



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

A GREATER STATE OF KNOWLEDGE



<https://msl.mt.gov>



OUR MISSION

The Montana State Library (MSL) helps all organizations, communities, and Montanans thrive through excellent library resources and services.

ACCESS Our open-data advocacy helps equalize the knowledge base of Montanans.

TRUST We are non-partisan with a reputation for integrity and transparency that fosters strong relationships across the state.

PURPOSE All areas of the State Library contribute to making lives better for Montanans.

EFFICIENCY We promote data-sharing that expedites decisions and leads to better outcomes.

LEADING EDGE We anticipate the information needs of Montanans which results in innovative product and service offerings.

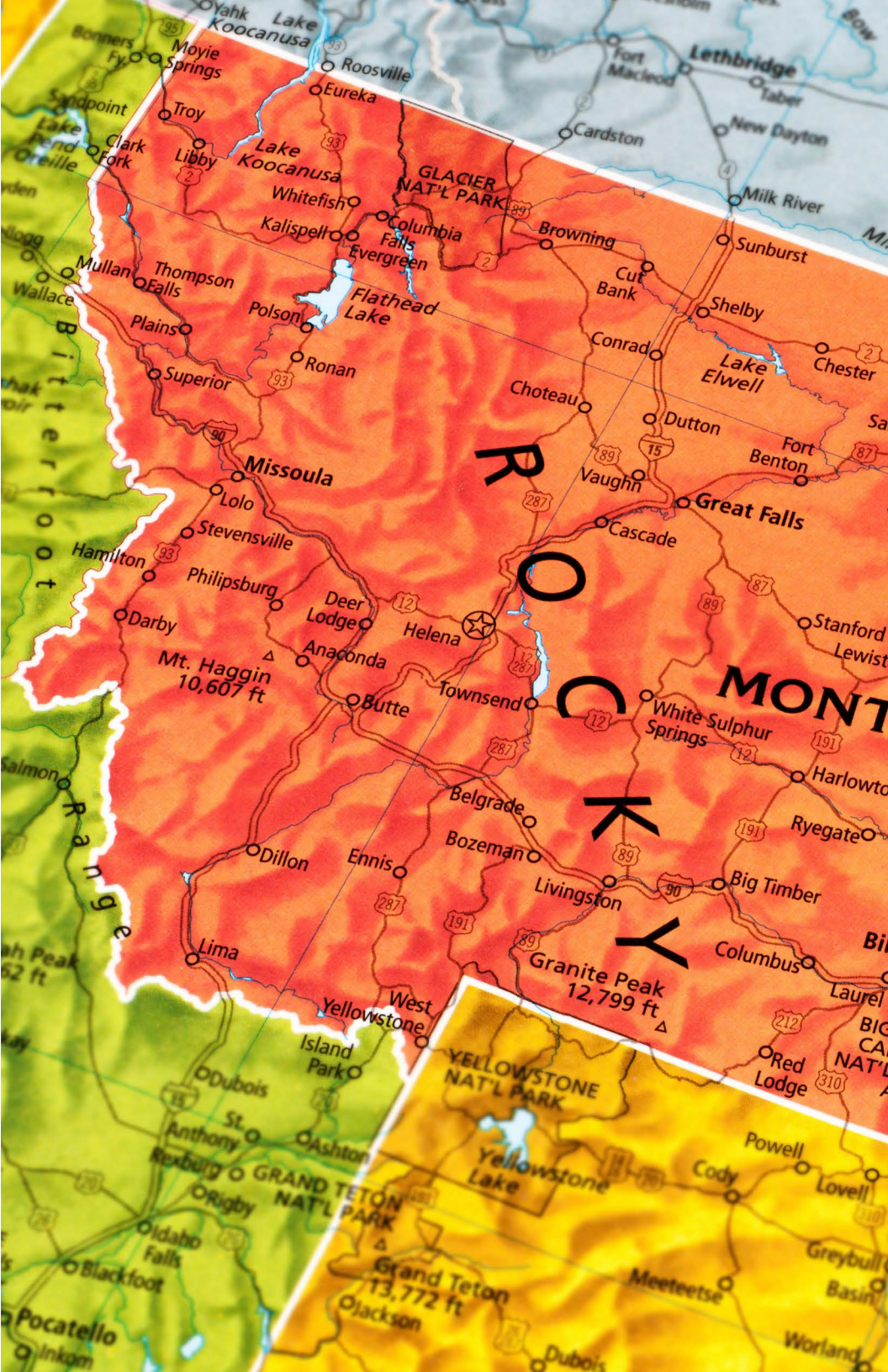


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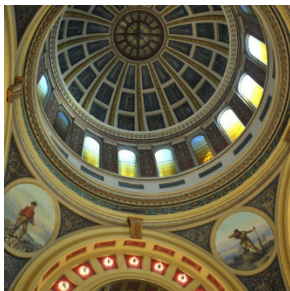
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LIBRARY LEADERSHIP



