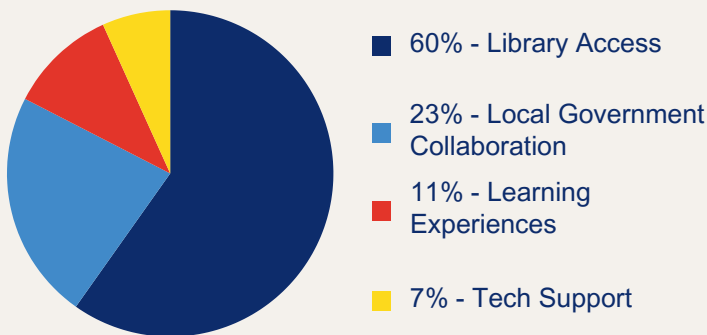


Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA) funding strengthens libraries in rural Montana

Montana's 2023 Grants to States Award Expenses by LSTA Goal

\$1,428,817



LSTA Grants Boost Technology and Digital Literacy for Montanans

Libraries are essential to Montana's communities, often serving as the only source of free, reliable Internet in rural areas where connectivity is critical. Internet access is essential for education, employment, and staying informed, making libraries a lifeline for many Montanans.

Upgrades to library networks, including firewalls, switches, and Wi-Fi access points, have boosted broadband speeds by up to 400% in 39 public libraries. These improvements help patrons stream classes, apply for jobs, and access telehealth services.

Additionally, 86 libraries across 51 counties provide **mobile hotspots**, bridging the gap for those without home Internet or with temporary connectivity needs. Montanans use these devices to stay informed, apply for jobs, and connect with loved ones.

Digital opportunity plans ensure libraries can meet future technology demands while emphasizing digital literacy training. Eight libraries completed plans in 2024. By providing both access and education, Montana's libraries remain vital hubs for connection and opportunity.

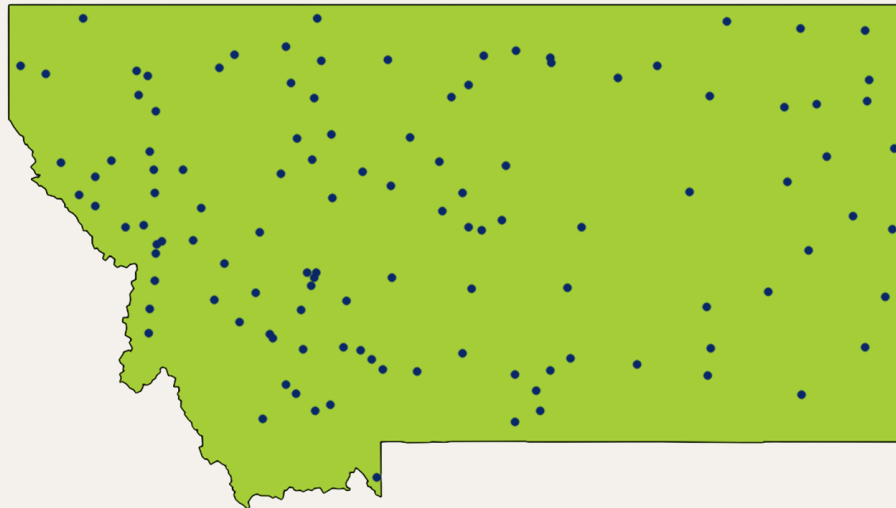
These projects were made possible in part by the **Institute of Museum and Library Services through the LSTA Grants to States program**.



What does LSTA mean for Montana?

In 2024, the **Whitefish Community Library upgraded its network with support from LSTA funding**. Before the project, wireless download speeds were just 12 Mbps. After the upgrades, speeds soared to 522 Mbps, enabling more patrons to engage in bandwidth-heavy activities like virtual interviews and online classes. Last year, the library's network supported 6,417 public computer and Wi-Fi sessions. The upgrades also extended wireless access to the community room, enhancing the library's ability to host training and educational programs for learners of all ages.

Public Libraries in Montana



There are 123 public library locations in Montana including 82 central libraries, 30 branches, 7 bookmobiles, and 4 accredited tribal college libraries that provide services to the public.

2024 Key Library Measures



383,670 Number of Montanans who had a public library card



378,907 Number of times Montanans used library computers



5,433,750 Number of books and other items Montanans borrowed from their libraries



357,554 Number of times Montanans attended educational library programs



534,344 Number of questions Montanans asked their trusted librarians

Montanans love to recreate outdoors. Did you know Montanans visit libraries just as frequently as they visit our state parks?



3.3M public library visits
(Montana Public Libraries Survey, 2024)



3.1M state park visits
(Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 2024)

Learn more about your library using [Montana's Public Libraries Survey dashboard](#).

Investing in libraries helps you, your neighbors, and your community.