

Certification and Continuing Education Handbook



Certification and Continuing Education Handbook

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Certification and Continuing Education Handbook

Introduction

What is the Montana State Library?

The Montana State Library (MSL) provides information, resources, and guidance to organizations, communities, and residents of Montana to help them expand their knowledge and empower their decisions. Our leading-edge data and applications help those seeking answers about Montana’s government, natural resources, heritage, land ownership, and more while our vital services improve public libraries and provide reading materials to those with disabilities.

Our Mission

The Montana State Library (MSL) helps all organizations, communities, and Montanans thrive through excellent library resources and services.

We meet this mission by

- Providing comprehensive information about Montana’s natural resources and heritage
- Consistently collecting and standardizing commonly available land information
- Fulfilling the information needs of state agency employees
- Preserving state publications
- Improving public library services
- Promoting cooperation among all Montana libraries of all types
- Providing reading materials to those with physical disabilities

Library Development Services

The Montana State Library provides leadership and guidance to libraries in order to improve programs, services, and facilities.

Consulting, Training, and Lifelong Learning

MSL provides consulting services, continuing education opportunities, and learning programs for library employees and trustees across Montana. These resources, training sessions, and professional development opportunities help libraries meet the needs of their patrons and create thriving opportunities for their communities.

Continuing Education and Certification Program Goals



Promote continuing education and demonstrate its impact for quality library services



Promote recognition for librarians who participate and libraries that encourage staff to continue learning



Provide continuing education opportunities that benefit library directors, staff, and trustees

Certification and Continuing Education Handbook

The Montana Library Certification Program was established to promote continuing education and to recognize librarians and trustees who continue to expand their knowledge and skills to provide improved services for patrons and communities.

Promote continuing education and demonstrate its impact for quality library services

Learn more about how continuing education supports quality library services through the [MSL Continuing Education Dashboard](#).

Promote recognition for librarians who participate and libraries that encourage staff to continue learning

An official certificate is available for downloading and printing from ASPeN upon completion of certification requirements. MSL publishes an annual list of librarians and trustees who complete certification through our newsletters and a press release. A press release template is available with this handbook.

Recognition can take many forms: presentation at a board meeting, introduction at a staff meeting, local press release, extra compensation, special parking spot, gift cards, social media or website post, newsletter feature—there are lots of ways to acknowledge certification. The most important thing is to be consistent in how and when recognition happens.

Provide continuing education opportunities that benefit library directors, staff, and trustees

MSL strives to provide a variety of opportunities to engage in continuing education for all library staff and trustees. Learn more about these opportunities by subscribing to our newsletters, visiting the ASPeN Event Calendar, and visiting our website.

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Certification Program Requirements

Public Library Directors

These requirements emphasize library administration but also provide flexibility and personalized goals for specialization. The requirements increase flexibility and personal choices that library directors have in creating their own learning plans.

The initial certification requirements set a foundation that can serve small and large library needs while the renewal encourages professional growth based on the unique circumstances of the individual and the library.

ARM 10.102.1160 Personnel sets the expectation that library directors must be certified.

For library staff members who choose to complete an initial library administration certification track, the initial certification requirements have the potential to increase knowledge and skills that can help them move into leadership positions and improve library services.

Certificates are valid for 4 years. All public library directors must continue to participate in continuing education activities and renew certification every 4 years.

Newly hired directors will have 4 years from hire date to earn a certificate if they have not completed a Library Administration track prior to hiring.

Initial Certification

Total Credits

60 continuing education credits earned in a 4-year period

Library Administration Category

30 credits

Electives

30 credits in any category

Renewal after Initial Certification

Total Credits

60 elective continuing education credits earned in a 4-year period

Verification

Once you have the required number of credits, you will be prompted to submit your certification record through ASPeN. The board chair will be contacted to verify your certification record after the MSL CE Coordinator reviews the submission.

Expired Certificates

If a director does not earn or renew certification within a 4-year period, a deferral can be requested from the State Librarian. Please contact a library consultant for details and deadlines.

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Transition from 2009 Requirements

Effective on the date of approval by the MSL Commission, director's applications for a Library Administration track that are renewals and meet or exceed the 60 credits required under the old requirements will be issued when submitted and verified.