Evan Hammer
**Digital Library
Administrator**
ehammer@mt.gov



Jennie Stapp
**State Librarian
(Chief Officer)**
jstapp2@mt.gov



Malissa Briggs
**Central Services
Administrator**
mbriggs@mt.gov

STATE LIBRARY PROGRAM LEADS

-
- [Sean Anderson](#), Agency Procurement Officer
 - [Kazi Arifuzzaman](#), Real Time Network Coordinator
 - [Marilyn Bennett](#), Outreach Librarian
 - [Jennifer Birnel](#), MT History Portal Director
 - [Troy Blandford](#), Water Info Systems Manager
 - [Tracy Cook](#), Lead Statewide Consulting Librarian
 - [Erin Fashoway](#), State GIS Coordinator
 - [Michael Fashoway](#), GIS Land Information Lead
 - [Lee Fossum](#), IT Manager
 - [Sharon Hardwick](#), Human Resource Specialist
 - [Jim Kammerer](#), Government Information Librarian
 - [Rebekah Kamp](#), Data Coordinator
 - [Kenny Ketner](#), Information Products Lead
 - [Amy Marchwick](#), Shared Catalog System Administrator
 - [Bryce Maxell](#), Natural Heritage Program Coordinator
 - [Savanna Sill](#), MT Library Network Director

COMMISSIONS & COUNCILS

STATE LIBRARY COMMISSION

The State Library Commission sets forth policies and funding priorities that empower the State Library to meet its mission and statutory obligations and to advocate for the State Library and the Montana library and information communities whenever possible.

MONTANA GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Montana Geospatial Information Advisory Council (MGIAC), as required by statute, advises the State Librarian and the State Library Commission on issues related to geospatial information, on the priority of geospatial information, on the development and management of the Montana Geospatial Information Act grant process and on the distribution of funds collected in the Montana Geospatial Information Account.

Commission Chair
Robyn Scribner
Geraldine, MT
Term expires: 5/31/2027

Commission Vice-Chair
Tom Burnett
Bozeman, MT
Term expires: 5/31/2027

Commissioner
Peggy Taylor
Whitefish, MT
Term expires: 5/31/2026

Commissioner
Carmen Cuthbertson
Kalispell, MT
Term expires: 5/31/2026

Commissioner
Tammy Hall
Bozeman, MT
Term expires: 6/1/2025

Commissioner of Higher
Education Appointee
Brian Rossmann
Term expires 6/29/2026

Superintendent of Public
Instruction
Elsie Arntzen
Term expires 1/6/2025

KEY CHANGES IN ADMINISTRATIVE RULE

ARM 10.102.1158(1) and 10.102.4003

The definition of public libraries was revised by the 2023 Legislature to include tribal college libraries. After adopting new administrative rules which were unanimously supported by the library community, tribal college libraries are now eligible to receive state aid funding to support their work to provide public library services in their communities.

ARM 10.102.1160

An amendment to the public library standards removed the requirement for directors of libraries that serve over 25,000 people to have a Master of Library Science or equivalent degree.

ARM 10.102.70

The State Library transitioned the Montana State Reference Network (MTRSN) from a pilot project to a subscription-funded network. In addition to setting the subscription rate for the network, administrative rules allow the State Library to enter into agreements with contributors that grant them access to use the network in exchange for support and services that expand the reach of the MTRSN and that promote its use. The State Library is also excited to offer the MTRSN to educational users for use directly related to learning, teaching, training, research, and development.

