American Rescue Plan Act – Grants to States

Budget Priorities and Options for Electronic Resources

Spending options ranked from most to least favored by librarians:

1. **First spending priority:** Deposit one-time credits into shared accounts for current state-administered e-content providers such as OverDrive and DPLA across platforms that serve different types of library audiences (publics, tribals, schools, academics, specials).

Proposed allocation: 50% ($360,000)

E-Content Providers:

- MontanaLibrary2Go (publics, tribals, limited academics)
- MT Schools Shared Collection
- Digital Public Library of America (all libraries)

Options:

- Add remainder of public and tribal libraries to MontanaLibrary2Go if they agree
- Supplement shared MontanaLibrary2Go content budget
- Fund promotional materials and outreach for MontanaLibrary2Go
- Expand access to more schools
- Supplement shared school content budget
- Expand access to perpetual-access content through DPLA partners such as Biblioboard (see appendix)

2. **Second spending priority:** Initiate or extend one-year trials for resources embedded in current state-administered services (example: adding Universal Class or SAT test prep offerings via MontanaLibrary2Go), with the understanding that future state or federal funding may not be available to sustain the service. Although this was ranked as the second-highest priority, the funding suggestion is lower than the third priority because spending options are more limited.

Proposed allocation: 10% ($72,000)

Options:

- OverDrive Magazines: $30,000 for renewal of simultaneous statewide access
- Universal Class online learning for patrons: $12,500 for statewide access via OverDrive
- Method test prep: $12,500 for statewide access via OverDrive
- READsquared: extend existing MSL contract to support summer reading: up to $6,000 for access for up to 20 libraries in Summer 2022 (see appendix)

3. **Third spending priority:** Offer one-year subscriptions to remote-access online resources or mobile applications that extend library services during the pandemic, with the understanding that future state or federal funding may not be available to sustain the service.

Proposed allocation: 20% ($144,000)

Categories ranked from most to least prioritized by librarians for one-year pilot subscriptions:

- Adult education (test prep, certification, professional development such as LinkedIn or Udemy or Universal Class)
- Practical how-to/lifelong learning
- Online newspapers
- Student support
- Early literacy
- General research databases
- Entertainment
- Remote-access genealogy
- Software licenses for remote work
- Professional resources such as ASTM standards

There are many options that would fall under this priority. We are asking the NAC to make recommendations on which categories to pursue for one-year subscriptions.

4. **Fourth spending priority:** Initiate one-year trials for new e-content service models, such as pay-per-circ like Hoopla or Kanopy, with the understanding that future state or federal funding may not be available to sustain the service.

Proposed allocation: 5% ($36,000)

5. **Fifth spending priority:** Invest in one-time purchase of standalone electronic resources that do not require an internet connection, such as Playaways or Wonderbooks.

Proposed allocation: 5% ($36,000)

6. **Not surveyed but recommended by MSL staff:** Invest in professional development resources for all Montana library staff.

Proposed allocation: 5% ($36,000)

Options:

- PCI Webinar Series, $2,000 (see appendix)
- LinkedIn Learning or similar for one-year subscription
- Supplement Montana State Library OverDrive professional development collection for librarians

- Disaster planning kits for every public and tribal library, to supplement online Moodle course (see appendix)
- Documents recovery kits for libraries, to supplement online Moodle course; one per federation (see appendix)

7. **Not surveyed but recommended by MSL staff:** Analytics software to improve existing resource sharing programs.

Proposed allocation: 5% ($36,000)

This funding would support a pilot to improve tracking and data analytics for the courier program, and to test software options for coordinating and analyzing centralized collection development.

APPENDIX

1. Biblioboard (prepared by Cara Orban)

Biblioboard is a content provider that licenses perpetual access and simultaneous access ebooks which can be integrated into the DPLA Palace app. The DPLA collections are available to all types of libraries. These collections may be selected individually. Individual titles may also be selected, though the cost for selecting titles a la carte is 25% more expensive than when purchased in a collection.