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Trustees

The trustee certification provides both flexibility and focus on library administration credits. This optional track gives individual trustees a choice in how they will engage in continuing education on the role of trustees and their specific responsibilities. This is important for volunteer service on a public library board. The requirements allow directors and trustees to plan for continuing education needs that may change as trustees move on and off boards and as important continuing education topics change over time.

Certificates are valid for 4 years.

Total Credits

15 continuing education credits earned in a 4-year period

Library Administration Category

10 credits

Electives

5 credits in any category

Verification

Once you have the required number of credits, you will be prompted to submit your certification record through ASPeN. The board chair will be contacted to verify your certification record after the MSL CE Coordinator reviews the submission. The vice chair will verify the chair's record.

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Public Library Staff

The library staff certification provides a balance of foundation in library skills and flexibility for exploration and specialization. This optional track gives individual staff members a choice in how they will engage in continuing education. The category requirements give library directors and supervisors support in planning continuing education for staff members who may not have prior experience working in public libraries.

Certificates are valid for 4 years.

Total Credits

60 continuing education credits earned in a 4-year period

Library Administration Category

5 credits

Library Services to the Public

5 credits

Collection Management and Technical Services

5 credits

Technology

5 credits

Electives

40 credits in any category

Verification

Once you have the required number of credits, you will be prompted to submit your certification record through ASPeN. A supervisor will be contacted to verify your certification record after the MSL CE Coordinator reviews the submission.

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MLS/MLIS Degree Completion

Graduates of Master of Library Science (MLS) or Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) programs are eligible for an Initial Library Administrator Track certificate. Certificates awarded this way are issued as of the date of graduation, and renewal is due four years from the graduation date.

To claim that certificate, librarians should:

1. Login to ASPeN, and follow the directions found in the Help section for "[ASPeN - Getting Started with Continuing Education](#)" to create a Library Administrator Track Participation.
2. Send an electronic copy (image or PDF) of your recent diploma to the [CE Coordinator at the State Library](#).
3. Follow the directions in ASPeN help for Applying or Renewing Certification in ASPeN.

The CE Coordinator will review and file a copy of your diploma, record the relevant information into ASPeN about your degree, and issue your certificate. A new participation track will be created for you to begin to collect credits toward your renewal.

Specialization

Specializations are available that make it possible for participants to be recognized for continuing education in a given category that is above and beyond the basic certification.

Participants can earn a specialization by accumulating a minimum of 20 credits (10 credits for trustees) in these categories:

- Collection Management and Technical Services
- Library Services to the Public
- Technology

There is no specialization in Library Administration. Individuals interested in Library Administration as a specialization are encouraged to pursue the Initial Library Administrator Track.

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Continuing Education

Definition

Training presented as a structured learning opportunity is eligible for continuing education credits. That structure might be an online course, a workshop at a conference, or a video recording from an online workshop. An agenda with learning objectives and a description of the topics covered in the event can be a good source to identify the number of credits and continuing education category.

A structure can also be a formal continuing education plan. The plan should be created by a director/supervisor for an employee and could include online courses, workshops, videos, discussion groups, or other activities that the employer approves and will verify for MSL certification purposes. A sample plan is included in this handbook.

Continuing Education Credits

One contact hour of qualified training equals one continuing education credit.

30 minutes (.5 hours) is the smallest credit eligible for continuing education.

There are a lot of possibilities but in general it is a good idea to choose trainings that you can answer “yes” to the following questions.

- Is the training presented in a structured learning situation?
- Is the training on the continuing education plan my supervisor has created for me?
- Is it library-specific and/or specific to your library’s needs?
- Will it help you do your job better?
- Does it fit into one of the four continuing education categories?
 - Library Administration
 - Library Services to the Public
 - Collection Management and Technical Services
 - Technology

If you can answer yes to most or all these questions, then it is very likely something worthy of continuing education credits. If you have questions about categories, what counts and what doesn’t, please visit with your supervisor, the library director, or reach out to the MSL Continuing Education Coordinator.

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Special Circumstances

Serving as Site Supervisor for Library School Practicum Students

Librarians are encouraged to support learners attending library school by accepting internships when possible. Some programs of study for librarianship require practicum experience, and for those seeking post-graduate credentials while working/living here in Montana, it can be challenging to find a site. The process of supervising an intern is recognized for credit when the practicum meets all the following requirements:

- The practicum is a minimum of 20 hours of student work.
- The practicum is structured within a specific time frame with objectives and responsibilities for both the practicum student and the supervisor.
- The practicum is under the direction of a faculty member in a library science program at an accredited university.
- The site supervisor fulfills all requirements of the college and retains documentation that all requirements have been fulfilled.

