

# Navigating the Elective Roadmap to Library Excellence

Programming in Libraries – August 12, 2025



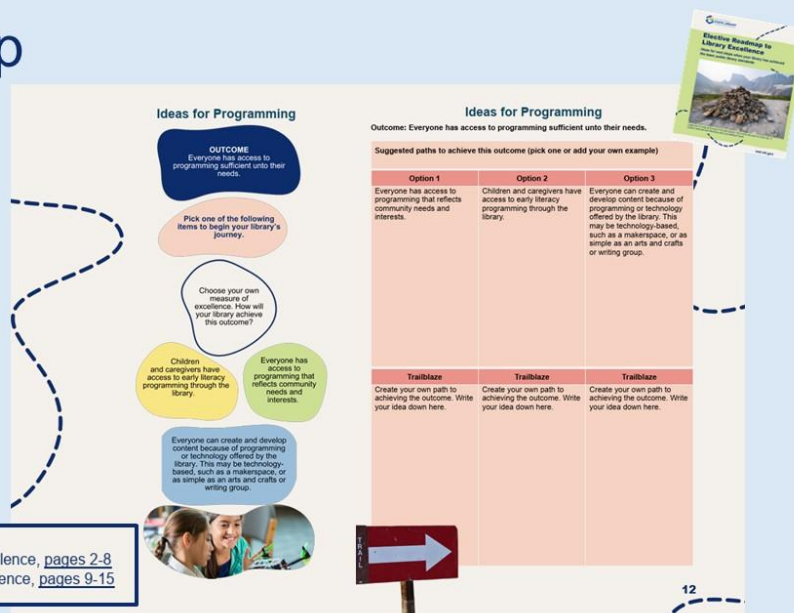
## The Roadmap

ARM 10.102.1158 LIBRARY BOARD, GOVERNANCE, AND WORKING WITH THE DIRECTOR

(12) The public library board and director shall be familiar with the most current Public Library Standards Road Map maintained by the Montana State Library.

### Table of contents

- Trail Markers - visual exploration of library excellence, [pages 2-8](#)
- Summit Trail - linear exploration of library excellence, [pages 9-15](#)



## Webinar Recording

- Recorded on August 12, 2025
- [Watch the Video](#)

## Panelist Contacts

- Bobbi DeMontigny – MSL Lifelong Learning Librarian [bdemontigny@mt.gov](mailto:bdemontigny@mt.gov)
- Anika Risener – Big Horn County Library [arisener@bighorncountymt.gov](mailto:arisener@bighorncountymt.gov)
- Marilyn Bennett – Montana Talking Books supervisor [mbennett@mt.gov](mailto:mbennett@mt.gov)
- [MSL Consultants](#)

## Links from Chat

- [Roadmap](#)
- [Sign Up for MSL Newsletters](#)
- [MSL Lifelong Learning](#)
- [Teen Media Literacy](#)
- [Civic Engagement Programming for Teens](#)
- [MSL Virtual Trunks](#)
- MLN Virtual Programming for all - with topics of interest for adults. If you are interested in cohosting these please use this survey! <https://forms.office.com/g/TyATLzTsDf>
- [Big Horn County Library](#)

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- [Glasgow Library](#)
- [Plains Public Library](#)
- [Thompson Falls Public Library Programming](#)
- [Talking Books Patron Handbook](#)
- [National Good Neighbor Day](#)
- [2024 creative aging seed projects.](#)

## Big Horn County Library – Anika Risener, Director

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Here's a summary of the main points from Anika Risener's presentation.

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### Background and Challenges

- **Anika Risener** is the Director of the **Bighorn County Library** and has been in the role for about 7 months.
- She inherited a library that had been **neglected**, especially in terms of **children's programming**, which had been inconsistent for 8–10 years.

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### Children's Programming Revitalization

- Started as a **Children's Librarian** and focused on **consistency** in programming (e.g., weekly story times, after-school activities).
- Designed programs that catered to **all age groups**, recognizing the role of older siblings in caregiving.
- Emphasized **community outreach**: visited daycares, community boards, post offices, and other local hubs to promote programs.

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### Transition to Director Role

- Faced challenges shifting from children's to **adult programming** and gaining community acceptance in her new role.
  - Focused on **underserved populations** like veterans and the unhoused.
  - Continued support for **Friends of the Library**, book clubs, and other community groups.
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## Adult Programming Initiatives

- Introduced **author visits, gardening and writing classes**, and other adult-focused events.
  - Built programs by leveraging **community passions** and encouraging volunteers to lead activities.
  - Collaborated with venues like **House of Books in Billings** to bring authors to her library.
  - Now hosts **two authors per month** and offers **senior-focused activities**.
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## Community and Infrastructure Challenges

- Struggles with **technological infrastructure** in Bighorn County; many residents lack internet access.
  - Online programming is limited due to poor connectivity and low digital literacy.
  - Created “**library closets**”—mini-libraries in each town, run by local volunteers, to extend reach and maintain programming consistency.
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## Key Takeaways

- **Consistency, community engagement, and adaptability** are central to Anika’s approach.
  - Despite infrastructure limitations, she has found **creative, community-driven solutions** to expand library services.
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Summary generated by Microsoft Copilot from webinar transcript.

## Accessible Programming Ideas

- Equipment and books for demo
- Book clubs
- Braille children's books
- Braille Legos and accessible toys

Contact Marilyn Bennett to learn more.

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## What are participants' favorite or most popular programs?

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- Chess Club
- Pokemon Club
- Ukelele Club
- Movie Fridays
- Book Club
- Story Time
- Pinochle
- Genealogy Club
- Book Bingo
- Coding Club
- Lego Club
- Local tire service hosted teens and showed how to change tires and oil.
- Pickleball – equipment checkout
- Archery
- Summer Reading program
- Haunted Library
- Santa & Grinch
- Annual Japanese Festival
- Book Sales
- Labor Day
- Spring Fling and Bling
- Loom and Fabrics/Materials
- Author Talks
- Crochet/Fibercraft Clubs
- Community Needs Cupboard
- Personal hygiene baskets in our bathrooms
- Big coloring sheets and setting them up in the pre teen/teen space
- Slime is a great all age activity
- After-school activities, we offer prizes with some of our games



Montana State Library Talking Books provides **FREE** reading materials in accessible formats to Montanans who are unable to use standard print materials due to visual, physical, and/or reading disabilities.

The library provides audio and Braille books and magazines. Materials are available for direct download or are sent through the US Postal Service.

### **Eligibility**

You are eligible for services if:

- You cannot see well enough or focus enough to read a regular print book, although you wear glasses or contact lenses.
- You are legally blind—that is, your vision in the better eye is 20/200 or less with corrective aids, or your widest diameters of visual field are no greater than 20 degrees.
- You are unable to handle print books or turn pages.
- You have a perceptual or reading disability.
- Schools and institutions with eligible students or clients may also sign up for service with an institutional account.

**For further information or to request an application, please contact**

**Montana State Library**

**[mtbl@mt.gov](mailto:mtbl@mt.gov) (406)444-5352 [msl.mt.gov/tbl](http://msl.mt.gov/tbl)**

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