

MINNESOTA
ALLIANCE OF
LOCAL
HISTORY
MUSEUMS

2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT



2025 - 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dave Nichols

Chair

Rice County Historical Society

Corrie Hackbarth

Vice Chair

Lake Superior Railroad Museum

Mariah Ring

Secretary

Minnesota Historical Society

Adam Smith

Treasurer

Minnesota State University,
Mankato

Lindsay Marshall

Scott County Historical Society

Mai Huizel

Hmong Museum

Jess Edberg

Dorothy Molter Museum

Heather Harren

Blue Earth County Historical
Society

Jaimie Timm

Mower County Historical Society

MISSION

The purpose of the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums shall be to nurture and encourage an appreciation of the local history of the state of Minnesota by providing the structure to foster collaborative local history projects, communicate curatorial and educational information, and encourage professionalism among local and specialized historical organizations in Minnesota.

“PEERS HELPING PEERS”

MALHM serves hundreds of local history groups throughout the state. Although Minnesota’s history groups serve different communities, they share a common mission of connecting people to nearby history. Alliance members operate with different levels of resources. Some have professional staff, but many are small, volunteer-run societies. Together, we work to raise the quality of the local history field in Minnesota.

2026 AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER.....Dave Nichols

APPROVAL OF 2025 MINUTES.....Mariah Ring

ACCEPTANCE OF 2025 TREASURER'S REPORT.....Dave Nichols

ALLIANCE COORDINATOR REPORT.....Liz Koele

C/A PROJECT MANAGER REPORT..... Ann Grandy

BYLAW VOTE & ELECTION OF
BOARD MEMBERS 2026-2028.....Dave Nichols

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION.....Liz Koele

ADJOURNMENT.....Dave Nichols

2025 MINUTES

The Annual Meeting of MALHM was held on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, in White Bear Lake, MN. Chair Lindsay Marshall called the meeting to order at 1:06pm.

Approval of 2024 Minutes

On motion of Brent Peterson, duly seconded by Merlin Peterson, the membership voted to approve the 2024 board meeting minutes as presented. Members present voted in the affirmative. Motion carried.

Acceptance of 2024 Treasurer's Report

On motion of Nicole Elzenga, duly seconded by Sara Hanson, the membership voted to approve the Treasurer's Report. Members present voted in the affirmative. Motion carried.

Alliance Coordinator's Report

Liz Koele reported that 2024 was a year of growth for MALHM. Twelve emergency supply caches were set up around Minnesota through the Mutual Assistance Team and have been used several times. Collective Access continues to grow in both users and capability. Liz traveled extensively, from as far southeast as New Ulm to as far northwest as Thief River Falls and is open to requests to visit other local history organizations. MALHM hopes to keep growing and expand Teams. More at-large members are desired on most Teams. Liz and the board are open to new Teams, with existing plans to add an Advocacy Team. The Networking & Inclusion Team has a table with information on all Teams and a sign up sheet. Liz ended by thanking the members, partners, and board.

CollectiveAccess Report

Ann Grandy provided an overview of the C/A Team's efforts. Highlights included that over 60 organizations now subscribe to C/A and that they collectively have over one million objects in their databases, with over 350,000 of those records being accessible to the public online through the web portal.

Election of Board Members 2025-2027

Jennifer Andries and Hannah King both reached their term limits and would not continue on the board. Christopher Welter resigned from the board in 2025 and was replaced by Jess Edberg. Election: Mai Huizel and Mariah Ring for their final third terms; Heather Harren and Jaimie Timm for their first terms.

On motion of Ann Grandy, duly seconded by Jess Edberg, the membership voted to approve the slate of nominees as presented. Members present voted in the affirmative. Motion carried.

Volunteer Recognition

MALHM introduced its third annual recognition of volunteers. Each MALHM member organization was given the opportunity to submit the name of one volunteer. Eighteen individuals were recognized by name in the conference program and annual meeting presentation.

Adjournment

On motion of Merlin Peterson, duly seconded by David Nichols, the membership voted to adjourn the meeting at 1:28pm. Members present voted in the affirmative. Motion carried.