Upon completion of the practicum, the faculty supervisor or other representative of the university should email the MSL Continuing Education Coordinator with a confirmation that the practicum is complete. The MSL Continuing Education Coordinator will then work with the supervising librarian to add their credits to ASPeN.

Normally, the designated site supervisor may claim credit for the practicum as the primary supervisor of the student; if the supervising plan for the practicum involves the student working under more than one person at the library, or more than one library site, then the credits may be divided, provided each supervising period is at least 10 hours of student work time.

Librarians may claim credit for more than one practicum, but not if they supervise more than one practicum student for the same academic time period. For example, if a site supervisor takes on a student one year, and a different student the next year, they may claim credit for both supervision periods. If they supervise two students during the same semester, though, they may only claim credit for one.

Site supervision is applied to the library administration category with credits earned according to the following formula:

Practicum hours*	CE credits
10	3
20	7
30	10
40	14
60	20

*Practicum hours refers to the total number of hours that the student spends working at the site library

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Trainer/Presenter Credits

Participants in the certification program are eligible for continuing education credits for workshops that they develop and present for librarians or trustees on library-related topics.

The formula for CE credits is the length of the workshop times two.

Example: A 4-hour workshop about library law will be 4 CE credits for attendees and will be 8 CE credits for the presenter (4 hours x 2).

Credits can only be earned once unless substantial changes are made to the presentation. Presenters can only receive credit twice per training topic in a 4-year certification period.

If you are preparing a training session for librarians or trustees, your supervisor will help with the number of credits and CE category. If uncertain of the category, please contact the State Library for assistance.

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Categories

Continuing education credits can be earned in four categories. A well-rounded approach to a continuing education plan will include learning across categories. Each of the four categories in the Montana Certification Program relates to professional library competencies and skills. For those who have a professional library degree (MLS, MLIS, MSLS), continuing education builds on the foundation of your graduate degree.

For those who come to library work from other backgrounds, the four categories provide a roadmap to gain the library-specific knowledge and skills that are foundational to providing excellent library services.

The lists of competencies and range of topics for each category can help you search for continuing education courses or categorize offerings from sources outside of the Montana Continuing Education and Certification Program.



Definitions

Library Administration

This category is focused on the administration and management of the library, its personnel, facilities, budgets, and planning.

Competencies: community relations, facilities, financial management, laws, policies, procedures, marketing and public relations, organizational leadership, personnel management, project management, staff training and development, strategic planning, trustees/friends/foundations

Range of Topics - library law, library policies, friends and foundations, budgeting and finance, policy development, long range planning, human resources, board and staff development, interpersonal relationships, time management, marketing, assessing community needs, grant writing, fundraising, local governance, ethics and values, customer service, collaboration, innovation, leadership skills

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Library Services to the Public

This category is focused on the variety of programs and services libraries provide for patrons and the community at-large.

Competencies: adult and older adult services, children's services, circulation services, patron training, public access technology, young adult services

Range of Topics - early literacy programs, programming for the community, customer service, book clubs, developing research skills, information services, outreach activities, ILL, library material challenges, censorship, copyright, adult literacy and basic education, genealogy, virtual programs, accessing legal documents

Collection Management and Technical Services

This category is focused on the technical skills, systems, and processes to manage collections and make them accessible to patrons.

Competencies: acquisition and processing, cataloging, collection development and management, digital resources technology, e-resource management, preservation

Range of Topics - materials selection and processing, collection development and policies, organizing the collection, caring for the collection, book repair, cataloging materials, maintaining the library catalog, MARC, Dublin Core, FRBR standards, selecting/managing electronic resources, selecting/evaluating subject specialties for the library collection, archiving, digitization

Technology

This broad category includes all facets of using technology from individual staff training to patron use of technology devices and services. Technology includes the hardware and software applications used to access, share, and create content.

