



## MEMO

**To:** Committee reviewing state aid formula  
**From:** Tracy Cook, Lead Consulting Librarian  
**Subject:** Service area populations  
**Date:** December 13, 2023

[Administrative Rule 10.102.4003](#) defines how state aid per capita per square mile is distributed to eligible libraries. It has a formula that calculates the service area population for each public library. We may want to consider whether to continue to use service area population. It's based on census data and is about potential users. [MCA 22-1-327](#) references the decennial census which is why the state aid formula uses the census and attempts to account for all residents in Montana.

It might be helpful to discuss the concept of service area populations. We have used city, county, and school district populations in the past. There may be an alternative. Who do you see in your library? If someone asked you to geographically describe your service area population, how would you describe it? Do you only serve people in a city, a county, or a school district area? Do you have patrons that use multiple libraries? If so, what libraries are sharing patrons?