Minutes submitted by Hannah King, Temporary Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

January 1 - December 31, 2025

Starting Balance
\$ 113,314

Operational Income

Annual Conference	\$ 37,639
MNHS/MALHM Partnership Grant	\$ 67,500
Mutual Assistance Development Grant (2023-2024)	\$ 267
Membership Dues	\$ 6,283
Program Income	\$ 244
CollectiveAccess	\$ 63,223
Misc. Income	\$ 1,617

Total Income
\$ 176,773

Operational Expenses

Coordinator Payroll	\$ 63,998
Annual Conference	\$ 34,567
Office Supplies	\$ 1,077
Technology & Subscriptions	\$ 1,530
Coordinator Expenses	\$ 1,697
Phones	\$ 1,209
MALHM Teams & Program Expenses	\$ 1,567
Accounting/Banking Fees	\$ 7,135
CollectiveAccess	\$ 42,712
Organizational Memberships	\$ 375
Office Space Lease	\$ 2,306
Insurance	\$ 598

Total Expenses
\$ 158,771

Annual Profit/Loss
\$ 18,002

Ending Balance
\$ 131,316

ACCOUNTING CLEANUP PROJECT

In the first half of 2025, MALHM underwent a bookkeeping clean-up project with Reliable CFO & Accounting.

Uncategorized or uncleared transactions dating back to 2022 were properly sorted. Classes were also added to meet Form 990 requirements. The cost of this project is reflected under the "Accounting/Banking Fees" line item.

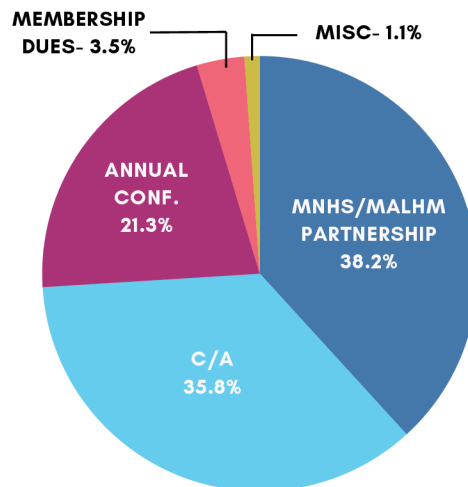
MALHM TEAMS

For the first time in 2025, each MALHM Team received dedicated funds from the organizational budget, empowering the groups to continue expanding their work.

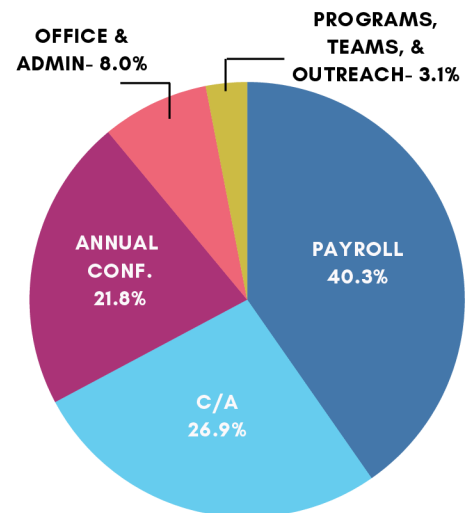
EOY C/A PROJECT INCOME

MALHM received payment for two new CollectiveAccess user projects in the last week of 2025, but didn't pay developer Whirl-i-Gig until 2026. These payments are responsible for the increase in income vs. expenses in the 2025 finances, both in the C/A lines and the overall financial summary.

INCOME



EXPENSES



2025 HIGHLIGHTS

255

Attendees to the 2025 Annual Conference & Meeting in White Bear Lake (new record!)



8

History Awards given out to 15+ organizations & individuals.

4

Uses of the 12 Emergency Supply Caches deployed throughout the state, created thanks to the work of the Mutual Assistance Team & the generous support of Minitex.



AN COLLECTIONS



Explore the co

65+

CollectiveAccess Minnesota users & growing!

