
SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS

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INTRODUCTION

South Dakota Public Library Standards is a self-evaluation tool. The purpose of the voluntary certification and accreditation program for public libraries and librarians in South Dakota is to encourage the ongoing development of quality library service in the state. See [Appendix D](#) for a list of basic services a library should strive for. The SD Public Library Standards are intended to:

- Provide a tool to assess the quality of library service
- Identify areas needing improvement
- Aid libraries in gaining maximum community support

The manual is divided into three sections by level of accreditation. Each section is then divided into the following categories:

- Governance
- Administration
- Access
- Collections and Resources
- Funding
- Staffing
- Technology
- Public Relations

Each standard is presented as a statement, allowing the library to easily determine whether it meets or does not meet the criteria. There are three levels of accreditation:

ESSENTIAL – the minimum which should be available to all

ENHANCED – an expansion of services beyond the basic

EXEMPLARY – the highest level of service

To be accredited at the Essential level a library must meet all Essential Standards.

To be accredited at the Enhanced level a library must meet all Essential standards and all but two Enhanced standards. The two Enhanced standards that a library selects as exemptions cannot be in the same category. Trustee training (#39) and a technology plan (#55) are required.

To be accredited at the Exemplary level a library must meet all Essential standards, all Enhanced standards, and all but two Exemplary standards. The two Exemplary standards that a library selects as exemptions cannot be in the same category. Trustee training (#64) and a long-range plan (#65) are required.

SDSL's Library Development staff is prepared to assist public libraries in using this manual to its full potential and will be able to answer any questions you may have regarding the new standards.

Appendices, checklists, and useful references are also included.

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTARY PUBLIC LIBRARY ACCREDITATION

This document is for your use as you work on the Voluntary Standards for Accreditation. You may print out this document for your own records.

The application will be accessed through your library account on sd.countingopinions.com opening in June of each year. Only online applications will be accepted.

Applications are accepted June through the third Friday of August of any given year. Specific dates will be announced via the public library listserv.

The South Dakota State Library Accreditation Committee will review all applications.

LIBRARY HOURS GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Public libraries are expected to offer a minimum number of service hours based on population to ensure equitable access to resources and services. Including evening and weekend hours allows working individuals, students, and families to use the library outside of traditional daytime hours.

HOURS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

POPULATION SERVED	MINIMUM	DESIRABLE
0-3,499	15	25-40
3,500-9,999	30	40-50
10,000-24,999	40	50-60
Over 25,000	50	60+

Many libraries exceed the minimum hours because the community, Board of Trustees, and the library director recognize that the number of hours of public service is directly related to greater use by the public.

Evening hours definition: where “evening hours” are referenced, the library must be open at least one day per week until 7 pm or later.

If a library’s accreditation is hindered by the public service hours standard, the library board may submit a formal written request for a waiver to the State Librarian. The request should detail the following points:

- The hardship imposed by maintaining evening or Saturday hours, particularly for a single-staff library.
- The lack of public usage during those specific hours.
- The library's overall strong performance on other accreditation standards.

ESSENTIAL LEVEL

To be accredited at the Essential level, a library must meet ALL the following:

Governance

- __ 1. The library provides free access to tax-supported public library services to the residents of the political subdivisions which supply the library's tax support. These services shall include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Free loan of print and non-print materials from the local circulation collection
 - b. General reference and information services
 - c. Access to other library collections via interlibrary loan
 - d. Access to a computer with Internet access and a printer
- __ 2. The library is legally established and operates in accordance with Chapter 14 of the South Dakota Codified Laws. Send a copy of your city or county ordinance with the issue date. (If you have done this in the past, please make a note of when your library included this information. This will be for renewals.)
- __ 3. A legally appointed or selected Board of Trustees governs the operation of the library. Required by law 14-2-35
- __ 4. The library's Board of Trustees assists the library director in preparing and adopting an annual budget and may accept gifts and donations for library purposes. Required by law 14-2-40 #3 and #4, and 14-2-41 #1
- __ 5. The library's Board of Trustees appoints the library director and delegates active management of the library to the library director. Required by law 14-2-40 #1
- __ 6. The library's Board of Trustees has written bylaws which outline its purpose and its operational procedures. Required by law 14-2-40 #2
- __ 7. The library's Board of Trustees with the library director develops, studies, evaluates and adopts a written policy for operating the library. Required by law 14-2-40 #2
Minimally the policies need to include:
 - a. Circulation
 - b. Collection development
 - c. Confidentiality of library records
 - d. Computer/Internet use
- __ 8. The library's Board of Trustees meets regularly and not less than once each quarter with the library director in attendance. These meetings are held at a time and in a physically accessible location convenient for the board members and the community and in compliance with state law on open meetings, the Sunshine Laws, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Required by law 14-2-40 #5
- __ 9. The library submits the Annual Report of South Dakota Libraries to the South Dakota State Library. Required by law 14-2-40 #6
- __ 10. Library board members are required to complete a minimum of 15 hours of continuing education every three years, focusing on topics that enhance their effectiveness in their roles. Documentation required: CE certificates or other appropriate proof of activities that trustees have completed.
 - a. No single board member can fulfill all 15 hours.

