

Memo

To: Montana State Library Commission

From: Jennie Stapp, State Librarian

Date: May 27, 2020

Re: **2020 State Library Pay Incentive Strategy**

Please know that the Montana State Library currently projects approximately \$346,000 in remaining FY20 personal services funds. These available funds were generated primarily through vacancy savings that accrued while the State Library filled vacant positions that were re-funded by the 2019 Legislature. Some of these funds have already been repurposed to the hot spot lending program previously approved by the Commission at your April 27 Commission meeting.

Over the last three months, the work of MSL staff has been both directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and, for most of us, a significant percentage of our work time has pivoted to support the agency, the State and our partners to grapple with the impact of COVID-19 in our communities.

- MSL staff quickly identified and adopted new technologies and workflows to support remote work to enable all but one FTE to work remotely seamlessly and without interruption to our patrons and partners.
- Staff support the state's Joint Information Center to develop tools including the COVID-19 dashboard and a personal protective equipment daily use tracker.
- Staff are responding to an increased demand for Talking Book Library services. Of note the number of Braille and Audio Reading Downloads (BARD) doubled in April over March statistics.
- Staff launched and maintain a COVID-19 response website for libraries to provide librarians and library boards with the best available information to inform their

local response. Information includes model policies, reopening plans, information about available online services, etc.

- Staff handle numerous consulting calls, change service delivery models, and update technology to help libraries to continue to support their communities.
- Staff host a weekly check-in with an average of 55 Montana librarians to create a community of practice within Montana to support and inform our COVID-19 response.
- Staff compiled the best available information and sought feedback from the Network Advisory Council and approval from the Commission on a four-part strategy to quickly and efficiently spend federal CARES Act funds in ways that provide immediate benefits to libraries end users.
- Staff collect data and create dashboards to readily track the impact COVID-19 has on the services of the MSL and Montana libraries.

Staff continues to perform at an incredibly high level to meet the demands placed on us by the pandemic while at the same time managing the personal stress that we face. For these reasons, I ask that the Commission authorize one-time-only bonuses for staff. The bonuses total approximately \$100,000 and would be allocated across multiple funding sources that correspond with each position.