



MEMO

To: Montana State Library Commission

From: Jennie Stapp, State Librarian and Marilyn Bennett

Subject: Talking Book Services contract update

Date: December 7th, 2022

In June 2022 the Montana State Library (MSL) entered a partnership with Utah State Library (USL) to provide more resilient and robust Talking Book Services to Montana patrons. In this contract USL provides Reader's Advisory, circulation services, other program enhancements. MSL will utilize the cost savings achieved through the contract to hire two staff to support and promote Talking Book services throughout Montana. The goals of this partnership are to grow the number of Talking Book patrons, spread awareness of services, provide service improvements, and provide more stability and resiliency to the program. The partnership also helps MSL advance toward Library Services and Technology 5 -year plan goals.

[Proposal to Restructure Talking Book Services](#)

[Talking Books Update Memo](#)

[Talking Book Services Dashboard](#)

After two busy quarters that dealt with the preparation and transition to the new service model with USL, and clean up tasks post-transition, Montana Talking Book Services is now experiencing its first quarter of more normal activity. Since June, there have been numerous positive changes and adjustments to the program. In addition to the updates linked above:

- There continues to be a significant increase in the circulation of materials to Montana patrons. In Q1 of FY23 there was a growth of 82.4% in the circulation of materials compared to Q1 of FY22.
- There has been a total of 121 new patrons added to our services since the contract took effect. There's an average of 24 patrons added per month, with 30 new patrons added in October.
- Staff has attended several outreach opportunities and made valuable connections.
- MSL recording staff have produced and uploaded 18 books to the National Library Services website, BARD (Braille and Audio reading Download) Titles include Winter Wheat by Mildred Walker and Lady Blackrobes: Missionaries in the Heart of Indian Country by Irene Mahoney.
- USL has begun the process of recording several Montana books, including The Names of the Stars: A life in the Wilds by Pete Fromm.