

# Standard Operating Procedure for Public Library Standards



## Timeline/Process

	Activity
<b>March</b>	<p>MSL will send a reminder to all public libraries that encourages them to review the public library standards – particularly the standards that have been challenging in the past.</p> <p>MSL Consultants assist libraries with meeting standards.</p>
<b>March - Early April</b>	<p>MSL Continuing Education Coordinator will create a certification report to see which directors are NOT in compliance with certification to pre-populate Counting Opinions’ form.</p> <p>MSL will notify directors that have expired or soon to expire certifications.</p>
<b>May – Mid-July</b>	<p>Report forms open for public library directors to complete.</p>
<b>May – July</b>	<p>MSL staff track responses, send reminders, answer questions, and prepare deferrals.</p>
<b>June – August</b>	<p>MSL consultants review the deferral requests and work with any libraries that have a deferral. The goal is to help as many libraries as possible come into compliance before the State Librarian reviews the deferral requests.</p> <p>As part of this process, the consultants will ask probing questions to determine the cause of the deferral. They will work with the library to meet the standard within the grace period. They will extend as much assistance as possible to the library.</p>
<b>August – September</b>	<p>MSL staff prepare state aid spreadsheets for Central Services.</p>
<b>September</b>	<p>State Librarian reviews remaining deferrals. Library directors and board chairs review State Librarian responses and sign forms.</p>
<b>October – November</b>	<p>State aid/federation checks are prepared and sent to libraries.</p>
<b>October – June</b>	<p>Consultants work with libraries that have deferrals to implement compliance plans.</p>

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## Standards Report Form Questions

- Libraries will be asked whether they comply with each standard listed within Administrative Rules.
- If they answer no, the libraries will be asked the following questions:
  - Why were you unable to meet this standard? How was this standard a hardship for your library?
  - How will you meet the standard in the future? If the standard requires a multi-year solution, what will you do in each year to comply with the standard?
  - Who will be responsible for the activities listed above?
  - What date will your library meet the standard?
- Pre-populated Information
  - Prior year statistics submission status.
  - Responses from prior year deferrals will be displayed for review and updating.
  - New directors will see a date by which they must be certified under “The director is or will be certified by the Montana State Library within the required timeframe mandated by the certification program adopted by the Montana State Library Commission.”
  - MSL will make note of any libraries with unusual governing structures that addresses the fact that they meet the standards in spirit but perhaps not in the letter of the rule.

## General guidelines for Deferral Requests

- MSL Consultants should work with libraries who do not complete a standard within the 3-month grace period. If a library cannot meet the standard within that 3-month period of time the State Librarian reserves the right to deny state funding due to a lack of hardship.
- Libraries that submit a plan for meeting a deferral should follow that plan. If they are unable to do so they need to communicate with their assigned consultant. A failure to follow through on a plan could lead to state funding being denied until the standard is met. The State Librarian will consider adverse circumstances or changes (such as a change in personnel) before denying state funding.

For more information about [Montana Public Library Standards please visit the MSL Website.](#)

Contact your [MSL Statewide Library Consultant](#) for assistance or for any questions.