

New Public Library Standards

The standards will go into effect July 1, 2022. Public libraries receiving state payments must meet the Essential Standards by July 1, 2023 and each year following.

Essential Standards - Library Board, Governance, and Working with the Director

1. The library is established per Title 7, Title 22, or through the legal process practiced by a Tribal Council.
2. The Board meets at least 6 times a year and complies with Montana's Open Meeting Laws when meeting.
3. Board members learn about the services the library provides to users, the role of the board in providing administrative and financial oversight, and the role of the board in planning for new services for users.
4. The Board receives at least 3 hours of continuing education each year.
5. The Board understands the revenue sources that fund the library, the budgeting process, and adopts a budget for the library.
6. For a library created under Title 7 or Title 22 at least 70% of the revenue is from local tax revenues. Grants, donations, and other revenue sources supplement but do not supplant local tax support. If a tribal college library serves tribal members, the Tribal Council recognizes and supports the efforts of the library to obtain funding.
7. The library budget shows year-to-year growth reflecting community needs. The director and library board routinely present the library to the community and local government in a manner to maintain and increase the library's ability to meet their community's needs.
8. The Board and Director identify in writing what they want to accomplish in the next 3-5 years, and that plan is focused on meeting community needs. The Board and Director annually review their plan and progress made.
9. The Board adopts emergency response plans that ensure the safety of the public and staff as the primary priority.
10. The Director or designee submits the Montana Public Library Annual Statistical Report to the Montana State Library. The Board and Director annually review public library statistics.
11. The Board adopts and regularly reviews policies that reflect the mission and goals of the library. The policies govern use of the library, its materials, and services. No single policy goes more than 4 years without review.
12. Library board and director review the most current Public Library Standards Road Map maintained by the Montana State Library.

Essential Standards – Serving the Community

1. The library is open convenient hours. At a minimum the library is open at least the following number of hours weekly:

| Service Area Population | Minimum | Desirable |
|-------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Less than 3,500 | 15 | 25-40 |
| 3,501 – 9,999 | 30 | 40-50 |
| 10,000-24,999 | 40 | 50-60 |
| More than 25,000 | 50 | 60+ |

2. Everyone has safe, comfortable, and convenient access to the library and its services.
3. Everyone has access to updated and regularly maintained physical and digital library content and services.
4. Everyone can find library materials online.
5. Everyone has access to virtual and face-to-face programming.
6. Everyone has access to information about local community and government activities that assists them with understanding local community issues and allows them to engage civically in the community.
7. Children and caregivers have access to early literacy programming and materials either through the library or by being directed to another community organization that specializes in early literacy.
8. Everyone has access to information about library programs and services through internal and external marketing efforts of library staff.
9. Everyone has access to a library website or social media site.
10. Everyone can obtain materials and services from another library through interlibrary loan services.
11. Everyone has access to the Internet via wired and WIFI connections.
12. Reasonable accommodations are made so that people with disabilities have access to the library's services.

Essential Standards - Personnel

1. Staff members are offered health insurance according to local policy.
2. Staff members are offered retirement benefits according to local policy.
3. The Board adopts a sufficient budget for continuing education.
4. During 90 % of open hours, paid staff are available to assist users.
5. Staff have the tools and training they need to perform their work.
6. The director is or will be certified by the Montana State Library within the required timeframe mandated by the certification program adopted by the Montana State Library Commission.
7. Directors of libraries that serve over 25,000 people have a Master of Library Science or equivalent degree.

Essential Standards - Standard notification and appeal process

1. MSL will notify libraries of any proposed changes to the standards at least 6 months before requiring libraries to implement standards.
2. The State Library Commission is the final arbiter for any questions arising because of ARM (use numbers for new standards).

Essential Standards - Deferrals

1. Any library may request, in writing, a waiver from the State Librarian by July 25 of each year.
 - a. The State Librarian may grant a waiver of any of the standards in ARM (use new ARM numbers) if:
 - i. the library explains why the standard(s) is not being met; AND
 - ii. provides a compliance plan by which the library will meet the standard(s).
 - b. State Library staff will work with the library director to decide upon a timeline for achieving the standard(s). The State Librarian shall make the final decision on the amount of time the library has to comply with the standard(s) and will notify the library requesting the waiver of the decision by letter by October 1.
2. Any library may request a one-year extension of the waiver from the State Librarian in writing by July 25 of each year. The library shall provide the State Librarian with an updated compliance plan with an explanation of why they cannot meet the standard(s).
3. The State Librarian may grant an extension for one year only. No further extensions will be granted.