Core Competencies: email, hardware, internet, operating systems, applications, web technologies

Range of Topics - using or creating databases, using OCLC tools, computer repair and/or troubleshooting, computer networking, library-related software, digitization projects, library automation, building/maintaining a library web page, technology plans, trends in library technology,

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Continuing Education Plans

Instructions

For the Director/Supervisor

A continuing education plan can be used in conjunction with job descriptions and performance evaluations to plan for individual employee growth in the skills and competencies needed to perform their job. It can serve as a roadmap to plan the budget and time needed to support the employee in meeting expectations for service.

- A good CE plan is informed by the Library's goals and is integrated by the Director into the performance evaluation for each employee.
- A CE plan that is kept current and regularly reviewed with the employee can help keep everyone accountable and on track with the goals identified in the plan.

If MSL Certification is a goal for all employees, the certification program requirements will help determine what the employee should focus on in their plan.

Before You Start

You should gather these items:

- Library Strategic Plan and CE Goals
- Job Profile
- Latest Performance Evaluation

Fill in Library Goals for Continuing Education

Goal 1 [SAMPLE: All Library employees will complete MSL Certification within 4 years of hire.]

Goal 2 [SAMPLE: All Library employees will attend 2 workshops each year.]

Goal 3 [SAMPLE: All Library employees will complete at least 3 hours of CE each year in at least 2 categories.]

[add, modify, or subtract goals as needed]

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Add Job Specific Information

The job description can help serve as a reminder of the purpose of the position.

Include job skills to focus on in the CE Plan. Skill gaps that are identified in a performance evaluation are a good place to start.

Job Description	Job Skills –
[SAMPLE job description - The customer service librarian provides friendly customer service at the main desk of the library, is proactive in doing circulation duties, and contributes actively to a team centered approach to work.]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> [SAMPLE Assists patrons who want to print from their own devices to the library’s wireless-enabled printers] <input type="checkbox"/> [SAMPLE Provides quality customer service to virtual users as well as to users in the building, ensuring that customer service principles are applied to online interactions] <input type="checkbox"/> [SAMPLE Acts as a goodwill ambassador for the library, promoting the library’s values and services in all user interactions] <input type="checkbox"/> [SAMPLE Maintains a calm, professional manner in difficult situations and applies effective communication techniques]

Fill in the Details!

CE Plan

CE Category	Title/Description	Online/In-person	Credit Hour Estimate	Date Completed	Cost
The form includes sections for each of the 4 MSL CE categories	Workshop/ Conference/ Course Title		Minimum credit amount is .5		Include estimated costs to plan for budget requests

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For the Employee

A CE plan can be used in conjunction with job descriptions and performance evaluations to plan for your growth in the skills and competencies needed to perform your job.

As you and your supervisor identify goals related to your job, use the recommended continuing education sources listed in this document to select and plan what courses and workshops you will take. Make your plan balanced across CE categories but also concentrate on CE that is specific to your position and plans for advancement.

If you choose to work toward MSL Certification, create a plan that matches the certification requirements and timelines.

CE Tracking Checklist

- Update your profile and contact information in ASPeN.
- Start a Certification Track.
- Track CE Credits in ASPeN after completing each planned activity.
- Review and update the CE Plan with your Supervisor at least twice each year.

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Recommended Continuing Education Sources

[ASPeN Event Calendar](#) – find and register for Montana State Library and Montana Library Association events.

[MSL Learn](#) – Montana State Library’s online learning platform.

[MSL YouTube Channel](#) – find recorded sessions from CE events to watch at your convenience and then claim CE credits in ASPeN.

[Subscribe to the MSL Continuing Education Newsletter](#) – monthly updates with recommended CE activities.

[Montana Library Association](#) (MLA) – MLA sponsors workshops, conferences, and other continuing education opportunities.

[WebJunction](#) – MSL sponsors access to a large collection of live webinars and online courses across all CE categories and jobs.

Other – training offered through your municipal or county government are a very good source for continuing education. Staff training days offered at your library are another way to claim independent learning credits.

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ASPeN

MSL's [Access to Services, Programs, and eNetworks](#) (ASPeN) system is the tool used to track continuing education and certification.

ASPeN provides a variety of services for Montana's library community. Members of the public can search ASpEN to find a nearby library or learn more about their local library. Library Directors can update library information, and keep track of continuing education.

[Access the ASpEN Knowledge Base](#) to learn more about how to manage your continuing education credits.

