

LIBRARY FEDERATION NOTEBOOK 2024



**MONTANA
STATE LIBRARY**
A GREATER STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

Federation Notebook 2024

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Overview

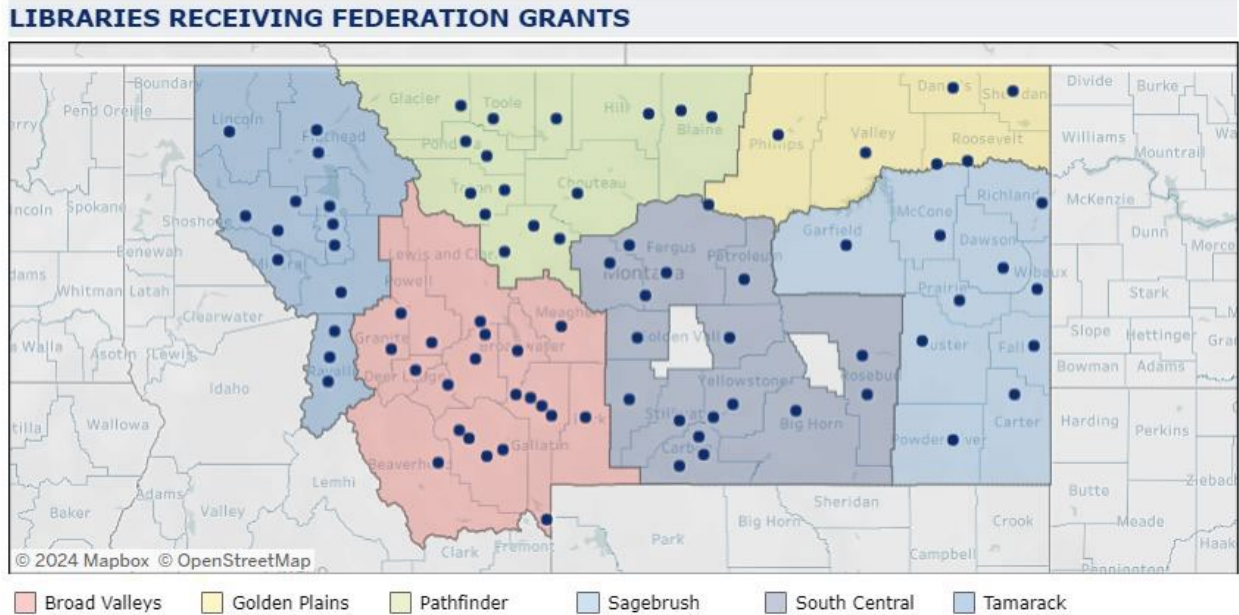
Libraries in Montana are organized into federations - groups of libraries working together to provide a broader range of resources and services than individual libraries can offer on their own. These federations were developed by the legislature and the Montana State Library (MSL) Commission to give all Montanans access to a library and, through it, the library resources within their area, the state, and the nation.

Originally, only public libraries participated in federations. In 1999, the Legislature expanded the law to allow all types of libraries to participate in the federations, including school, academic, and special libraries.

There are 6 federations in the state. They have the same basic structure, but each has its own culture and operational structure. Programs differ among federations, but they can include interlibrary loan, technology, cooperative purchases, and continuing education (CE) and training.

The following items were identified by federation members as valuable outcomes:

- The regional nature of federations lends itself to solving problems and meaningful networking that helps libraries improve local library services.
- Meeting at least once a year helps reduce feelings of isolation.
- Training provided at federation meetings can help trustees and directors improve services and administration of the library.



[Visit the MSL Federation webpage for more information.](#)

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Coordinator Information

Each federation has a coordinator who is chosen from one of the member libraries in the federation. Federations have a variety of ways of assigning and rotating the coordinator position. The Federation coordinator is responsible for facilitating all federation activities, including organizing the federation meetings, creating the plan of service, creating the annual report, and organizing continuing education activities. Each federation also has an MSL consultant assigned to assist the federation and work with coordinators to organize these various activities.

The role of the coordinator involves encouraging federation libraries to work collaboratively to improve library services locally and regionally. This person also creates a sense of camaraderie among members, advises other federation library directors, and works with MSL staff and the MSL Commission to administer the federation.

Ideally, the coordinator communicates well, is able to create positive energy, has a desire to coach, mentor, and lead, understands the needs and values of others and is willing to travel long distances for meetings.

Specific duties include:

- Facilitate and lead federation meetings
- Encourage and develop leadership amongst federation libraries by asking members to help with continuing education, arranging meeting logistics and other federation duties
- Create positive energy and opportunities for networking during meetings
- Help federation members identify ways to work collaboratively to improve library services
- Work with federation members, MSL staff, and MSL Commission
- Represent federation libraries at MSL Commission meetings
- Answer questions about the federation
- Help federation members create a Plan of Service that details goals for improving library service
- Create a final report that details how the federation achieved those goals
- Administer the federation by completing reports for the state, communicating with MSL staff, and reporting to the State Library Commission.