1,663

Miles traveled by the Alliance Coordinator & 13+ museums & historical societies visited.



ADDITIONAL

ALLIANCE COORDINATOR

We were busier than ever in 2026 as the Alliance continues to expand! Looking back, much of this past year's work falls under the theme of balancing growth & capacity while planning for the future.

The annual conference in White Bear Lake (the first in the metro in over a decade) saw a record-breaking 255 attendees. We've come a long way from its early days as a small gathering hosted by local organizations. As a result, we've adjusted our planning process (and booked more space!) for future conferences.

We spoke last year about re-organizing the MALHM Teams—this has mostly been completed & the teams have tackled an impressive amount of work in the time since. I attempted to write out a few brief highlights here, but ran out of room! You can read more on page 7 of the Annual Report.

Once the conference rush ends, I'd love to travel out and visit with folks. I've had great email conversations, but want to continue to discuss how MALHM can further support your organizations. Reach out if you'd like to schedule a visit!

We are extremely appreciative of our continued partnership with the Minnesota Historical Society. It has allowed us to continue to grow and look ahead to how we can serve local history organizations for years to come.

Minnesota's local history community continues to do amazing work and we are so proud to be able to support you. Thank you for being part of the Alliance and for your commitment to preserving and sharing our histories!



Liz Koele
Alliance Coordinator
liz@mnhistoryalliance.org
(612) 500-7460

REPORTS

COLLECTIVEACCESS

CollectiveAccess Minnesota (C/A) is an open-source collections management software created by Whirl-i-Gig and supported by the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums. It is designed to help local history museums keep track of their collections; from *what* artifacts they have and *where* they are stored, to *how* the artifacts connect to the people, places, and organizations within their communities.

C/A is fully financially self-sustaining. C/A member organizations pay a small annual fee that covers the shared web hosting, backup costs, and allows us to set aside funds for technical support and future system upgrades.

CollectiveAccess Minnesota currently has almost **70 member organizations** across the state who have inventoried more than **1.5 million objects** in their private cataloging systems. Some of these organizations have opted to make portions of their collection public and are sharing over **430,000 object records** and **2,500 archival records** on MNCollections.org.

The C/A Project Manager provides training and support for incoming organizations throughout the conversion process, and offers ongoing monthly training for existing users. The C/A Team supports the project manager and discusses user-requested software changes. The C/A Project Manager and MALHM Coordinator are also in frequent communication with other C/A users and museum consortiums throughout Canada and the United States to discuss shared issues and updates.

In 2026, we look to improve monitoring systems to catch errors in connection between our individual pages and MNCollections. We are also in the very early stages of planning a website redesign to improve accessibility on MNCollections.org

We onboard new organizations twice a year on the following schedule:

Application Due to MALHM
September 9, 2026

MNHS Small Grant App Due
October 9, 2026

Approximate Start Date
January 2027

Application Due to MALHM
March 9, 2027

Grant Application Due to MNHS
April 9, 2027

Approximate Start Date
August 2027

Data transfer & set up can take 1-3 months after the start date depending on the complexity of your data and how quickly you can respond to set-up and customization questions.

If you are interested in joining please contact Ann Grandy or Liz Koele.



Ann Grandy

CA Project Manager

collectiveaccess@mnhistoryalliance.org

MALHM TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

Visit the N&I Team table if you want more info on joining a MALHM Team!

ADVOCACY TEAM

- Organized and started meeting for the first time
- Discussed ideas & goals for the future
- Created Advocacy Pocket Guide
- Planned conference session & poster

COLLECTIVEACCESS TEAM

- Began reviewing documentation & resources
- Started planning for accessibility updates
- Discussed how to stretch time & resources to support increasing needs of C/A

MEMBERSHIP TEAM

- Assisted in transition to new membership system
- Mailed postcards to current, expired, and prospective members & started outreach to MN colleges & universities
- Started planning ways to raise awareness about membership benefits

MUTUAL ASSISTANCE TEAM


- Facilitated emergency response & cache access
- Hosted wet salvage workshop at Pope County Historical Society in October
- Began discussing potential additions to emergency caches


NETWORKING & INCLUSION TEAM

- Hosted first in-person History Happy Hour in Faribault in November
- Launched new conference scholarship program
- Planned new conference activities (“What to Expect” guide, Convo Cards, dine-outs, etc.)

