

Certification: What is it, Who needs it, and How to get it

What is certification and why does it exist?

Maryland law (COMAR Title 13A.05.04.02) requires individuals working in public libraries whose job classifications fall under one of three categories: library director, librarian, or library associate, to maintain certification within their profession in order to be eligible for the Maryland state retirement system. It is a process of professional development that requires eligible employees to earn 90 contact hours of continuing education every 5 years.

Who has to be certified?

Individuals working in positions classified as director or librarian, and are: (1) employed by a county public library and (2) enrolled in the state retirement system, are required to have a Public Library Director Certificate or a Professional Public Librarian Certificate respectively. These individuals must have a master's degree from an American Library Association (ALA) accredited library science program.

Library associates who are (1) employed by a county public library and (2) enrolled in the state retirement system, are required to have Library Associate Certificate. These individuals must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and must complete the Library Associate Training Institute (LATI) within 2 years of initial employment.

How to maintain certification?

You should always consult with your staff development coordinator if you're not sure if an event you want to attend is CEU-worthy. Your Staff Development Coordinators are:

- Allegany County: Jennifer Spriggs
- Garrett County: Cathy Ashby
- Washington County: Kathleen O'Connell
- Western MD Regional: Julie Zamostny

Julie Zamostny is also available to answer your questions regardless of which county you're in but copies of your CEU forms should always be sent to your specific staff development coordinator and your supervisor.

Examples of ways to earn Contact Hours:

- SkillSoft courses – all courses have been pre-approved by the MD State Department of Education
- Attending a seminar or workshop that is related to your job responsibilities
Statewide Training Calendar is here: <http://bit.ly/LearningCalendar>
- Participating in an e-learning course (like a webinar, etc.)
- Serving on the Great Books Committee or the Blue Crab Award Committee
- Completing a college course that is related to your job responsibilities

References:

Librarians and Library Directors: <http://www.maplaonline.org/DLDS/adobe/certguide.pdf>

Library Associates: <http://www.maplaonline.org/DLDS/adobe/edtrain.pdf>