

Library Infrastructure Grant Program (One-Time-Only) Budget Request

Montana public libraries face the same infrastructure challenges faced by schools and communities to maintain their buildings, roads, bridges, water systems, and other needs. Unlike Montana schools and communities, there is no source of State funding to help address the challenges. Inequitable and over-extended local tax bases, that may, more may not, be able to support these needs, perpetuate inequitable access to quality library services. As a result, libraries are operating in buildings that do not meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and basic building codes, that are aging and not compatible with 21st century library services, and, in some cases, are rendered unusable due to water damage, mold infiltration, and other issues that impact the health and well-being of library staff and patrons.

To address this need, the Montana State Library suggests the State invest in a one-time-only grant program, administered by the Department of Commerce, targeted at critical library infrastructure needs. This program should be informed by a statewide public libraries' infrastructure assessment. Grants could be awarded as planning grants and/or to fund shovel-ready projects.

Funding need	Estimated cost
Infrastructure assessment	\$575,000 (115 locations @ \$5,000 ea)
Program administration	\$250,000
Grant funds	\$19,175,000
Total budget request	\$20,000,000



Figure 1 North Jefferson County Library, Clancy, MT, June 10, 2022

