

Montana State Library Certification Course Catalog - DRAFT

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Feedback Form

Review the contents of this draft course catalog and then [submit comments in this form](#).

This catalog is a preliminary draft and does not include all potential continuing education opportunities.

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 Catalog

This catalog is a comprehensive list of continuing education opportunities aligned with the competencies listed in the State Library Commission's course of study for certification. Continuing education opportunities must appear in the course catalog to be eligible for credits issued toward certification.

Basic Laws Competency: 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)
- MSL Consulting Workshops
 - Laws 101 – a basics course that walks attendees through the open meeting law, code of ethics, powers and duties of library boards, and the library records confidentiality act. (1-2 credits depending on course length)
- MSU Local Government Center
 - Basic board, municipal, and county trainings cover open meeting law, public participation, the code of ethics, the relationship between the Montana constitution, Montana Code Annotated, and laws governing local governments. (1-3 credits depending on course length).

Financial Management Competency: Understand the budget, library finances, and financial reports

- MSL Learn Courses
 - Trustee Essentials: Understanding Local Government Budgeting and Finance (1 credit)
 - Library Mill Levies Webinar (2025) (1 credit)
- MSL Consulting Workshops
 - Managing the Money – contact any of the Statewide Consulting Librarians to arrange an individual or regional training that teaches the basics of governmental accounting and how to read financial reports. (1-3 credits)
- WebJunction Courses
 - Grantseeking for Libraries: Strategies and Tips (1 credit)

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Board, Government, and Community Relations Competency: 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)
 - [Trustee Essentials: Responsibilities](#) (1 credit)
 - [Trustee Essentials: Understanding Local Government and Its Relationship to the Library](#) (1 credit)
 - [Connecting with Local Government Officials: How Libraries Add Value](#) (1 credit)
 - [Connecting with Local Government Officials - Libraries and Literacy](#) (1 credit)
 - [Connecting with Local Government Officials - Better Libraries, Better Achievement, Better Futures](#) (1 credit)
 - [Connecting with Local Government Officials - Do public libraries help mitigate crime?](#) (1 credit)
 - [Legal Topics: Conducting an Executive Session in a Public Meeting](#) (1 credit)
- MSL Consulting Workshops
 - Basic Board Training provided by MSL staff either in person or online. This course focuses on the primary duties of a library board: planning, policies, budget, personnel, community/government relations, and understanding important laws that impact the library. The course also explores the role of the board, director, and local government. (1-4 credits).
- MSU Extension Local Government Center Courses
 - Board trainings hosted on site - new and continuing members of boards will review basic governing information, such as: ethics and nepotism, meeting minutes, open meetings, parliamentary procedure, principles of good governance, the public's right to know and participate, rules of procedure, and more. (3 credits)

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Policy Competency: Assist the board with policy development and adoption

- MSL Learn Courses
 - Lawful and Fair: Policy Development for Public Libraries (2 credits)
 - Legal Topics: Drafting, Enforcing, and Managing Operational Policies (1 credit)
 - Legal Topics: Patron Behavior and Safety Policies (1 credit)
 - Legal Topics: Surveillance and Video Recordings in Public Spaces (1 credit)
 - Legal Topics: Meeting Rooms and the Library as a Public Forum (1 credit)
 - Legal Topics: Children/Minors in the Library (1 credit)
- MSL Consulting Workshops
 - Policy development – a face-to-face or online session led by MSL consulting librarians. This course will cover policies, procedures, best practice for policy development, and a discussion about which policies are most important for libraries to create. (1-3 credits).

Planning Competency: Work with the board to create a plan for the library

- MSL Learn Courses
 - Written Plans (1 credit)
- MSL Consulting Workshops
 - Written plans – a course taught by MSL consulting librarians that covers effective planning, reasons to plan, methods of collecting community input, and ways to make the plan realistic and doable. (1-3 credits depending on content)
- MSU Extension Local Government Center Courses
- WebJunction
 - Turn Strategy into Action with Theory of Change (1 credit)

Facilities Management Competency: 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)
- WebJunction Courses
 - Universal Design at Your Library (1 credit)
 - Accidental Facilities Manager (1 credit)
 - Crisis Communications Planning for Libraries, Archives, and Museums (1 credit)
 - Navigating new building projects (1 credit)

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Library Services Competency: Understand the basics of library services and oversee collection management, programming, outreach, information services, and technology.

