



MEMO

To: MSL Commissioners
From: Rebekah Kamp, Data Coordinator
Subject: FY 2022 Public Libraries Survey Certified
Date: May 16, 2022

The following summary of the Public Libraries Survey information is provided to the Commission for informational purposes. The Montana State Library submitted and certified its results from the FY 2022 Public Libraries Survey for inclusion in the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) national dataset. The Public Libraries Survey (PLS) examines when, where, and how library services are changing to meet the needs of the public. These data, supplied annually by public libraries across the country, provide information that policymakers and practitioners can use to make informed decisions about the support and strategic management of libraries.

In Montana, the PLS is also required under [Administrative Rule 10.102.1155](#) and the [Public Library Standards](#). All Montana public libraries submitted statistics for FY 2022, a notable accomplishment. These library systems include 82 central libraries, 32 branches and six bookmobiles. Summary of key results:

- **Montanans use libraries.** While still slightly below counts documented pre-pandemic, Montana observed a significant rebound in library visits this past year. Montanans visited public libraries 2.5M times in FY 2022, an increase of 53% from FY 2021. Though not required for visiting the library, 38% of Montanans hold a public library card which grants access to physical and digital collections, totaling over 2.8M titles statewide.
- **Visitors seek internet access.** The public used library computers 292K times and connected to library Wi-Fi 1.5M times. Over the past five years, Wi-Fi sessions doubled.
- **Patrons turn to the library for trusted information.** Montanans asked library staff 460K reference questions, and 50K citizens received one-on-one technology support.
- **Families build literacy in partnership with libraries.** 236K people attended educational library events. Notably, Montanans ages 0-5 and their caregivers attended programs 76K times. Library preschool events are designed to empower families as they support their child's early literacy development.
- **Montanans borrow books for education, information, and recreation.** Readers of all ages borrowed library books and other media 5.1M times. Together, they borrowed 23% more titles than the previous year, another indicator of post-pandemic recovery.



To review additional insights, please see the [Public Libraries Survey dashboard](#). For a tutorial on the PLS, please see the following [recording](#).