ARM 10.102.91

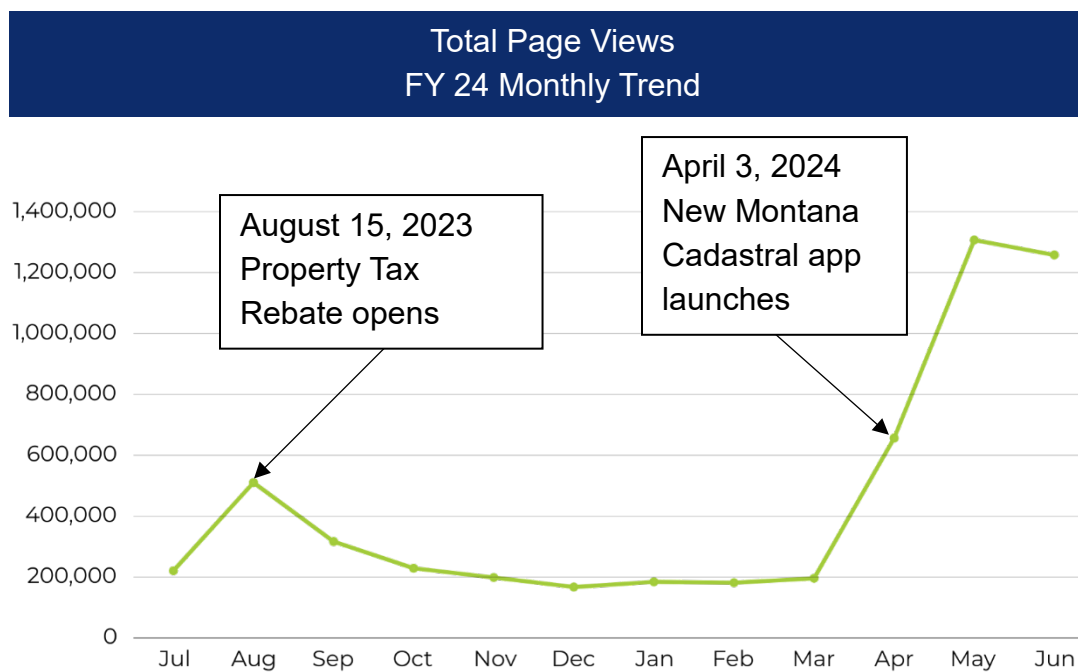
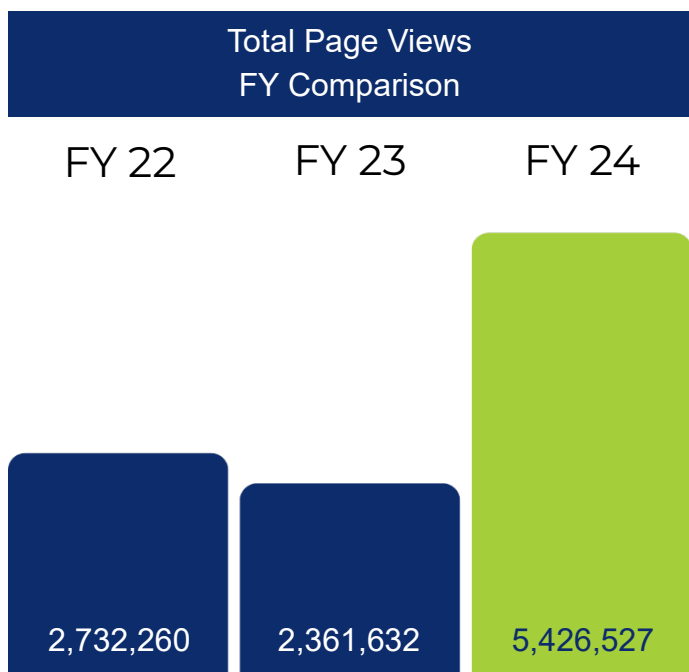
The State Library worked to align administrative rule with statute regarding library geospatial and natural resource information. The 2023 Legislature modernized and improved the Montana Geospatial Information Act. ARM updates clarified procedures surrounding the Geospatial Plan and the MGIA grant program.

MONTANA CADASTRAL

UPDATES TO THE MONTANA CADASTRAL APPLICATION

Montana State Library launched the most significant upgrades to the Montana Cadastral application in more than a decade. Upgrades began “under the hood” with improvements to the underlying cadastral data service. Improvements to the application include improved mobile device access. The redesign also enhances map performance in the application. Users can quickly zoom to counties, cities, reservations, townships, ranges, and sections. The redesign improves the experience of browsing through multiple selected parcels. For realtors, this upgrade allows for easily browsing through properties in a neighborhood to view comparable properties.

The Montana Cadastral offers a variety of options for the basemap in its Basemap Gallery, such as topographical, terrain, or aerial imagery by odd year going back to 2005. In the redesign, users can use the basemap swipe tool to drag the tool between two different basemaps. With this new tool, a user can easily see historic changes to a property.



STATE REFERENCE NETWORK

TRANSITION TO A SUBSCRIPTION-FUNDED NETWORK

The Montana State Reference Network (MTRSN) is the state-owned real time positioning network that can provide, where available, up to centimeter accuracy in latitude, longitude, and 2-to-5-centimeter accuracy in ellipsoid height, depending on specific data collection factors. This network is operated with the cooperation of partners that include tribal nations, the Montana Department of Transportation, Montana State Library, counties, educational institutions, and private entities who contribute to the operation of the statewide network. MTRSN began accepting subscriptions in April 2024, and by the end of FY 24, the network had already secured 53 paid subscribers. For a self-sustaining network, MTRSN will require a minimum of 500 paid subscribers, which MSL anticipates achieving by 2029.

MTRSN Glide Path to a Self-Sustaining Network

Year	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Stations	80	100	140	160	160	160
Total Expenses	\$266,982	\$499,403	\$634,515	\$705,704	\$713,738	\$747,012
Subscription Target	0	100	150	250	350	500
Subscription Revenue	\$ -	\$150,000	\$225,000	\$375,000	\$525,000	\$750,000
Revenue Gap	(\$266,982)	(\$349,403)	(\$409,515)	(\$330,705)	(\$188,738)	\$2,988

