



PO Box 201800 1515 East 6th Avenue Helena, MT 59620 (406) 444-3115

Memo

To: Montana State Library Commission

From: Jennie Stapp, State Librarian

Date: March 31, 2022

Re: State aid for Tribal College Libraries

MSL staff requests approval from the Commission to submit a legislative change request to the Governor that, if passed, would allow tribal college libraries to receive per capita/per square mile state aid if they meet public library standards.

When the Montana State Library (MSL) charged a task force of librarians to draft revised public library standards, one of the goals of that work was to provide an opportunity for tribal college libraries that provide public library services to certify that they meet the new standards. The new standards take effect on July 1, 2022 and four tribal college libraries have expressed interest in certifying.

Statute change is necessary for tribal colleges libraries to receive state aid funding made available to public libraries that meet the public library standards. If supported by the Commission, MSL intends to seek legal guidance regarding how to properly include libraries created by tribal colleges and/or tribal councils in section (1) of 22-1-326 Montana Code Annotated below:

22-1-326. State aid to public libraries. (1) As used in **22-1-326** through **22-1-331**, "public library" means a library created under Title 7 or under **22-1-301** through **22-1-317**.

(2) As provided in **22-1-325** through **22-1-329**, the commission shall administer state aid to public libraries and public library districts created and operated under part 7 of this chapter. The purposes of state aid are to:

(a) broaden access to existing information by strengthening public libraries and public library districts;

- (b) augment and extend services provided by public libraries and public library districts; and
- (c) permit new types of library services based on local need.

(3) Money appropriated for the purposes of this section may not be used to supplant general operating funds of recipient public libraries or public library districts. The commission may withhold a distribution to a library or district that receives less support from a mill levy or local government appropriation than its average for the preceding 3 fiscal years if the decrease may reasonably be linked to money received or expected to be received under **22-1-325** through **22-1-329**.

MSL staff has briefed the Governor's Office, the State Tribal Relations Committee, and the Education Interim Committee about this request.

This request is supported by the Network Advisory Council and the Montana Library Association Government Affairs Committee.