

Memo

To: State Library Commission

From: Tracy Cook & Sue Jackson

Date: April 3, 2009

Re: Certification Fee and Update

Since the beginning of the Montana Library Certification Program in 1991, participating librarians and trustees have paid a \$10 fee for initial certificates and renewals. This money was used in the past for printing certification manuals and certificates, and for focus group expenses when the program was updated in 1998. Less than \$3,000 has been collected since that time. If the State Library continues to collect this money on an ongoing basis as an agency program, then an estimated budget needs to be included in the executive planning process, and then be included in the major appropriation bill, HB0002, which is approved by the legislature. MSL staff discussed this issue and now recommends that the Commission consider discontinuation of certification fees beginning in the next fiscal year (July 1, 2009). This recommendation is based both on the small amount of money collected and the complications in spending it. It does not seem to justify the time and effort needed to meet the budget office requirements. And a secondary benefit would be that librarians and libraries will receive a small savings for their budgets.

The Certification Update Focus Group met on February 3rd and worked through a series of issues and prepared recommendations for program updates. These have been posted on the MSL web page (http://www.msl.mt.gov/For_Librarians/Training/certification/default.asp) and a survey is now available for librarians, library support staff, and trustees to comment on continuing education, certification, and the update recommendations. More than 100 responses have been received so far. The survey will be available until May 31, 2009. In addition, the certification update was presented for discussion at all spring federation meetings and there will be a session at MLA on the topic. MSL's booth at the conference will have a computer available for attendees to access the survey and give their comments and suggestions.

The input MSL receives from the federation meetings, survey responses, MLA conference, and other venues will be compiled and used to finalize the update recommendations. These will be presented to the Commission, probably in August. Final approval of the updated program would be requested in October or December. The new program is scheduled for launch in January 2010.