RECORDING PROGRAM

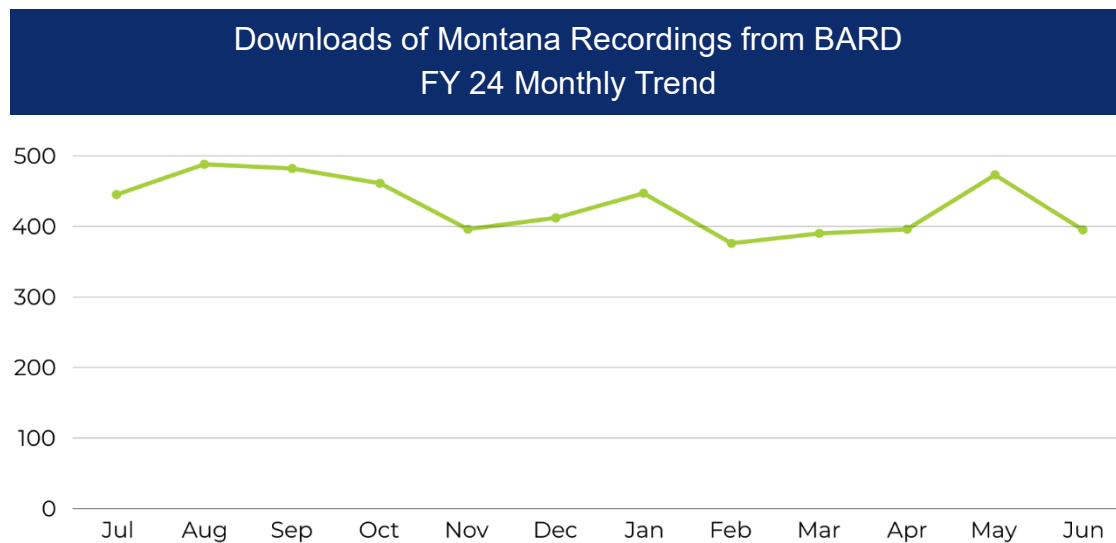
TALKING BOOKS RECORDED IN NATIVE VOICES

Montana State Library developed an innovative partnership with Utah State Library, the National Library Service (NLS), and the Medicine Spring Library at the Blackfeet Community College to record a Talking Book adaptation of the graphic novel *Thunderous* by Montana authors M.L. Smoker and Natalie Peeterse. Patrons across the country can now download the finished recording through the National Library Service's app BARD (Braille and Audio Read Download). This exciting production of a Montana graphic novel inspired additional recording partnerships this year.

MSL staff and the National Library Service traveled to Stone Child College and the Blackfeet Community College to record children's books of local significance with several community members serving as narrators in Chippewa Cree and English. In total, seven books will be uploaded to BARD. The Veterans History Project, another program of the Library of Congress, accompanied the State Library to both locations to record interviews with tribal members. These firsthand recollections will be preserved by the Library of Congress so that future generations can hear directly from veterans about their service in the U.S. military.



Picture of Brandon Roe of NLS and a Blackfeet community member working together to record the narration of a book.



PUBLIC LIBRARIES

MONTANA LIBRARIES DEMONSTRATE EXCELLENCE

Montana State Library deployed new reporting software, Counting Opinions LibPAS, for collecting annual statistics and other required reports from public and tribal college libraries. With added reporting functionality, directors submitted stories with their Public Library Standards capturing the ways their libraries demonstrate excellence. Aaniiih Nakoda College Library and the Glendive Public Library provided two examples of how libraries meet and exceed the Public Library Standards to provide the best for their communities.



The Aaniiih Nakoda College Library hosted and sponsored diverse programming for campus and community members, including the Fort Belknap Midwinter Fair Art Show and Quick Drawing Competition and workshops on crafting, seed saving, gardening, food sustainability, nutrition, healthy cooking, and more. Community partners included the MSU Extension Office, Harlem Public Library, and Fort Belknap Tiwahe, an initiative that “provides Tribes the opportunity and funding to assess their own needs and design their own models to improve the health, safety, and wellbeing of families” (Bureau of Indian Affairs).

Quick Art Competition at Fort Belknap Mid-Winter Fair, February 2024.



Glendive Public Library staff and board of trustees worked diligently to increase accessibility for all library patrons. The branch library, Richey Public Library, received a Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC): Accessible Small and Rural Communities grant to build a ramp for all residents with mobility issues who want to access the library. The main branch has also strived to enhance safety and quality of access for all library visitors. The library board prioritized infrastructure upgrades including replacing the building’s air handler this fall to comply with air quality standards. With a strategic plan in place that is mindful of infrastructure needs, the library can prepare for future repairs and upkeep while maintaining a self-sufficient budget.

Richey Public Library Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, July 2024.

