

# Essential Standards Survey that Libraries Would Complete

Dear Library Board Member and Director,

Thank you for taking the time to review and complete the annual library standards form. Our reasons for having library standards are to:

- Ensure that all Montanans and visitors receive equitable library services
- Give libraries direction for how to move forward
- Help stakeholders understand the value and relevance of libraries

The essential standards are required. You must certify that you meet the essential standards in order to receive state funding. If you are unable to meet a standard you will need to explain why you cannot meet the standard. You will also need to create and share your plan for how you will meet the standard in the future.

We also have excellent library standards. These are for library boards, directors, and staff who wish to pursue excellence. Your library will be acknowledged for pursuing these standards. For those of you who may struggle to reach the standards, State Library staff are ready to help you. As part of the essential standard process we will ask you to choose an excellent standard to work towards achieving. We believe every Montanan deserves library services that are sufficient unto their needs.

## Essential Library Board Standards – Page 1 of the Survey

Board members have two primary responsibilities: to govern the library for the benefit of everybody in the community, and to help keep the Board functioning effectively. Both tasks are equally important.

Board members are part of a decision-making team that includes the rest of the library board and the library director. To function effectively, everyone needs a firm understanding of each other's different roles.

Please respond to the following statements with yes, no, or n/a. At the end of each section, you will be asked to explain any no answers. You will also be asked for a plan for addressing any standards that received a no response. We have included some interpretative language to help you determine the best response for your library. You can access this information by clicking on the question mark:

| Standard                                       | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| 1. The Board meets at least 8-10 times a year. |     |    |     |

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| 2. The Board is transparent and complies with Montana’s Open Meeting Laws.   |  |  |  |
| 3. New board members receive information about the library, the services it provides, and the role of the board in governing the library.                            |  |  |  |
| 4. Board members comply with local, state, and federal laws.   |  |  |  |
| 5. The Board has a set of bylaws that governs Board business, membership, and meetings.  |  |  |  |
| 6. The Board follows or has an evaluation process for reviewing the Director’s work.   |  |  |  |
| 7. The Board and Director identify what they want to accomplish in the next 3-5 years.   |  |  |  |
| 8. The Board and Director create a mission statement for the library.  |  |  |  |
| 9. Board members talk about the value of the library to community members, leaders, and local government leaders.  |  |  |  |
| 10. The Board adopts policies that govern use of the library, its materials, and services.   |  |  |  |
| 11. The Board reviews library policies every three years.  |  |  |  |
| 12. The Board adopts a budget for the library.   |  |  |  |
| 13. The Board and Director identify what level of funding the library needs to achieve the library’s mission.  |  |  |  |
| 14. The Board and Director create a plan for obtaining additional resources.   |  |  |  |
| 15. Board members know what revenue sources fund the library and how those revenue sources can be used.  |  |  |  |
| 16. At least 70% of the library’s revenue is from local tax revenues. Grants, donations, and other revenue sources supplement but do not supplant local tax support. |  |  |  |
| 17. If the library serves tribal members, the Tribal Council recognizes and supports the efforts of the library to obtain funding.                                   |  |  |  |

**Final questions:** For any essential standards where you answered no:

- Why is difficult for your library to comply with the standard(s)?
- What is your plan for bring your library into compliance with the standard(s)?

## Services, Collections, and Technology Standards – Page 2 of the Survey

The library plays an important role in the community. It provides access to information professionals, services, materials, tools, and spaces that support learning, decision making, personal growth, and play. You have an important job in providing these services in a way that makes everyone in the community feel welcome – no matter what their age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, or identity. You have an opportunity to showcase how beautiful your community is in all its diverse forms.

