

# Memo

**To:** Montana State Library Commission

**From:** Jennie Stapp, State Librarian and Tracy Cook, Director of Library Development

**Date:** March 21, 2019

**Re:** **Automatic Deferral for Public Library Standards**

Unless something changes during the legislative session, public libraries are scheduled to receive their state aid per capita in FY2020. As a reminder, library directors must certify that their library meets Montana's public library standards or submit a request for deferral to receive state aid. Libraries must make this certification by the end of July.

In preparing for the upcoming public library standards certification process, we realized that one of the standards will be difficult for libraries to meet. It states, "The board uses the Montana Public Library Annual Statistical Report to review the library's year-to-year progress and performance." Due to the budget cuts and loss of staff we experienced in 2017, we have been unable to create the "Montana Public Library Annual Statistical Report." We were also unable to upload the normal reports to our statistics center.

We asked attorney, Jeff Doud, for his recommendation on how to handle this issue. He reported that we need to grant a deferral on this standard. We request that the Commission approve an automatic one year deferral for this standard for the reasons listed previously.

We are in negotiations with a private vendor to provide reports and collection tools for the public library statistics. This will allow us to once again provide this service to public libraries.