

Proposed Essential and Excellent Standards for Administrative Rules

Introductory sentence for Administrative Rules - The standards will go into effect July 1, 2021. Public libraries receiving state payments must meet the Essential Standards by July 1, 2022 and each year following.

Essential Standards - Library Board Meetings, Governance, Duties, Working with the Director

1. The library is established per Title 7, Title 22, or through the legal process practiced by a Tribal Council.
2. The Board complies with Montana's Open Meeting Laws.
3. The library complies with the Secretary of State's guidelines for records retention.
4. While engaged in library matters, board members and the Library Director comply with local, state, and federal laws.
5. Board members learn about the library, the services it provides, and the role of the board in governing the library. This information is provided so that Board members understand their roles in relation to the board chair, the library director, staff, and the local government funding body.
6. The Board meets at least 6 times a year.
7. The Board adopts bylaws and rules for its own transaction of business and for the government of the library, not inconsistent with law.
8. At least one board member attends at least one local government meeting annually.
9. At least one board member is certified by the Montana State Library.
10. The Board reviews the performance of the Library Director.
11. The Board annually evaluates its work.
12. The Board and Director create and regularly review a mission statement for the library.
13. The Board and Director identify and discuss community needs and aspirations.
14. The Board and Director identify in writing what they want to accomplish in the next 3-5 years.
15. The Director or designee submits the Montana Public Library Annual Statistical Report to the Montana State Library. The Board and Director annually review public library statistics.

16. The Board and Director annually review progress on achieving the library's goals and mission.
17. The Board adopts policies that reflect the mission and goals of the library. The policies govern use of the library, its materials, and services.
18. The Board reviews library policies to ensure safe operation of the library and for potential barriers to use. It reviews policies on a regular schedule set by the Board, but no single policy goes more than 4 years without review.
19. The Board understands the revenue sources that fund the library, the budgeting process, and adopts a budget for the library accordingly.
20. At least 70% of the revenue of a library created under Title 7 or Title 22 is from local tax revenues. Grants, donations, and other revenue sources supplement but do not supplant local tax support.
21. If a tribal college library serves tribal members, the Tribal Council recognizes and supports the efforts of the library to obtain funding.
22. The Board and Director identify what level of funding the library needs to achieve the library's mission. The Board and Director explore and identify ways to obtain sufficient resources.

Excellent Standards - Library Board Meetings, Governance, Duties, Working with the Director

1. The Board meets at least 11 times a year.
2. The Board has a formal process for welcoming and educating new board members.
3. The library evaluates the degree to which everyone in their community has access to library content and services, sufficient unto their needs. From this inclusive, ongoing individual-based discovery process, the library devises a community-based plan for addressing their community's needs. The plan is reviewed annually and updated, as needed.
4. The Board and Director can succinctly communicate to the public about the plan - specifically what is in the plan and progress on achieving the plan.
5. The Board and Director are data-inspired when planning, evaluating and communicating about library services.
6. Board members are strong library advocates and receive training about advocacy at least every year.
7. 100% of local tax revenue funds support the services and personnel necessary to achieve the essential standards. Grants, private funds, supplement and help libraries meet the excellent standards.
8. At least three board members are certified by the Montana State Library.

Essential Standards - Access to the Library, Collections, Services, Programming, and Technology

1. The Board, Director, and Staff ensure that all people have access to library content and services.
2. All people (including current non-users and those who might be marginalized) know they are welcome in the library.
3. People know where to find the library.
4. The library is open convenient hours. At a minimum the library is open at least the following number of hours:

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+

5. The library provides services for those who may not or cannot physically enter the library.
6. The library is accessible, maintained, clean, and safe for staff and members of the public. The library director is aware of the general condition of the building and what maintenance issues might need to be addressed.
7. Library users have access to physical and digital materials.
8. Library users can obtain materials from another library through services offered at the library.
9. Library users have access to local items about the culture, government, and history of the area. People can find information about local events and local government through the library.
10. People are connected to the relevant resource they need.
11. People who cannot read traditional print are connected to alternative formats.
12. Library staff regularly evaluate, add to, and weed the library's collection.
13. Users have access to programming.
14. Users have access to the Internet.
15. Users have access to WIFI.
16. Users have access to or can be directed to technology sufficient to their needs.
17. People who need help using the library's technology receive assistance.

