

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



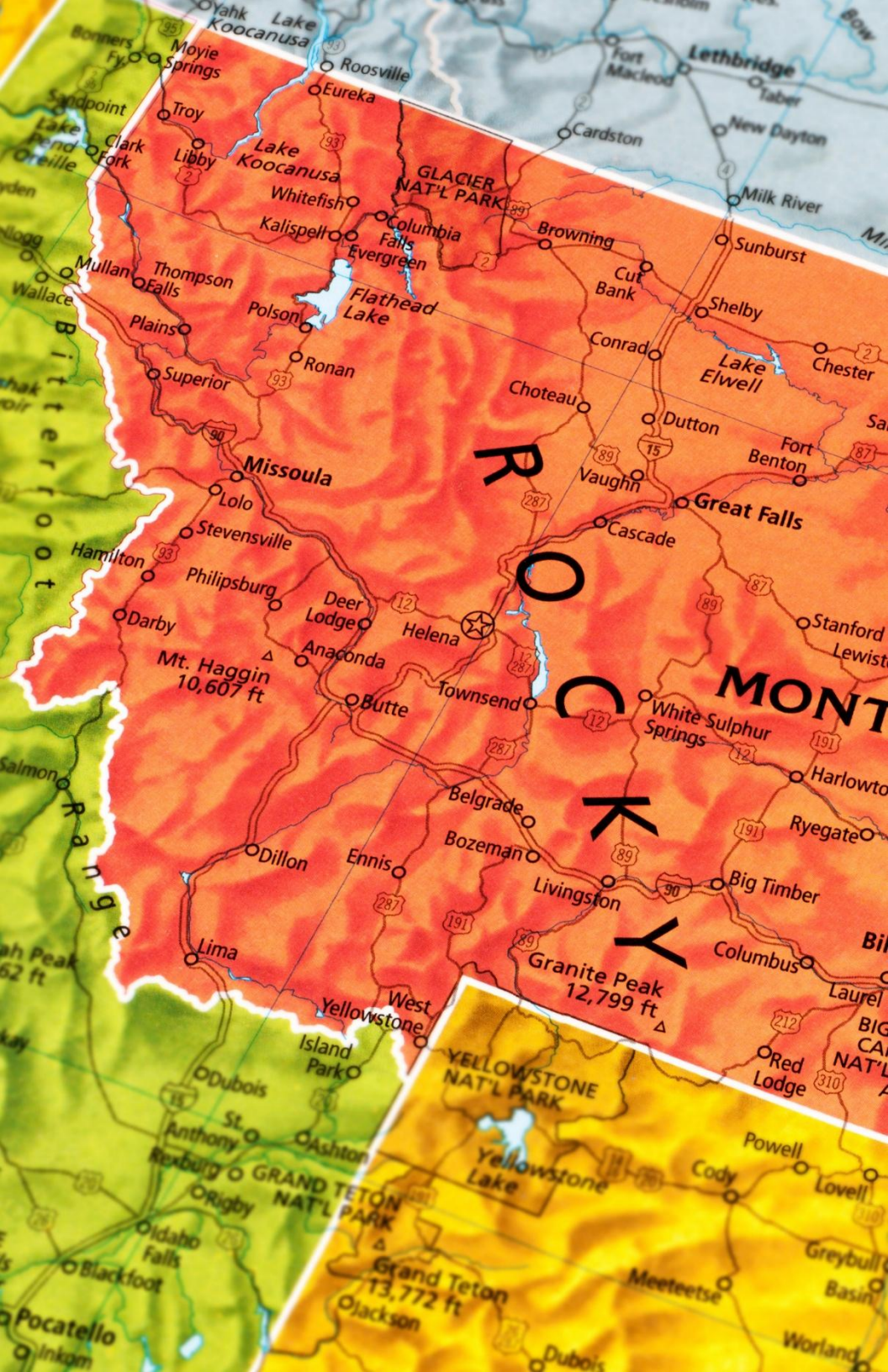


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OUR MISSION

The Montana State Library (MSL) helps all organizations, communities, and Montanans thrive through excellent library resources and services.

ACCESS Our open-data advocacy helps equalize the knowledge base of Montanans.

TRUST We are non-partisan with a reputation for integrity and transparency that fosters strong relationships across the state.

PURPOSE All areas of the State Library contribute to making lives better for Montanans.

EFFICIENCY We promote data-sharing that expedites decisions and leads to better outcomes.

LEADING EDGE We anticipate the information needs of Montanans which results in innovative product and service offerings.



LIBRARY LEADERSHIP

STATE LIBRARY EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP



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STATE LIBRARY PROGRAM LEADS

[Sean Anderson](#), Agency Procurement Officer
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[Marilyn Bennett](#), Outreach Librarian
[Jennifer Birnel](#), MT History Portal Director
[Troy Blandford](#), Water Info Systems Manager
[Tracy Cook](#), Lead Statewide Consulting Librarian
[Erin Fashoway](#), State GIS Coordinator
[Michael Fashoway](#), GIS Land Information Lead

[Lee Fossum](#), IT Manager
[Sharon Hardwick](#), Human Resource Specialist
[Jim Kammerer](#), Government Information Librarian
[Rebekah Kamp](#), Data Coordinator
[Kenny Ketner](#), Information Products Lead
[Amy Marchwick](#), Shared Catalog System Administrator
[Bryce Maxell](#), Natural Heritage Program Coordinator
[Savanna Sill](#), MT Library Network Director

COMMISSION & COUNCIL

STATE LIBRARY COMMISSION

The [State Library Commission](#) sets forth policies and funding priorities that empower the State Library to meet its mission and statutory obligations and to advocate for the State Library and the Montana library and information communities whenever possible.