Tracking Continuing Education Credits

CE events are added in the following ways:

1. automatically if you register for an event within ASpEN
2. added from the independent learning event list in ASpEN
3. input as an independent learning event

Applying for Certification

[Login to ASpEN](#) to access the Continuing Education (CE) system to submit your CE record for certification.

Once you have the required number of credits, you will be prompted to submit your certification record through ASpEN. A supervisor will be contacted to verify your certification record after the MSL CE Coordinator reviews the submission.

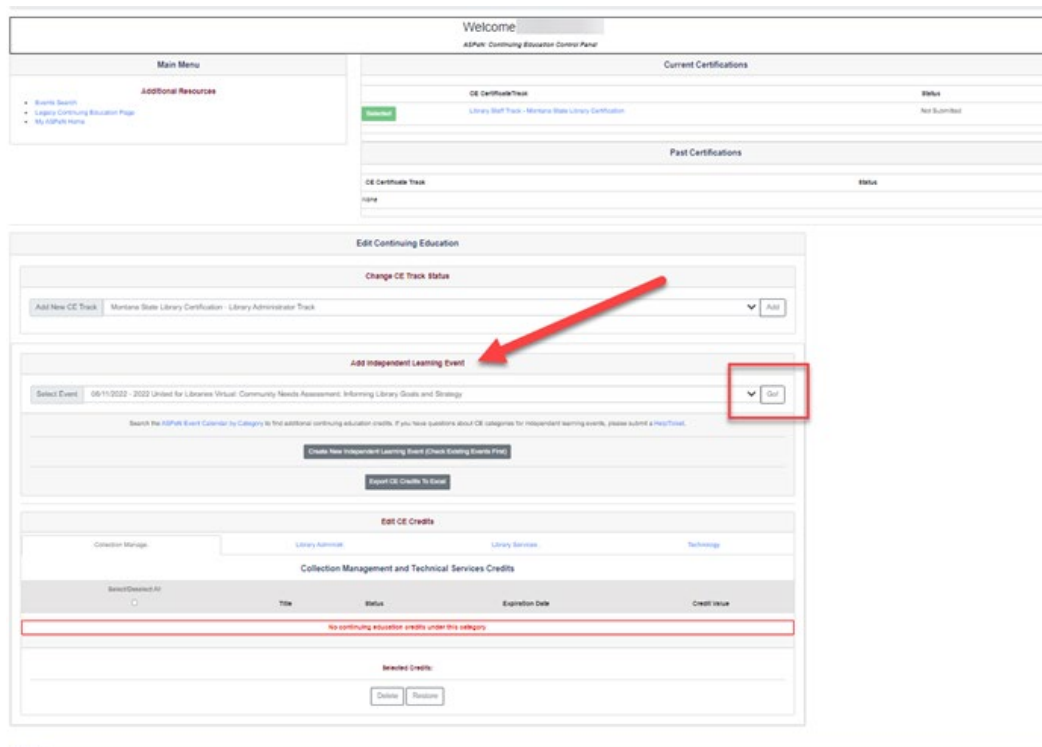
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Eligible Continuing Education Opportunities

MSL and MLA-sponsored events

Login to ASPeN to claim credits for events offered by the State Library and the Montana Library Association.

Choose the Continuing Education tile and then Scroll down to the "Add Independent Learning Event" section. Events appear in the list AFTER the date of the event.



Use the drop-down option (the small triangle to the right of the most current event listed) to display all the events in the past year.


Find the event you wish to claim and click Go!

Only events you have not already claimed credit for are displayed to you. Events are displayed in reverse chronological order with the most recent dates at the top.

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Continuing Education Credits - Create New Continuing Education Independent Learning Event

Person	<input type="text"/>
Title	③ Giving Montanans their Fullest Opportunity: Administering and Financing Public Libraries in Montana
Begin Date/Time	③ Thursday, September 22, 2022 9:00 AM
End Date/Time	③ Thursday, September 22, 2022 1:00 PM
Sponsor	③ Montana State Library
Trainer Name	③
Information URL	③ https://forms.office.com/g/J2tqKC3Eod
Location	③ Levinstown Public Library 701 West Main Levinstown, MT 59457 Map
Continuing Education Credits	③ 4.0 credits Library Administration
Email On Assigned Credit	③ <input type="checkbox"/>



Click the SAVE button on this page to officially claim that credit.

