



Fall Session
October 20 – December 8, 2026

[Fundamentals Handbook 2023 MCA Updates](#)

This handout contains updated links to the 2023 MCA updates and their corresponding chapters and page numbers in the *Fundamentals* text. Use it to link to the current statutes, revised during the 2023 legislative session.

Unit 1: Introduction to Local Government in Montana

Due:

October 27, 2026

Required Reading:

[Unit 1: Handbook Text: Part I – pages 3-21 \(Section 1.1-1.406\)](#)

Subjects:

- Origins and Characteristics of Municipal Government
- Municipal Classification
- Forms of Municipal Government
- Powers of Municipal Government

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand the relationship between state, county, and municipal government in Montana.
2. Understand the characteristic options available to Montana municipal governments: Classification, Form, and Governing Powers.
3. Be able to identify your own municipality's characteristics. Understand methods available to alter forms of municipal government.

Unit 2: Municipal Officials

Due:

November 3, 2026

Required Reading:

[Unit 2: Part I – pages 21 – 35 \(Section 1.5-2.209\) & Part I - pages 60 - 127 \(Section 3.1-3.1407\)](#)
[Executive vs. Legislative Oversight](#) (handout)

Subjects:

- Municipal Officers
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Legal Responsibilities and Limitations
- Hiring Process
- Background Checks
- Interviewing and Reference Checks
- Compensation
- Nepotism
- Performance Evaluation
- Personnel Records Management

Learning Outcomes:

1. Be able to identify the required officers of municipal government.
2. Understand the difference between elected and appointed officials in terms of roles and responsibilities, hiring, compensation, and performance evaluation.
3. Be able to describe the importance of following proper hiring procedures.
4. Understand the importance of performance evaluation for municipal employees.
5. Be able to identify key elements of personnel records management.

Unit 3: Municipal Meetings

Due:

November 10, 2026

Required Reading:

[Unit 3: Part I – pages 35-56 \(Section 2.3-Attachment 2.5\); Part I – pages 174-178 \(Section 7.1-7.107\); & Part II – Pages 204-220 \(Section 1.1-1.19\)](#)

Subjects:

- Conduct of Council Meetings
- Ordinances and Resolutions
- Citizen Participation and Interaction

Learning Outcomes:

1. Be able to assemble an agenda.
2. Be able to properly notice a meeting in accordance with state laws.
3. Understand the process for creating and implementing local ordinances and resolutions.
4. Be able to create minutes for public meetings.

Optional Additional Resources:

The MSU Local Government Center offers a free, online, self-paced Parliamentary Procedure for Public Officials course for those interested in additional ParliPro information. [Details about the course can be found by clicking this link.](#)

Unit 4: Municipal Accounting and Finance

Due:

November 17, 2026

Required Reading:

[Unit 4: Part I – pages 130-165 \(Section 4.1 - Attachment 5.3\) & Part II – 258-277 \(Section 5.1 - 5.23\)](#)

Subjects:

- Municipal Budgeting
- Investing Public Funds
- Managing Public Debt
- Accounting
- Claims for Payment
- The Audit
- Financial Trend Monitoring

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand basic budget and accounting principles and purposes.
 2. Be able to produce reconcile monthly financial reports.
 3. Be able to identify and follow the Checklist for Year End Closing Entries.
 4. Understand the purpose of an audit.
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Unit 5: Land Use and Planning

Due:

December 1, 2026

Required Reading:

[Unit 5: Part I – pages 182-201 \(Section 8.1-8.6\)](#)

Subjects:

- Authority for Local Land Use Decisions
- Local Land Use Decision Making Bodies
- Montana Land Use Planning Act (MLUPA)
- Growth Policies
- Zoning
- Subdivision Regulation and Review

Learning Outcomes:

1. Explain the statutory and constitutional authority that allows Montana local governments to regulate land use and development.
2. Differentiate among major local land use planning tools, including land use plans, growth policies, zoning regulations, and subdivision regulations.
3. Describe the major review processes, requirements, and decision criteria applicable to zoning actions, subdivision applications, and other land development proposals in Montana.
4. Explain how growth policies, zoning regulations, and subdivision regulations work together to guide community development.

Unit 6: Municipal Clerk/Treasurer Duties

Due:

December 8, 2026

Required Reading:

[Unit 6: Part II - pages 223-255 \(Section 2.1 - 4.7\)](#)

Subjects:

- Licenses
- Contracts
- Permits
- Public Records
- Insurance
- Resources

Learning Outcomes:

1. Be able to identify resources available to municipal officials to assist with questions based on subject.
2. Understand the process for providing and monitoring municipal licenses and permits.
3. Be able to identify key elements of public records requirements.
4. Understand basic bid and contract procedures.