

# Resolution: Support for Library Professionalism

## MONTANA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

**November 13, 2023**

*Whereas*, the recent decision by the Montana State Library Commission to eliminate the graduate degree requirement for library directors in the state's largest libraries has denigrated the standing of Montana's library professionals and put the future of library services in Montana at risk; and

*Whereas*, the Montana Library Association (MLA) acknowledges the importance of diverse voices and perspectives in the governance of libraries, as well as the need for local autonomy; and

*Whereas*, MLA is dedicated to fostering a strong community of library professionals who collaborate, share knowledge, and support one another in the mission to provide the best possible library services to our communities; and

*Whereas*, MLA established the Sheila Cates Scholarship in 1994 and continues to provide financial support to Montana library professionals seeking a graduate degree in Library and Information Science field; and

*Whereas*, MLA recognizes the value of legislative advocacy and understands the critical role it plays in advocating for libraries, ensuring equitable access to information, and securing necessary funding; and

*Whereas*, the challenges faced by the ImagineIF Library in Kalispell underscore the necessity of professional development and the need for library directors to have the skills and knowledge required to lead their institutions effectively;

*Now, therefore*, be it resolved that the Montana Library Association affirms its commitment to upholding the highest standards of professionalism in library services while recognizing the importance of local governance in library decision-making.

*Be it further resolved* that MLA will continue to prioritize:

1. Professional Development: MLA commits to providing resources and opportunities for professional development, enabling library professionals to enhance their skills and knowledge, and ensuring they are well-prepared to serve their communities.
2. A Community of Support for Libraries: MLA will strengthen its efforts to build a supportive and collaborative community of library professionals. We encourage networking, knowledge sharing, and mentorship to help library staff, Trustees, and volunteers achieve their goals.
3. Legislative Advocacy: MLA will continue its efforts to ensure libraries receive the funding and support they need to serve their communities effectively. We remain committed to engaging with all stakeholders, including government agencies and elected officials, to advocate for the best interests of Montana's libraries and library users.

*Be it further resolved* that MLA invites all stakeholders, including the Montana State Library Commission, to engage in a constructive and open dialogue to find common ground, address concerns, and work together to ensure the continued success of Montana's libraries.

*Be it further resolved* that MLA reaffirms its dedication to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, recognizing the importance of representing the needs and values of all library professionals and users.

*Be it further resolved* that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Montana State Library Commission and other relevant stakeholders to foster understanding and collaboration in our shared commitment to providing outstanding library services for all Montanans.

Adopted by the Montana Library Association

November 13, 2023