Credits you claim will display as PENDING in your list. Participants may add events on the honor system, but before a certificate is issued, the credits must be reviewed and verified by the participant's supervisor.

Independent Learning Events

For continuing education that is NOT sponsored by MSL or the Montana Library Association, you can add new independent learning events.

You will need this information:

- Event Title
- Begin Date and Time
- End Date and Time
- Sponsor
- Trainer/Presenter Name
- CE Category
- Credit Value (.5 hour is the smallest credit allowed)

These items are required. There are other options to fill in but only those with a red asterisk are required to "Save" the Independent Learning Event.

A description of the event is helpful for review and verification steps when you submit your certification.

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Edit Continuing Education


Change CE Track Status

Add New CE Track Montana State Library Certification - Library Administrator Track ▼ Add

Add Independent Learning Event

Select Event 08/11/2022 - 2022 United for Libraries Virtual: Community Needs Assessment: Informing Library Goals and Strategy ▼ Go!

Search the [ASPeN Event Calendar](#) by [Category](#) to find additional continuing education credits. If you have questions about CE categories for independent learning events, please submit a [HelpTicket](#).

Create New Independent Learning Event (Check Existing Events First) 

Export CE Credits To Excel

Edit CE Credits

Collection Manage. Library Administr. Library Services Technology

Collection Management and Technical Services Credits

Select/Deselect All

Title	Status	Expiration Date	Credit Value
No continuing education credits under this category			

Selected Credits:

Delete Restore

You will enter the required information into the next screen and "Save."

You can check the event in the "Edit CE Credits" section of the Continuing Education page.

Credits you have claimed are listed by CE Category. If you accidentally duplicated an event or need to make changes, you have options to do that.

Edit CE Credits

Collection Manage. Library Administr. Library Services Technology

Library Administration Credits

Select/Deselect All

Title	Status	Expiration Date	Credit Value
<input type="checkbox"/> ARPA 101 & Related Fundin.	Pending	11/17/2025 2:00 PM	1.5
<input type="checkbox"/> Getting2knowU - An orient.	Approved	1/24/2026 3:30 PM	0.5
<input type="checkbox"/> Webside Chat with Montana	Approved	5/20/2026 12:00 PM	1.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Webside Chat with State L.	Approved	9/9/2026 12:00 PM	1.0
<input type="checkbox"/> South Central Federation	Pending	9/10/2026 1:00 PM	1.5
Total Category Value:			5.5 credits

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Certification History

Year	Milestone
1915	<p>Montana Legislature authorizes the establishment of county free libraries.</p> <div data-bbox="358 430 1321 632" style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 10px;"> <p>Appointment and Qualification of Librarian. Section 3. Upon the establishment of a county free library the Board of County Commissioners may appoint a county librarian, who may be removed for or without cause. Any person who is a graduate of a library school, or has had one year's practical experience in library work, shall be eligible to the office of county librarian.</p> </div> <p>Qualifications for a county librarian include “graduate of a library school” or one year’s experience.</p>
1929	<p>Revised Codes of Montana (RCM) 1575.1 State library extension commission created by an act of the 1929 Legislative Assembly.</p> <p>Powers and duties include operating as a “state board of library examiners.”</p> <div data-bbox="358 884 1321 1480" style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 10px;"> <p>44-203. (4565) County librarian—appointment and removal—qualifications. Upon the establishment of a county free library, the board of county commissioners may appoint a county librarian, who may be removed for cause after a hearing by said board. In counties of the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth classes, no person shall be eligible to the office of county librarian except a person who is graduate of a library school, or has had two years practical experience in a library of not less than three thousand volumes, provided that after the creation and organization of a state board of library examiners no person shall be eligible to the office of county librarian in counties of such class, unless, prior to his appointment, he has received from said board of library examiners a certificate of qualification for the office. Upon the establishment of a county free library in any county of the sixth or seventh class, if no experienced librarian is available, the county superintendent of such county may be the librarian, and may, with the permission of the county commissioners, appoint an assistant or assistants at a salary or salaries to be fixed by the board of county commissioners.</p> <p>History: En. Sec. 3, Ch. 45, L. 1915; amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 137, L. 1917; re-en. Sec. 4565, R. C. M. 1921; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 56, L. 1923; amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 202, L. 1943.</p> <p>Collateral References Counties 63, 64, 74(1). 20 C.J.S. Counties §§ 101, 102, 120.</p> </div> <p>County librarian qualifications include library school degree and expand experience requirements.</p>

