

# The 5Ws of Certification

## What is certification and why does it exist?

Maryland law (COMAR Title 13A.05.04.02) requires public librarians, public library directors, and public library associates 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 hours of continuing education units (CEUs) every 5 years.

## Who has to be certified?

If you are a professional public librarian or director, and you are: (1) employed by a county public library and (2) enrolled in the state retirement system, you are required to have a Professional Public Librarian Certificate or a Public Library Director Certificate. These individuals must have a master's degree from an ALA accredited library school.

If you are a library associate and you are (1) employed by a county public library and (2) enrolled in the state retirement system, you are required to have Library Associate Certificate. These individuals must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, completed 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

I am also available to answer your questions regardless of which county you're in but copies of your CEUs should always be sent to your specific staff development coordinator.

Some possible ways to earn CEUs:

- 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 (like the ones Julie schedules)
- Participating in an e-learning course (like a webinar, etc)
- Serving on the Great Books Committee or the Blue Crab Award Committee
- Completing an academic course (college class) that is related to your job responsibilities

For more information about the certification process, please visit:

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

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