

Memo

To: Montana State Library Commission

From: Tracy Cook, Lead Consulting & Learning Librarian

Date: July 18, 2022

Re: Federation Task Force

Description of Task Force, Purpose, and Timeline

[Chapter 4 of Title 22, Part 1](#) of Montana Code establishes Montana Library Federations and defines their purpose. Information about the history of Montana's library federations was compiled by Tracy Cook for the February 9, 2022 meeting of the State Library Commission. The presentation can be reviewed at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/3267051/video/675958266>. The presentation began at 02:18:02.

MSL staff would like to know if the Commission has any further input on what the task force should address and/or any other components of this study.

Why are we studying Federations?

- The purpose, function, and goals of federations haven't been reviewed in 15 years.
- MSL intends to study the structure and purpose of current federations to make sure that the legislative intent created when federations were established is still valid. We would also like to consider how well the federation structure is working for Montanans and Montana's libraries. If the purpose and structure of federations needs changes, MSL would like to know what changes are needed and how those changes will benefit library services.

Federation Task Force Duties

- Review federation legislation, structure, history, and purpose
- Lead discussions about federations to hear what the Montana library community values and doesn't value about the current format and structure of federations
- Research, consider, and answer questions from the State Library Commission, state library staff, and the Montana library community
- Share perspectives about federations
- Create recommendations for the State Library Commission, recommendations may include suggestions for future legislation.

Federation Timeline

- Task force is seated in August
- Task force meets virtually in the fall/winter and hosts discussions with Montana libraries
- Task force creates recommendations for Commission. First draft is presented in April 2023 with Commission action in June 2023
- Commission directs MSL staff in following through on any adopted recommendations.

Potential members

- Six federation coordinators
- Tracy Cook
- One other MSL staff member
- MSL Commissioner
- Anyone else?
 - Should we have a non-public library representative? What about a Board member who has served on a Federation board? What about a NAC representative?

Questions we have about federations

- Is the legislative intent for federations still relevant? After reviewing the historical purpose of federations, what is still relevant?
- Does the current structure meet the intent – if it is still relevant?
- What is truly unique about federations?
- Where does it make sense to be regional versus statewide?
- How do Montanans benefit from federations?
- How do library directors and/or trustees benefit? What about library staff?
- What are the challenges facing federations?
- What could federations do with more funding – if there was a need?
- Where can federations have the greatest impact?