Commissioner	First Appointed	Current Term Began	Term Expires
Tom Burnett , Vice-Chair	11/21/2022	6/1/2024	6/1/2027
Carmen Cuthbertson	6/1/2023	6/1/2023	5/31/2026
McKenna Gregg , Superintendent of Public Instruction Designee	1/10/2025	1/10/2025	1/1/2029
Tammy Hall	3/23/2022	6/13/2025	6/1/2028
Brian Rossman , Commissioner of Higher Education Appointee	6/29/2023	6/20/2025	6/1/2028
Robyn Scribner , Chair	6/15/2021	6/1/2024	6/1/2027
Peggy Taylor	8/1/2021	5/31/2023	5/31/2026

MONTANA GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

The [Montana Geospatial Information Advisory Council](#) (MGIAC), as required by statute, advises the State Librarian and the State Library Commission on issues related to geospatial information, on the priority of geospatial information, on the development and management of the Montana Geospatial Information Act grant process, and on the distribution of funds collected in the Montana Geospatial Information Account.

2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION SUMMARY

BUDGET

The Montana State Library's budget included no new proposals. The state budget bill (House Bill 2) included funding for fixed costs, inflation adjustments, and pay increases.

The state pay plan bill (House Bill 13) grants eligible state employees raises of \$1.00 per hour or 2.5%, whichever is greater, on July 1, 2025 and July 1, 2026. It also raises in-state travel per diem rates to 70% of the Federal Standard Rate. Previously the State determined its own per diem rates. Finally, the bill increases the monthly state health plan contributions by 2.5% in January 2026 and January 2027. House Bill 2 provides General Fund dollars and spending authority for other sources of revenue (State Special, Federal, and Proprietary) to cover the cost of these increases. Some costs not covered by the General Fund, including employee pay from federal funds, will be met using existing revenue sources, reducing available operational funds.

House Bill 192 increased the Montana Geospatial Information Act recordation fee, along with the fees received by Clerks and Recorders. MSL's GIS recordation fee increased by \$0.75 per page, and the County GIS account feed increased by \$0.25 per page, effective October 1, 2025. The legislation also adds an inflationary factor to be calculated by the Department of Revenue to help fees keep pace with rising costs.

POLICY

The Education Budget Subcommittee adopted a revised organizational structure for the Montana State Library. Instead of considering MSL one program, Statewide Library Resources, the budget and financial reporting will now be broken out into three programs, Central Services, Patron and Local Library Development Services, and GIS, Data, and Information Programs.

INTERIM

House Bill 864, the Section E budget companion bill, includes a requirement for the Education Interim Budget Committee to study statewide interlibrary resource sharing programs.

HOTSPOT LENDING PROGRAM CONCLUDES

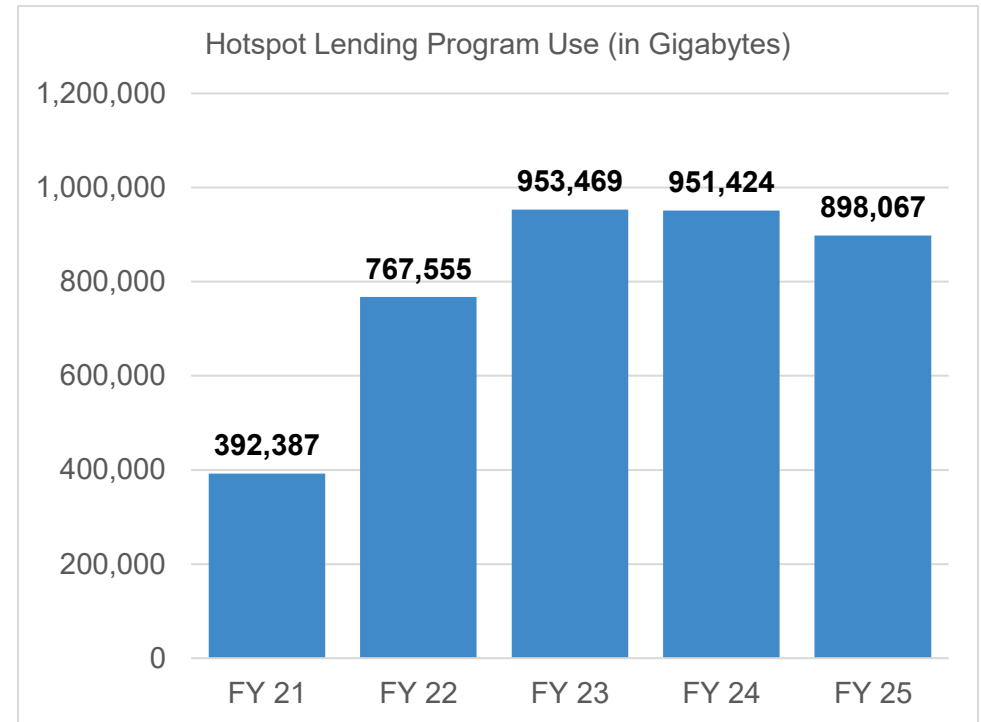
The Montana State Library's [Hotspot Lending Program](#) was launched in the early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic to provide Montanans with additional options for internet access during school and business closures and stay-at-home orders. Originally envisioned as a small pilot project to explore how libraries might lend mobile Wi-Fi hotspots to those without home internet service, the program was implemented immediately in response to urgent statewide needs.

Mobile Wi-Fi hotspots use cellular data to provide internet access for home computers and other devices. Using COVID-19 relief funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the State Library purchased hotspots and data plans, which were distributed to participating libraries for checkout to patrons. At the height of the pandemic, more than 1,000 hotspots were in circulation across 54 Montana counties.

