



South Dakota Voluntary Certification Program Guidelines

Last updated September 2026

The South Dakota State Library (SDSL) oversees a voluntary certification program for public and academic library directors and staff. This program aims to help library personnel acquire, maintain, and develop skills through continuing education, improving library services for their communities. By participating in this program, the State Library acknowledges library directors and staff who are committed to continuous professional development. Having a certified director is one of the Essential Standards for South Dakota public libraries under the SDSL's library accreditation program.

Certification is valid for three years. To renew at the same level, participants must complete 30 contact hours of continuing education during the three-year period prior to renewal. It is the applicant's responsibility to save documentation of their continuing education activities; acceptable activities and required documentation are explained on page 4.

New and renewal applications are accepted year-round. Applicants will be notified the month after their materials are received. Certificates are mailed to the applicant's library and remain valid for three years from the award date.

Certification Requirements for Library Directors

Certification Requirements	Documents Required
Grade 1	
Master's degree in library science from an ALA-accredited program, or	Master of Library Science graduate diploma or transcripts
Master's degree in a related field approved by the SDSL <i>plus</i> five years of library experience, or	Master's diploma or transcripts and documentation of five years of library experience
Master's degree in a related field approved by the SDSL <i>plus</i> 30 hours of library-related continuing education (CE) in the past three years*	Master's diploma or transcripts and documentation of 30 hours of qualifying CE activities*
Grade 2	
Bachelor's degree with at least 18 credit hours of library coursework from a college or university such as a minor in library science, or	Bachelor's transcripts showing at least 18 credit hours of library coursework
Bachelor's degree <i>plus</i> 30 hours of SDSL-approved library-related continuing education in the past three years*	Bachelor's diploma or transcripts and documentation of 30 hours of qualifying CE activities*
Grade 3	
Associate degree with at least 18 credit hours of library coursework from a college or university, or	Associate degree transcripts showing at least 18 credit hours of library coursework
High school diploma or GED <i>plus</i> at least five years of library experience, or	HS diploma or GED certificate, plus documentation five years library experience
High school diploma or GED <i>plus</i> 30 hours of SDSL-approved library-related continuing education in the past three years*	HS diploma or GED certificate, plus documentation of 30 hours of qualifying CE activities*

*Guidelines for CE hours option are the same as for Certification Renewal, see page 4 for details.

Note that to meet the standards for voluntary library accreditation, directors must be certified at a level that meets or exceeds the required certification grade based on the population served by the library.

South Dakota Public Library Standards	
Required Certification Grade Levels for Library Directors	
Population Served	Certification Grade Levels
10,000 +	1
5,000 – 9,999	2
1 – 4,999	3

Certification Requirements for Library Staff (Non-Director)

Certification Requirements	Documents Required
Grade 1	
Master's degree in library science from an ALA-accredited program, or	Master of Library Science graduate diploma or transcripts
Bachelor's degree <i>plus</i> five years' library experience, or	Bachelor's diploma or transcripts and documentation of five years of library experience
Bachelor's degree with at least 18 credit hours of library coursework from a college or university such as a minor in library science, or	Bachelor's transcripts showing at least 18 credit hours of library coursework
Bachelor's degree <i>plus</i> 30 hours of SDSL-approved library-related continuing education in the past three years*	Bachelor's diploma or transcripts and documentation of 30 hours of qualifying CE activities*
Grade 2	
Associate degree <i>plus</i> five years' library experience, or	Associate diploma or transcripts and documentation of five years of library experience
Associate degree with at least 18 credit hours of library coursework from a college or university, or	Associate diploma or transcripts showing at least 18 credit hours of library coursework
Associate degree <i>plus</i> 30 hours of SDSL-approved library-related continuing education in the past three years*	Associate diploma or transcripts and documentation of 30 hours of qualifying CE activities*
Grade 3	
High school diploma or GED certificate <i>plus</i> a minimum of 15 hours of SDSL-approved library-related continuing education in the past three years*	High school diploma or GED certification documentation of 15 hours of qualifying CE activities*

*Guidelines for CE hours option are the same as for Certification Renewal, see page 4 for details.

Certification Renewal

Certificates are valid for three years. To renew certification, 30 continuing education contact hours (CECH) are required within this period.

Acceptable Activities and Required Documentation

The following activities are eligible for CECH credit. Please submit the appropriate documentation with your renewal application:

Training sessions sponsored by SDSL, SDLA, or other recognized library organizations, including online classes or webinars (live or archived).

Documentation: Certificate of completion.

Library, technology, or education conferences hosted by organizations such as SDLA, MPLA, ARSL, PLA, ALA, Internet Librarian, Computers in Libraries, or TIE.

Documentation: Certificate of attendance. If unavailable, submit the conference schedule with the sessions you attended clearly marked.

Library science courses taken through an accredited college or university.

Credit: 1 semester hour = 15 contact hours.

Documentation: Official or unofficial transcript showing completed coursework.

Other workshops, seminars, or conferences not listed above but relevant to library services.

Requirement: Must be pre-approved by the South Dakota State Library.

Documentation: Completed [Contact Hours Approval Form](#).

Submission Guidelines

Submit documentation totaling no more than 30 contact hours.

Ensure all documentation clearly indicates the date, duration, and content of the activity.

*If you are renewing a teaching certificate, contact the SD Department of Education

<http://doe.sd.gov/certification/>

Document Submission

Documents should be submitted via email to Certification Committee Chair:

Shawn.Behrends@state.sd.us

Attach the application form and scanned copies of required documents.