# Montana State Library Virtual Fall Workshops 2020

### Report to the MT State Library Commission, December 9, 2020

## Virtual Fall Workshops November 17-18 2020 ***by the numbers:***

* Registration was 77 – at least 3 registrations represent whole library staffs; final number of attendees likely close to 100
* The cost of conducting training this way is comparable to a per person credit cost for a traditional Fall Workshops conference
* Registrations for virtual at 60-75% of traditional
* 70%+ of attendees represented rural public libraries serving less than 10,000
* Some librarians reported that they prefer this model of training to in-person conference
* 60% of attendees who completed the evaluation survey were staff – not directors
* 60% had worked in a library less than 10 years; 22% less than 3 years
* Nearly 10% reported this was the first statewide training they had attended
* 87% reported that were likely to attend another virtual conference if it were offered
* Hosting the online conference took considerable staff time – tech support, facilitating, recording, posting, follow-up attendance, etc.
	+ Facilitator staff time: 2 FTE days per session x 8 sessions
	+ CE Coordinator time planning and implementing a virtual conference is comparable to a face-to-face conference except for travel time/expense and the time required in securing a venue

## Conclusions:

Registration and attendance targets were met; this training event reached new librarians and our target group: small public libraries with few staff at a cost that was comparable to presenting a live event, but less than ½ the actual cost overall. The decision to contract with professional high-quality presenters (new faces) and to keep a longer format with small class size seemed to work well. The selection of topics also seemed to appeal to our target group. This is a format that works well for a synchronous learning experience. But, it does take considerable staff time to produce.

## Recommendations:

Continue to offer a virtual conference on alternate years from the traditional Fall Workshops. Coordinate with Lifelong Learning Librarian so that traditional Fall Workshops occur on years opposite of the Ready2Read conference. The virtual conference should replace the MSL Workshops model of one day events in Montana’s small towns which were much more expensive per person/per credit to produce and did not permit bringing in top-shelf presenters. Support training events at Federation meetings with quality in-state presenters like the CIT training, the MSU Local Government Center and Sage Solutions training offered over the past few years. Focus on what front line and 1-2 person library staff need most at both virtual and traditional Fall Workshops events. Look for opportunities to make some of the traditional Fall Workshops accessible online – and to record parts of sessions. Continue to differentiate from MLA’s conference events so as not to draw down attendance there.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Flick, CE Coordinator, Montana State Library 12/9/2020