



MEMO

To: State Library Commission

From: Continuing Education/Certification Committee

Subject: Certification/Continuing Education Review

Date: June 3, 2025

Update from the committee

The committee comprised of Carmen Cuthbertson, McKenna Greg, Tammy Hall, Colet Bartow, Tracy Cook, and Rebekah Kamp met on April 29, 2025. The committee discussed their charge, roles and responsibilities, and ideas for updating the continuing education and certification program.

Here is a summary of key points discussed by the committee:

- Pros and cons of having MSL staff be the sole providers of offering continuing education that qualifies for credit. There was recognition that this might not be feasible, and there would need to be a system for additional providers.
- Topics that would be valuable to board members, directors, and staff. This led to a suggestion to ask library directors for feedback on what board members, staff, and new directors need to know.
- Changes that would be needed if we implemented a system that required pre-approval of topics and providers. We might need to reduce the number of credits. We might need to require a yearly quota to encourage regular continuing education. We might need to drop the categories. We may need to purchase subscriptions to supplement training from MSL staff.
- Next steps include a survey of library directors, more discussion about topics, and more discussion about how to support intermediate to advanced learning once a library board member, director, or staff member has taken the foundational courses.
- Foundational courses discussed by the group include
 - budget
 - finance
 - law (federal and state)
 - open meetings
 - MSL resources provided to libraries
 - managing library materials
 - working with boards and local government
 - facilities management
 - technology
 - programming 101



The committee would like the Commission's thoughts on the following ideas for changes to the program:

- Have a foundational list of coursework for boards, directors, and staff that is pre-approved.
- Have additional courses (pre-approved) that library directors, board members, and staff can take to earn continuing education credit.
- Shift to a new system where courses are pre-approved and only those courses are eligible for credit.
- Have staff present suggested topics, providers, number of credits, and course descriptions to the Commission or a designated committee for approval.

Office of Public Instruction/Board of Public Education Panel

The Board of Public Education and Office of Public Instruction also have certification programs. We have asked representatives to present at the June Commission meeting. We are asking them to talk about their program, process, and roles and responsibilities.

We recommend reviewing the following Administrative Rules of Montana for an introduction to their program:

- [ARM 10.55.714 Professional Development](#) - The Professional Development ARM specifies the standards that professional development opportunities must meet.
- [ARM 10.57.216 Approved Renewal Activity](#) - Approved renewal unit providers must offer activities that are deemed appropriate for professional development of licensees in compliance with ARM 10.55.714 and 10.57.215.
- [ARM 10.57.215 Renewal Requirements](#) - The activities that are eligible for renewal units are professional development activities and college credits that are of a planned and structured experience and an activity that provides exposure to a new idea or skill or an extension of an existing idea or skill.