- b. All 15 hours can be completed online. Online courses must be pre-approved by the SDSL accreditation committee and archived for review by the committee at the time of application.
- c. Libraries are responsible for maintaining accurate records of their collective board CE hours, including details of events and dates.
- d. Continuing education hours earned by the library director cannot be included.

Administration

- _ 11. The library director prepares current library financial and statistical reports for review at each meeting of the library's Board of Trustees. Required by law 14-2-42 #2
- _ 12. The library director is responsible for administration of personnel, consistent with local personnel policies.
- _ 13. The library director is responsible for developing library operating procedures.

Funding

- _ 14. The library is primarily supported on a permanent basis by funds from the city, county and/or other political subdivision(s). Grants, donations and other revenue sources supplement, but do not supplant, local tax support. Required by law 14-2-27 #4
- _ 15. The library's Board of Trustees with the library director develops an annual budget based on the library's plan and presents the budget to their funding authorities. Required by law 14-2-40 #3

Staffing

- _ 16. The library has a permanent, paid director who is or will be within two years of hire, certified at the required level, or who is actively enrolled in a program leading to the required certification. (See [Appendix A.](#)) The director's certification must be kept active through renewal every three years.
- _ 17. Paid library staff are present during all hours when the library is open. Unpaid volunteers may be used as substitutes during occasional absences of paid staff for vacation, sick leave and attendance at continuing education events.
- _ 18. The library follows generally accepted employment practices and procedures that ensure equitable treatment of all employees and comply with local, state, and federal employment laws.
- _ 19. The librarian shall appoint such staff as are necessary to operate the public library within its budgetary limitations. Library employees shall receive any employee benefits provided all other employees of the local governmental unit and shall be compensated at rates determined by the governing body's compensation schedule. If no such schedule exists, the salary shall be set by the library board. Required by law 14-2-42 #3

Access

- _ 20. All in-house library services are available to all individuals when the library is open.
- _ 21. The library maintains fixed and clearly posted hours. It operates for at least 15 hours each week, including evening or weekend times. Public service hours are determined based on the availability of users and potential users. (See [page 3.](#))

- 22. The library possesses its own telephone line, and the number is publicly accessible through various channels such as the website, signage, newspapers, and telephone directories.
- 23. The library building, if constructed, occupied, or remodeled since January 26, 1992, meets the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If the building was constructed, occupied and last remodeled prior to January 26, 1992, access to library programs and services for persons with disabilities is provided by meeting the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 or through alternate methods such as bookmobiles, home delivery, staff aides or other methods which make the programs and services of the library readily accessible.
- 24. Adequate and convenient parking is available for the library's patrons and staff.
- 25. The exterior of the building is well lit and identified with signs clearly visible from the street.
- 26. The library's facility is safe for the public and staff.

Collections and resources

- 27. The library's Board of Trustees with the library director develops an annual materials budget within the library's budget. The funds allocated are designated for purchasing materials in a variety of formats and for accessing electronic resources based on the library's collection development policy.
- 28. The library uses interlibrary loan to supplement, but not supplant, local collection development.
- 29. Materials are purchased at regular intervals throughout the year to ensure a steady flow of new materials for the public.
- 30. The library's collection is evaluated throughout the course of a five-year cycle to determine which materials to retain, replace, or withdraw.

Technology

- 31. The library provides Internet access and personal computing applications to patrons free of charge. Access to a printer is also available.
- 32. The library provides access to online resources, including those offered by the South Dakota State Library.
- 33. Library computers are maintained and updated.

Public Relations

- 34. The library recognizes all contributions to the library with personal letters, plaques, or other appropriate means.
- 35. Library staff, volunteers, and board members are knowledgeable about library services and versed in promoting the library within the community.