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Year	Milestone
1945	<p>Legislative Assembly appropriates \$20,000 for biennium to fund the Montana State Library Extension Commission, A State Librarian is hired and the powers and duties include acting “as a state board of professional standards.”</p> <div data-bbox="358 367 1362 861" style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 10px;"> <p>44-129. (1575.3) Powers and duties of the commission. The work of the commission shall be to give assistance and advice to all libraries in the state and to all communities in the state which may propose to establish libraries, as to the best means of establishing and administering such libraries, or improving established libraries, and aiding in the establishment of traveling libraries; the commission shall act as a state board of professional standards and library examiners and perform all the duties of said board as provided in section 44-203; obtain, each year, from all libraries in the state, reports showing the condition, growth, and development and such other facts and statistics as may be deemed of public interest by the commission; the commission shall make a biennial report to the governor of the state on or before the first day of January covering the work of the commission, and incorporating reports of libraries in the state.</p> <p>History: En. Sec. 3, Ch. 91, L. 1945; amd. Sec. 3, Ch. 55, L. 1961.</p> </div>
1965	<p>Powers and Duties of the Commission updated “To act as a board of professional standards and library examiners and develop standards for public libraries and adopt rules and regulations for the certification of librarians.”</p>
1969	<p>Public Library Standards adopted by the Commission</p> <div data-bbox="358 1129 1252 1572" style="background-color: #f0f0e0; padding: 10px;"> <p>b) Generally, the professional (requiring the training acquired by graduation from a library school accredited by the American Library Association) and library assistant (requiring a broad general education strengthened by courses in librarianship, in-service training, and/or well supervised library experience) staff in a library system should be approximately one-third of total personnel. Supporting staff, including clerical staff, clerical supervisors, and other non-librarian staff (excluding maintenance staff) should be approximately two-thirds. Changes in operational procedures brought about by automation or contractual arrangements may change this ratio.</p> </div>

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Year	Milestone
1990	<p>Montana State Library Commission approved Voluntary Certification Task Force Manual.</p> <p>The goals of the original certification program were to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve library services throughout the state 2. Motivate librarians, staff, and trustees to acquire, maintain and develop their skills through continuing education 3. Recognize individuals who update their knowledge and skills on a continuing basis in order to provide better library services to their patrons 4. Improve the public image of librarians and libraries 5. Provide guidelines for governing boards to use to select and retain personnel
1999	<p>New Public Library Standards Adopted, Certification Manual published and mailed to libraries.</p> <p>Certification became a requirement for directors of the state's smaller public libraries. The certification requirements remained unchanged from the original 1990 program.</p>
2009	<p>Certification Program updated and all public library directors required to be certified in the Library Administrator Track starting in 2010. Graduate degrees in Library Science also qualify applicants for a Library Administration Track certificate.</p>
2017-18	<p>ASPeN launched to provide access to continuing education events and for individuals to track credits toward certification.</p>
2022	<p>ARM 10.102.1160 Personnel sets the expectation that library directors must be certified. Effective July 1, 2022.</p> <p>Continuing Education and Certification Task Force convened to review requirements and make recommendations for updates to the program.</p>
2023	<p>Certification Program updated to clarify goals and modify credit requirements for directors and staff. The optional trustee track remained the same.</p>

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Appendix 2: Website Links

AGENCY WEBSITE msl.mt.gov – Visit the MSL website to explore programs and information about the agency.

ASPeN mslservices.mt.gov/ASPeN – Login to ASPeN to find continuing education events, record your continuing education credits, and submit completed certification tracks.

MSL LEARN mtstatelibrary.moonami.com – Online courses for Montanans served by the Montana State Library.

MSL YOUTUBE CHANNEL youtube.com/@montanastatelibrary – Subscribe to the channel to access meeting and continuing education content from the State Library.

NEWS msl.mt.gov/about/news – Subscribe and access a complete archive of MSL newsletters and bulletins.