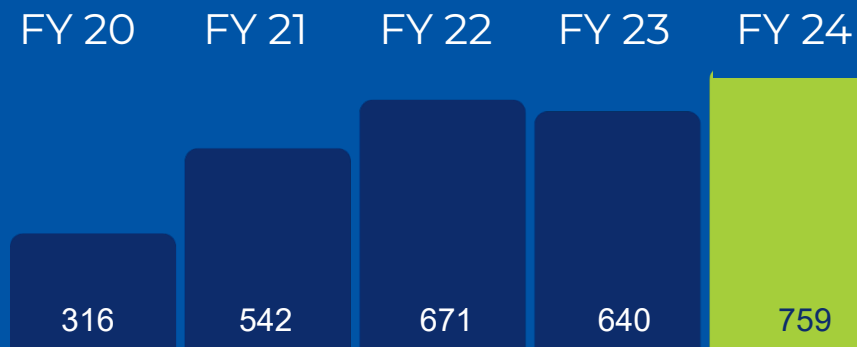
MONTANA STATE LIBRARY BY THE NUMBERS

PUBLIC LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

Give assistance and advice to all tax-supported or public libraries in the state and to all counties, cities, towns, or regions in the state that propose to establish libraries, as to the best means of establishing and improving those libraries. (MCA 22-1-103)

Measure: total library consultations

Five-year average: 586 consultations/year

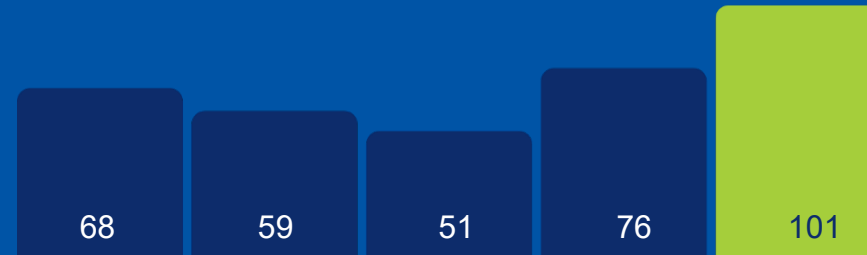


LIBRARIAN CERTIFICATION

Act as a state board of professional standards and library examiners, develop standards for public libraries, and adopt rules for the certification of librarians. (MCA 22-1-103)

Measure: total certifications awarded

Five-year average: 71 certifications/year

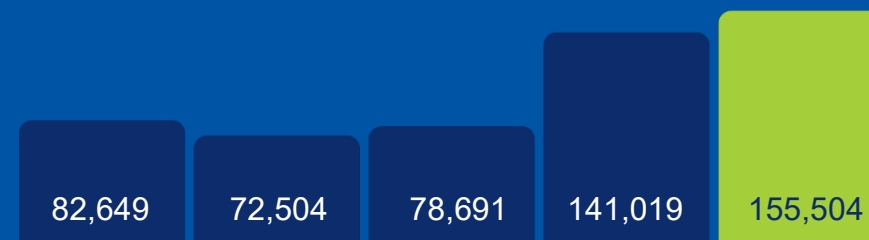


SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

Provide library services for the blind and for individuals with physical disabilities. (MCA 22-1-103)

Measure: materials loaned to Talking Book patrons

Five-year average: 106,703 materials loaned/year



See [Montana State Library Dashboards](#) for more details.

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY BY THE NUMBERS

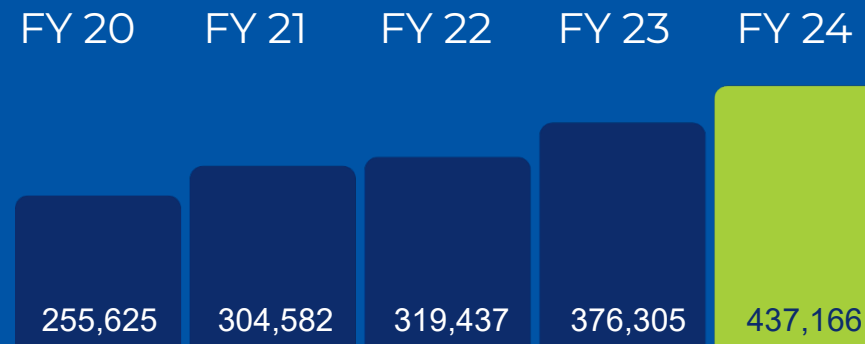
STATEWIDE RESOURCE SHARING

Support and facilitate resource-sharing among libraries in Montana, including but not limited to public libraries. (MCA 22-1-328)

Measure: total interlibrary loans borrowed*

Five-year average: 338,623 loans borrowed/year

*FY 24 data preliminary as public libraries will verify their final ILL data October/November 2024.

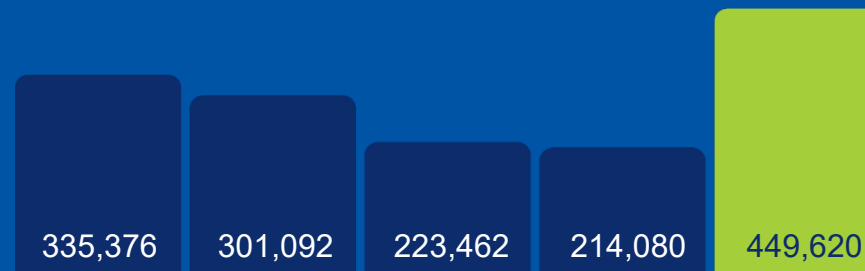


STATE PUBLICATIONS

Administer a state publications depository library program to identify, acquire, catalog, preserve, and provide access to state publications. (MCA 22-1-212)