ENHANCED LEVEL

To be accredited at the Enhanced level, a library must meet ALL Essential standards and all but two Enhanced standards. The two Enhanced standards that a library selects as exemptions cannot be in the same category. Trustee training (#39) and a technology plan (#55) are required.

Governance

- _ 36. The library's Board of Trustees reviews the bylaws at least once every three years. Documentation required: Copy of the minutes from the board meeting where the review was conducted.
- _ 37. All policies are reviewed at least every three years and made available for public inspection. Documentation required: Copy of the minutes from the board meeting where the review took place or a link to the policies on the library's website.
- _ 38. Members of the Board of Trustees are encouraged to take advantage of additional training opportunities and are kept informed of upcoming library-related continuing education.
- _ 39. Library board members are required to complete a minimum of 30 hours of continuing education every three years, focusing on topics that enhance their effectiveness in their roles. Documentation required: CE certificates or other appropriate proof of activities that trustees have completed.
 - a. No single board member can fulfill all 30 hours.
 - b. Up to 20 hours can be completed online. Online courses must be pre-approved by the SDSL accreditation committee and archived for review by the committee at the time of application.
 - c. Libraries are responsible for maintaining accurate records of their collective board CE hours, including details of events and dates.
 - d. Continuing education hours earned by the library director cannot be included.

Administration:

- _ 40. Registration records shall be updated at least every three years.
- _ 41. The library director is responsible for ensuring communication between the library and its various constituency groups including the Board of Trustees, funding officials, patrons and staff.
- _ 42. The library director keeps the library's Board of Trustees informed of library services and programs.
- _ 43. The library evaluates one program each year based on the outcomes it achieves. Documentation required: Three evaluations over the three-year renewal cycle. (See [Appendix B](#) for an example evaluation.)
- _ 44. The Library Director is responsible for public relations between the library and community. This may be done through personal appearances, memberships in community organizations, press releases, newspaper columns or newsletters, websites, etc.

Funding

- _ 45. The library aims to obtain fair reimbursement for services provided to individuals who

do not live in the political subdivisions that fund the library. These fees are set at a rate at least equal to the per capita income from the political subdivision(s) that provide the primary tax support for the library. Documentation required: Copy of city or county board minutes where the topic was discussed.

Staffing:

- _ 46. There are library staff members who are computer literate, able to use email, and trained to use and assist the public in using available electronic materials and sources.
- _ 47. The library director is active in community and library organizations.

Access

- _ 48. The library has an automated catalog of its holdings in an area easily accessible to staff and patrons. The library catalogs and organizes its collection according to standard cataloging and classification systems and procedures. Automated records comply with the machine-readable catalog (MARC) format.
- _ 49. Directional signs and instructions for using the collections, the card catalog/online catalog, and other library services are prominently displayed throughout the library.
- _ 50. A book return is provided for returning library materials when the library is closed.
- _ 51. The library maintains an updated website that provides public service hours, phone numbers, services, access to the library's electronic resources, and other essential details. Documentation required: URL of the library's website.

Collections and resources

- _ 52. The library makes available the local county and/or regional newspaper.
- _ 53. The library uses at least one professionally recognized review source as a selection tool. Documentation required: List the title of at least one review source.
- _ 54. The library's Board of Trustees adopts a collection development policy which includes the selection criteria for electronic resources. Documentation required: Copy of the collection development policy or link to the policy on the library's website.

Technology

- _ 55. The library has a technology plan, adopted by the Library Board and evaluated every three years. (See [Appendix C.](#)) This plan includes a timeline and a proposed annual budget for technology improvements. Documentation required: Copy of the technology plan including date of last review or the board meeting minutes where it was reviewed.
- _ 56. The library offers free wireless internet.
- _ 57. The library participates in online statewide interlibrary loan service.

Public Relations

- _ 58. The library maintains a list of contacts for local schools, community organizations, and elected officials and communicates regularly with these entities.
- _ 59. The library promotes its services and events through various channels, such as its website, newsletters, social media, mailings, and printed materials.

- _ 60. The library actively participates in local events such as parades, winter festivals, Art in the Park, and fairs.
- _ 61. The library maintains a list of local media contacts and regularly sends them information about library events, programs, and services.

EXEMPLARY LEVEL

To be accredited at the Exemplary level, a library must meet ALL Essential standards, ALL Enhanced standards, and all but two Exemplary standards. The two Exemplary standards that a library selects as exemptions cannot be in the same category. Trustee training (#64) and a long-range plan (#65) are required.

