



Summary of role of the state library commission and types of libraries

Role of the State Library Commission – support for libraries

MCA 22-1-103. State library commission – authority.

The state library commission may:

- (1) give assistance and advice to all tax-supported or public libraries in the state and to all counties, cities, towns, or regions in the state that propose to establish libraries, as to the best means of establishing and improving those libraries;
- (5) serve as the agency of the state to accept and administer any state, federal, or private funds or property appropriated for or granted to it for library service or foster libraries in the state and establish regulations under which funds must be disbursed;
- (8) act as a state board of professional standards and library examiners, develop standards for public libraries, and adopt rules for the certification of librarians;
- (9) designate areas for and establish federations of libraries.

Types of libraries and role of MSL in working with each library

This document focuses on the main four categories of libraries. The leaders and boards of these libraries choose whether to use the State Library's services.

Academic libraries – found in higher education institutions. They support student, faculty, and staff research and learning.

- Ways MSL interacts with academic libraries
 - A librarian from the Montana university system is appointed by the Commissioner of Higher Education to sit on the State Library Commission
 - Academic libraries may participate in some of our statewide services like the statewide OCLC contract, the Montana Shared Catalog, or Montana History Portal
 - Academic libraries in Montana have chosen to work together on cooperative purchases and educational efforts

Public libraries – community libraries established by community members or local government officials. They support literacy, lifelong learning, and access to local community information.

- Ways MSL interacts with public libraries
 - Our primary support is for public libraries and includes consulting, continuing education, and programming support.
 - Public libraries participate in many of our statewide services including MontanaLibrary2Go, Montana Shared Catalog, and sharing groups.

School libraries – found in K-12 education institutions. They support student, teacher, and staff research and learning.

- Ways MSL interacts with school libraries
 - The Superintendent of Public Instruction and/or designee sits on the State Library Commission
 - School libraries may participate in some of our statewide services – particularly the Montana Shared Catalog.
 - The Office of Public Instruction and regional cooperatives provide some support for school libraries.

Special libraries – found in institutions like hospitals, museums, historical offices, private business, legal firms, etc. These libraries support the staff, management, and clientele of the organization. They may also have unique collections of value to researchers.

- Ways MSL interacts with special libraries
 - The State Library is a special library and its role as a special library is spelled out in law. It includes the following MCA 22-1-103 - (6) provide library services for the blind and for individuals with physical disabilities; (7) furnish, by contract or otherwise, library assistance and information services to state officials, state departments, and residents of those parts of the state inadequately serviced by libraries;
 - Special libraries may participate in statewide services such as the OCLC contract, Montana Shared Catalog, and the Montana History Portal.

Additional resources

Montana State Library Commission Handbook – pages 21-22 describe the history and role of the Montana State Library Commission and how it has changed over time but remains true to supporting libraries and providing access to information.

Montana State Library Commission: History and Services -

<https://archive.org/details/librmontanastate00montrich/page/n7/mode/2up>