

SDSL's Cornerstone Newsletter

South Dakota State Library's e-newsletter

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Four Community Partnerships Your Library Should Nurture

Madison County (NC) Library staff gave a presentation entitled *Connect 4: Four Essential Partnerships for Small, Rural Libraries* at the [2022 ARSL conference](#). Here are some takeaways we think you'll appreciate.



Great things can happen if we think of our libraries as part of an ecosystem rather than stand-alone institutions. How do you grow your library's influence and build capacity? Partnerships! How do you form a winning partnership? Reciprocity!

Share out each other's programs. Think about how you could fold another organization into a grant opportunity. Invite partner organizations to do window displays. Add resource links to their services on your library website.

Consider forming mutually beneficial partnerships with the following four groups.

Educational entities: Schools are a public library's best connection to introduce kids and parents to your services. Get to know school staff and offer to collaborate on programs. Well-planned program collaborations foster literacy and enrich the classroom. Be willing to be flexible in whether you host programs at your library or in the classroom. Are you short on staff? Partnerships with local colleges and job skills programs can provide volunteer workers looking for real-world work experience.

Other city and county services: Identify where you serve the same populations. Make sure other departments know how your library's services and programs can help them and their constituents. Ask them to be speakers at your library programs.

Local celebrities: Authors, writers, TV personalities—and remember for kids, local celebrities include firefighters, police, and Santa. These folks can draw attention for summer reading kick-off, be guests at in-person and virtual programs, and it's a great public relations opportunity for them.

Nonprofits and other community groups: Find groups whom you can help connect to residents. Do they have services that would benefit library visitors? Help them get the word out. Hook up with organizations who can spread the word about your library, like the Chamber of Commerce and tourism office. Include them in your library's community resource guide.

Want to know more about building school-public library relationships? Check out the [SDSL School Library Collaboration Guide](#).

SDSL School Library Collaboration Guide



About SDSL



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The South Dakota State Library provides leadership for innovation and excellence in libraries and services to state government.



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