



MEMO

To: 2023 Public Library Standards Task Force Members
From: Tracy Cook, Lead Consulting Librarian and Cara Orban, Consortia Director
Subject: Data regarding MLS degrees nationally and in Montana
Date: September 14, 2023

MSL staff member, Rebekah Kamp, researched the question about the number of MLS degrees awarded annually. She also researched the number of public libraries nationally that have directors with graduate degrees and the service area population. She reviewed data from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Summary of MLS degrees awarded and top universities

Here is data regarding accredited MLS degrees:

Year	Enrolled in Accredited MLS Programs	MLS Awarded from Accredited Programs
2022	19,818	7,249
2021	20,322	7,079
2020	19,087	6,335
2019	18,002	6,233
2018	16,720	5,993

Top 5 programs with most total graduates in the past five years:

Program	MLS Awarded
San Jose State *	2,964
University of North Texas *	1,783
University of Toronto	1,447
Simmons University *	1,356
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign *	1,232

*Degree may be earned through coursework attended 100% online.

Summary of library staff and number that hold an MLS degree



Public library staff with MLS degrees in nation:

Legal Service Area Population	Libraries	Staff with MLS	% Libraries without MLS
> 24,999	2,162	27,730.05 FTE	4%
20,000-24,999	362	1,219.89 FTE	13%
< 20,000	6,647	4,796.66 FTE	62%

Public library staff with MLS degrees in Montana:

Legal Service Area Population	Libraries	Staff with MLS	MLS Director*	% Libraries without MLS
> 24,999	8	54.3 FTE	7	0%
20,000-24,999	0	0 FTE	0	0%
< 20,000	74	16 FTE	13	77%

*This data is collected by Montana State Library, but it is not available at the national level.

Any changes to Montana library Legal Service Area (LSA) populations won't be made until after the next decennial census in 2030.

Links to spreadsheets with the raw data

- [Library staff with MLS degrees for public libraries](#)
- [Library staff in Montana with an MLS degree](#)
- [MLS trends from 2018 - 2022](#)