

Memo

To: Network Advisory Council

From: Rebekah Kamp

Date: April 6, 2022

Re: WhoFi recommendation from Public Library Statistics Task Force

With the new Public Library Survey (PLS) detail items for programs regarding mode of delivery and audience, 85% of Montana public libraries did not provide complete or satisfactory answers. Similarly, Montana has a low response rate for Wi-Fi sessions. Though valuable for assessing library performance, the metrics are both confusing and difficult to collect. One solution used by other states is a product called WhoFi. WhoFi aids libraries with consistent and simplified statistical tracking for Wi-Fi use and programs. The product also includes a public facing community calendar. Data from WhoFi can be fed into the annual Public Library Survey in a centralized manner to relieve the burden from public library directors and to ensure consistent and reliable data across all organizations.

The Public Library Statistics Task Force recommends WhoFi on the condition that the State Library can provide stable funding for the product. Notes from the committee include the following:

- WhoFi can help with more consistent tracking of program attendance, automating a currently manual task for small libraries.
- The product can lead to greater collaboration and program comparison between libraries, delivering useful statistics for planning purposes.
- Reports from WhoFi can answer questions regarding program trends, help with data-driven decisions, and assist with communicating the value of the library.
- A large library representative thought the product would be useful for program and Wi-Fi tracking, and it was reviewed positively by the library systems administrator.
- The task force wished to emphasize that they only recommend the product if funding is available, and they won't experience a withdrawal of service after a short period of time.

WhoFi provided a quote for a 12-month statewide contract for 115 public library locations. Based on current library service area population counts, the discounted total is \$39,085.