BYLAWS UPDATE & BOARD ELECTION

BYLAWS

According to organizational records, MALHM's bylaws have not been updated in almost 30 years and there's uncertainty about whether proposed changes were officially approved. You can view the current bylaws [here](#). → 

MALHM began redrafting and reorganizing the bylaws in 2025. The Board of Directors approved a new draft on January 26, 2026. You can view the new version [here](#). → 

We are now seeking the membership's approval to finalize the process.

BOARD ELECTION

REACHING TERM LIMITS

[Dave Nichols](#), Rice County Historical Society (Chair)

[Adam Smith](#), Minnesota State University, Mankato (Treasurer)

[Lindsay Marshall](#), Scott County Historical Society

UP FOR RE-ELECTION

[Corrie Hackbarth](#), Lake Superior Railroad Museum – Completing 2nd term in 2026, up for re-election to 3rd term (2026-2028)

[Jess Edberg](#), Dorothy Molter Museum – Appointed to finish Christopher Welter's term, completing 1st term in 2026, up for re-election to 2nd term (2026-2028)

PROPOSED NEW MEMBERS

[Danelle Erickson](#) – Executive Director at the Meeker County Historical Society

[Heather Hoagland](#) – Founder of Clever Fox Consulting

[Jeremy Murray](#) – Curator of Collections at Carver County Historical Society

VOLUNTEER

Many volunteers across Minnesota dedicate their time and resources to preserve and share our collective history. We want to celebrate their contributions year after year. Each MALHM member organization was invited to submit one name for inclusion.

Anita Zager, Lake Superior Railroad Museum
Ashton Loebis, Beltrami County Historical Society
Barry Schreiber, Mille Lacs County Historical Society
Colette Chafee, Mower County Historical Society
Evelina Businaro, Scott County Historical Society
Gary Pettis, Minnesota State University, Mankato
Keith Kullman, Goodhue County Historical Society
Linda Jerviss, Dodge County Historical Society
Nancy Drazkowski, Wright County Historical Society
Patrick Demuth, Nobles County Historical Society
Ron Boje, Wheels Across the Prairie Heritage Center
Sandy Noreen-Ruben, Gammelgården Museum
Steven Martin, Pope County Historical Society
Sue Iveland, Friends of Linden Hill
Virgil Prestby, Clearwater County Historical Society

THANK
YOU!

RECOGNITION

“Just last year he volunteered 114 hours of his time! He has been our go-to volunteer for any audio/visual projects. Over the years, Keith has digitized countless negatives, glass plates, reel-to-reel audio and visual, cassettes, and VHS.... Keith’s contribution to our organization is invaluable.”

“Her volunteering ranges from organizing the gift shop, greeting visitors at our Festival of Trees, to pretty much ANYTHING we throw at her! Having Nancy here has been lifting a lot of weight off the rest of the staff and its much appreciated.”

“Now that he is retired, he is at the Heritage Center on a daily basis, and is always tackling whatever needs to be done, whether its vacuuming up bugs, applying for grants, or overseeing other volunteers’ activities.”

“[She] is one of our dedicated volunteers, who has worked with us for 12 years....Most recently, Anita helped us move the archives. We were given 5 weeks to box everything up and more our collection due to a building-wide HVAC project. We would have never been able to reach the deadline without Anita’s help. Her dedication to the LSRM archives is truly unmatched and we are so grateful she is part of our team.”

“[She] has been instrumental in organizing, sorting, and categorizing the estate’s archives. Not only has she contributed to the overall collection management and organization within our museum, but she is always ready and willing to dive into a research project or locate a requested item. Sue’s positive attitude and love for history makes her special and a valuable part of the Linden Hill team.”



This project has been financed in part with funds provided by the State of Minnesota from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society.