PUBLICATIONS msl.mt.gov/about/publications - The Montana State Library produces publications for many audiences including Montana citizens, legislators, and our vested partners. Montana State Library also collects and provides permanent public access to state publications produced by state agencies.

STAFF DIRECTORY directory.mt.gov/govt/state-dir/agency/library – Up-to-date contact information for all employees of the State Library.

Certification and Continuing Education Handbook

Appendix 3: Sample Continuing Education Plan

Employee Name	
Job Title	
Supervisor Name	
Date of Last Performance Evaluation	

Library Goals for Continuing Education

Goal 1
Goal 2
Goal 3

Job Description

Job Skills –
<input type="checkbox"/> Skill
<input type="checkbox"/> Skill
<input type="checkbox"/> Skill
<input type="checkbox"/> Skill
<input type="checkbox"/> Skill
<input type="checkbox"/> Skill

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CE Plan Start Date
CE Plan End Date

CE Plan

CE Category	Title/Description	Online/In-person	Credit Hour Estimate	Date Completed	Cost
Library Administration					
Library Services to the Public					

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CE Category	Title/Description	Online/In-person	Planned Start Date	Date Completed	Cost
Collection Management and Technical Services					
Technology					
Other					

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Appendix 4: Press Release Template

PRESS RELEASE <<Today's date>> For Release: Immediately Contact: <<Library Director, Library Name, email & phone>>

<<Librarian's Name>> Earns Montana State Library Certification

(HELENA) ---The Montana State Library is pleased to announce that <<librarian's name>>, librarian at the <<library name>> Library in <<town>>, has received <<his/her>> certificate from the Montana State Library certification program for library directors, staff, and trustees. The goal of the Montana State Library's certification program is to ensure that Montana's library patrons receive the best possible library service.

<<Insert quote here from library director or trustee related to the value of professional development and the goals of continuing education at the local library. Here is suggested text The <<library name>> actively promotes professional development for staff. This effort includes providing staff with travel support to attend training and encouraging staff to participant in online learning opportunities. This investment is pursuant to the public library standards set by the Montana State Library Commission.>>

"Library services are changing and today's librarians have to be knowledgeable in a wide range of areas – from human resources to online information delivery," said Jennie Stapp, Montana State Librarian. "Additionally, Montana librarians have to work extra hard to provide the best modern library service in our rural state by making innovative use of technology and resource sharing. Our library certification program rewards the efforts of librarians like <<librarian's name>>, to keep their skills up to date."

To receive the Library Certification, <<librarian's name>>, earned more than 60 valid continuing education credits in a four-year period. Certification expires in four years, so librarians must continue to seek professional development to maintain their certification.

"Montana librarians are public servants and this certification program helps them to provide topnotch service to our state's citizens," said Stapp. "Whether a patron needs help looking for work, planning a trip, applying for college scholarships, or just finding a good book for the weekend, our librarians will help them find whatever they need to move forward with their lives."

The Montana State Library (MSL) provides information, resources, and guidance to organizations, communities, and residents of Montana to help them expand their knowledge and empower their decisions. Our leading-edge data and applications help those seeking answers about Montana's government, natural resources, heritage, land ownership, and more while our vital services improve public libraries and provide reading materials to those with disabilities. For more information, visit www.msl.mt.gov.

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Certification and Continuing Education Handbook

Appendix 5: Continuing Education Credit for College Coursework

It is possible to earn credit for college coursework, [excluding MLS/MLIS Degrees](#).

An unofficial transcript can be used to document course completion.

Library Science Courses

Library science college courses completed during a 4-year certification period can be used for CE credits. To be eligible for CE credits college coursework must, for the most part, be library specific.

Both undergraduate and graduate level library science courses can be converted into continuing education credits using the formula below:

Semester Credits

1 semester credit course = 4 continuing education credits

2 semester credit course = 8 continuing education credits

3 semester credit course = 12 continuing education credits

Quarter Credits

1 quarter credit course = 2 continuing education credits

2 quarter credit course = 4 continuing education credits

3 quarter credit course = 6 continuing education credits

Please contact the MSL Continuing Education Coordinator to enter these credits as independent learning events.

Non Library-Specific Courses

Review your plan to complete college coursework with your supervisor or director.

As your employer, they will determine whether CE credits for non library-specific college courses will be acceptable to verify for MSL Continuing Education credit and MSL Certification completion.