



MEMO

To: Montana Geospatial Information Advisory Council
From: Jennie Stapp, State Librarian, Erin Fashoway, State GIS Coordinator
Subject: Grant Program Review update and next steps
Date: September 22, 2025

In 2023 the Montana Legislature passed House Bill 343 which renamed and modernized the Montana Land Information Act (MLIA) originally passed in 2005, creating the Montana Geospatial Information Act. Subsequently, in the spring of 2024, the Montana State Library (MSL) Commission adopted updated Administrative Rules, including changes that shifted MGIA Grant Program, from an annual to a biennial process. The Advisory Council's, along with MAGIP's, input was essential to updates to both statute and administrative rules.

Also in 2024, MGIA revenue dropped dramatically to the lowest number of recordings seen since shortly after the MLIA was passed. Due to this loss of revenue, the MSL made the difficult decision to cancel Fiscal Year (FY) '24 grant extensions, and all FY '25 grant awards. MSL continued to pause the grant program in FY '26 as revenues slowly began to rebound.

Given the changes to statutes and administrative rules, revenue shortfalls, and while not administering grants, MSL used the opportunity to evaluate the impacts and overall administration of the grant program over the last 20 years. This internal review will be used to guide how the program is administered in the future.

The amount of funds granted was outside the scope of this review. MSL plans to reopen the MGIA Grant Program in Winter of 2026 to fund projects for FY2027.

During the September 25, 2025, Council meeting, the Council will receive an update from Erin Fashoway and Data Coordinator, Rebekah Kamp, about interviews they conducted this summer with past grant recipients. These interviews greatly informed the internal review.

Following the Council meeting, a subcommittee will be asked to review and offer feedback to staff on the internal review. MSL intends to invite past grant subcommittee members to be part of this review process.

The full Council will receive the review at least one month before the November Council meeting when the Council will be asked to consider whether to accept the recommendations made in the review.

