

# Memo

**To:** Jennie Stapp, State Librarian      **To:** Montana State Library Commission

**From:** Sarah McHugh, Director  
Statewide Library Resources      **From:** Jennie Stapp, State Librarian

**Date:** January 23, 2013

**Re:** Recommendation for new library recognition

For many years, the Commission recognized libraries that shared resources with the Collection Management Honor Roll. This honor recognized libraries dedicated to resource sharing through maintaining current collection management policies and regular updating of their collection holdings in the WorldCat database. The Honor Roll was appreciated by librarians and served to encourage libraries to meet the requirements and be recognized. Over time, the application process and automated uploads that are part of the continually growing Montana Shared Catalog have resulted in large numbers of libraries meeting these goals, making this honor less effective. This memo proposes a new way the Commission could recognize library accomplishments.

The current Public Library Standards provide a basic tool to determine what a library does well and where improvements might be made. In each of the standards categories, distinction is made between levels of accomplishments, with some identified as "enhanced" and some as "excellent". Though the standards were created for public libraries, most of the recommendations for enhanced and excellent achievements are relevant to all types and sizes of libraries.

## Proposal:

A checklist based on the standards that includes most of the enhanced and excellent recommendations would be used as a guide to evaluating libraries. The checklist will have 34 enhanced and 32 excellent recommendations, presented in 12 different categories. Please refer to the draft checklist proposed that accompanies this memo.

The checklist would serve as the basis of an application that libraries would complete and submit to be considered for the Commission's recognition. The application would be completed by the library director. Branch libraries would not apply, but would be recognized as part of the library system if the requirements are met.

Recognition would be given to libraries that meet an established number of recommendations in a certain number of the categories. For example, to be recognized, a library would be asked to meet a total of 30 recommendations – including a minimum of 10 excellent recommendations -- from at least 7 of the categories.

This recognition would be done annually. MSL would promote the opportunity to be recognized, have the checklist available, and determine after an application deadline which libraries met the criteria. Those libraries would receive a certificate to display at the library and MSL would do publicity including press releases and letters to local government officials or other governing bodies. The certificate would be presented at the MLA awards luncheon and the list of recognized libraries would be placed in the MLA conference booklet.

The impact of this recognition would be evaluated after five years to determine if it is meaningful and has provided encouragement for libraries to improve.

A possible name for this honor could be the Excellent Library Service Award (the ELSA).