To assist the Missoula Public Library Board of Trustees in preparing for a mill levy election in 2026, here's a proposed timeline based on the Montana State Library’s guidelines and relevant Montana statutes. This schedule is tailored for a November 2026 general election, with adjustments possible for a June primary if preferred.

### Proposed Timeline for 2026 Mill Levy Election:

# Spring–Summer 2025: Strategic Planning & Community Engagement

**Assess Funding Needs:** After FY26 budget is approved, conduct a thorough evaluation of the library's financial requirements to determine the necessity and scope of the proposed mill levy. Great Falls Public Library is a great resource for this process.

**Develop Message:** Early talking points should be established.

**Engage Stakeholders:** Initiate discussions with the County Commissioners (also Mayor Davis and Council) to build support.

# Fall 2025: Formalizing the Ballot Initiative

**Community Outreach:** Begin public engagement efforts to inform and gather feedback from the community, laying the groundwork for a successful campaign.

**Resolution or Petition:** Secure a resolution from the County Commission to place the mill levy on the ballot.

**Legal Review:** Ensure all legal requirements are met, including compliance with Title 15, Chapter 10, Part 4, Section 425 of the Montana Code Annotated, which outlines the procedures for mill levy elections. ([Montana State Legislature](https://archive.legmt.gov/bills/mca/title_0150/chapter_0100/part_0040/section_0250/0150-0100-0040-0250.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com))

# Winter 2025–Early Spring 2026: Campaign Development

**Form Campaign Committee:** Establish a dedicated team to lead the campaign efforts, focusing on messaging, outreach, and fundraising.

**Develop Campaign Materials:** Create informative materials that clearly articulate the benefits of the mill levy for the library and the community. Include talking points for staff.

**Public Engagement:** Host informational sessions, attend community events, and utilize various media platforms to educate voters and build support.

# Spring–Summer 2026: Final Preparations

**Submit Ballot Language:** Work with the Missoula County Elections Office to finalize and submit the ballot language by the required deadlines (Slaven has a sample).

**Voter Education:** Continue outreach efforts to ensure voters are informed about the specifics of the mill levy and its impact.

# November 2026: Election Day

**Monitor Voting:** Ensure that all campaign activities comply with election laws and monitor the voting process.

**Post-Election Follow-Up:** Regardless of the outcome, communicate with stakeholders and the community about the results and next steps.