

Memo

To: Montana State Library Commission

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

Date: January 24, 2022

Re: Library Federation Discussion

Over the last few years, Commissioners have asked important questions about federations, their purpose, funding and impact. The State Library has periodically conducted reviews of the library federation structure. The last review took place in 2005. Staff believe it is time to review this model again.

Reviews are an opportunity for us to determine if the existing federation structure is working for Montanans and the library community. A review will help us determine if the current structure is still meeting the legislative intent of libraries pooling their resources and avoiding duplication of effort to encourage efficient delivery of library services. This is also a chance for us to check in with the library community on the value of federations and challenges that may need to be addressed.

Staff would like to hear about Commissioners experiences with library federations. We are curious to know what questions you have about federations and their structure. We would also benefit from knowing what your expectations and sidebars are for a federation review.

This review would begin in late summer/early fall. We would seat a task force of librarians and board members and ask them to review the history, information we have about federations, and feedback from the libraries to make a recommendation to the State Library Commission on possible future action.