



**MEMO**

**To:** Montana State Library Commission  
**From:** Tracy Cook, Lead Consulting and Learning Librarian  
**Subject:** History and review of the Montana public library standards  
**Date:** September 21, 2023

As requested here is a history and review of the public library standards. I am including a timeline, information about the charge of the former public library standards task force, a brief description of the process, and links to additional resources.

**Timeline of review of public library standards**

Date	Action
August 2023 – present	Reviewing select public library standards due to law changes, state aid reauthorization, questions from staff and directors, and request from policymakers
July 2022 – July 2023	MSL staff assist libraries in meeting standards. Libraries asked to confirm their compliance with new standards.
July 1, 2022	Current version of the public library standards went into effect
August 19, 2021	Current version of the public library standards adopted by the Commission
March 2021 – June 2021	Commission and MSL staff seek feedback on proposed standards
September 2019 – March 2021	Public Library Standards Task Force meets regularly, discusses community feedback, and creates recommendations for the Commission.

**Process used to adopt current standards**

- Past meeting materials can be found at <https://mslservices.mt.gov/ASPeN/Archive/Default.aspx?CommitteeID=1>. Meeting materials will be available for 2019, 2020, and 2021.
- Librarians applied to become members of the task force. The following factors were considered in appointment of members - geographic representation, size of library, position within library, and tribal college library representation.
- The charge of the task force was to review all standards adopted in 2010 to create a new set of standards. Task force members were asked to consider changes to library models and services, the future of libraries, and what was best for Montanans and for Montana libraries.
- The task force decided to be as community focused as possible and to create a set of standards that was built by the entire library community.
- The process used was iterative with multiple opportunities for public comment which then influenced subsequent drafts of the standards.



- The task force wanted to simplify the standards while still asking libraries to provide the best possible service to their community.

**Additional resources**

- Link to current public library standards - <https://docs.msl.mt.gov/librariesweb/documents/Standards/FINALEssentialStandardsARM.pdf>
- Link to 2010 public library standards - [https://ftpaspen.msl.mt.gov/EventResources/20190903085109\\_14739.pdf](https://ftpaspen.msl.mt.gov/EventResources/20190903085109_14739.pdf)
- Link to public library standards task force page - [https://mslservices.mt.gov/About the Library/Commission Councils/Public Library Standards Task Force/](https://mslservices.mt.gov/About%20the%20Library/Commission%20Councils/Public%20Library%20Standards%20Task%20Force/)
- Link to archived meeting materials - <https://mslservices.mt.gov/ASPeN/Archive/Default.aspx?CommitteeID=1>