

Montana State Library Certification Policy

Contents

Introduction	1
Administrative Rules of Montana	1
Transition from 2023 Program	2
Montana State Library Certification Policy.....	2
Initial Certification.....	2
Renewal Certificate	2
Earning Credits	3
Adding Classes to the Course Catalog	3
Reconsideration of a Previously Denied Request	3
Special Circumstances	4
Conference Sessions	4
Definitions	4
Appendix: Certification Catalog Proposal Questions and Sample Response.....	5
Required Information.....	5
13. What is the name of the library or organization providing this opportunity?	5

Introduction

As required by law and outlined in the Administrative Rules of Montana, the Montana State Library maintains a certification program and requires certification of Library Directors in Montana.

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.

Montana State Library Certification Policy

Transition from 2023 Program

- Credits earned through June 30, 2026 follow the 2023 policy and remain valid.
- Credits earned after July 1, 2026 must follow the 2026 policy.
- Current certificates remain valid until expiration.

Montana State Library Certification Policy

Directors must be certified to meet requirements in ARM 10.102.1160 Personnel.

Trustees and staff are encouraged to earn certification voluntarily.

Initial Certification

Applicants must complete 20 credits within two years of employment.

The course of study in place at the time certification was initiated will govern completion of the certificate.

Public library directors hired after July 1, 2026, with an MLIS/MLS degree earned within 5 years of hire, may substitute their degree for the initial certification track.

Renewal Certificate

Applicants who have earned an MSL certificate are eligible for a renewal certificate. Applicants must complete 60 credits within 5 years.

Applicants that earn an MLIS/MLS degree after the initial certification has been achieved may substitute their degree for 20 credits towards the renewal certificate.

Montana State Library Certification Policy

Earning Credits

The MSL Commission reviews and updates the course of study annually at its June business meeting. The *course of study* is the plan that lays out the topics and number of credits in each topic that a student must complete to achieve certification.

The Commission reviews the course catalog and potential additions to the catalog at [their regular or special meetings](#). The *catalog* is a list of available courses approved for certification credit. Anyone can suggest a course for inclusion in the catalog by submitting [this form](#). We have included a copy of the form with an example in the appendix.

The Commission encourages applicants to submit their proposals before taking a course. Credit will only be awarded if the course is approved by the Commission. Before submitting a request for credit for a course applicants should consider whether a course fits within the course of study, is opportune, and the timing of the course did not allow for pre-approval.

Adding Classes to the Course Catalog

- Courses may be added to the catalog throughout the year by submitting a proposal to MSL staff using the form provided.
- Suggested courses are reviewed and recommended by MSL staff for approval or denial by the Montana State Library Commission at regular and/or special [Commission meetings](#). Each course fits under a specific topic and counts for a certain number of credits. Students choose courses from the catalog to gain the required credits in each topic.
- Staff and the commission will consider the following questions when reviewing suggested courses. Not all questions have to be answered yes for approval.
 - Do the learning outcomes of the course fall under one or more of the topics outlined in the course of study?
 - Does the presenter have expertise with the subject matter?
 - Do the learning outcomes address the needs of multiple libraries in Montana?
 - Does the learning support the library in meeting the public library standards?

Reconsideration of a Previously Denied Request

- If the Commission chooses to deny credit for a course, the applicant is welcome to work with MSL staff to address Commission concerns.
- If the applicant feels the concerns have been addressed, they may re-apply for credit using the form with the updated information.

Montana State Library Certification Policy

Special Circumstances

Conference Sessions

To the extent possible, MSL staff coordinates with associations that run the most commonly attended conferences to obtain a list of sessions offered. Staff presents the list to the State Library Commission at either a regular meeting or a special meeting prior to the conference.

Approved conference sessions are added to the course catalog.

Librarians are encouraged to submit upcoming conference sessions for credit approval well in advance of a conference using [this form](#).

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.

Montana State Library Certification Policy

Appendix: Certification Catalog Proposal Questions

Required Information

1. Course Title
2. Course Description
3. Competencies
4. Desired Learning Outcomes
5. Presenter Name
6. Presenter Credentials
7. Presenter's Association/Organization
8. Number of Credits
9. Cost
10. Name of Person Submitting Proposal
11. Email and Phone Number of Person Submitting Proposal
12. Are you submitting the proposal on behalf of your library or organization?
13. What is the name of the library or organization providing this opportunity?

DRAFT