

MSL Continuing Education and Certification Task Force (2022)

Response summary for

- What new goal(s) would you recommend for updating the MSL Certification Program?
- If you selected "Change" for any of the items above, what would those changes be?
- What other topics should the Task Force consider? In other words, what haven't we thought about or should be thinking about to improve the MSL Continuing Education and Certification program?

About this document

- Please review this information to inform discussion about the program goals and certification requirements.
- Responses are categorized into five (5) groups
 - [comments related to program goals](#)
 - [certification requirements](#)
 - [ASPeN/Tracking](#)
 - [Continuing Education topics](#)
 - [other general comments](#)
- Responses were not edited from their original submission.

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Program Goals
more recognition and incentive (maybe publishing a yearly list or announcements each month?). Some extra benefit if ALL trustees and/or staff at a library are certified?
I think the true focus should be on meaningful training more than category.
Discarding most of it, as it seems to be more of a recurring set of bureaucratic hoops to be jumped through with little benefit to being a requirement.
Just make it easier.
Making it easier to understand the process and how to participate.
Consider the smaller libraries when you at the State level are making your changes.
"have X% of MT library staff certified
"Make it patron centered, not librarian centered.
better recognition and incentives for certification
More promotion, and bring us right up into link with the Western Council and ALA
We discussed changes in the CE session on Thursday - to keep it robust and meaningful, but not add language that would add hoops to jump through or extra work for MSL staff.
Use other certification programs for ideas, but design MSL's program based on needs and values unique to Montana libraries.
I wouldn't worry about walking in lockstep with other organisations. I'd rather focus on MCA and the legal guidelines that govern libraries in our state. The ALA is not relevant.
No opinion- not sure what other competencies are and how that would affect the current program
I am not sure how to answer this question, but the goal made me think to improve on the CE program by bringing it in line with other programs such as the WC and ALA. I do think the MLA CE program could be improved on even more than how it is set up currently.

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Certification Requirements
"Tracks specific to those not required by PLS to be certified but would still benefit from it. Terms like ""Specials, Academic, Small"" are more tied to MSC language but having served as the representative for these groups in the past it has been expressed to me that they sometimes don't know where they fit in. They still have to take the MSC trainings to use Sirsi, so it might be nice for them to have somewhere to put that training that will demonstrate their investment without the public service requirements that do not apply to them in the same way.
Revising requirements based on employment - a part-time person shouldn't need as many credits as a director
Sometimes I struggle with whether a class is Technology or Technological Services. A good description of that would help.
Some of the training is hard to categorize. It can fit in multiple or doesn't really fit in any category. Maybe a stricter definition of the categories. EX: Public Service or Technology when the class is about both and how they work together.
I have been pleased to hear the discussion of offering certification hours for meaningful participation in state committees, task forces, etc. This is valuable because for some of us we have very limited time away from our libraries, and participation in those meetings means we can't also attend trainings. It is also appropriate because we learn so much and grow as professionals through participation in those meetings.
As one of the participants in the PPDP track pilot, I can't say enough how much I hope this program continues. It has been so much more beneficial and professionally rewarding to me than "checking the boxes" in the standard track. I have been steadily working toward a Certified Genealogist credential from the Board for Certification of Genealogists as a direct result of the PPDP track.
The personalized track should be simple and designed by the employee and Director because they know the position requirements well. Provide a benchmark and let them decide the most effective path.

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Certification Requirements
"Add a track that requires fewer credits and certifies someone for a shorter length of time. Add the ability to extend your certification out to a maximum of 5 years Add higher tiers of certification for more credits or that recognize presenting or being published
I feel like I spend a lot of my time watching webinars that are out dated or do not apply to my job just to get the mandatory credits.
"The availability of trainings for certain categories and how much those categories relate/fit into the job. For example, I am struggling to get the last 2 Technology credits in my current certification. There were hardly any offered at MLA Conference and I am scrounging for ones online. Plus, many technologies crossover into Services to the Public and Collection Development, mudding the waters as to what actually qualifies for Technology.
Also, the relevance of some of these to my job. For example, some, though not all, directors don't purchase books. They have staff to complete that task. So the Collection Development requirement has little meaning."
creating specialization tracks more accessible to participants so they don't feel as if their time is wasted.
Revise requirements based on employment hours; help libraries provide recognition and incentive for all staff to become certified
A degree recognition program as part of the overall recognition for certification.
revising categories to reflect newer learning and library service conditions, or possibly creating different categories or tracks for public, school special library staff
"Different requirements for professional librarians (MLS/MLIS) vs support staff.
adding a Correctional Librarian component
New specializations such as DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion), Youth Services, and Open Educational Resources.
I would like to see a 2nd track for mid-level staff. There is a staff track and an administrator track but nothing that tests the librarian or middle management that I can see.