| Standard  | Yes        | No        | N/A       |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
|---|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|----|-------|---------------|----|-------|---------------|----|-------|------------------|----|-----|--|--|--|
| 1. The Board, Director, and Staff work together to ensure that all community members have access to library content and services.   |            |           |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
| 2. Members of minority groups within the community know they are welcome in the library.  |            |           |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
| 3. The library is open convenient hours for community members. At a minimum the library is open at least the following number of hours:   |            |           |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
| <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Population</th> <th>Minimum</th> <th>Desirable</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Less than 3,500</td> <td>15</td> <td>25-40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3,501 – 9,999</td> <td>30</td> <td>40-50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10,000-24,999</td> <td>40</td> <td>50-60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>More than 25,000</td> <td>50</td> <td>60+</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Population | Minimum   | Desirable | Less than 3,500 | 15 | 25-40 | 3,501 – 9,999 | 30 | 40-50 | 10,000-24,999 | 40 | 50-60 | More than 25,000 | 50 | 60+ |  |  |  |
| Population  | Minimum    | Desirable |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
| Less than 3,500   | 15         | 25-40     |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
| 3,501 – 9,999   | 30         | 40-50     |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
| 10,000-24,999   | 40         | 50-60     |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
| More than 25,000  | 50         | 60+       |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
| 4. The library provides services for remote patrons who may not or cannot physically enter the library because of their distance from the library.  |            |           |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
| 5. The library facility is maintained, clean, and safe for staff and members of the public.   |            |           |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
| 6. The library offers physical and digital materials for community members.   |            |           |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
| 7. The library will obtain materials from another library for their community members to use.   |            |           |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
| 8. The library collects local history items and makes them available for community members to use.  |            |           |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
| 9. Community members can find what they need at the library or are connected to the proper resource/organization.   |            |           |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
| 10. The library provides reference and reader's advisory services.  |            |           |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |
| 11. Community members who cannot read traditional print are connected to alternative formats.   |            |           |           |                 |    |       |               |    |       |               |    |       |                  |    |     |  |  |  |

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|---|--|--|--|
| 12. Library staff regularly evaluate, order materials, and weed the library's collections.  |  |  |  |
| 13. The library provides programs for community members.  |  |  |  |
| 14. The library offers Internet access to community members.  |  |  |  |
| 15. The library offers WIFI access to community members.  |  |  |  |
| 16. The library offers access to functional computers and/or devices that have software community members can use to search the Internet and create documents and spreadsheets. |  |  |  |

**Final questions:** For any essential standards where you answered no:

- Why is difficult for your library to comply with the standard(s)?
- What is your plan for bring your library into compliance with the standard(s)?

### Personnel Standards – Page 3 of the Standards

Library staff (and volunteers) are the ones who carry out the work of the library. They are the face of the library. The services the library provides would not happen without them. Developing and providing support to library staff is one of the most important jobs of the board and director.

| Standard  | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| 1. Staff members receive health insurance.  |     |    |     |
| 2. Staff members receive retirement benefits.   |     |    |     |
| 3. The Board budgets money for continuing education for staff.  |     |    |     |
| 4. Staff are compensated at a rate that is regionally competitive with other libraries of a similar size.   |     |    |     |
| 5. Paid staff are working in the library all open hours.  |     |    |     |
| 6. The Director uses job descriptions and verbal communication to inform staff of expectations.   |     |    |     |
| 7. The director is or will be certified by the Montana State Library within the required timeframe mandated by the certification program adopted by the State Library Commission. |     |    |     |
| 8. Directors of libraries that serve over 25,000 people have a Master of Library Science or equivalent degree.  |     |    |     |
| 9. Directors talk about the value of the library to community members, leaders, and local government leaders.   |     |    |     |

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| 10. Every other year directors invite at least one local government or community leader to visit the library. |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|

**Final questions:** For any essential standards where you answered no:

- Why is difficult for your library to comply with the standard(s)?
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### Public Relations Standards – Page 4 of the form

Community members are not always aware of the services the library offers. It is important for library staff to communicate with community members about what is happening at the library.

| Standard  | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| 1. The library uses local media, library created publications, community presentations, websites, and/or social media to advertise library programs and services. |     |    |     |
| 2. The library has a website or social media presence.  |     |    |     |

**Final questions:** For any essential standards where you answered no:

- Why is difficult for your library to comply with the standard(s)?
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### Stretch Standard – Final page of the form

We know that many of you want what is best for your community members. You want to provide excellent service and to ensure that all community members and visitors are receiving the services they need. Every library in Montana has difference in its ability to provide services. Because of that we are asking you to think about one aspirational standard that you would like to achieve this year. Please review the excellent standards and select your stretch standard. Remember, MSL staff are ready and willing to assist you in achieving this standard.

1. Which excellent standard do you want to try and achieve?
  - a. Please see the Excellent standards
2. How do you plan on achieving that standard?
3. What assistance do you need from Montana State Library staff to achieve that standard?