Measure: total views of digitized publications

Five-year average: 304,726 views/year

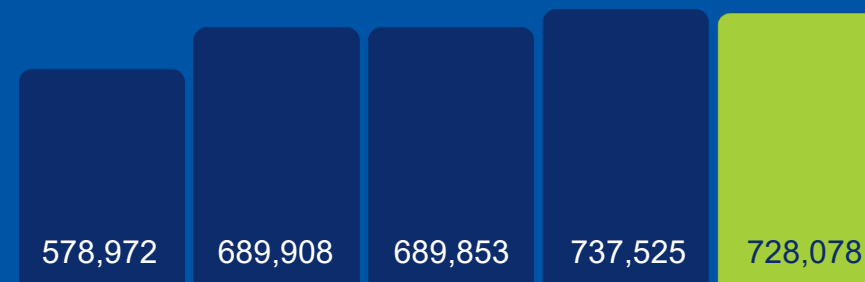


MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE

Integrate Montana Natural Heritage data as a part of the natural resource information system. (MCA 90-15-302)

Measure: total field guide website sessions

Five-year average: 684,867 website sessions/year



See [Montana State Library Dashboards](#) for more details.

FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

MT STATE REFERENCE NETWORK

Administer a state reference network to provide real-time geospatial location data from any location within the network. (MCA 22-1-230)

Measure: % of necessary subscriptions acquired for a self-sustaining network (minimum of 500 by 2029)

Baseline: MTSRN acquired first paid subscriber April 2024



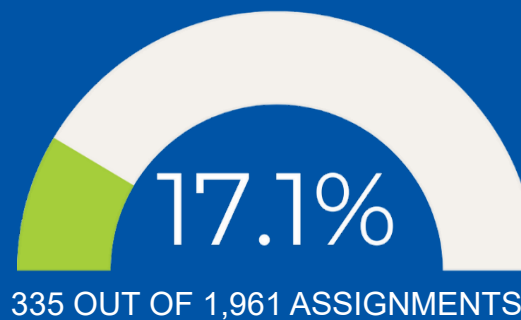
53 OUT OF 500 SUBSCRIBERS

NEXT-GENERATION 9-1-1

Administer Support public safety answering points on the assessment and improvement of next-generation 9-1-1 GIS data. (MCA 10-4-310)

Measure: % of assignments completed for GIS readiness (total of 1,961 assignments)

Baseline: Assessment software released to PSAPs December 2022



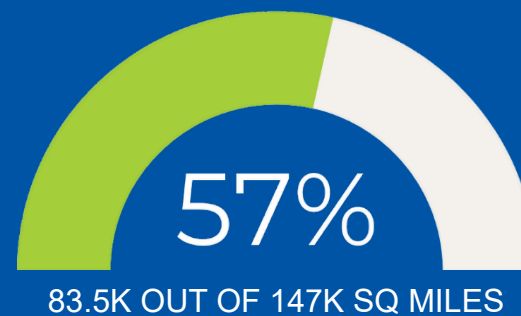
335 OUT OF 1,961 ASSIGNMENTS

MONTANA LIDAR INVENTORY

Collect, maintain, and disseminate information about the natural and artificial land characteristics of Montana. (MCA 90-1-402)