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Certification Requirements
<p>I would like to see a change in the way continuing ed is approached, as relying on the director does not always work if there is no help or guidance on which way to approach continuing ed. I personally would stay in the public library field if there was a way to grow and learn with proper guidance and support. I have been trying to discover a certification track that will align with my interests and talents.</p>
<p>In my opinion it would be nice if the people that are working on their certification while going to college or another academic profession. Those credits should count towards the certification.</p>
<p>Getting certified was very beneficial during the first three years of my new Library Director position. I gained knowledge in many different areas which enabled me to do a better job as director. However, as we have a small library, I am slacking on getting CE's. I am not interested in most of the available webinars and am not willing to pay for any unless I thought the information learned would positively impact our county library's function. Once certified, I think the amount of CE's could be reduced when working on the 2nd, 3rd...certification.</p>
<p>Allow for classes taken for credit to be accepted without such a short limit of one year. Maybe that has changed, and I missed the memo ;), most classes should be relevant 3-5 years. Maybe not for technology but most other subjects. As much as I don't want to add more work for Directors, it is good that they are required to be certified. I think they should be held to a higher standard and more level of coursework. Like maybe specific only to directors, vs library support staff. It's important for library staff to work towards a goal for taking classes, and it's great that they can get certified, too. However, there should be a clearer distinction between director certification and library support staff certification. More classes on HR (I know I keep stressing this), and cataloging, like for beginners or people who don't do it often. I wish the technology classes were a little more designed for public libraries specifically. I know I have more thoughts on this, but these are the things that stand out. I will say that I like how we have 4 years to plan and prepare for certification. if it was every year I'd probably scramble! I would say at least 2 years but no less.</p>
<p>Make certification mandatory for all staff and trustees, not just directors.</p>

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Certification Requirements
One of my biggest issue was not getting credit for trainings that were recorded earlier than allowed. Jo Flick would not give credit to me or staff for certain trainings. I think I am best suited to decide if a training is valuable still for myself and my staff.
I think we need to bring the certification more into line with ALA and have it more accessible to especially support staff.
Currently the 6 30-minute videos six times per year is sufficient. All the board members have full time jobs. They are doing the best they can.

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ASPeN/Tracking
I know we have a new website but it ins't streamlined and user friendly. Trustee's don't use it often and are often overwhelmed not being able to find their information. I think the new design is even more difficult because it takes you right back to ASpeN but you need to login through the new site. They need a pretty basic straight forward site.
"I have had some problems with the Aspen website. I don't think this is what you are mainly considering, but I would like you to know.
On the old website, there was a delete button by each entry in case you made a mistake. Now you have to open a ticket and have someone remove the mistake.
When registering an event I took, it would help if there was a place to put the date I took the class, as well as the date the class was recorded.
Better website navigation
A better tracker for CE credits."
Simplify. Forget about the date a webinar was recorded. It may be the most up-to-date on available. For example, I assign new cataloging staff to take the cataloging winter webinar series. Those are the most up-tp-date cataloging trainings MSL has on the site so those must count. Don't bother making staff put in the date of the webinar, they can enter the watched date. All my staff complain that entering training into ASPEN is difficult and each time they need my help.
It isn't a new goal but I really like being able to track the Trustee CE hours. It would be really helpful for directors to be able to track that information.
I do not find ASPEN easy to work with.
Make the system more user friendly. I cannot ever sign in as each time it does not recognize me, so therefore I continually lose all of the tracking for CE credits I have done - hence why I am not certified. Or I have to continually contact support, and that becomes annoying to even get in - hence why I gave up as well.
Increase ease of use.
Make it more user friendly. The whole system is clunky and hard to navigate as well as it is difficult to even track CE credits.