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Administrative Checklist and Timeline

	General Timeline	Coordinator Duties
July	New fiscal year begins. Libraries begin following the Plan of Service approved by the Commission	Remind libraries to begin reporting how previous fiscal year (FY) funds were spent using current reporting tool
August	Coordinator and MSL consultant develop agenda for fall meeting	Continue encouraging libraries to submit spending report. Annual report for entire federation is due at the end of the month
September	Coordinator and MSL consultant plan fall meeting and arrange training. Federation meetings occur	Data Coordinator prepares report for October Commission meeting.
October	Fall meetings continue; federation members discuss federation business and possible plans for next year	Federation coordinators meet in Helena; present annual reports to Commission
November	Federation and state aid checks are mailed to all libraries from MSL, based on Plans of Service	
December-January	Libraries continue reporting expenses	Coordinator assists libraries with reporting
February	Planning for spring meetings begins – consultant and coordinator develop CE plans and agenda	Coordinators estimate travel expenses for October meeting in Helena. MSL sends information on amount of funding available for upcoming FY.
March-May	Plans of Service are prepared and voted on at spring meetings	MSL sends Plan of Service template to coordinators; coordinator sends completed POS to MSL after spring meeting
June	Coordinators present federation Plan of Service to Commission for approval	Coordinator works with libraries to ensure all funds will be spent by June 30

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Federation Meetings

Federations hold two membership meetings a year, one in the fall and one in the spring. Libraries are expected to attend these meetings since they provide the opportunity to meet with fellow trustees and library directors, discuss issues, learn what others in the region are doing in their communities and receive continuing education training. The director of each member public or tribal college library usually attends with a trustee as a voting member. This group of librarians and trustees is called the federation advisory board. Trustees have voting power. The federation advisory board assists in planning services available through the federation. Each local library board retains control over local aspects of its library's services as set forth in [MCA 22-1-402](#).

Depending on the federation, these spring and fall meetings may be in the same location each time or move between federation libraries. Coordinators work with MSL staff to plan the agenda and arrange training. See Appendix for a sample agenda.

Some federations plan a 2-day spring retreat so they can offer additional training for directors and trustees. Coordinators in these federations manage the logistics, including food and lodging, as well as training.

Federation meetings should be announced publicly with the agenda posted, similar to library board meetings. The State Library consultant assigned to the federation can add the federation meeting to ASPeN which includes an events calendar for meetings, webinars, and other important dates.

[Visit the ASPeN Event Calendar.](#)

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Sample Agenda

Federation Name
(*Fall or Spring*) Meeting Agenda

Date of meeting

Location of meeting

9:30 am – 3:00 pm

Agenda

9:30 – 10:00 Networking/Catching up

10:00 - 10:10 Welcome & Open meeting by Chair
Volunteer for taking minutes...

10:00 – 10:20 Roll Call (*to confirm each library's attendance at a least one meeting each year, required to receive federation funds*)

10:20 – 12:00 General Meeting

- Minutes from (*previous*) meeting – vote
- Elect Chair/Vice-Chair – vote (*by-laws usually specify how often this occurs*)
- State Library Report
- Federation Report – update from Coordinator on funds, expenses, reporting
- Plan of Service – discussion and vote (*at the Spring meeting*)
- Next Meeting Date & Location
- Other items - ?
- Adjourn

