

# State Aid to Public Libraries

The 2023 Legislature reauthorized state aid to public libraries, increasing aid from \$0.40 per capita to \$0.50 per capita (22-1-326, MCA). At the same time, Legislature revised the definition of public libraries to include accredited tribal college libraries that provide services to the public.

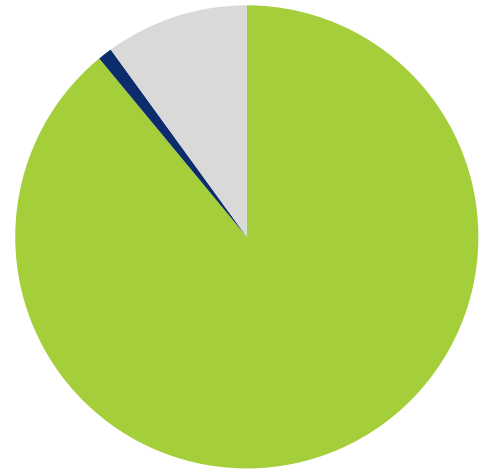
According to Montana Public Library Standards which are established in Administrative Rule, a public library defined at 22-1-301(3), MCA, and created under Title 7, MCA, shall derive at least 70% of its revenue from local tax revenues (ARM 10.102.1158). This standard ensures that state aid supplements but does not supplant local tax support. In the last fiscal year, state aid made up 1% of total public library operating revenue with local revenue contributing 89% and the remaining 10% in grants, donations, and other similar one-time resources.

## Example 1: Billings Public Library

- State Aid: **\$70,544** (1%)
- Local Revenue: **\$4,010,607** (81%)
- Total Operating Revenue: **\$4,925,759**

(Public Libraries Survey, 2024)

## Library Operating Revenue



- Local Revenue - \$38.6M (89%)
- State Aid - \$542K (1%)
- All Other - \$4.2M (10%)



**State Aid**  
\$70,544 (1%)  
**Local Revenue**  
\$4,010,607 (81%)  
**Total Operating Revenue**  
\$4,925,759

**Billings Public Library**

Photo Credit: Brian D. Butler.

## Example 2: Wibaux County Library

- State Aid: **\$805** (1%)
- Local Revenue: **\$122,734** (97%)
- Total Operating Revenue: **\$126,003**

Under the same Administrative Rule, a tribal college library that serves the public is required to receive recognition and support from the tribal council in its work to obtain funding (ARM 10.102.1158). This effort is mainly in the form of seeking federal grants.

Four tribal college libraries met the standards to receive state aid in FY 2024 and received payment this fall:

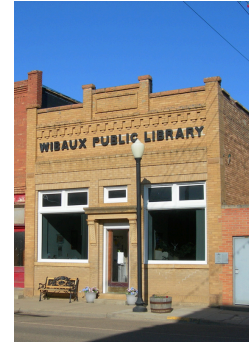
- Aaniiih Nakoda College Library - **\$2,232.50**
- James E. Shanley Tribal Library - **\$3,558.00**
- Stone Child College Library - **\$2,046.00**
- Woodenlegs Library - **\$2,315.50**

Because payment was first received in FY 2025, the example below reflects operating revenue pre-state aid.

## Example: Woodenlegs Library

- Federal Revenue: **\$95,360** (100%)
- Other Revenue: **\$0** (0%)
- Total Operating Revenue: **\$95,360**

(Public Libraries Survey, 2024)



**State Aid**  
\$805 (1%)  
**Local Revenue**  
\$122,734 (97%)  
**Total Operating Revenue**  
\$126,003

### Wibaux Public Library

Photo Credit: Jimmy Emerson, DVM.

How much state aid did tribal college libraries receive?

**\$10,152**

total across four libraries



**State Aid**  
\$0 (see FY25)  
**Federal Revenue**  
\$95,360 (100%)  
**Total Operating Revenue**  
\$95,360

### Woodenlegs Library

Photo Credit: Anthony Chow.