MEMO

To: Network Advisory Council

From: Montana State Library Staff

Subject: Fiscal Year 2024 Funding Priorities

Date: April 19, 2023

This memo was shown to the NAC at the February 1, 2023 meeting. It has been updated.

MSL staff need the NAC to prioritize projects for funding recommendations. The State Library Commission will act on the FY2024 budget in June. MSL staff will take NAC recommendations to the Commission at the June meeting as part of the overall budget item on the agenda.

We have provided a draft budget for you to review along with an explanation about certain items. This budget covers current staff and operations. We estimate we have between $150,000 and $160,000 to put towards new priorities.

Sustained funding for Montana History Portal Specialist position – included in draft budget

The MLN Cultural Resources Committee has recommended that the MMP focus on developing out the MMP's Recollect platform, continue outreach to new contributors, educate end-users, and develop end-user engagement. Develop the policies to allow the use of new features like crowd-sourcing transcripts and getting content from individual contributors. To this end the committee has recommended hiring additional staff for the MMP to develop this content to the fullest. To fulfill this recommendation, we request the funding to continue to employ a full-time MMP Project Specialist. This position has been funded for the last 18 months with ARPA funds. We request one FTE for the MMP Project Specialist.

Montana History Portal Collection funding – included in draft budget
The MMP is also requesting funding to assist cultural institutions in preparing content for addition to the MMP. This funding would cover the cost of digitizing content or creating born digital content, and/or creating the necessary metadata for the content to be discoverable. We are requesting at least $6000 dollars. This will be distributed to eligible applicants for requests up to $1500 to pay a vendor or contractor to complete the project work.

In-person Fall Workshops – funded by NAC at February 1, 2023 meeting – included in draft budget

This request provides funding for presenters, meeting space, food, travel costs for presenters, and supplies for an in-person MSL Fall Workshops event. MSL does not charge any registration fees for library staff and trustees to attend Fall Workshops. The cost of the workshops is $21,300.

Public Libraries Survey software - included in draft budget

MSL's Data Coordinator works in partnership with the Statewide Library Consultants to prepare and collect data for the Public Libraries Survey. This work includes designing and demonstrating survey collection methods to local library directors and trustees so that they can advocate for funding and communicate outcomes to local government, their vested partners, and constituents. The data can be used for benchmarking which helps libraries improve and provide the best services possible to their communities. The requested funding is from coal tax and will be used to maintain access to survey collection software in the next fiscal year. The library's current contract ended January 2023, and the library is in the procurement process with Counting Opinions for the software, LibPAS. The switch to LibPAS will help the library address other NAC priorities such as the comparable wage and occupational standard survey and provide the flexibility to add questions on topics such as broadband and library buildings. The cost of this software is $10,000.

Qualitative Analysis software – included in draft budget

As the Network Advisory Council and Montana State Library implements the MLN structure, it is important to be able to articulate success and evaluate outcomes. While MSL collects qualitative responses from patrons and librarians regarding multiple core services, the agency does not presently have the tools to effectively analyze this information. For example, the "I Love My Library" survey produced 503 patron responses. Qualitative analysis software can help turn this rich information into actionable data. Software will be used to find insights in unstructured qualitative data to present sound conclusions, drive effective outcomes, and increase project impact. With proper analysis, data will help the NAC make defensible recommendations so that MSL can effectively execute and administer core services. The proposed funds will cover the expense of one software license for MSL's Data Coordinator for NVivo or a similar product. The cost of this software is $1,500.

Additional funding for library federations

The federation task force recommended asking for each of the six federations to receive an additional $4,000 to be used for annual retreats or other collaborative projects that meet legislative intent. The task force believes this additional funding will help federations fulfill their role of supporting library board members and directors in regional efforts. The total amount

needed is $24,000. The funds requested are coal tax funds. This is currently included on the draft FY24 budgets.

Ready 2 Read: Continue funding READSquared for June 1, 2023 – May 30, 2024

READSquared is an online reading program resource which offers customization and configuration of summer reading programs and other reading and learning programs, as well as readers' advisory tools for all ages and all reading levels.

MSL's READSquared contract started during COVID, in May 2020 with a 40-library contract. 21 libraries participated throughout COVID. That contract was renewed for another year, until May 2022. Both years were paid for with federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

For the May 2022 – May 2023 contract, MSL contacted participating libraries to see who wanted to continue using READSquared. 6 libraries responded. MSL negotiated a smaller contract of $3,352 to renew READSquared for another year (about $559 per library). The currently participating libraries are:

- Dillon Public Library
- North Jefferson County Library
- Boulder Community Library
- Ronan Library District
- North Lake Public Library District
- Sidney-Richland County Library

Costs and Proposal:
- Renewal costs for June 2023 – May 2024 are $3,352, which comes out to ~$559 per library. The cost of individual libraries contracting with READSquared is $595 per library.
- Each library pays $150 towards the contract, with LSTA funds covering the rest.
  - Libraries contribute $900 total
  - LSTA pays for $2,452 total.

Sustained funding for electronic magazines and self-paced courses in MontanaLibrary2Go

In January 2021, MSL used federal pandemic relief funds to pilot a simultaneous access (always available) e-magazine collection via the MontanaLibrary2Go OverDrive Libby platform. Circulation from this collection has increased over the past year by 46%, to 62,604 checkouts across 100 different library locations in calendar year 2022, or $0.48 per checkout. This accounts for 5% of total checkouts from MontanaLibrary2Go. Furthermore, the simultaneous access model allows patrons to check something out immediately without having to place a hold, perhaps mitigating the dissatisfaction of having to wait for bestseller titles with long holds queues.

Universal Class is a self-paced online continuing education platform that has partnered with OverDrive to provide seamless access to courses via the Libby app. This platform offers over 600 courses, many of which offer continuing education units (CEUs) or credits. MontanaLibrary2Go patrons can access Universal Class by checking out a 7-day pass through Libby. They can check out the pass as many times as they need. In addition to being available to all Montanans through their participating public libraries, Universal Class can also be useful to library staff seeking continuing education credit or looking for self-paced options to improve their professional skillsets.

These subscriptions are currently funded through calendar year 2023.

Downloadable and streaming e-content for Montana K-12 students

Between 2020 – 2022, MSL invested $165,000 in federal pandemic relief funds in the shared content budget and enrollment budget for the independently administered Montana Schools Shared OverDrive Program. Schools are contractually ineligible to participate in MontanaLibrary2Go. The MSSOP provides access to age-appropriate materials for grades K-12, selected by school library specialists, via a child-friendly app called Sora.
As a result of MSL's investment, 168 Montana schools were able to join the consortium at no cost; student registration in the program increased by 213%, to 27,053; and circulation increased by 162%, to 129,983 items in the past year.
Continued support for this program would help sustain access to a robust collection of e-books and e-audiobooks at a significant cost savings to school districts that might not otherwise be able to offer this collection to their students. This program also reduces the collection development workload on individual teacher-librarians, as selection responsibilities are covered at the consortium level.

Increased funding for Montana Courier Network

Any additional funding for the courier program would be helpful. The NAC may want to consider how the State Library should continue to invest in this program.

Montana Shared Catalog New Library Migrations – included in draft budget

The Montana Shared Catalog is a cooperative project that allows member libraries to pool resources for their library automation system. This request would provide funding for the migration of new libraries joining the MSC in the coming fiscal year. This is an estimated maximum cost. The cost can vary as it depends on the number of new applicants and the migration service of our vendor is priced according to the size of the incoming library. There is currently one library expressing interest in applying to join the MSC, but the application has not opened yet, so the number of migrating libraries has not been set.