



Per Capita Per Square Mile State Aid Funding for Montana's Public Libraries

History

- In 2013 HB 203) passed the legislature. The bill increased the per capita/per square mile state aid to public libraries in Montana through a statutory appropriation.
- The original per capita/per square mile state aid legislation was created in 1989; however funding was not appropriated until 1999. From 1999 to 2013 there had been NO increase in the amount appropriated for state aid. Prior to the passage of HB 203, the appropriation was \$102,830 per year divided among the 82 public libraries in Montana.
- With the successful passage of the per capita/per square mile increase, the funding went from \$102,830 per year (approximately \$.10 per citizen) to \$395,766 per year (\$.40 per citizen).
- The per capita/per square mile funding is distributed to public libraries based on a formula located in Administrative Rule 10.102.4003.

Why State Funding

- Libraries are funded through a multitude of sources. Cities and counties cannot be turned to as an adequate source of funding. Local funding perpetuates the Haves and the Have Nots, with the wealthier areas able to provide more resources and more advanced library services. The State Library strives to level the playing field by establishing equitable programs and services and making sure they are available to all MT libraries. The per capita/per square mile state aid appropriation ensures every library patron in the state has access to quality library services.
- As anchor institutions, libraries are an essential service in our cities and towns. Assisting people who are looking for jobs and helping them complete job applications; providing people the resources to file their taxes; supporting people filing for unemployment; providing a safe location for youth to learn and grow while their parents are at work – **these are essential services** that support economic development and the positive quality of life in towns across Montana.
- Public Libraries must adhere to the Public Library Standard in order to receive state aid funding.

Statutory Appropriation

- The per capita/per square mile state aid is a statutory appropriation that was evaluated by the Legislative Finance Committee during the 2015-2016 Interim. As a statutory appropriation, state aid met all eight guidelines for statutory appropriations.

Sunset Extension

- The statutory appropriation for the per capita/per square mile state aid funding sunsets July 1, 2017. The Montana Library Association fully supports efforts by the Montana State Library to extend the sunset date for six years.

The Impact*

- Libraries serve as the community hub, especially in many rural towns in Montana. Librarians are able to notarize documents, provide early literacy materials and interactive programs, help people complete cumbersome on-line applications for jobs, unemployment and other services, help students find and utilize academic resources for research, and finally, librarians check out good, old fashioned books.
- State aid funding supports local communities and local libraries. Librarians use state aid dollars to meet the needs of their patrons and their towns.
- In order to track the outcomes of this funding, the Montana State Library created an online reporting tool for librarians to share their stories about how the additional funding was used and in turn the impact it has had on provision of services.



Exploding toothpaste
North Valley Public Library, Stevensville MT



Bookmobile
Lewis & Clark Library, Helena MT



Free library
Jefferson County Library System, Clancy MT



New computers
Broadwater School and Community Library, Townsend MT

*These funds pass through the State Library and go directly to YOUR community libraries. The State Library DOES NOT retain any of the per capita/per square mile state aid funds for administrative purposes.