



The Voice of
Small & Rural
Libraries

*The Association for
Rural & Small
Libraries provides
resources and
support that
empower those in
small and rural
libraries to deliver
excellent service for
their communities.*

PO Box 33731
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PRESS RELEASE

The Association for Rural & Small Libraries

Questions to info@arsl.org

June 7, 2024

The Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) is pleased to announce the 2024-25 cohort of the ARSL Leadership Institute. Beginning this month, this group of 30 library professionals from across the United States and Canada will engage in residential, online, and conference experiences spanning 18 months to deepen their understanding of and commitment to professional values while they gain practical managerial skills.

The members of the 2024-25 Leadership Institute cohort are:

Abi Avery
Covert, Michigan, US

Andrea Eckerson
East Helena, Montana, US

Brian Kendall
Dardanelle, Arkansas, US

Brooke Bourgeois
Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, US

Charlie Oribio
Dayton, Washington, US

Casey Copeland
Belpre, Ohio, US

Danielle Herriman
Okotoks, Alberta, CA

Emily Ott
St Marys, Ohio, US

Erin Coughlin
Ankeny, Iowa, US

Jane Gagne
Suffolk, Virginia, US

Jean Markert
La Conner, Washington, US

Jess Ansari
Nederland, Colorado, US

Kim Matthews
Danville, Virginia, US

Kristy Smith
Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, US

Laranda Bailey
Viriden, Manitoba, CA

Maddie Cummings
Devils Lake, North Dakota, US

Manny Pasillas
Winnsboro, Texas, US

Maggie Moore
Chillicothe, Missouri, US

Melissa Beaulieu
Wells River, Vermont, US

Melissa Duncan
Columbus, Mississippi, US

Miriam Sisson
Drain, Oregon, US

Nancy Ramirez
Le Mars, Iowa, US

Rachel Lunden
Burlington, Washington, US

Rebecca Shelton
Lexington, South Carolina, US

Ruth DeSouza Wilson
Pawnee, Oklahoma, US

Sammie Betler
Dunnville, Kentucky, US

Sara Newell
Effingham, New Hampshire, US

Sean Gantt
Dolores, Colorado, US

Shone Ellis
Butte Falls, Oregon, US

Tanner Ames
Winnemucca, Nevada, US

The members of this year's cohort were chosen through a rigorous multistage selection process that included evaluations by selectors from across the country representing a broad range of perspectives and professional expertise. ARSL appreciates the contributions of those selectors in helping us build a strong cohort.



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ARSL's Leadership Institute is unique because its students are selected from only small and/or rural libraries. Often these are "accidental librarians" who have no formal education in librarianship and few local resources for library-specific professional development. These library professionals came into their leadership positions from a wide variety of backgrounds and may already be in a position of authority, or they may be looking ahead to a transition of power within their organization. However they got to where they are today, they're ready to expand their professional capabilities and grow as institutional and community leaders.

Key priorities for this institute are to develop strong rural and small library leaders, give them tools to strengthen the communities they serve, and empower them to add their voices to national conversations about libraries.

As the premier organization representing rural and small libraries, ARSL recognizes the uniqueness of small and rural libraries and is committed to providing an environment that encourages excellence within this community of practice, supporting their goals of service and speaking on behalf of this important constituency. This program is funded by a generous grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Science.