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CE Offerings/Topics
having correctional library trainings
More energy should be spent training employees in maintaining boundaries and personal safety. More training for administrators who are insulated from the front-line issues which are the most physically dangerous. More training for trustees should be REQUIRED.
There is very little advanced training available. The current offerings are great for anyone new to the library world, but are very basic and lacking for anyone with years of experience.
The one year restriction on classes has made things really difficult. I know some things are timely, but many classes are still relevant 2 or 3 years later.
"It can be a challenge to come across Technology and CM&TS credits, and not because I am not interested in those aspects of my job.
My trustees are really trying to take the 3-hour training requirement from the new Standards seriously. The approach that is working best for them is to incorporate a 10-20 minute CE into each board meeting. Unfortunately since training that short doesn't count in the traditional certification, there aren't a lot of opportunities available once we exhaust the Short Takes for Trustees from United for Libraries. My trustees aren't worried about tracking their hours, just wanting to have options for brief in-board training. I'd love to see the State Library develop more of that content available to watch on-demand on Moodle or Vimeo."
things on banned book week, dealing with difficult customers, what is happening in the world of libraries nationally as well as locally,
I would love to see more Technology options available as it is required for certification and rarely offered. I currently have over the amount of credits needed to be recertified but am lacking in the technology section , though I have been taking every webinar or training that has been available in that category.
Workplace safety
I would like to see more advanced training, and more training opportunities in general.

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CE Offerings/Topics
Its a great program. More varied and practical content would be wonderful. Sometimes my staff have gotten nearly all of their credits but cannot finish because there are no classes offered in the remaining areas they need to satisfy.
Ensure most CE offered through MSL is meeting practical needs for Montana Libraries to help improve daily service to our communities and not simply following national trends that may not apply or may quickly become dated.
"Ensure CE opportunities offered by or through the State Library reflect the new standard of 3 hours of CE for Library Boards.
Ensure ample opportunities exist for the harder-to-come-by CE areas (Technology and Collection Management & Technical Services).
Recognize that in person and virtual CE opportunities are critical to allow participation for more directors, staff, and trustees. In person training needs to be offered in all geographic areas of Montana."
The hardest credits for most of us to fulfill are the technology and collection management. I think it would be helpful to have more opportunities for credits in those categories.
That Directors get training on bullying in the workplace.
Help guide the participants with "tracks" with core and elective components so that they can more easily move through a topic and develop a deep understanding of an area.

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CE Offerings/Topics

Come on, make it easier and simplify so I don't have to hand hold. Repeat: Realize many libraries don't have the budget or time to send staff to trainings so need to allow a wide variety of webinars, and ones that may not have been recorded recently may still be very valuable. Always, always make digital versions available after the fact since when they are live there might not be staff coverage. Staff need to be able to watch later. The new YouTube channel does not have many videos. Will the cataloging ones be added there? It would be nice if there was one place to go for all the training videos. Not sure if YouTube allows you to put links to trainings offered by others. Maybe just add MSL and MLA trainings to <https://msl.mt.gov/libraries/learning/certification> and a few other so the on-demand. If I needed to send a staff member to a computer class that should also count. We spend a lot of time training new employees. I trained someone for a day and so have other people on my staff. It seems to me that internal training should count. If I train someone and then they are able to get a better job at MSL or another library because we trained them that seems pretty valuable.

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Other
Some of the folks in these groups are advocates for the MSL and finding more ways to keep them engaged with the work we do could help grow our community of support. It is extremely important to help our publics meet their standards but finding new ways to include other types of libraries might be a nice consideration down the road. "
I don't usually attend live, but watch the vimeo, etc., later. In this process, I scroll through the event calendar to find a class. If I click on a class and decide not to take it, I don't go back where I was, but to the top and have to start all over again.
Thanks for listening.
Have no idea.
Don't know the program well enough to judge that...
Not sure right now, I would be interested in knowing what they are thinking about doing and what changes are proposed.
I'll be thinking on this.
I find the MSL CP website maddening.
Make the MSL website easier to navigate. There are a lot of extra steps in just getting to the CE participation track, when it should only involve one login
Getting trustees to see the need to learn
Encourage librarians to see their own libraries as a unique expression of the local area they serve. In a world of globalisation, anonymity, and increasing online communications, a library should be a place with lots of opportunities for in-person connection. While a lot of online tools work really well for libraries, one-on-one communication should be the gold standard for all library services. No phone trees, voicemail loops, and empty desks, please!"
Measures for change are difficult to answer because I'm not familiar with any other system.
I think improvements can be made across every one of these options, and they probably will be once the Moodle is up and running!
What kind of promotions are going on other than on the blog or off the Montana State Library website?
I think an updated program would be a benefit to me in my role.
I don't know enough about it! Therefore, I think it needs increased promotion.