A patron survey indicated that 49% of respondents used the devices for work or school tasks, while others used them to connect with family and friends, attend telehealth appointments, complete government forms, or participate in community and religious events. Hotspots also supported internet access at locations such as vaccination clinics and funeral services where connectivity was otherwise unavailable.

After the full expenditure of state and federal funds, the statewide program concluded under State Library management and transitioned to local operation. Today, 37 public libraries continue lending hotspots with local funding, serving an estimated 30,000 households without reliable internet access. Carnegie Public Library in Big Timber is one of the libraries that will continue offering hotspots. Director Jacque Scott explains, *"My library board feels we need to offer hotspots to serve people who have a need for internet connectivity. Our Friends of the Library is willing to fund this need for our community."*

The Hotspot Lending Program illustrates how the Montana State Library and local libraries can respond rapidly to emerging needs and how partnerships developed during a crisis can lay the groundwork for locally driven services.



Over the hotspot lending program's lifetime, Montanans used the hotspots to access 3,964,249 gigabytes of data.

MT STATE REFERENCE NETWORK SUBSCRIBERS

The [Montana State Reference Network](#) (MTRN) is a state-owned, real-time positioning network managed by the Montana State Library in partnership with tribal nations, the Montana Department of Transportation, counties, educational institutions, and private organizations. It consists of a growing statewide array of permanent global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) reference stations. These stations collect and transmit high-precision GPS data to a cloud-based processor, which generates correction information for users. By connecting to the network, users can obtain centimeter-level accuracy for applications such as surveying, mapping, precision agriculture, and scientific research.

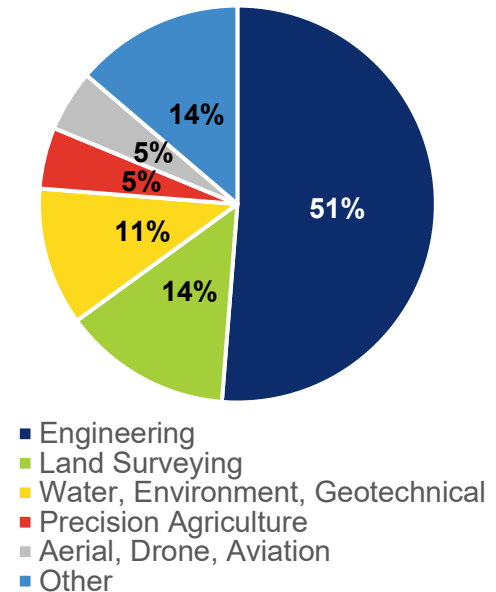
MTRN transitioned to a paid subscription model in 2024. Customers began purchasing subscriptions at an early-bird rate in April 2024, with full subscription service starting in July 2024. Fiscal Year 2025 was the first year the network operated with paid subscribers, ending the year with 73 subscribers and remaining on track to reach 100 by the end of the calendar year. Renewal rates in this first cycle have been strong, with about 80% of existing users continuing their subscriptions.

In addition to subscriber growth, the MTRN formalized five contributor agreements with organizations that host GNSS stations, supply equipment, or provide other operational support. The network also entered into six educational use agreements with colleges and universities, enabling students and researchers to access high-accuracy data for class projects, environmental monitoring, and scientific studies.

Outreach and engagement expanded during the year through the inaugural meetings of the MTRN Technical Committee and User Group, webinars for Montana's survey and GIS communities, and the launch of regular email updates for current and potential users. Staff also developed an outreach calendar to identify events where the benefits of the network can be shared with new audiences statewide. Most recently, Montana State Library attended Montana State University Agricultural Experiment Station Field Day events in Conrad and Havre to connect with students and professionals to show how the Montana State Reference Network can be used to support precision agriculture.

