Montana State Library Certification Course of Study

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Administrative Rules of Montana

10.102.1160 Personnel

(6) The director is or will be certified by the Montana State Library within the required timeframe mandated by the certification program adopted by the Montana State Library Commission.

(a) The purpose of the certification program is to ensure library directors have the foundational skills necessary to manage a public library that meets standards set forth in ARM Subchapter 10.102.11 Public Library Development.

(b) A course of study will be reviewed by the Commission annually for approval at its final meeting of the state fiscal year.

(c) Continuing education credits issued through the State Library certification program are the only eligible credits that can be applied to certification.

(d) The certification program will be reviewed on a regular schedule with no more than 10 years between reviews.

Adopted December 10, 2025; Effective July 1, 2026.

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FY2027 Course of Study

The Course of Study is a pathway of learning that outlines knowledge librarians need to provide basic library services in Montana. It identifies which courses align with specific topics. It is a required part of the certification process of the State Library.

Topics

- Basic Laws
- Financial Management
- Board, government, and community relations
- Facility Management
- Policy
- Planning
- Library Services
- Personnel Management
- Data and Reporting

Initial Certification

Applicants complete twenty (20) credits within two (2) years of employment from this course of study and catalog.

Note

Applicants may substitute an MLIS/MLS degree earned within the previous five (5) years for the ten (10) credits listed under Policy, Planning, Library Services, Personnel Management, and Data and Reporting.

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Required Courses

Basic Laws (4 credits): Understand state and federal laws that apply to libraries

- MSL Learn Courses
  - Montana Library Law (1 credit)
  - Next Level Montana Library Law (1 credit)
  - Public Library Standards (1 credit)
  - Legal and Operational Issues Facing Montana's Libraries (1 credit)

Financial Management (1 credit): Understand the budget, library finances, and financial reports

- MSL Learn Courses
  - Understanding Local Government Budgeting and Finance (1 credit)

Board, Government, and Community Relations (5 credits): Work with boards, local government officials, community members, and the Montana State Library

- MSL Learn Courses
  - MSL: A Greater State of Knowledge (2025) (1 credit)
  - Connecting with Local Government Officials (1 credit)
  - Board Member Basics (2 credits)
  - Navigating the Elective Roadmap to Library Excellence: Increasing Community Awareness (1 credit)

Facility Management (1 credit): Manage the library facility and ensure community members can safely access and use the building

- MSL Learn Courses
  - Safety Inspections: What to Know and What to Do (.5 credit)
  - Facilities Management for Libraries (.5 credit)

Policy (2 credits): Assist the board with policy development and adoption

- MSL Learn Courses
  - Lawful and Fair: Policy Development for Public Libraries (2 credits)

Planning (1 credit): Work with the board to create a plan for the library

- MSL Learn Courses
  - Written Plans (1 credit)

Library Services (4 credits): Understand the basics of library services and oversee collection management, programming, outreach, information services, and technology.

- WebJunction Courses
  - LiFT: Public Library Fundamentals (1 credit)
  - LiFT: Introduction to Library Collections (1 credit)
  - LiFT: Organizing and Maintaining a Collection (1 credit)
  - LiFT: Introduction to the Library Catalog (1 credit)

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Personnel Management (1 credit): Supervise library staff and volunteers

- MSL Learn Courses
    - Legal Topics: Personnel Questions and Laws (1 credit)

Data and Reporting (1 credit): Data management and reporting

- MSL Learn Courses
    - Patron Privacy and Practical Steps for Data Management in Montana Public Libraries (1 credit)

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Renewal Certification

Applicants complete 60 credits within five (5) years from the catalog approved by the State Library Commission.

Applicants may select a combination of courses across different competencies that best fit individual interests as well as knowledge and skill gaps specific to their position.

To create a personalized continuing education plan, refer to the most current catalog approved by the Montana State Library Commission.

Definitions

Credit – a numerical value given to a course listed in the course catalog. 1 hour is equal to 1 credit; .5-hour increments are allowed.

Course of Study — a plan that lays out the topics and number of credits in each topic that a student must complete to achieve certification. The course of study is reviewed and approved by the Montana State Library Commission annually.

Course Catalog — a list of available courses. The catalog is reviewed and updated continuously to provide learners with relevant courses that align with the course of study.