

Memo

To: Montana State Library Commission

From: Jennie Stapp, State Librarian
Tracy Cook, Lead Consulting & Learning Librarian

Date: June 1, 2020

Re: Recommendations from the Public Library Standards Task Force

The Public Library Standards Task Force recommends that the State Library delay the process to update Montana's public library standards. Task Force members met on Tuesday, May 26, 2020 to discuss public comment on the current draft standards and whether the COVID-19 crisis has changed the process or the content of the proposed standards. Task force members unanimously agreed to recommend delaying the process.

Task Force members considered that the COVID-19 experience has led to a transformation of library services that library directors, boards, and staff are still navigating. It may result in a change in what library services are considered essential and a change in what a successful library of the future might look like. Since the library community is still exploring and learning task force members recommend reconvening in early September to de-brief about the COVID-19 experience, discuss the future, and reconsider proposed changes to the standards with fresh eyes. Members believe that taking this extra time is in the best interest of libraries in Montana.

To this end, the task force recommends that the Commission take no further action on the draft public library standards at this time.