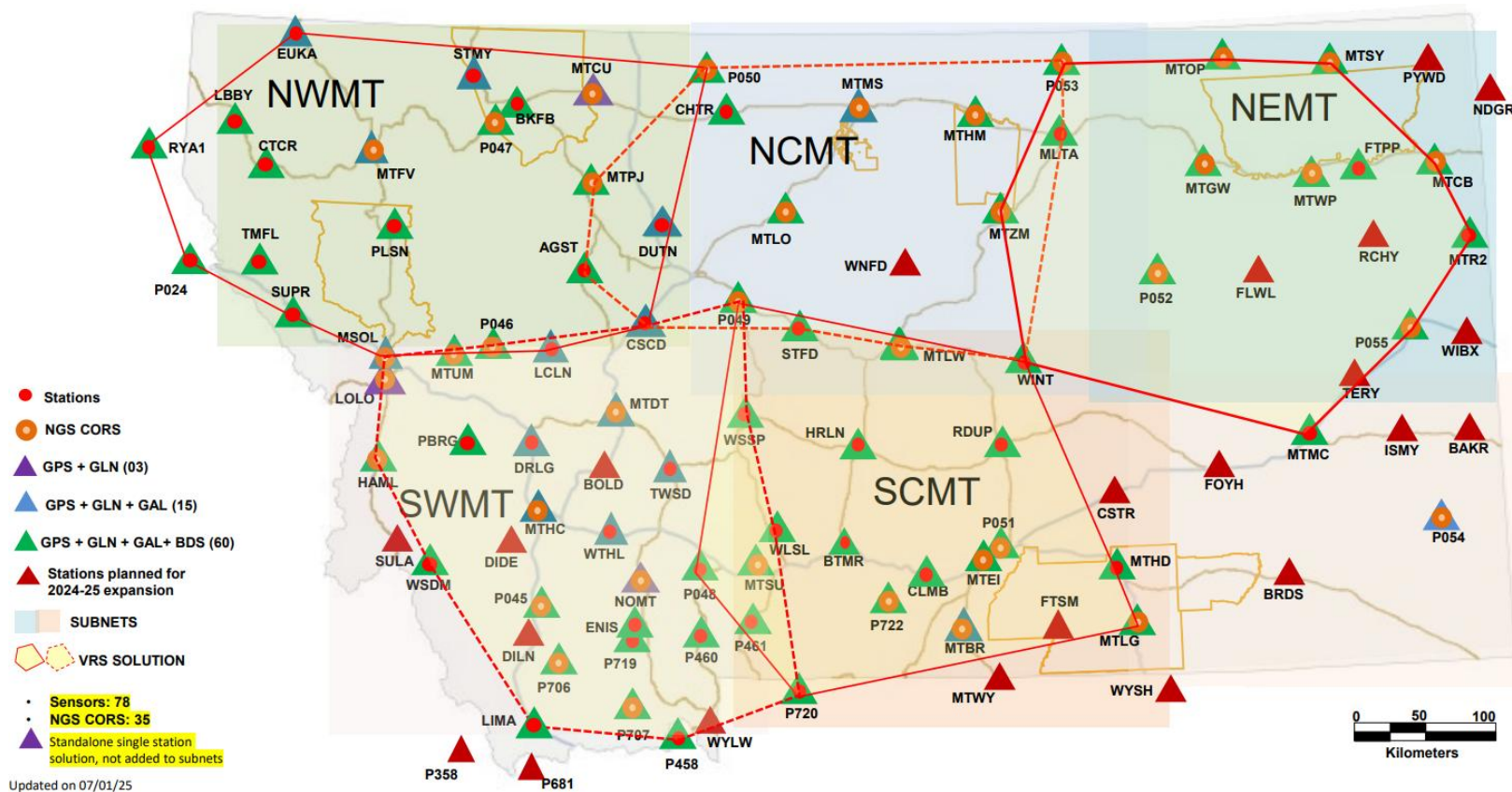
The Montana State Reference Network remains focused on improving coverage, accuracy, and awareness so that agriculture, education, research, and professional fields across the state can benefit from reliable, high-precision spatial data.

MTRN Subscribers by Industry



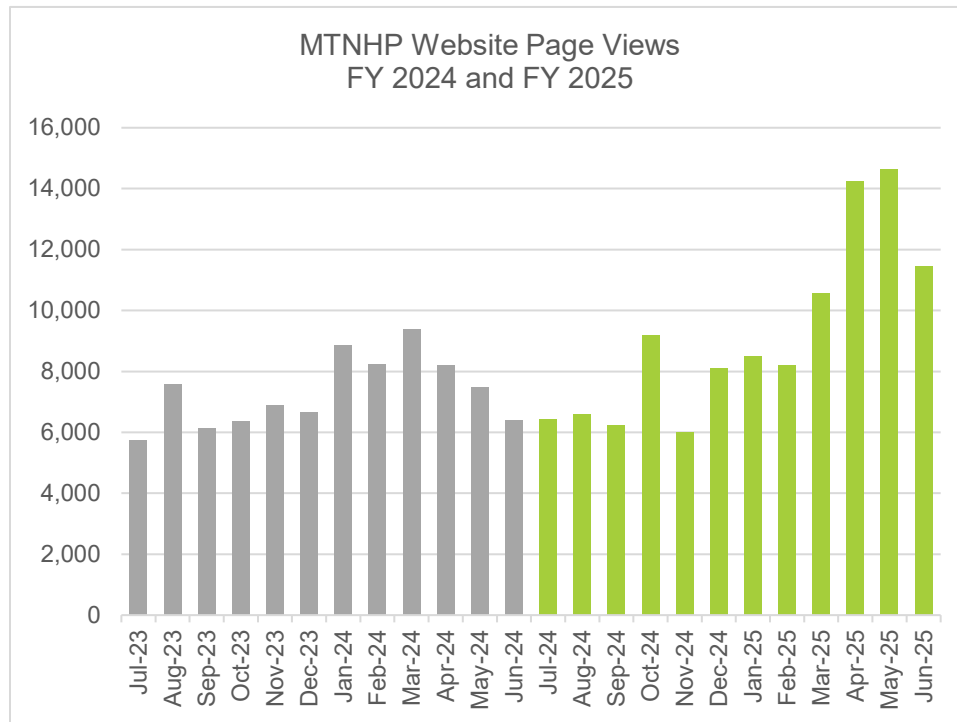
MTRN subscribers represent many industries. "Other" in the chart above includes telecommunications, utilities, construction, equipment resellers, archaeology, research, local government, and federal government.

MT STATE REFERENCE NETWORK MAP



Montana State Library staff attended MSU Field Day events in Conrad and Havre to show attendees how the MTSRN benefits precision agriculture. Pictured left and center, MSL staff share information about MTSRN at the Western Triangle Ag Research Center in Conrad. On the right, tractors take attendees on tours around the research grounds in Havre.

MT NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM NEW WEBSITE



The Montana Natural Heritage Program website saw a 25% increase in total page views in FY 2025 compared to FY 2024.

consultants, organizations, and the public to request custom environmental reports and geodatabases for environmental review and permitting, with clear instructions and confidentiality protections built in. Meanwhile, the updated [Data Submission](#) page makes it easier for natural resource professionals and citizen scientists to submit observation data and photographs using ArcGIS Survey123 forms and the iNaturalist application.

Through improved design and expanded tools, the Montana Natural Heritage Program's new website continues its mission to provide reliable, objective, and accessible information, both for environmental review, permitting, and planning processes, and for all Montanans interested in the state's natural heritage.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP) unveiled a [newly redesigned website](#) to better serve Montanans seeking information about the state's native species and habitats. The new site features a mobile-friendly layout and a simplified navigation system, making it easier for users to find the information and tools they need, whether on desktop or mobile devices.

