



MEMO

To: Montana State Library Commission
From: Tom Burnett, Commissioner
Subject: Serving the Community, Open Hours Public Library Standard draft Administrative Rules amendments and timeline
Date: August 1, 2025

The following draft amendments to the *Serving the Community, Open Hours Public Library Standard* reflect the Commission's discussion at the June 13, 2025 business meeting. Positive action from the Commission will initiate the administrative rules process described in the timeline below.



ADMINISTRATIVE RULES OF MONTANA

10.102.1159 SERVING THE COMMUNITY

- (1) The library is open during convenient hours. ~~At a minimum~~On average, the library is open ~~at least~~ the following number of hours weekly, as reported by the library in the annual public library survey:

<u>Service Area Population</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Desirable</u>
Fewer than 3,500	15 hours <u>10.5 hours</u>	25-40 hours
3,501 – 9,999	30 hours <u>21 hours</u>	40-50 hours
10,000 – 24,999	40 hours <u>28 hours</u>	50-60 hours
More than 25,000	50 hours <u>35 hours</u>	60+ hours

- (2) Everyone has safe, comfortable, and convenient access to the library and its services.
- (3) Everyone has access to updated and regularly maintained physical and digital library content and services.
- (4) Everyone can find library materials online.
- (5) Everyone has access to virtual and face-to-face programming.
- (6) Everyone has access to information about local community and government activities that assists them with understanding local community issues and allows them to engage civically in the community.
- (7) Children and caregivers have access to early literacy programming and materials either through the library or by being directed to another community organization that specializes in early literacy.
- (8) Everyone has access to information about library programs and services through internal and external marketing efforts of library staff.
- (9) Everyone has access to a library website or social media site.
- (10) Everyone can obtain materials and services from another library through interlibrary loan services.
- (11) Everyone has access to the Internet via wired and WIFI connections.
- (12) Reasonable accommodations are made so that people with disabilities have access to the library's services.

Authorizing statute(s): 22-1-103, MCA

Implementing statute(s): 22-1-103, MCA



REASON: Action to change the period of reporting for open library hours from weekly to annually is intended to give libraries the flexibility to account for weeks when they may be closed due to holidays or other scheduling priorities. Annual reporting is consistent with reporting for the Public Library Survey. Action to reduce the minimum number of open hours required by a public library is intended to allow libraries the option to reduce their open hours. This action is justified because rulemaking is within the statutory powers and duties of the Montana State Library Commission and operational policies will be governed by this rule.

Ref: 22-1-103, MCA

History and Background

Minimum hours for library service can be found in the [Public Library Standards](#) the State Library Commission first adopted in 1969. The Commission most recently adopted revised Public Library Standards on August 5, 2021.

The State Library Commission, before being formally established in 1929, was named as the body to set the standards and qualifications for public libraries and their directors in the 1923 Revised Codes of Montana (RCM) publication.

The connection between RCM, Montana Codes Annotated (MCA) and Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) are consistent with the defined authority of the State Library Commission to “act as a state board of professional standards and library examiners, develop standards for public libraries, and adopt rules for the certification of librarians.” 22-1-103, MCA

The ARM for public library standards first tied minimum open hours to state funding in 1999.

Terms

RCM – [Revised Codes of Montana](#). Montana’s statutes from 1889 until implementation of 1972 Constitution.

MCA – [Montana Code Annotated](#). Montana’s statutes from 1978 to present.

ARM – [Administrative Rules of Montana](#). Formal business rules adopted by state agencies granted rule making authority.