



Welcome to the Spring Session January 13 – February 24, 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 January 13 - January 20, 2026

Due:

January 20, 2026

Required Reading:

[Handbook Text: Part I – pages 3-21 \(sections 1.101-1.406\)](#)

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 January 20 - January 27, 2026

Due:

January 27, 2026

Required Reading:

[Part I – pages 21 – 35 \(section 1.501-2.209\)](#)
[Part II - pages 59 - 126 \(section 3.101-3.1407\)](#)
[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
January 27 - February 3, 2026

Due:

February 3, 2026

Required Reading:

[Part I – pages 35-56 \(sections 2.301-Attachment 2.5\)](#)
[Part I – pages 173-177 \(sections 7.1-7.107\)](#)
[Part II – Pages 2-19 \(sections 1.1-1.19\)](#)

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
February 3 – February 10, 2026

Due:

February 10, 2026

Required Reading:

Part I – pages 129-164 (sections 4.101 - Attachment 5.3)

Part II – 57-76 (sections 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.

Unit 5: Land Use and Planning
February 10 - February 17, 2026

Due:

February 17, 2026

Required Reading:

Part I – pages 180-194 (sections 8.101-8.503)

Subjects:

- Authority for Making Local Land Use Decisions
- Growth Policies
- Zoning
- Subdivisions
- Buildings for Lease or Rent

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand the procedure for adopting and amending municipal zones.
2. Be able to identify and articulate the purpose of a municipal growth policy.
3. Understand subdivision regulations and exemptions.

Unit 6: Municipal Clerk/Treasurer Duties
February 17 - February 24, 2026

Due:

February 24, 2026

Required Reading:

Part II - pages 21-55 (sections 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.