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch

1:00 – 3:00 Continuing Education/Training

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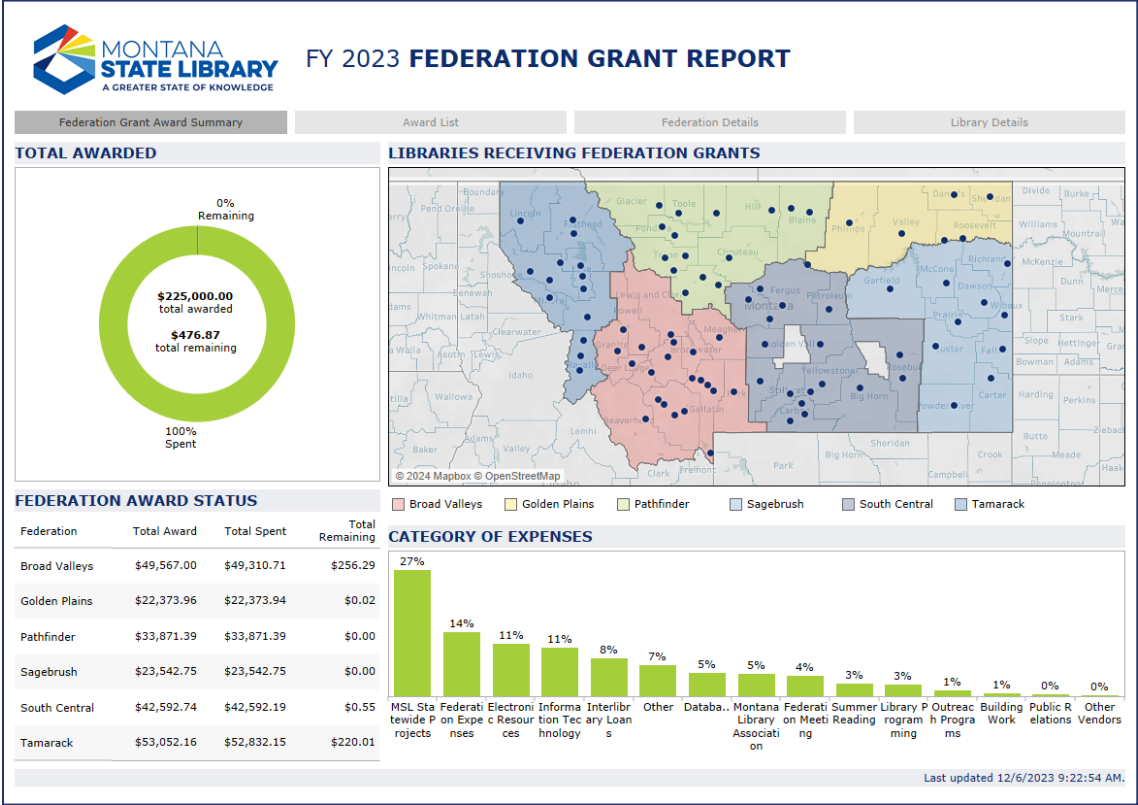
Funding, Plans of Service, and Reporting

Federations receive funding through Coal Severance Tax monies received by the state, subject to legislative action. The State Library Commission approves the appropriation, based on a formula in [Administrative Rule 10.102.5102](#). Monies are split, partly divided equally and partly based on population.

Each federation develops a Plan of Service indicating how the funds received each year will be spent, both by the federation and individual libraries. Programs relating to collaboration among the federation libraries and services to benefit all communities are created. Continuing education, resource sharing, technology and community outreach are all common goals in these plans. The State Library Commission approves the plans prior to implementation.

Individual libraries report their spending throughout the fiscal year. Coordinators present reports to the State Library Commission each year in October, outlining how the funds were spent and highlighting benefits and successful programs. [Detailed reports](#) are available on the state library website.

Coordinators can contact their federation consultant to access a current Federation Plan of Service template.



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Roles of Federation Chair, Board Members, and Library Directors

Federation Chair

The federation chair is selected by member libraries during an election process defined in the individual library federation bylaws. This person is expected to

- Call the meeting to order
- Hand discussion items to the coordinator, when needed
- Manage the motion making and voting process
- Close the meeting
- Optional – the chair is welcome to help create the agenda and manage the discussion. The chair can also help with committees.

Board Members

Library board members that serve as the local library's representative to the federation are expected to

- Vote! The board member is the voting representative for the library.
- Listen and learn. The regional nature of the conversation often brings up challenges faced by many of the libraries in the federation. Listening to the challenges and joys of other libraries can generate ideas and solutions. State Library reports can also be helpful for understanding upcoming issues that may impact the local library or for learning about services, programs, and training that might benefit a local library.
- Share. Make note of any interesting ideas or issues that were discussed and work with the director to share information with board members who could not attend the federation meetings.
- Volunteer to help on federation committees or to be an officer. It's a great way to give back to the federation and to gain helpful skills in planning, brainstorming, running meetings, and implementing projects. Learning new skills can be valuable - personally, and professionally.

Library Directors

Library directors are expected to

- Share ideas and concerns at the federation meeting. Be prepared to talk about any services or programs that were really successful. It's also helpful to talk about challenges the local library is facing. Peers appreciate the new ideas and not being alone in facing tough challenges.

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- Listen. The regional nature of the conversation often brings up challenges faced by many of the libraries in the federation. Listening to the challenges and joys of other libraries can generate ideas and solutions.
- Learn. State library reports can also be helpful for understanding upcoming issues that may impact the local library or for learning about services, programs, and training that might benefit a local library.
- Assist voting library member with reporting back to the library board.
- Use funding as agreed upon in the federation plan of service.
- Report on how funding was used through the current federation reporting tool.

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Role of Montana State Library Staff

The Montana State Library assigns a Statewide Consulting Librarian to each federation. This person provides assistance to federation coordinators by helping the coordinator plan the meetings, arrange continuing education, and assisting with anything else federation related.

The Consulting Librarian works directly with federation libraries. They regularly visit the libraries, provide assistance to directors and board members, answer questions, provide continuing education and support for the local libraries.

