Mary C. Murphy Library Construction Grants**AT A GLANCE****2026 Request Amount:** \$10,000**Priority Ranking:** 1

Project Summary: This request is for \$10 million in state general obligation bonds for the Mary C. Murphy library construction grants program. Grants will be distributed statewide through a competitive process and provide funding for library infrastructure to repair, modernize, and construct library facilities. These funds will also be to maintain and improve access to library services for people with disabilities and extend the useful life of library buildings in Minnesota.

Project Description

Library Construction grants require a one-to-one non-state match and are awarded in amounts up to \$300 thousand for library accessibility projects and up to \$1 million for new construction, repair work or remodeling.

Library Construction Grants leverage state bond funds with local dollars for renovation, construction and improvement projects that extend the useful life of library buildings while resulting in more accessible public library buildings. In addition to ensuring that public library buildings meet Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines, library construction grants result in more sustainable and energy efficient public library facilities and improve library services. Grants are awarded in consultation with the Minnesota State Council on Disabilities. Projects may:

- Remove architectural barriers from a library building or site
- Remediate conditions hazardous to health or safety
- Renovate or expand an existing building for use as a library
- Construct a new library

Depending on grant size, five to fourteen projects receive funding. Since 1994, 170 projects in 67 counties have been supported. Through 2021, the local dollar to state dollar ratio is \$6.27 local to \$1.00 state.

Eligible applicants are regional public library systems, regional library districts, cities and counties operating public libraries that meet the statutory definition of a public library in Minnesota Statutes 134.001.

Project Rationale

Mary C. Murphy Library Construction Grants ensure that the Minnesota's public libraries meet modern energy efficiency standards and buildings and Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility

requirements. Given the limited resources available to public libraries for major building and construction projects, the state's contribution through this grant program is vital. It guarantees equitable access to public services for all residents and often serves as the necessary impetus for local and private funders to join in.

Demand for these grants is persistent. Between 2018 and 2024, State Library Services had \$7.951 million available but received requests totaling \$11.471 million. Furthermore, informal discussions with communities statewide indicate approximately 50 potential library improvement projects, collectively valued at over \$60 million, could significantly benefit from future Mary C. Murphy Library Construction Grant support.

Project Timeline

- *August 2026 Competitive grant round opens
- *January 2027 Grantees notified of application status; MDE executes grant agreements
- *All projects completed with five years.

Other Considerations

In many communities across the state, older library buildings are nearing the end of their lifespan and are in need of improvements that address energy efficiency and sustainability in addition to accessibility. According to the public library data report, many buildings have not been updated in 50 years. Public libraries are highly valued community assets, and the Library Construction grant program signals the state's support for up-to-date, energy efficient, safe and accessible buildings that are open to all.

According to data collected by the Council of Regional Public Library Systems (CRPSLA), there is currently (2025) \$89,912,500 in public library capital needs throughout the state.

Impact on Agency Operating Budgets

This request has an impact on the Department of Education's operating budget. The project is supported by .10 FTE of an existing staff member who administers the grant application, award and reporting processes. MDE may require additional funds for administering these grants.

Description of Previous Appropriations

2025 \$750 thousand

2023 \$4.0 million

2020 \$2.951 million

2018 \$1.0 million

2017 \$2.0 million

2014 \$2.0 million (\$877,000 earmarked for specific projects; \$1,123,000 available for competitive grants)

2012 \$1.0 million

2008 \$1.5 million

2006 \$1.0 million

2005 \$1.0 million

2003 \$1.0 million

2000 \$1.0 million

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