Excellent Standards - Access to the Library, Collections, Services, Programming, and Technology

1. The library staff, director, and/or board foster partnerships with local community organizations to improve library services for all community members.
2. The library staff attend training that helps staff identify implicit bias and how to overcome that bias.
3. The library works with other organizations to ensure that everyone, regardless of age, ability, income, race, or ethnicity, has safe, comfortable, and convenient access to community destinations and public places—whether walking, driving, bicycling, or taking public transportation.
4. All people have access to materials that reflect community culture and languages.
5. People can find library materials online.
6. The library participates in sharing groups in order to increase the number of library materials community members can access.
7. The library participates in cooperative collection development.
8. People have access to programming for all ages, ethnicities, income levels, and abilities.
9. People have access to programming that reflects community needs and interests.
10. Children and parents are offered early literacy programming.
11. Users have access to sufficiently reliable and speedy Internet at their library.
12. Users have access to devices that can be used in the library or at home.
13. People with disabilities have access to technology and assistance with using that technology.
14. The library provides software and programming that allows people to create and develop content.
15. The library participates in statewide/regional cooperative efforts that improve library services for community members.

Essential Standards - Personnel, Salaries and Benefits, Certification, Directors

1. Staff members are offered health insurance according to local policy.
2. Staff members are offered retirement benefits according to local policy.
3. The Board adopts a sufficient budget for continuing education.
4. The library offers a competitive enough compensation package to attract and retain high quality staff.
5. During open hours, paid staff are available to assist users.

6. Staff have the tools and training they need to perform their work.
7. Every position has a written, current, and accurate job description. These descriptions are reviewed at least every 4 years.
8. Staff receive regular feedback on their performance and what is expected of them on the job.
9. Staff are encouraged to become certified by the Montana State Library.
10. The director is or will be certified by the Montana State Library within the required timeframe mandated by the certification program adopted by the Montana State Library Commission.
11. Directors of libraries that serve over 25,000 people have a Master of Library Science or equivalent degree.
12. Directors are strong library advocates and receive training about advocacy at least every year.

Excellent Standards - Personnel, Salaries and Benefits, Certification, Directors

1. All community members see themselves reflected in the staff, volunteers, or board because the library board and/or Director make every effort to recruit and select staff, volunteers, and board members that represent community demographics, with emphasis on recruiting under-represented community groups.
2. The Board reviews staff and Director salaries to see if they are compensated at whichever rate is higher - the salaries of other city or county staff with similar jobs or other directors and staff of libraries with similar size staff and budgets.
3. Directors of any size library have a college degree or equivalent experience.
4. Staff receive recognition when they certify and maintain their certification by the Montana State Library.

Essential Standards - Public Relations

1. Library staff internally and externally advertise library programs and services.
2. Library staff maintain a website or social media presence.
3. The Director annually invites at least one local government official to visit the library.
4. The Director annually invites at least one community leader to visit the library.
5. The Director attends at least one local government board meeting every year.

Excellent Standards - Public Relations

1. Local media are encouraged to publish articles about the library and its services.

2. Library staff participate in state and national marketing efforts for the benefit of the library and potentially other libraries.
3. Library staff identify the target audiences for their publicity efforts and create materials specifically for those audiences.
4. Library has a community support group such as a Friends or a Foundation to advocate for the library and provide funding.
5. Library cultivates donors.
6. Community members are advocates for the library.
7. Library staff support local businesses by purchasing items locally, when feasible.

Essential Standards - Stretch Standard

1. The Montana State Library trusts that library directors, board members, and staff strive for excellence. State Library staff will support and assist libraries in working towards excellence. Using a process that works best for the library, the Library Director, and Board will work towards achieving one excellent standard. The Director and Board will identify what assistance they need and will craft a plan for achieving that standard. The excellent standard should align with work the library is already doing. The Montana State Library recognizes that it may take time to achieve an excellent standard. Once a standard is achieved, the Montana State Library will ask the Library Board and Director to work towards another excellent standard.

Essential Standards - Standard notification and appeal process

1. MSL will notify libraries of any proposed changes to the standards at least 6 months before requiring libraries to implement standards.
2. The State Library Commission is the final arbiter for any questions arising because of ARM (use numbers for new standards).

Essential Standards - Deferrals

1. Any library may request, in writing, a waiver from the State Librarian by July 25 of each year.
 - a. The State Librarian may grant a waiver of any of the standards in ARM (use new ARM numbers) if:
 - i. the library explains why the standard(s) is not being met; AND
 - ii. provides a compliance plan by which the library will meet the standard(s).
 - b. State Library staff will work with the library director to decide upon a timeline for achieving the standard(s). The State Librarian shall make the final decision on the amount of time the library has to comply with the standard(s) and will notify the library requesting the waiver of the decision by letter by October 1.

2. Any library may request a one-year extension of the waiver from the State Librarian in writing by July 25 of each year. The library shall provide the State Librarian with an updated compliance plan with an explanation of why they cannot meet the standard(s).
3. The State Librarian may grant an extension for one year only. No further extensions will be granted.

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