The work with local libraries helps State Library staff better understand what is happening in Montana's libraries. This puts the consulting librarians in the position of being liaisons between local libraries, the federation, and the state library. The consulting librarians are able to share information that helps with the design of state library services.

These consulting librarians are able to report back on state library activities. They can answer questions about state library services and can relay feedback from the libraries that other state library staff can use to improve services to local libraries and the federation.

[Visit the MSL Website](#) to access contact information for your federation's consultant.

Laws and Rules

Montana Code Annotated (MCA)

- Policy: [MCA 22-1-401](#)
- Definition: [MCA 22-1-402](#)
- Board of Trustees and Coordinator: [MCA 22-1-404](#)
- Board of Trustees – authority – resolution of disagreements: [22-1-405](#)
- Funding: [22-1-412](#) and [22-1-413](#)

Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM)

- Arbitration of Disputes within federations: [10.102.3604](#)
- Description of federation areas and headquarters: [10.102.5101](#)
- Allocation of funding between federations and grant programs: [10.102.5102](#)
- Joining library federations: [10.102.5105](#)
- Base grants: [10.102.5106](#)

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Bylaws for Federations

Based on feedback from federation members and coordinators, MSL staff reviewed the Montana Code Annotated, Administrative Rules and Robert's Rules of Order 11th edition to identify what should be included in federation bylaws. We tried to identify some of the questions that should be answered in each section.

Bylaws protect the rights of individuals within an organization, provide guidance on how to select officers, outline the duties of members and officers, and specify how to resolve problems. Well-written bylaws help federation members by giving them a structure for votes, meetings, and other business procedures. This allows federations to spend more time on discussions and less time on wondering how to take care of federation business. Please contact MSL staff if you would like assistance with updating federation bylaws.

Per [MCA 22-1-402](#) and [ARM 10.102.5102](#) bylaws must include the following:

- Federation advisory board composition and appointment as well as Federation Board of Trustees – bylaws must describe the makeup of the federation advisory board along with information about how the federation advisory board members will be elected. It should also reference those who serve on the Federation Board of Trustees.
 - According to [MCA 22-1-404](#) there must be a federation board of trustees of whom the majority of members must be trustees.
- Procedures for approving the Plan of Service – how/when will the federation approve their plan of service?
- Proxy voting – Will the federation allow proxies? If so, under what circumstances? Who can carry a proxy for a participating member? What is the procedure for using a proxy?
- Quorum requirements – How many participating libraries are required in order to have a quorum?
- Procedures for conducting federation business – see below for suggestions on what to include in this section.
- Withdrawal from the federation – what procedure does a participating library need to follow in order to leave the federation?

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Bylaws Recommendations from *Robert's Rules of Order, 11th Edition*.

Article I. Name – What is the official name of the federation?

Article II. Object –What is the purpose of the federation?

Article III. Members – Who can join the federation? How do they join? What are the requirements of being a member? Who is the voting representative? How many members does the federation need at a meeting in order to have a quorum? What procedure must be followed if a member wants to leave the federation? What procedure should a member follow if they have a grievance with the federation?

This is the section where federation members can address whether or not attendance at meetings is required in order to receive funding from the federation. Federation members may also want to address how branches will be treated.

Article IV. Officers – Who are the officers of the federation advisory board? How are they nominated? How are they elected? When are they elected? What are their duties? How long are the terms of office? What happens if there is a vacancy? Can the chair vote? The bylaws should indicate whether or not the chair can vote every time or only when his/her vote is needed to break a tie. How is the coordinator selected and/or elected? If applicable what is the term of office for the federation coordinator? What are the duties? Are there term limits?

Remember: Per MCA 22-1-404 the coordinator cannot vote. It's a good idea to include this information in the bylaws.

Article V. Meetings – When are federation meetings? Where are they? And how often does the federation meet? What is the procedure for calling a special meeting? This is the section where the federation can identify when and how it will approve its plan of service. It may also be appropriate to discuss proxies and electronic meetings in this section.

Article VI. Executive Board – Does the federation have an executive board? If so, who is a member of the executive board? What are their duties? How are they elected? What are their terms?

Article VII. Committees – Does the federation have standing committees? If so, what are they? What are the duties of the committee? How are members selected for the committee? If the federation does not have a standing committee is the coordinator and/or the executive board given the authority to form a committee? If so, what are the procedures?

Article VIII. Parliamentary Authority – Does the federation use a parliamentary authority like Robert's Rules of Order? It may be wiser to simply state that the federation uses standard parliamentary authority to complete its business if it does not normally follow Robert's Rules of Order.

Article IX. Amendment of the Bylaws – How are bylaws amended? What procedures does a bylaws committee need to follow to suggest bylaw amendments? How many votes will it take to pass bylaw changes? What procedures does the federation follow for an emergency suspension of the bylaws?