Governance

- _ 62. The library's Board of Trustees ensures an annual performance evaluation of the library director is conducted, either directly or via the governing body. Required documentation: Copy of minutes from the Board meeting where the evaluation was discussed or date of most recent evaluation.
- _ 63. At least one member of the Library Board must participate in a library education event each year. This can be either an in-person or online event. The library supports this continuing education by covering expenses such as workshop registration and travel costs.
- _ 64. Library board members are required to complete a minimum of 45 hours of continuing education every three years, focusing on topics that enhance their effectiveness in their roles. Documentation required: CE certificates or other appropriate proof of activities that trustees have completed.
 - a. No single board member can fulfill all 45 hours.
 - b. Up to 30 hours can be completed online. Online courses must be pre-approved by the SDSL accreditation committee and archived for review by the committee at the time of application.
 - c. Libraries are responsible for maintaining accurate records of their collective board CE hours, including details of events and dates.
 - d. Continuing education hours earned by the library director cannot be included.

Administration

- _ 65. The library's Board of Trustees and director have developed a long-range plan, which includes a mission statement, goals, and specific annual actions. The library's Board of Trustees reviews or updates the plan annually. Required documentation: Copy of the plan or link to the plan on the library website.
- _ 66. The library director keeps the library's Board of Trustees informed of national issues facing libraries.
- _ 67. The library conducts annual evaluations of one teen program, one adult program, and one children's program, focusing on the outcomes achieved. (See [Appendix B](#) for an example.) Copies of these evaluations are submitted with the accreditation application. Required documentation: Copies of nine evaluations over the three-year renewal cycle.

Funding

- _ 68. The library actively seeks funding from non-government sources for special programs and services, such as grants, gifts, foundations, and Friends of the Library.

Staffing

- _ 69. Employee performance is evaluated annually.
- _ 70. Written job descriptions for each position including a list of duties and experience requirements are available for review.
- _ 71. The library assigns staff members to specific service areas, such as children's services, adult services, reference, and technical services.

Access

- _ 72. The library provides public meeting spaces for its own programs as well as for other community groups.

Technology

- _ 73. Library subscribes to online resources appropriate to its community and promotes the use of online resources on their website and within the library.
- _ 74. Library offers training and/or classes to patrons in dealing with computer software and online resources, as well as other technology-related skills and issues. Documentation required: List titles and date of classes.
- _ 75. Library website offers added features such as access to e-materials, social networking, or other types of interactive content.

Public Relations

- _ 76. The library has and promotes a Friends of the Library group or other organized volunteer group.
- _ 77. The library maintains and regularly updates a comprehensive marketing and public relations plan. Required documentation: Copy of the plan or a link to it on the library's website.
- _ 78. The library has a logo and/or slogan that is used on signage and promotional materials.
- _ 79. The library conducts regular surveys to gauge community satisfaction and the effectiveness of its marketing strategies. Documentation required: Copy of the survey or minutes from board meetings discussing the results.
- _ 80. The library actively participates in state and nationally organized programs and events, such as National Library Week, Teen Read Week, Banned Books Week, Children's Book Week, Teen Tech Week, and Prairie Pasque/Prairie Bud.

APPENDIX A

CERTIFICATION LEVELS FOR LIBRARY DIRECTORS

Required Certification Grade Levels for Library Directors

Population Served	Certification Grade Levels
10,000+	Grade 1
5,000-9,999	Grade 2 or higher
1-4,999	Grade 3 or higher

Library director MUST be certified at the required level:

- Grade 1: Master's degree in library science from an ALA-accredited program,
-or-
Master's degree in a related field approved by the SDSL plus five years of library experience,
-or-
Master's degree in a related field approved by the SDSL plus 30 hours of library-related continuing education (CE) in the past three years.
- 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 degree plus 30 hours of SDSL-approved library-related continuing education in the past three years.
- Grade 3: Associate degree with at least 18 credit hours of library coursework from a college or university,
-or-
High school diploma or GED plus at least five years of library experience,
-or-
High school diploma or GED plus 30 hours of SDSL-approved library-related continuing education in the past three years.
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APPENDIX B

SAMPLE PROGRAM EVALUATION

Evaluation of a Children's Program

July 19, 2022

Archeology Summer Reading event

Goal: To facilitate a fun and engaging program about archeology and introduce children and families to the great resource we have in the Archeology Center in South Dakota. To have fun learning about archeology tools and digging for "buried treasure".