The new [Dashboards and Tools](#) page is a notable enhancement that brings together interactive applications on Montana's native and non-native species, habitats, and ecological topics in one location. Among the highlighted tools is the [Montana Beaver Restoration Hub](#), which includes five different tools and data models that outline management options to guide beaver restoration and land-use planning. The [Montana Invasive Species Watchlist](#) helps citizens and land managers identify and respond quickly to emerging invasive plants and animals before they spread. [Grazing Boundary Information](#) maps grazing districts and allotments to support coordination among ranchers and agencies for more effective rangeland management. The [G1-G2 Species Location Tool](#) provides location data for Montana's most imperiled species to allow the timber industry to meet Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) standards in conserving them; SFI certification improves market access and supports higher-value pricing for Montana timber.

To support research and planning, the new [Data Requests](#) page allows

TRIBAL COLLEGE LIBRARY STATE AID

Governor Gianforte's signature on House Bill 91 in 2023 marked a historic milestone for Montana's tribal college libraries. For the first time, state aid funding was extended to tribal college libraries that meet public library standards, recognizing their vital contributions to education and community life.

In FY 2025, four tribal college libraries, Woodenlegs Library, Stone Child College Library, James E. Shanley Tribal Library, and Aaniiih Nakoda College Library, received their first-ever allocation of state aid, a moment that both honors tribal heritage and strengthens the future of learning.

At Woodenlegs Library in Northern Cheyenne Country, this support brought the community together in powerful ways. The Sisters Sewing Circle gathered at the library, creating 60 pieces of regalia while sharing traditional skills, stories, and laughter. These handmade regalia were donated to Head Start classrooms, ensuring every student could participate in heritage activities. Throughout the summer, the library became a hub for storytelling events and intergenerational language preservation efforts, resulting in four hours of documented oral traditions. The season culminated in a children's powwow that welcomed 154 attendees, where families received books to inspire a love of reading at home.

Stone Child College and Rocky Boy Public Library also used their funding to support summer reading programs, helping bridge the gap between academic years and encouraging literacy for children and families. Embracing the theme "Color Our World," the library welcomed families for art, creativity, and book discussions, while children from birth to age seventeen took part in a summer reading challenge.

Across all four tribal college libraries, this first allocation of state aid has built new connections between generations, fostered community learning, and celebrated the unique strengths of each community. The investment stands as a testament to the power of partnership between the State and Montana's tribal nations, supporting lifelong learning and honoring cultural traditions.



At the Woodenlegs Library's children's powwow, families received 658 books to read at home, a gift made possible through state aid and a joyful close to the summer reading season.

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY BY THE NUMBERS

PUBLIC LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

Give assistance and advice to all tax-supported or public libraries in the state and to all counties, cities, towns, or regions in the state that propose to establish libraries, as to the best means of establishing and improving those libraries. (MCA 22-1-103)

Measure: total library consultations

Five-year average (2021-2025): 695 consultations/year

LIBRARIAN CERTIFICATION

Act as a state board of professional standards and library examiners, develop standards for public libraries, and adopt rules for the certification of librarians. (MCA 22-1-103)

Measure: total certifications awarded

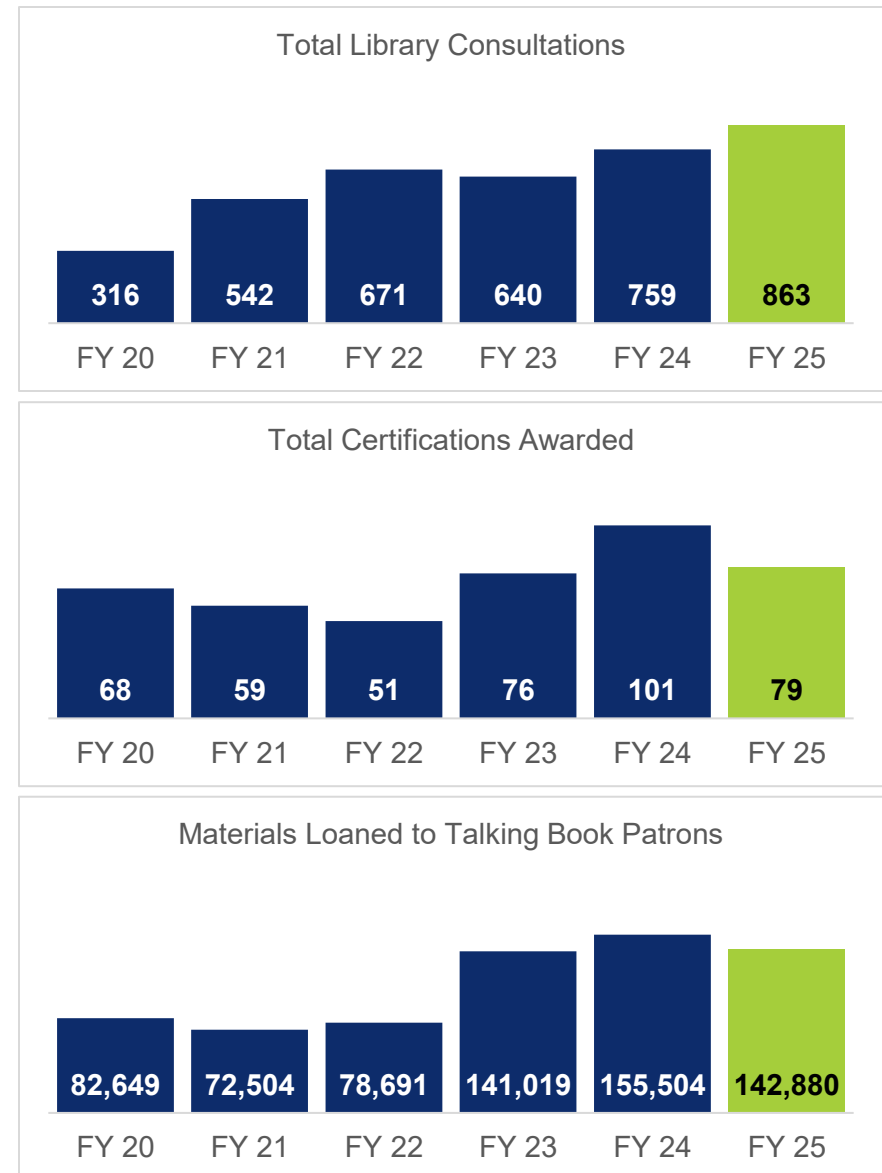
Five-year average (2021-2025): 73 certifications/year

SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

Provide library services for the blind and for individuals with physical disabilities. (MCA 22-1-103)

Measure: materials loaned to Talking Book patrons

Five-year average (2021-2025): 118,120 materials loaned/year



MONTANA STATE LIBRARY BY THE NUMBERS

STATEWIDE RESOURCE SHARING

Support and facilitate resource-sharing among libraries in Montana, including but not limited to public libraries. (MCA 22-1-328)

Measure: total interlibrary loans borrowed at public libraries*

Five-year average (2021-2025): 389,228 loans borrowed/year

*FY 25 data is preliminary as public libraries will verify their final ILL data October/November 2025.

STATE PUBLICATIONS

Administer a state publications depository library program to identify, acquire, catalog, preserve, and provide access to state publications. (MCA 22-1-212)

Measure: total views of digitized publications

Five-year average (2021-2025): 321,424 views/year

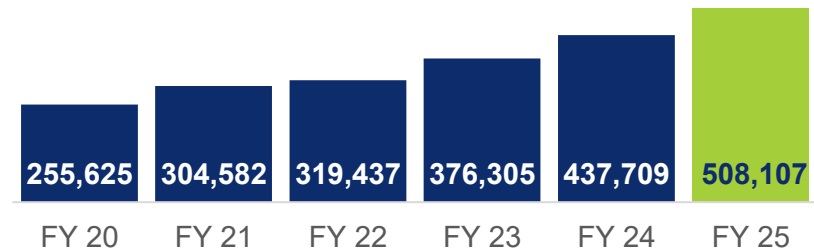
MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE

Integrate Montana Natural Heritage data as a part of the natural resource information system. (MCA 90-15-302)

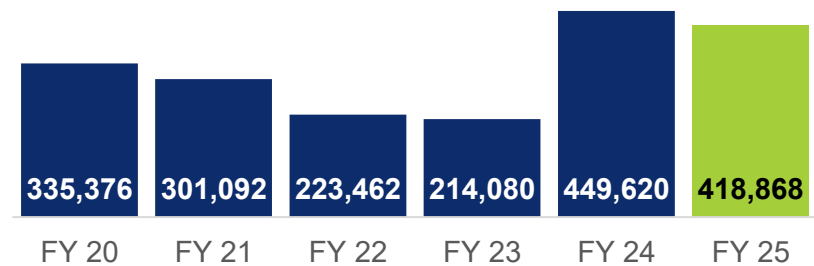
Measure: total field guide website sessions

Five-year average (2021-2025): 701,792 website sessions/year

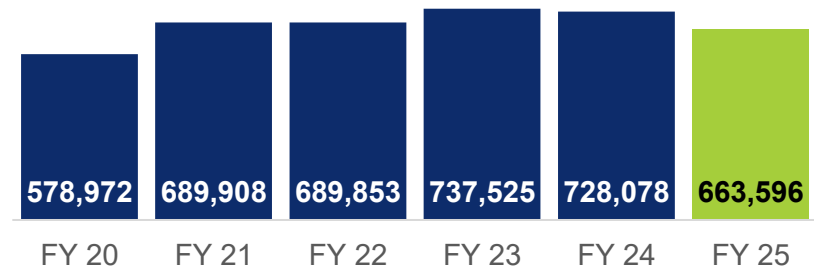
Total Interlibrary Loans Borrowed at Public Libraries



Total Views of Digitized Publications



Total Field Guide Website Sessions



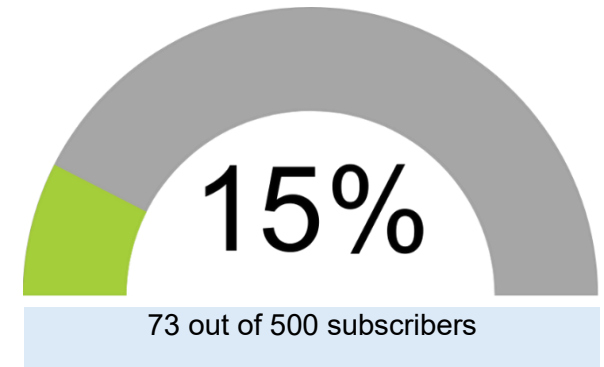
MONTANA STATE LIBRARY BY THE NUMBERS

MT STATE REFERENCE NETWORK

Administer a state reference network to provide real-time geospatial location data from any location within the network. (MCA 22-1-230)

Measure: % of necessary subscriptions acquired for a self-sustaining network (minimum of 500 by 2029)