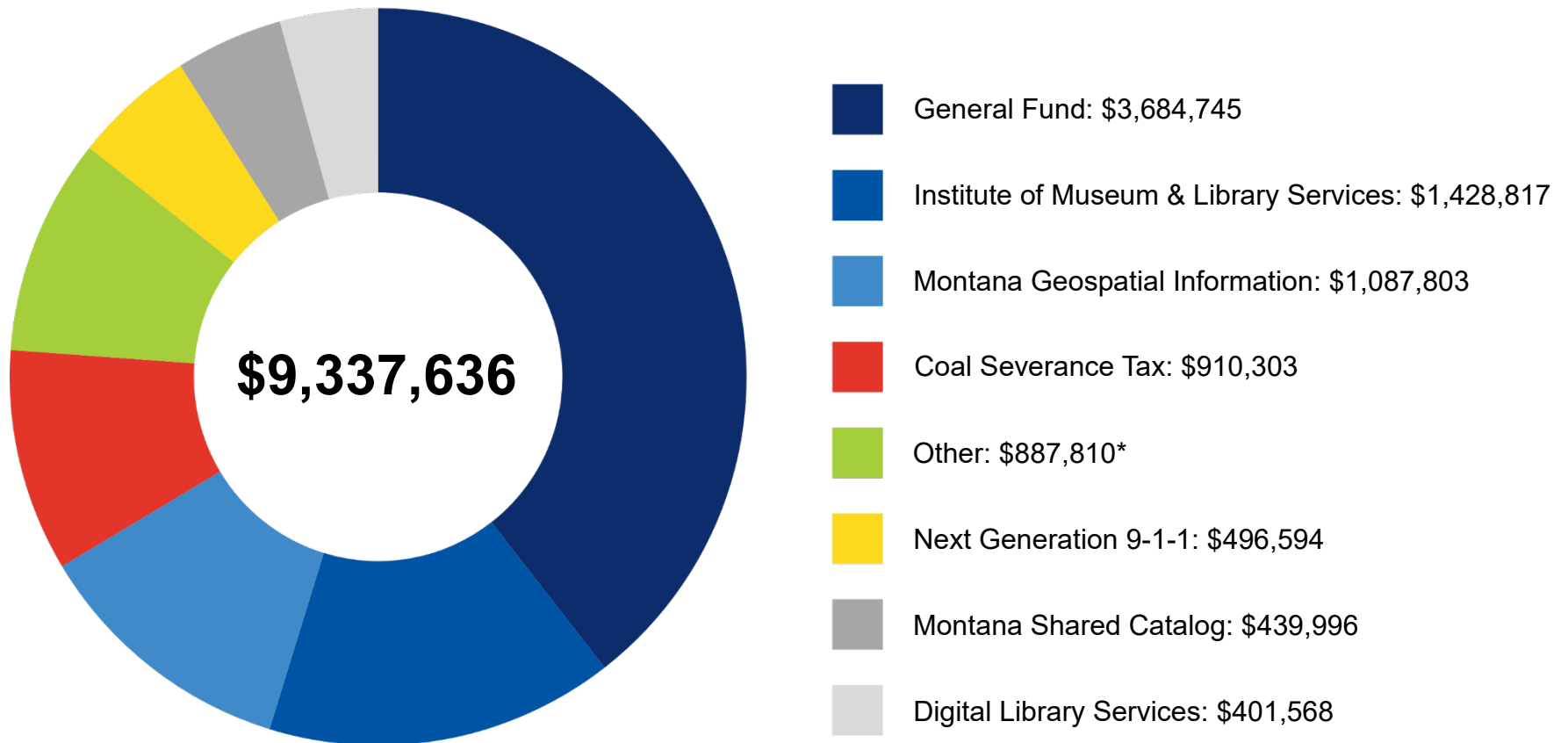
Measure: % of total collected and available within the state boundary and meeting USGS 3DEP specifications (total of 147K square miles)

Baseline: Montana Lidar Plan published June 2019 with 42,000 square miles (28%) meeting USGS baseline specifications



83.5K OUT OF 147K SQ MILES

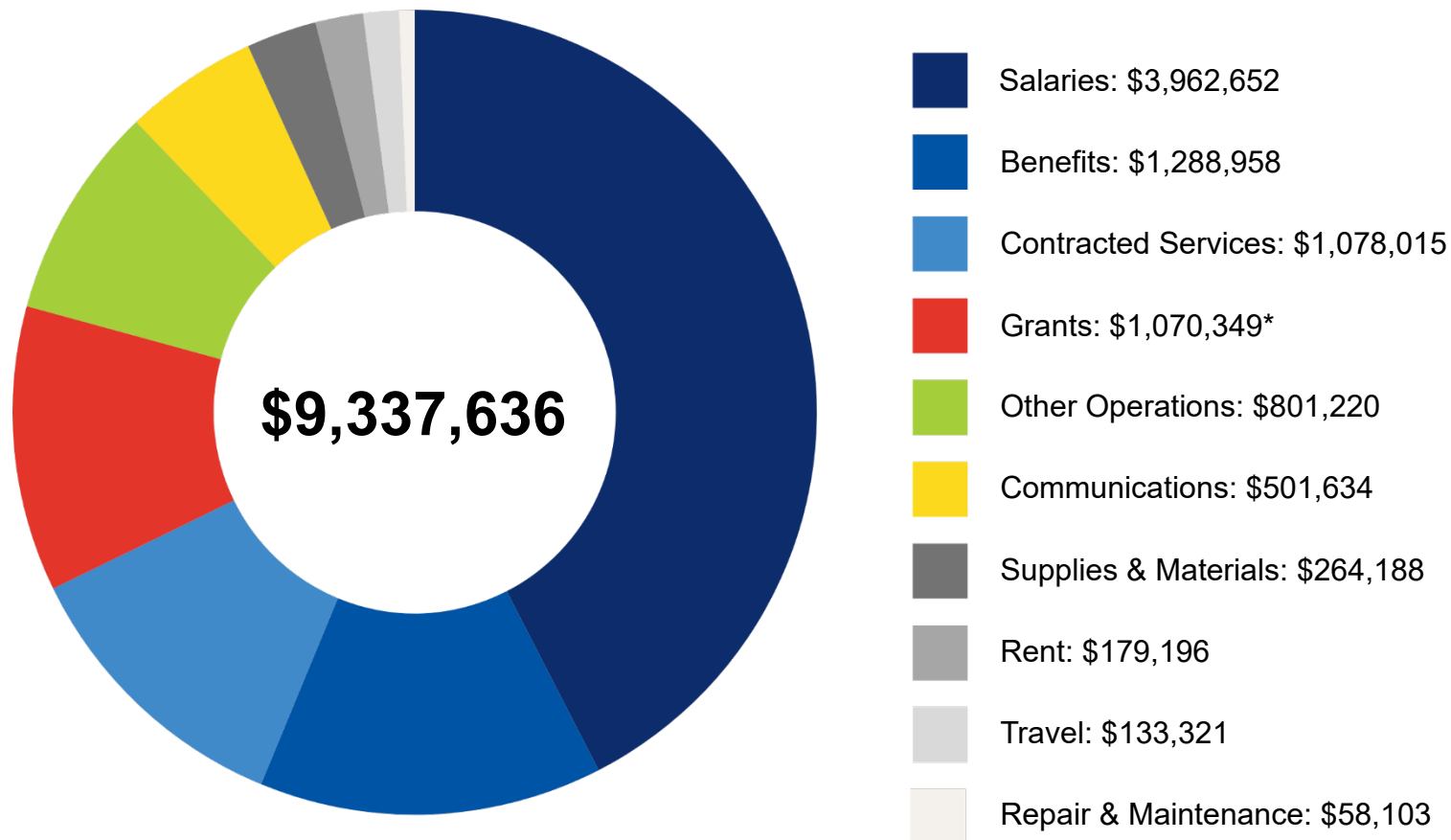
WHERE DID THE MONEY COME FROM?



