

Memo

To: Network Advisory Council

From: Tracy Cook, Lead Consulting & Learning Librarian

Date: May 14, 2020

Re: MSL Staff Work Plan and Budget Priorities for FY 2021

In November 2019, the Network Advisory Council discussed the Montana State Library's progress on meeting the objectives outlined in the agency's Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA) five-year plan, and identified priorities for the agency work plan for Fiscal Year 2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) to make further progress in meeting these objectives. In summary, the main priorities were:

- Support the Montana Shared Catalog
- Analyze courier capacity needs
- Coordinate economic development efforts in libraries
- Support library staff and trustee professional development in the areas of community leadership and civil engagement.

Since that time, the COVID-19 crisis has changed our world. MSL staff recommend revisiting these priorities and discussing whether we need to focus on new priorities. There are many needs, and we need the NAC's help in identifying what needs to address.

Needs that libraries have identified in the COVID-19 check-ins:

- Community members need help with
 - Financial uncertainty
 - Mental health challenges
 - Managing children and schoolwork and helping their children process what is happening
 - Managing family responsibilities such as caring for an older family member
 - Connecting with others during this time of social isolation
 - Managing their own safety and well-being if they are experiencing homelessness or a threat to their safety due to domestic violence concerns
- Libraries are worried about
 - The impacts of a possible economic recession and how that might affect their budgets

- Keeping staff and community members safe during this time
- Making wise decisions in a time when things are changing rapidly, and information is conflicting

Questions for the NAC:

- Where do you think MSL staff should focus their energies? Where can we do the most good?
- Should we host face-to-face workshops this year? Or should we re-allocate that money in different ways? What do you think of shifting the funds to support online conferences and small, online cohorts?
- Does it still make sense to complete a courier study? We have potential funding, but is it feasible to do a study right now?
- How can we address some of the other needs that led to the original priorities you chose – building collaboration across libraries; addressing concerns with the Partners' sharing group; and changing the attitudes and skillsets of library people to focus on community leadership? Are those still a priority?
- Is it time to shift to supporting and providing access to more digital content? To improving broadband access for libraries and Montanans?