Publisher	# of Titles	Price per eBook	Total	Notes
ABDO	1302	$106	$138,338	K-12
Arbordale Publishing	333	$63	$20,813	K-12
Capstone	5718	$45	$257,310	K-12/Bilingual
Cherry Lake / Sleeping Bear Press	1557	$75	$116,775	K-12
Flux/North Star Editions - JNF	432	$75	$32,400	Hi-Lo
Flux/North Star Editions - MG Series	101	$75	$7,575	Hi-Lo
Flux/North Star Editions - MG Trade	18	$244	$4,388	Hi-Lo
Flux/North Star Editions - YA	230	$244	$56,063	Hi-Lo
International Step by Step Association (ISSA)	223	$64	$14,216	K-12/Bilingual
Jump! Library	1056	$96	$101,640	K-12
Milet Publishing	176	$118	$20,680	K-12/Bilingual
Orca Book Publishers - Elementary School	481	$203	$97,403	Hi-Lo
Orca Book Publishers - High School	451	$206	$93,019	Hi-Lo
Orca Book Publishers - Middle School	445	$179	$79,544	Hi-Lo
Rourke Educational Media	1511	$83	$124,658	K-12
Teacher Created Materials / TIME for Kids	3168	$48	$150,480	K-12/Bilingual
BOOM! Studios	510	$106	$54,188	Comics/Graphic Novels
Dark Horse Comics	1138	$95	$108,110	Comics/Graphic Novels
Dynamite Entertainment	183	$224	$40,946	Comics/Graphic Novels
Rosarium Publishing	47	$106	$4,994	Comics/Graphic Novels
TidalWave Productions	1039	$49	$50,651	Comics/Graphic Novels
Valiant Entertainment	945	$54	$50,794	Comics/Graphic Novels
IAP Select	700	$130	$91,000	
BookLife Elite	75	$173	$12,968	
Grand Total	**21839**		**$1,728,949**	

*A 25% break up fee must be added if you don't purchase entire publisher collections

2. **Online Summer Reading Tracker – Renewal Proposal (prepared by Lifelong Learning Librarian Amelea Kim)**

Report Purpose and Goals
The goals of these report are to answer the following questions:

- What is the status and feedback for the current statewide READSquared contract?

- Which libraries are interested in continuing with an online reading tracker in the future?
- What feedback did libraries have on READSquared?
- What other options for online reading trackers are there?

Current READSquared Contract

The current READSquared contract was purchased through COVID funds in May 2020, with the immediate goal of providing a means for public libraries to conduct summer reading programs virtually. We purchased a two-year statewide contract for up to 40 libraries to have their own READSquared site. MSL contracted directly with READSquared as we did not have time for limited solicitation in order to have something in place before the 2020 summer reading program. We did look at other options, mainly Beanstack, when deciding which software to go with, but decided to go with READSquared due to cost ($30,000 per year for 40 libraries at Beanstack vs $12,000 per year for 40 libraries with READSquared). Billings Public Library also had an account with READSquared from five or six years ago and was very happy with the product – Allynne Ellis provided a thorough description of the product and their implementation, which was helpful during this process too.

As of July 27th, 2021, 27 libraries had signed up for a READSquared site, although it was unclear whether some of the libraries actually used it or not.

The current contract will expire on May 31st, 2022. If we choose to renew with READSquared, we can do so at the same pricing as the current contract, which you can see below:

1. READSquared for 20 unique sites/apps - $5,995
2. Additional libraries above 20 can be added for $295 per library
3. Invoice for 2021 was $12,990 for 40 libraries

Feedback on READSquared from Public Libraries

As of July 27th, 2021, here is the general breakdown of library feedback on READSquared:

- 10 libraries have expressed interest in continuing with READSquared past May 2022
- 12 libraries have said they do not want to continue with READSquared past May 2022
- 5 libraries have not yet responded

Of the libraries who are interested in continuing with READSquared:

- Most of them are interested in a cost-sharing model with the State Library, although some of them would consider a cost-sharing model with other libraries. Only a few were interested in paying for the costs themselves.
- Some libraries have expressed interest in exploring other options. Two libraries expressed interest in Beanstack, and said they would be willing to pay more for it, as it seemed less clunky and easier to navigate.
- READSquared does seem to be difficult for some libraries to navigate, and does require some time to get used to the admin side of things. That being said, READSquared has excellent customer service, and the State Library has not had to handle any troubleshooting questions, beyond setting up office hour webinars for people to come and ask questions of READSquared staff.

Of the libraries who are not interested in continuing with READSquared:

- Many said that they didn't have enough patrons using it, and cost vs. usage did not make it worth it.
- Some said that if there were another pandemic (or similar situation), they would hope that this becomes an option again.
- Many said that they didn't have a chance, or didn't really need to use the program. Some said that it seemed like extra work to add on to things, and wasn't a priority for them.

Impacts and Outcomes from READSquared Libraries
Here is a list of specifics outcomes and impacts from libraries that have used READSquared:

- Interest in Expanding Reading Programs :
  - "I want to try it for our 1000 Books Before Kindergarten Launch in January"
  - "Was very helpful during these times but we are excited to see how the platform works when intergraded into our in person activities when we are able to continue those."
  - "Yes, we did really enjoy READsquared. In fact, we will definitely host our first winter reading program this year with READsquared and I think we will go ahead and switch over on 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten. We are averaging 250 participants in the program by the way, and we have had several complete the program. The national program shared one of our Facebook posts this summer! AND we have a child that started kindergarten as an independent reader. Her Mom credited the motivation provided by the program to get those books read as a major contributor to that success. We are thrilled with that! So thank you for all your work to bring this program to fruition statewide."
- A few other libraries also mentioned the ability to reach other sections of the population, who hadn't participated in summer reading before.