Time: 1:00PM

Attendance: We had very good attendance for this program, with 20 children and 11 adults.

Age Group: This program was targeted to ages 6-12, but we also had quite a few families bring children younger than this, which is common at our summer programs. Luckily, Katie from the Archeology Center did a great job accommodating for all ages in attendance and tying it all in with the theme of "Oceans of Possibilities".

Activities:

- Talked about different kinds of minerals, fossils, and the tools that archeologists use to find these things.
- Identified minerals and fossils.
- Created our own fossil using supplies provided by the Archeology Center.
- Dug for buried treasure.

Were expected goals met?

I feel this program went over really well. The presenter was engaging, and her craft was right on theme. The kids learned about what kinds of fossils are found, not only around the world, but right here in South Dakota. She brought some great samples that the kids were able to pass around and touch. Katie's craft of designing your own fossil was really fun and the kids seemed to really enjoy it.

We did get to go outside for this activity. We made mini treasure digs for all of the kids to enjoy. This activity was to show some of the tools that an archeologist uses, like brushes and picks, and how to use them in the field. Everyone enjoyed digging the little jewels and gold coins out of their hardened mixture of sand and plaster of Paris.

I would definitely consider doing this program again in the future.

APPENDIX C

LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY PLANS

Having a technology plan for your library is critical for receiving technology-related funding and keeping your library's technology up to date. A plan will provide a clear roadmap for current and future plans for the library.

A technology plan outlines a library's goals and strategies for utilizing technology to achieve its overall mission, strategic goals, and objectives. It helps in identifying how technology can support and enhance the library's services and functions. A thorough technology plan includes a timeline for updating technology resources and allocating funds for scheduled improvements. It should also include provisions for staff to acquire the necessary skills to use and support the library's technology investments.

The State Library provides a guidance and resources for building a technology plan on the SDSL Resources Guides [Technology Planning Guide](https://libguides.library.sd.gov/services/technology-resources) (libguides.library.sd.gov/services/technology-resources)

APPENDIX D

LIBRARY BASICS CHECKLIST

The following list is intended to help answer the following questions:

- Is this library welcoming?
 - What is our message?
 - What is our style?
-
- Accessibility**—Can people with disabilities easily use the library building and website?
 - Brand/Identity**—Does the library have a clear and consistent image? Includes consistent use of logo, full location info including web address.
 - Customer service**—Is the library's commitment to excellent customer service reflected in the courtesy and helpfulness shown to customers? Are there ID tags for staff? Can staff members articulate the library message? Are they encouraged to share their favorite books and other materials with users? Does front-line staff provide feedback on customer wants, complaints, compliments?
 - Décor, decoration**—Is the library too light or too dim? Is the library clean, clutter free? Is there effective use of posters, banners, art, and other promotional tools such as screen savers?
 - Display**—Are books and other materials displayed face out? Are there "shelftalkers"?
 - Local ownership**—How well does the library reflect the community, including its diversity? Is there a bulletin board? Displays of local art. Are there opportunities for the users to give feedback on library service/interact with other users? Share their comments on books?
 - Message**—Does your library have a key message that expresses its mission? Does everyone on the staff know it? Are library policies clear and widely communicated?
 - Media**—Does your library have a presence in relevant media? Is someone assigned to work with the press? Does your library initiate stories, interviews and placements of public service announcements/advertising?
 - Outreach**—Does the library have a life outside the building? Does it have a presence in the life of the community?
 - Programming**—Does the library actively offer and promote programs and/or training sessions? How are programs promoted?
 - Print materials**—Is there an appropriate amount? Does each item convey a clear message? Consider the effectiveness of bookmarks, flyers, letterhead, business cards, and newsletters in communicating the library's message.
 - Signage: Internal and External**—Is the library easy to find? Is it easy to find what you're looking for? Is the library mission visible? Does signage reflect awareness of diversity?

- Telephone**—Does a person or a machine answer the phone? If it's a machine, does your telephone greeting help or harm your image? Is it clear? Easy to follow?
- Website**—Is the image/message consistent with other library communications? Is the website easy for patrons to navigate and find information? Is the contact information easily found? Would a visually impaired or older person have difficulty with the color scheme or text fonts? Does the website meet accessibility standards? Is the website a “branch library?”
- Body Language**—What is the unspoken message being delivered by staff?
- Public Service Hours**—Do your library hours align with your community needs?