

Funding to provide equitable public library services to Montanans

1) Reauthorization and increase per capita per square mile state aid

The current statutory appropriation found in MCA 22-1-327 sunsets in June 2023 and must be reauthorized. The current appropriation is ten years old and should be increased to reflect the increasing cost to provide library services and to extend funding to tribal college libraries that provide public library services

A statutory appropriation for per capita per square mile funding was first created in 2013. This funding is administered by the State Library according to law and administrative rules. At the time the appropriation was passed, the funding amount was set at \$.40/capita tied to the decennial census. The statutory appropriation was reviewed by the Legislature in 2015 and the Legislature determined that the appropriation met all criteria for the appropriateness of a statutory appropriation. The statutory appropriation was reauthorized in 2017 with a six-year sunset. At that time, the per capita funding amount remained \$.40/capita. Because the funding amount is tied to the decennial census, the total amount of funds shared by Montana's 82 libraries increased in FY22 by approximately \$40,000. MSL requests per capita per square mile state aid be increased to \$.50/capita or \$542,112.50 annually.

This funding passes through the State Library budget. The State Library retains no portion of the funding for administration.

2) Extend eligibility of per capita per square mile state aid to tribal college libraries

This legislation would amend MCA 22-1-326 to make tribal college libraries that offer public library services, and meet public library standards, eligible to receive per capita per square mile state aid in accordance with MCA 22-1-327.

Approximately four of Montana's seven tribal college libraries offer public library services to their communities. Academic funding cannot be used to fund public library services so any services they offer are currently funded through grant funds. When the Montana State Library Commission revised Montana's public library standards in August 2021, the standards were written in such a way that tribal college libraries could meet them and therefore meet the criteria to receive state aid funding. MCA 22-1-326 currently defines public libraries as libraries created by Title 7 or 22-1-301 - 22-1-317. This language must be amended to include tribal college libraries for these libraries to be eligible to receive state aid funding.

While this legislative change does not require separate funding, it is the intent of the State Library Commission to seek this legislative change contingent on the passage of the reauthorization of the statutory appropriation to public libraries with an increase in the per capita amount of funding so that no library is negatively impacted by this legislative change.

Create an enterprise fund to fund the Montana Spatial Real Time Network

1) Montana Spatial Real Time Network Enterprise Fund

Since 2018 the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and the State Library administered a real time precision location network pilot with the State of Washington. In March 2022 the agencies created the Montana Spatial Real Time Network (MSRTN) and funded with funding from MDT and OTO funding from the Montana Land Information Act fund. It is the intent of the State Library to implement a subscription-based model to fund ongoing operational costs of the MSRTN. This model is consistent with funding for similar networks in the states of Utah and Washington. Further, implementing a subscription-based model to support the MSRTN is consistent with the intent of the recommendations from the Education Interim Committee that considered funding models for the State Library. An enterprise fund is necessary to receive and expend revenue collected through a subscription service to fund the MSRTN.