Request: Renew READSquared for Summer 2022 for up to 20 libraries (approximately $6,000).

3. **PCI Webinar Series proposal for Montana library staff professional development (prepared by Continuing Education Coordinator Jo Flick)**

Considerations: PCI (People Connect Institute) offers a weekly webinar series targeted to meet the broad continuing education needs of librarians. In 2020, the MT State Library contracted for 2 months of webinar services in May and June and the service contract resulted in librarians in Montana having access to 10 webinars, with the recordings available through the end of calendar year 2020. The response was positive with at least one Montana librarian attending every session live, some webinars had 10 Montana librarians in attendance. We did not conduct any formal evaluation for these webinars, but unsolicited feedback was very positive. PCI webinar topics are library-focused with presenters recruited from all across the USA.

Cost/benefit: PCI webinars were quoted in 2020 at $400 per month for all Montana library staff. Webinars are held weekly. The expected cost per person per credit for those attending sessions live worked out to less than $10. By comparison, Fall Workshops credits for a face-to-face or virtual event are about the same in direct costs, not counting MSL staff time or staff travel. Other training activities sponsored by MSL for Trustees or Little Hands Signing webinars are comparable or up to 3x more.

The staff time required to manage the PCI webinars is minimal – the webinars are posted in ASPeN, and posted to WIRED. PCI staff provide all the support required and issue an attendee report for each webinar. Teacher librarians may request an OPI certificate from MSL CE Coordinator if they attend a webinar live. Links to recordings are posted in the ASPeN event calendar following the live event.

For librarians, attending online training is an important way to learn. Even before COVID, librarians reported nearly 20% of the credits they earned toward certification were from online learning. In 2020, 10% respondents to the evaluation form for the first virtual Fall Workshops reported that it was their first, ever, statewide library conference. Access to free quality online learning is especially valuable during winter months, when travel is a concern in Montana and getting away from work, home, or ranch responsibilities makes attending live events difficult.

Outcomes: Librarians that attend PCI webinars will...
- Advance their knowledge and skills in librarianship
- Earn credit toward certification

Request:
License the PCI webinar series for December 2021, January, February, and March 2022; post the events into ASPeN and also put links to recordings as individual topics in a single Moodle course; include an evaluation of the webinars in Moodle to collect more data on the value placed on this resource by Montana's librarians. Create a Moodle discussion forum for librarians who take the webinar courses to support a Montana-only post event discussion. Estimated direct cost $2,000

4. Documents Recovery Kit for Libraries (list prepared by Jo Flick)

Recommending one kit per library federation (six kits in all).

- 4 Large plastic totes
- (4) Paper towels
- (20) sheets of Blotter paper
- (50) newsprint paper
- (2) Clotheslines
- (50) Bamboo or plastic clothespins
- 1 box Nitrile gloves
- (2) NIOSH-compliant respirator masks
- (2) Safety goggles
- Plexiglas panels (10) 8.5 x 11 (2) 10 x 20
- (1) Plastic tarp
- Fine mesh screen (for draining books – needs to be flat)
- Wet-dry Hand vac with HEPA filter
- Soft scrub brush
- 3 different sizes – false sable artist brushes

- (6) large construction/masonry sponges
- Hair dryer
- (2) dust-off canned air
- (20) extra -large freezer bags
- Freezer paper
- (3) Plastic trays (photo trays – for washing individual items)
- (10) White cotton towels
- Water-proof instruction sheets
- (2) Sharpie pens

5. **First Aid Kits for Libraries (list prepared by Jo Flick)**

Recommending one kit per public and tribal library (123 kits in all)

- 8 pairs of nitrile gloves (put these on top or put a pair in every zippered compartment)
- 4 n95 protective face masks
- 2 protective eyewear
- blanket and sheet
- notepad and pencil
- first aid instruction sheet or booklet
- 1 adult pocket mask with filter and one pediatric pocket mask
- 6 gauze pads (4x4 or larger)
- 2 large gauze pads (8x10)
- 2 packages gauze roller bandage (2" or wider)
- 2 triangular bandages
- 12 sealed moistened towelettes for wound cleaning
- 1 bottle of sealed saline solution for rinsing wounds or eyes
- trauma shears
- tweezers
- 1 roll of medical adhesive tape
- 1 roll of Coban adhesive wrap
- 1 box adhesive bandages (band-aids)
- 2 elastic wrap bandages (Ace bandage)
- 1 SAM splint 36 x 4.25"
- 3 ice packs
- 2 heat packs
- 1 CAT tourniquet
- penlight sized flashlight, extra batteries