



Smith and McGowan, Inc.

*Government Relations
Association Management*

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Contract Executive Director and Lobbyist Proposal

Prepared for: Montana Library Association

Proposed by: Smith and McGowan, Inc.
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Smith and McGowan, Inc. Description and Experience

Smith and McGowan, Inc. is a Government Relations and Association Management firm located in Helena, MT with nearly 40 years of legislative and association management experience. We offer thorough knowledge of the state legislative process as well as expertise in meeting planning, strategic planning, membership recruitment/retention/benefits, financial management and relationship building with partners. The firm's major emphasis in representing clients has been health and local government. Smith and McGowan is adept at following the state budget process as well as successfully tracking and managing policy legislation.

Smith and McGowan traditionally has provided year-round association management and lobbying for clients and finds it to be the best option for a robust and healthy association.

Lobbying for multiple clients has been our history. We have been successful because we have been cautious in contracting only with clients we deem to be compatible and that have overlapping issues, goals and objectives. We believe in the team approach at Smith and McGowan because it provides each client with a broad range of support and experience; however, we also assign one lead to each client for continuity of communication. With three full-time lobbyists, we are able to be in the budget subcommittees and pertinent policy committee hearings every day to strengthen our personal relationships with legislative leaders and individual legislative champions as well as track the actions and conversations of said committees.

Compliance with lobbying laws and regulations is high on our agenda. It has been our experience to work closely with the Commissioner of Political Practices and with our clients to be certain everyone is in good standing.

Smith and McGowan acts as Executive Directors of many large, successful associations, including the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association, Association of Montana Public Health Officers, and the Montana County Attorneys Association. As Executive Directors, Smith and McGowan staff are experts in board development, member recruitment, communication and engagement, financial management, public relations and conference planning.

We have a history of working with member-based associations, most notably the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association and the Montana County Attorneys Association, who have large numbers of members. We also contract with smaller associations with fewer members. In all cases it has been our belief that advocacy at the local level is the most effective. We strive to prepare our clients to advocate at home and at the Capitol. In addition to advocacy, we have assisted associations struggling with member retention and engagement. Through development of a strategic membership plan with tangible member benefits, Smith and McGowan has helped associations recoup members and increase member satisfaction and commitment to the organization.

We strive to bring personal attention to our clients and develop communication plans that will work for you and your members.

Our mission is to provide high quality government relations and association management services to the clients with whom we work.

Objectives

- Maintain an impeccable reputation of honesty and integrity.
- Contract with clients with whom we philosophically and ethically align.
- Strive for transparency between and among clients, avoiding conflicts of interest as much as possible.
- Skills to provide opportunities between and among clients to collaborate to pursue common goals and objectives.
- Specific to MLA, Smith and McGowan would be attentive to and oversee both the Association's legislative and operational priorities.

Goals for Smith and McGowan/MLA Contract

Smith and McGowan, as a firm, has extensive positive experience with legislative priorities and helping associations evolve and thrive. Smith and McGowan will build upon the foundation of the Montana Library Association while simultaneously moving your Association forward and advancing the goals and objectives to remain active and relevant into the future. We will strive to meet all of your association needs and ensure your association is adapting, growing and advancing the in the field of library sciences.

All employees at Smith and McGowan will be part of your Association Management team, which ensures there are multiple people up to speed on your association issues and available to attend meetings and hearings, monitor the political and economic climate in Montana and assess how those factors will affect your profession, plan and prepare your continuing education opportunities and annual conference, manage financials and prepare necessary reports, communicate with and report to the board of directors and meet the needs of your members. You will have a designated point of contact to ensure continuity and consistency of communication.

Current Clients

Montana County Attorneys Association, Montana Advocates for Children, Montana Library Association, Association of Montana Public Health Officials, Montana Community Corrections Association, Montana Academy of Ophthalmology, Montana Dental Association, Montana Association of Community Disability Services.

Proposed Work Plan for MLA

1. Association management

a. Board administration

- With Board President, schedule, plan and formulate meeting agendas for up to 4 meetings per year.
- Distribute agendas to Board and membership at least 1 week in advance.
- Confirm attendance with individual Board members.
- Make all logistical arrangements for meetings.
- Arrange telephonic participation for those who cannot physically attend.
- Assure minutes are drafted, distributed for review and accepted at the following Board meeting.
- Attend all Board meetings.

b. Board development

- According to Association Bylaws, assure Board and Executive Board positions are filled in a timely manner and there is a smooth transition of Officers.
- Work with Association Officers to orient new Board members individually and with orientation events, as necessary.

c. Member management and development

- Maintain a current database of members with contact information.
- Recruit members including billing and collection of dues, personal phone calls soliciting membership.

d. Website development and maintenance

- Assure website content is current and relevant to members. Regularly update events calendar, contact information, resources and other items.
- Occasionally update graphics, photos and look of the website, as funding allows.

f. Regular communication with membership

- Provide electronic communication with membership (frequency determined by mutual agreement) regarding association business, meetings, Board agendas and actions, trainings, conferences, policy and program issues relevant to the association, legislative matters, etc.

