



## **ANNOUNCING**

### **Montana State Library**

American Recovery and Rescue Plan - E-Bulletin

3-23-22

### **State Library ARPA E-Bulletin**

Welcome to the latest addition of the Montana State Library ARPA E-Bulletin. The State Library has contracted with the Montana Cooperative Development Center (MCDC) and the consulting firm of Applied Communications to provide outreach and technical assistance to local libraries regarding information about the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding opportunities. Look for monthly e-bulletins with updates on grants, training, and partnering opportunities.

### **Montana State Library ARPA Programs – Update**

During stay-at-home orders enacted at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Montana libraries, with the support of the Montana State Library, rapidly pivoted their services to support online learning and a remote workforce. Conceived as pilot prior to the pandemic, MSL launched a statewide mobile Wi-Fi hotspot and device-lending program and contracted for technology services that support remote reading and engagement.

MSL also rapidly increased investment in online education resources. These programs were initially funded through a combination of State Fiscal Year 2020 General Fund, FY 2019 Federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) dollars and CARES Act funds awarded to MSL through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funds. See website below for program details and for on-going program updates.

<https://arcg.is/WnH8W>

### **Montana Hot Spot Program – Survey Results**

The Montana State library recently conducted a survey of library users to collect data on usage of the hot spot lending program. Survey results are available on a statewide and county basis. To view survey results regarding the Hot Spot lending program, visit the following website:

[Montana State Library Hot Spot Lending Survey Results](#)

## **ConnectMT Broadband Program**

The ConnectMT program is extending the application deadline for broadband grants to April 29, 2022. It is recommended that libraries check with their broadband providers to determine if they will be submitting a grant application and if the application will include service upgrades to the library. Libraries are considered “Anchor Institutions” and broadband providers are encouraged to provide services to such customers as part of the application. See the [Broadband Funding Guide](#) for more details and continue to monitor the ConnectMT website. <https://connectmt.mt.gov/>

## **Broadband USA Technical Assistance Webinars**

To help prospective applicants understand broadband and digital inclusion grants available under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the National Telecommunications Infrastructure Administration is hosting a series of free technical assistance webinars to help grant applicants prepare prior to the issuance of the Notice of Funding Announcement (NOFA). To sign up for a webinar:

<https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/events/latest-events>

## **Library Federation Presentations**

Kathleen McMahon will be presenting on the library ARPA and grant outreach program at these upcoming Federation meetings.

April 21 – Golden Plains Federation Meeting

April 29 – Tamarack Federation Meeting

May 5 – Pathfinder Federation Meeting

The PowerPoint is available on-line on the Montana Cooperative Development Center resource page. It is located under “Other Resources & Publications.”

<https://www.mcdc.coop/msl-resource-page/>

## **Other Grant Resources**

Blackfoot Communications Public Library Grant Program for electronic equipment. (Deadline March 31)  
<https://givingback.blackfoot.com/submit/129076/public-library-grant-application>

Adult Literacy Programs - <https://www.wishyouwellfoundation.org/>

Family Literacy Programs - <https://believeinreading.org/>

Children Books Project Grants - <https://thepilcrowfoundation.org/>

## **Montana State Library - ARPA Webinar Series**

Earlier in March, MCDC hosted the third grant funding webinar for public facilities funding. Recordings and PowerPoints from the webinars are available at:

<https://www.mcdc.coop/msl-resource-page/>

Highlights from the Public Facility webinar are summarized below.

**1. Montana Dept. of Commerce - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**

Presenter: Gus Byrom, [gbyrom@mt.gov](mailto:gbyrom@mt.gov)

[CDBG Planning Grant](#) does fund preliminary architectural review (PAR) studies. The grant can pay for the portion of the study for libraries that address conformance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). These items may include things such as bathrooms, ramps, elevators, water fountains, automatic doors, water fountains and handicap parking. It is important to itemize these improvements in the PAR in order to access funding opportunities that could cover the costs of these improvements. CDBG planning grants are accepted on a quarterly cycle and must be submitted by the city or county government. The next grant cycle is in June.

**2. Montana Dept. of Commerce – Historic Preservation Grant**

Presenters: Mackenzie Espeland, [Mackenzie.Espeland@mt.gov](mailto:Mackenzie.Espeland@mt.gov)

Taylor Crowl, [taylor.crowl@mt.gov](mailto:taylor.crowl@mt.gov)

Renovations for historic libraries may qualify for a Montana Historic Preservation Grant. This is a biennial program, and the next round of applications will be accepted in 2024. Libraries must be at least 50-years old and have historic significance to qualify. If the library is on the National Register of Historic Places or within a historic district, this would make a stronger application but if the local historic preservation officer can write a letter of support that could also be accepted. A PAR is not required for this grant but is helpful. It is recommended to start preparing early for the next grant cycle.

**3. USDA – Rural Development – Community Facility Grant/Loan**

Presenter: Shelby Atchison, [Shelby.Atchison@usda.gov](mailto:Shelby.Atchison@usda.gov)

Libraries can apply directly for a [USDA Community Facility](#) grant or loan. The grant funds a wide range of improvements and can be used to fill in the gap between the project cost and fundraising. The grant does require a Preliminary Architectural Report (PAR) so it is advisable that the architect working with the library contact USDA to make sure the final report meets the requirements of the USDA grant. The grant cycle is open year-round.

**4. Other Grants - Presenters also mentioned other grants:**

- Main Street Grants

Libraries in Main Street Communities may qualify for Main Street grants for activities related to downtown and tourism. These may include 1) information kiosks for visitors, 2) improving outdoor space that is used for concerts, farmers market 3) Improving Connectivity to the city trail system

<https://comdev.mt.gov/Programs-and-Boards/Montana-Main-Street-Program/Main-Street-Road-Map>

- Tourism Grants

Tourism grants fund similar activities as the Main Street Program and have funded library improvements related to visitor services such as an information kiosk, events, historic displays, walking tours and bathrooms. <https://marketmt.com/Programs/Industry-Services-and-Outreach/Tourism-Grant-Program>

## **One-on-One Technical Assistance**

One-on-one technical assistance regarding ARPA funding is now available to libraries. Technical assistance is being provided by contract planner Kathleen McMahon and includes an initial telephone or zoom call to assess library needs, review grant programs and determine follow-up assistance. If you are interested in scheduling a technical assistance call, please contact:

Kate McMahon  
406-863-9255  
[kate@appcom.net](mailto:kate@appcom.net)

## **For more Information on Montana State Library/MCDC APRA Outreach Efforts**

Check future e-bulletins for answers to more questions! For additional information on this outreach contact:

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Montana State Library  
406-431-0685  
[TCook2@mt.gov](mailto:TCook2@mt.gov)

Kate McMahon  
Applied Communications  
406-863-9255  
[kate@appcom.net](mailto:kate@appcom.net)

For general information on ARPA and other resources:

State of Montana ARPA Commission web page: <https://arpa.mt.gov/>

MCDC/Montana State Library ARPA Resource: [MSL Resource Page - Montana Cooperative Development Center \(mcdc.coop\)](#)

MT ARPA Grant Submission Portal: [State of Montana Submission Manager \(covidreliefmt.org\)](https://www.covidreliefmt.org)

Montana Department of Commerce – ARPA Resources: [Montana Coronavirus Relief \(mt.gov\)](#)

Montana ARPA Hot Line: 1-844-406-2772