

## **Librarians Seek Day of Action After Library Services Technology Act (LSTA) Award Proposed to Drop by 20 Percent in Montana**

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) notified the Montana State Library that our official FY 2017 Award for Library Services Technology Act (LSTA) monies is \$849,608. That's a drop of \$216,000 from last year's \$1.06 million – a staggering 20 percent decrease.

The IMLS grant makes up about 20 percent of the Montana State Library's annual budget. It's also 40 percent of the budget for library development and Talking Book Library Services in Montana. Those funds are paired with local, state, and non-profit funds to support statewide efforts such as:

- MontanaLibrary2Go, which gives Montanans around the state access to downloadable e-books and e-audiobooks. Last year, they downloaded more than 690,000 books – the equivalent of six times the population of Montana's largest city.
- Montana Shared Catalog gives patrons in Prairie County (service population: 1,179; annual budget: \$53,708) the same access to resources as patrons in Billings (service population: 141,254; annual budget: \$3.5 million). Nearly 400,000 Montanans have a library card at a facility that uses the Montana Shared Catalog.
- Montana Memory Project, which works with libraries and museums to digitize and preserve Montana's memories. More than 87,000 unique visitors visited the MMP in 2016 to view 445,000 pages of content.
- Ready2Read, an early literacy program offered by 78 of Montana's 82 public libraries, where librarians/parents incorporate early learning skills into their work with children. In some communities, the library is the only place in town that offers early literacy story times and training.
- Professional development opportunities for librarians helped them earn almost 3,500 credits of continuing education last year – many of them from the 231 credit hours the State Library either offered or arranged for librarians.

Thursday, April 13, is national Take Action for Libraries Day. It will highlight the library community's efforts to safeguard funding for the Institute for Museum and Library Services. The American Library Association (ALA) is asking librarians, library workers and patrons to advocate for full funding of IMLS by making at least five calls to their legislators to ask for full support.

“If the Montana State Library loses this funding – which significantly reduce costs for local libraries – these services and more are in jeopardy,” said State Librarian Jennie Stapp. “For example, a large Montana library that is a member of the Montana Shared Catalog pays about \$30,000 to have access to a state-of-the-art library system, which gives their patrons access to more than 1 million items in Montana libraries. The library would have to pay \$79,000 for the same system if it purchased it on their own. That’s a savings of 62 percent.

“For MontanaLibrary2Go, a small library pays about \$531 for the service,” Stapp added. “It would cost about \$5,000 if the library purchased it on their own – a savings of 89 percent. By working together and leveraging these federal funds, libraries reduce the burden for local taxpayers while giving Montana residents access to world-class library services.”

“We must stand-up and voice our support for libraries to legislators and local, state and federal leaders,” added ALA President Julie Todaro. “Librarians and library workers transform lives every day through educational resources and expert guidance. While many value the contributions of libraries, libraries can’t live on love alone. The loss of crucial federal funding will have a profound impact on library service and the more than 1.5 billion who rely on them.”

Montana LSTA State Allotment				
FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012
\$952,693	\$1,104,574	\$1,117,930	\$1,070,859	\$1,057,408
FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017
\$1,040,956	\$1,059,170	\$1,059,140	\$1,066,243	<b>\$849,608</b>

For more information, contact State Librarian Jennie Stapp at 406/444-3116.

### About the Montana State Library

Through its statewide programs, the Montana State Library empowers Montanans; enhances learning in families and communities; builds 21st Century skills; and provides opportunities for civic participation. For more information, visit <http://msl.mt.gov>.

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