*Other includes state, federal, and other special revenue and enterprise funds such as Natural Heritage, NRIS, and Secretary of State, among others.

See the [Montana State Library Quarterly Financial Report](#) for more details.

WHERE DID THE MONEY GO?



*Grant expenses include state aid to public libraries, support for library federations, and grant awards dispersed in accordance with the Montana Geospatial Information Act.

See the [Montana State Library Quarterly Financial Report](#) for more details.

MSL MGIA ACCOUNT BALANCE



See the [Montana State Library Quarterly Financial Report](#) for more details.

HOW DO GRANTS SUPPORT OUR WORK?

FY 2024 GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

The Libraries Services & Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to States program is the largest grant program run by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). It provides funds to State Libraries using a population-based formula set by federal law. Guided by the [LSTA five-year plan](#), MSL used its grant to provide opportunities for all Montanans to access library services, technology, and learning experiences to enable their personal, educational, and professional growth. Through training and consulting services, MSL also helped local governments and libraries work together to build resilient communities.

Grants expanded information needed to manage invasive and native plant species via the state's [Natural Heritage Program](#). Thanks to a grant from the Department of Agriculture, staff developed a centralized weed database and provided outreach and training to weed coordinators and natural resource managers to support their efforts to detect and control invasive species. Funding for surveys of Thick-leaf Bladderpod in south-central Montana assisted with a cross-border assessment of the conservation status of the species. The United States Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Montana Native Plant Society contributed to a pilot for Citizen Botany, a program that allows citizen volunteers with basic botanical skills to collect data on rare plants that assists agencies with their management.

KEY GRANT SUPPORT IN FY 24

Grant funds leverage existing investment and staff expertise and enhance the reach and impact of our statutorily required work.

- LSTA Grants to States: \$1,428,817
- DOA Noxious Weeds Trust Fund: \$38,046
- Citizen Botany: \$21,788
- University of Wyoming Thick-leaf Bladderpod: \$8,825



A Montana Thick-leaf Bladderpod in September,
Laura Holloway.

*Grants often extend beyond a single state fiscal year so the expenses in FY 24 may not represent the entire contribution. See the [Montana State Library Quarterly Financial Report](#) for details about these and other grants.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Following a year in which the State Library received new and expanded legislative authority to support and provide new information resources to Montana, the Montana State Library spent fiscal year 2024 engaged in significant efforts to put new legislation into practice.

The 2023 Montana Legislature expanded the definition of public libraries to include tribal college libraries, making them eligible for state aid funding. Additionally, the Montana State Library was authorized to operate the Montana State Reference Network (MTSRN) as a subscription-funded service, transitioning it from a pilot project. The Montana State Library also launched significant upgrades to the Montana Cadastral application, enhancing data service, mobile access, and map performance, while introducing new tools like the basemap swipe feature for comparing historical property changes.

Unfortunately, after a year of expanded outreach and new and improved services, the Montana State Library experienced a significant decline in revenue in the Montana Geospatial Information Act (MGIA) Account largely due to declining home sales and refinances attributed to high interest rates. As a result, the State Library was not able to offer extensions for existing MGIA grants or fiscal year 2025 grants. We tightened our belts across the agency to end the fiscal year in the black and plan to live with an austere budget in FY 25 as we monitor revenue projections.

Despite challenges, our staff continue to provide exceptional leadership and service to our users and partners and the Montana State Library remains committed to our mission to help all organizations, communities, and Montanans thrive through excellent library resources and services.



Jennie Stapp,
State Librarian



1201 11TH AVE PO BOX 201800 | HELENA, MONTANA 59620
PHONE: (406) 444-3115 | TOLL FREE: (800) 338-5087 | TTY: MONTANA RELAY 711

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Photo front cover: Picture of two staff members of the Utah Division of Indian Affairs as they narrate the graphic novel *Thunderous* with Montana State Library Talking Book services. Photo courtesy of M.L. Smoker.