- MSL Learn Courses
 - Montana History Portal (1.5 credit)
 - Youth Services Overview (1 credit)
 - Youth Services: Early Childhood (1 credit)
 - Youth Services: School-Age (1 credit)
 - Youth Services: Tween and Teen (1 credit)
 - MontanaLibrary2Go (1 credit)
 - 3 Keys to Collection Development Webinar (1 credit)
 - Children's Collections and Boosting Engagement Webinar (1 credit)
- MSL Consulting Workshops
 - Weeding 101 – a course for staff members that manage library collections. Consultants cover why weeding is important, criteria to consider, and when possible, provide hands on experience with weeding. (1-3 credits depending on course length)
- WebJunction Courses
 - LiFT Series
 - LiFT: Public Library Fundamentals (1 credit)
 - LiFT: The Reference Interview (1 credit)
 - LiFT: Introduction to Library Collections (1 credit)
 - LiFT: Introduction to Collection Policies (1 credit)
 - LiFT: Selection and Acquisitions (1 credit)
 - LiFT: Organizing and Maintaining a Collection (1 credit)
 - LiFT: Collection Assessment (1 credit)
 - LiFT: Weeding the Collection (1 credit)
 - LiFT: Introduction to the Library Catalog (1 credit)
 - LiFT: Subject Headings (1 credit)
 - LiFT: Classification and Call Numbers (1 credit)
 - LiFT: Copy Cataloging (1 credit)
 - AI and Public Libraries: Panel and Discussion (1 credit)
 - Opportunity Out of Adversity: Digital Access in Rural and Small Libraries (1 credit)

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Personnel Management Competency: Supervise library staff and volunteers

- MSL Learn Courses
 - Legal Topics: Personnel Questions and Laws (1 credit)
- MSL Consulting Workshops
 - Personnel management for library boards – this session covers hiring, evaluating, and managing library directors. It explores the role of local government, the board, and director when it comes to personnel. (1-3 credits depending on length of course)
- Associated Employers
 - Human Resources Webinars (1 or more credits depending on length of course)
 - These are offered for a fee of \$155 for 90-day access.
- WebJunction Courses
 - Hiring Well and Getting Your New Employee Off to a Good Start (1 credit)
 - Providing Constructive Employee Feedback (1 credit)
 - Successful Supervising in Libraries of All Sizes Part 1 (1 credit)
 - Successful Supervising in Libraries of All Sizes Part 2 (1 credit)
 - Proactive Planning for Library Staff Transitions (1 credit)
 - Public Library Directors 101 (3 credits)

Data and Reporting Competency: Data management and reporting

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

Continuing Education Pre-approval Process

- Courses may be added to the catalog throughout the year by submitting a proposal to MSL staff to present to the Commission for approval.
 - Proposals will include
 - course title
 - course description
 - competency the course will address
 - desired learning outcomes
 - presenter's credentials
 - name
 - professional biography with experience and/or degree
 - association and/or organization
 - number of credits
 - Cost for MSL (if any)
 - Proposal Form

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Definitions

Continuing education opportunity – online, in person course, training, or workshop designed to change an attendee’s knowledge, skills, or abilities. Also referred to as professional development opportunity.

Continuing education credit – a numerical value given to continuing education opportunities that meet State Library Commission requirements and are added to the course catalog. 1 hour is equal to 1 credit; .5-hour increments are allowed.

Certification – a credential given to an individual that completes the course of study and earns the required number of continuing education credits.

Course of study – a pathway of learning that outlines competencies librarians need to provide basic library services. It identifies which courses align with specific competencies. It is a required part of the certification process of the State Library.

Competency – description of knowledge, skills, or abilities a librarian needs to provide basic library services. Competencies are aligned to the Montana Public Library Standards. The competencies are broad areas of knowledge and skills from which to plan continuing education that meets the requirements of ARM 10.102.1160 (6)(a).

Basic Laws Competency: Understand state and federal laws that apply to libraries

Financial Management Competency: Understand the budget, library finances, and financial reports

Board, Government, and Community Relations Competency: Work with boards, local government officials, community members, and the Montana State Library

Policy Competency: Assist the board with policy development and adoption

Planning Competency: Work with the board to create a plan for the library

Facilities Management Competency: Manage the library facility and ensure community members can safely access and use the building

Library Services Competency: Understand the basics of library services and oversee collection management, programming, outreach, information services, and technology.

Personnel Management Competency: Supervise library staff and volunteers

Data and Reporting Competency: Understand how to manage and report using data

Course catalog – the list of continuing education opportunities aligned with the competencies listed in the State Library Commission’s course of study for certification. Continuing education opportunities must appear in the course catalog to be eligible for credit.