Baseline: MTSRN acquired first paid subscribers in April 2024

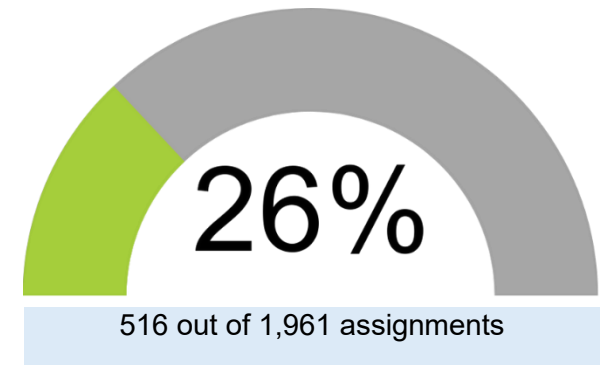


NEXT-GENERATION 9-1-1

Support public safety answering points on the assessment and improvement of next-generation 9-1-1 GIS data. (MCA 10-4-310)

Measure: % of assignments completed for GIS readiness (total of 1,961)

Baseline: Assessment software released to PSAPs December 2022

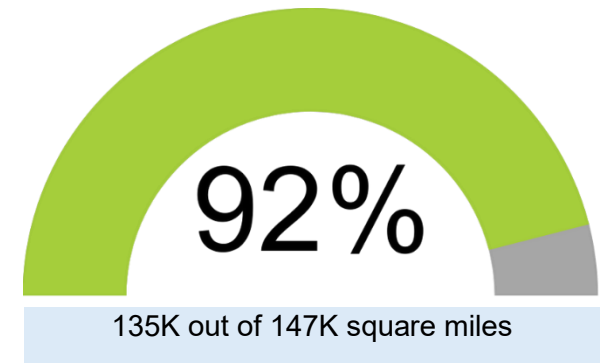


MONTANA LIDAR INVENTORY

Collect, maintain, and disseminate information about the natural and artificial land characteristics of Montana. (MCA 90-1-402)

Measure: % of total collected and available within the state boundary and meeting USGS 3DEP specifications (total of 147K square miles)

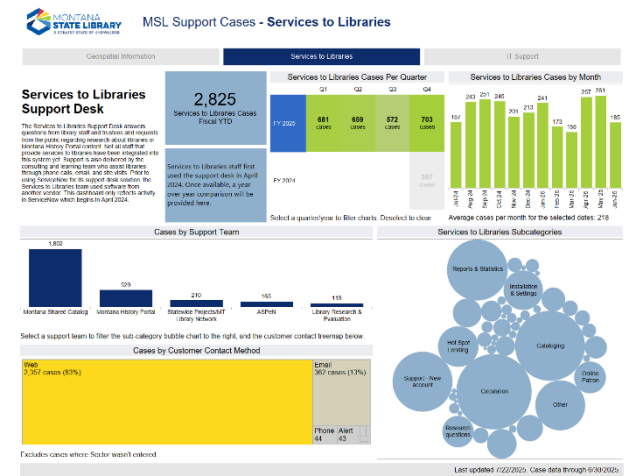
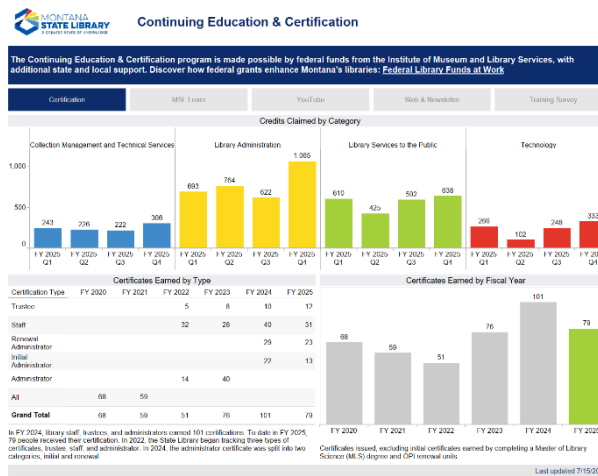
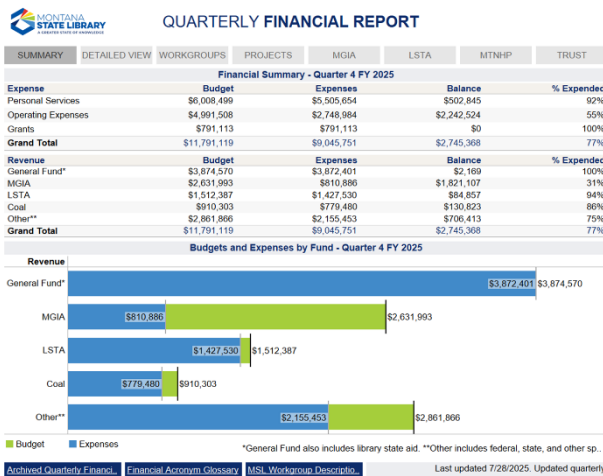
Baseline: Montana Lidar Plan published June 2019 with 42,000 square miles (28%) meeting USGS baseline specifications



MONTANA STATE LIBRARY BY THE NUMBERS

Interactive Dashboards

The Montana State Library maintains a series of dashboards throughout the year, with most updated quarterly to track progress on key initiatives. These interactive tools are publicly available and provide up-to-date information on the State Library's work and statewide impact. This page links to a selection of dashboards, with many more available anytime on the [Montana State Library's website](#). Montana State Library also collects data on Montana's public and tribal college libraries which can be viewed via the [Public Library Statistics dashboard](#).