2. Financial management

- Manage Association fiscal matters in coordination with the Board and Treasurer.
- Create and track annual budget, provide budget status reports showing revenue and expenses to date compared to budget; and profit and loss and balance sheets.
- Manage checking account.
- Provide financial information to the contracted Certified Public Accountant (CPA) for preparation of Annual Financial Compilation.
- Provide all necessary documents to CPA for preparation of annual tax return (IRS 990).

3. Conferences, conventions, membership meetings, trainings

- Provide logistical support
 - Select site in coordination with the MLA Board, negotiate contract and coordinate with site for meeting rooms, sleeping rooms, meals, breaks, training rooms, audiovisual requirements, etc.
 - Assign space at conference. Assist with special needs and requirements.
 - Arrange training and education in accordance with the MLA process to determine presentation topics, speakers and keynote address. Arrange and manage presenters, presenter fees, travel, lodging, AV, training materials.
 - Provide on-site coordination of registration, presenters, on-site and off-site logistics.
- Provide financial management
 - Determine registration fees based upon board motions.
 - Collect registration fees and maintain registration database.
 - Receive, audit and pay event expenses incurred.
 - Invoice and receive payments.
- Initiate and manage all advertising and promotion.
- Recruit and manage vendors, exhibitors and sponsors for event.
- Secure continuing education credits (CE Credits) for each event.

4. Government relations services

- On-Going
 - Provide Professional Representation for MLA, as directed by the board, with the following:
 1. State Librarian
 2. Montana State Library Commission
 3. ALA
 4. Montana Association of Counties
 5. Executive Agencies
 6. Others as needed, identified and/or directed by the board

- Non-legislative years
 - Provide on-going coordination with applicable state agencies, elected officials, and partner organizations on policy and budget issues, including meeting coordination and regular communication/relationship building.
 - Develop draft legislative priorities with the MLA Government Affairs Committee, vet with the MLA Board and membership and finalize.
 - Conduct pre-session meetings with legislators and/or candidates to present and discuss legislative priorities.
 - Communicate with candidates and legislators via email and US mail to disseminate legislative priorities, educate legislators and build support.
 - Assist the Board in seeking legislative sponsors for MLA priority legislation.
 - Monitor and coordinate MLA Board/Member participation, as necessary, with the following Interim Legislative Committees:
 1. Legislative Finance
 2. Education Interim Committee
 3. Local Government Interim Committee
 4. Other Committees as determined necessary
 - Assist with the development and coordination of MLA Proactive Legislation as well as the MLA Defensive Legislation strategies.
 - Post Legislative Wrap-Up and Follow-up with MLA Government Affairs committee, Board/Members, Legislators, Executive and State Agencies.

- Legislative years
 - Register with Commissioner of Political Practices; maintain a daily record of activities in order to meet all reporting requirements. Coordinate with President to assure timely and accurate reporting for MLA.
 - In coordination with the Government Affairs Chair, assist with the schedule and agenda for legislative conference calls. Participate in legislative conference calls with MLA Government Affairs Committee/Board/members regarding legislative activities.
 - Attend meetings with the State Librarian and MSL Commission regarding legislation.
 - Monitor and review bill drafts and identify those which may impact libraries, librarians, local government.
 - Coordinate with the Government Affairs Chair and Board to determine MLA position on high priority legislation.
 - Support or oppose, as appropriate, all matters of concern to public, school, academic and special libraries, including the Montana State Library budget, Coal Tax funding, public library funding, freedom of information, access to information, privacy, broadband, net neutrality.
 - Lobby legislative priorities.
 - Provide coordination of lobbying efforts including recruiting members to testify, contacting members to make legislative contacts, etc.
 - Assist with preparation of briefing papers, talking points and testimony.

5. Strategic planning and meeting facilitation

- Provide logistical support for planning sessions including room reservation and set-up, food and drink, etc.
- Design planning process, vet with Board, and invite and recruit participants.
- Facilitate planning session.
- Produce summary of meetings and formatted plans.
- Produce and track plan implementation with annual work plans.

6. Maintain meeting space and conference call services for use by association members.

