

Memo

To: Montana State Library Commission
Jennie Stapp, State Librarian

From: Tracy Cook, Lead Consulting Librarian
Pam Henley, Consulting Librarian, Chair, ELSA Revision Committee

Date: January 26, 2021

Re: Draft Excellent Library Services Award (ELSA) criteria

For years it has been the practice of the State Library Commission to recognize those libraries that provide outstanding service to their patrons. It is important that the criteria used to evaluate library services evolve as library services evolve.

Since the December Commission meeting the award criteria the Commission reviewed was amended slightly as summarized by Pam below. Staff recommend that the Commission adopt the ELSA award criteria as amended.

ELSA Revision

Two public comment sessions were held, with several participants; 3 email comments were received. Below is my summary.

General Themes

The "Open Question" received popular support (although there was confusion as to it being in addition to selecting two criteria or optional). A small formatting change (adding **AND**) should solve this.

Small libraries may find the criteria overwhelming, difficult to achieve. It often seems that everything is seen from the perspective large libraries; small libraries are just as important to their communities. Providing definitions, explanations and basic examples of how a library might meet some of the criteria was suggested.

Summary

The committee consisted of 8 individuals (one school, one tribal, 6 public libraries, only one of which would be considered large). Consensus was the proposed criteria could be

achieved by most libraries, regardless of size. Informational sessions at federation meetings to provide explanations and examples could alleviate concerns and encourage libraries to apply.