



MEMO

To: State Library Commission
From: Tracy Cook, Lead Consulting & Learning Librarian
Subject: State Library support for trustees
Date: November 12, 2024

I wanted to follow up on the information about the support state library staff provide to trustees. Do you have any questions for me? And is there any other support you would like us to provide for board members? Or any next steps you would like us to take?

Communication with Trustees

We have a monthly Trustee Newsletter. It is difficult to identify exactly how many trustees are subscribed. There are a variety of ways people can subscribe, but a quick analysis comparing email addresses from our subscription list to ASPeN reveals that about 10% of public library board members subscribe to the newsletter. Statistics for MSL newsletters can be found on the [Continuing Education Dashboard](#).

We have the following ideas for promoting the newsletter:

- Promote it on wired-mt
- During face-to-face trainings and federation meetings have a “subscribe me” checkbox on the sign-up sheet
- Ask directors to add it as an agenda item on board meetings and ask trustees if they would like to subscribe to the newsletter

Board members can contact state library consultants and the CE coordinator directly. Statistics for the number of consulting questions where a board member was the audience can be found on the [Consulting Dashboard](#). Click on “View by Audience” to see this information.

We also communicate with board members at federation meetings, the Montana Library Association conference, and during site visits to libraries.

Training for board members

We have online and face-to-face training available for board members. MSL staff are committed to submitting proposals for the annual Montana Library Association conference that are focused



on items of interest to board members. We also continue to offer our individual board trainings, short online videos, and webinars/MSL Learn classes for board members.

Statistics for board training provided by consultants can be found on the [Consulting Dashboard – Local Government Support](#).

Statistics for online views and usage of MSL Learn classes, webinars, and videos can be found on the [Continuing Education Dashboard](#). The MSL Learn and YouTube tabs will give you more information about the usage of our online offerings.

Resources for board members

We continue to update and add to the resources available on the page for Trustees. A recent review of the statistics for usage of the Trustee website (https://msl.mt.gov/libraries/library_development/Trustees/Trustees) shows that it has been viewed 238 times since July 1, 2024.

Upcoming work

Communication with trustees

- Staff are analyzing board member listings in ASPeN to see which libraries need to correct their board member listings. We will work with public libraries to update their entries in ASPeN.
- We will promote the Trustee Newsletter at upcoming events and meetings.

Resources

- We will update our Trustee Manuals and other guidebooks in 2025.
- We will continue to add new resources as board members request them.

Training

- We have almost achieved our goal of 10 individual library board trainings offered at the local library. We will continue to offer board trainings to individual library boards through our consulting services.
- We have submitted 4 proposals for topics that might be of interest to board members for the 2025 MLA annual conference in Bozeman.
- We will continue to work with federation coordinators to provide training at the Spring 2025 meetings on topics of interest to board members.
- We are scheduled to record a series of videos with the Local Government Center about complying with the open meeting law, managing public comment, and running effective



meetings. These videos will be added to the online, self-serve, available any time trainings are the MSL YouTube Channel.