FINANCIALS

A report of financial data from the most recent quarter

PROGRAMS

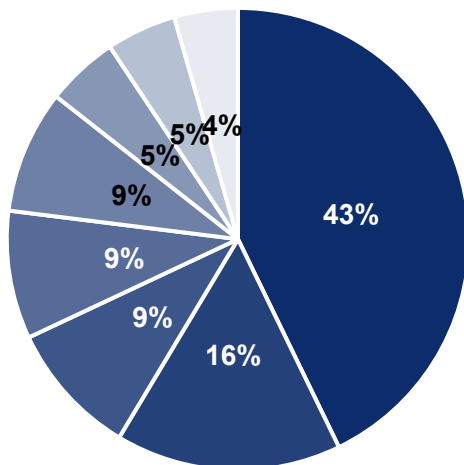
Data highlights from select programs at Montana State Library

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Data on customer support delivered through MSL's ServiceNow help desk

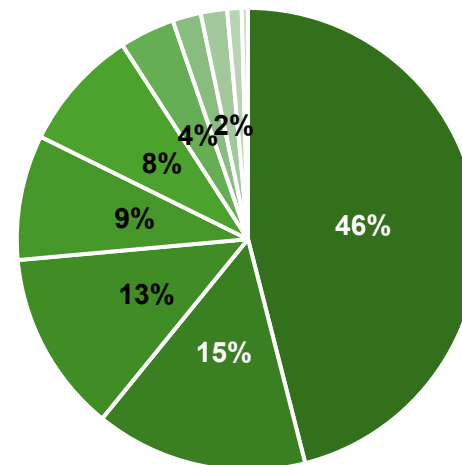
FINANCIALS

FUNDING SOURCE



- General Fund: \$3,872,401 (43%)
- Library Services and Technology Act: \$1,427,530 (16%)
- Other: \$852,261 (9%)
- Montana Geospatial Information Act: \$810,886 (9%)
- Coal Severance Tax: \$779,480 (9%)
- Shared Catalog: \$457,699 (5%)
- Next Generation 9-1-1: \$442,706 (5%)
- Digital Library Services: \$402,787 (4%)

EXPENSES



- Salaries: \$4,162,605 (46%)
- Benefits: \$1,343,049 (15%)
- Contracted Services: \$1,148,313 (13%)
- Grants: \$791,113 (9%)
- Other: \$773,842 (8%)
- Communications: \$349,704 (4%)
- Rent: \$179,823 (2%)
- Supplies/Materials: \$166,663 (2%)
- Travel: \$91,075 (1%)
- Repair and Maint.: \$39,563 (0.4%)

FEDERAL FUNDS AT WORK

Federal funding plays a vital role in the Montana State Library's ability to connect communities, preserve information, and protect natural resources. Each year, the State Library leverages federal grants to expand access to information, strengthen library services, and deliver high-quality data for conservation and land management.

LSTA GRANTS TO STATES PROGRAM

In FY 2025, Montana State Library received \$1.4 million through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to States Program, administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. These funds connected 210 libraries in 49 counties through the Montana Shared Catalog, giving more than 420,000 cardholders access to over three million books. They also sustained the Montana Library Network, which supported more than 1.6 million e-book checkouts and half a million physical items delivered by courier. Federal support maintained the Montana History Portal, now home to over 100,000 digitized historical and cultural items from 111 contributors and expanded Talking Book Services for more than 2,000 Montanans with print disabilities. Additional projects preserved millions of state government records and advanced professional development for library staff through training and consulting.

FEDERAL NATURAL RESOURCE FUNDS

Investment of federal natural resource funds, provided in partnership with agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, NRCS, and Bonneville Power Administration, ensured that Montana's communities, businesses, and agencies have access to the reliable, up-to-date information they need for stewardship, planning, and economic growth. These dollars sustained the Montana Natural Heritage Program's statewide databases and mapping tools, helping agencies, tribes, communities, and industry make informed land use and conservation decisions. MTNHP continues to produce Environmental Summary Reports, enabling more informed conservation and land management decisions and streamlining permitting processes for projects such as mining, timber sales, and energy development. Funds also backed Montana's Water Information System and precision mapping initiatives, including statewide lidar surveying. Recent investments in lidar surveying and water resource projects have advanced the availability of high-quality spatial data for agencies, local governments, and communities statewide.

Together, federal library and natural resource funds ensure Montanans have access to knowledge, rich historical and cultural resources, and trustworthy natural resource information. This impact can be seen in communities across the state every day. Read more about how federal funds impact [library development](#) and Montana's [natural resource information system](#).

YEAR IN REVIEW

Despite concerns, essential federal funding for library development services, library technology programs, the Water Information System, and the Natural Heritage Program remains intact. We continue to monitor federal administrative changes for potential future impacts on this funding, which accounts for approximately 18% of our total budget.

Similarly, in FY 25, we experienced a significant drop in revenue from recordation fees, which fund much of our GIS work. Lack of funds meant we could not offer Geospatial Information Act grants or make planned investments in the Montana State Reference Network. Although uncertainty in the housing market may continue to affect these fees, revenue has rebounded, and we're planning to invest in these programs in FY 26. We were also encouraged by unexpected legislative support and key partners like the Montana Association of Clerks and Recorders, who helped pass a law to increase the recordation fee and further support GIS in Montana.

These challenges aside, the State Library continues to find successes. For me, one of our greatest accomplishments occurred in October when we achieved our goal to award state aid funding to tribal college libraries. After updating public library standards, passing legislation in 2023, and revising Administrative Rules, we issued state aid checks to four of Montana's seven tribal college libraries. Although the funding is small, it recognizes the importance of these libraries to their communities.

We have much to be proud of and much to be grateful for. "Montana is spoiled with the resources [Montana State Library] has provided- just ask folks in other states." This statement from a Bozeman State Library patron is a refrain we hear echoed regularly. Meeting the information needs of Montanans is our greatest measure of success.



Jennie Stapp
State Librarian



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