

**TO:** ALA-APA Executive Board

**RE:** Certification Programs: History, Proposal, and Committee Process Summary

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

Action Requested

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**

ALA Executive Board

**CONTACT PERSON:**

Emily Drabinski, emily.drabinski@gmail.com

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**

MOTION 1: On the recommendation of the ALA-APA Executive Board, the ALA Council approve establishing the new Library Management Staff Certification Program.

MOTION 2: On the recommendation of the ALA-APA Executive Board, the ALA Council approve establishing the new Library Support Staff Certification Program.

**DATE:** December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**BACKGROUND:**

Over the past two years, ALA staff have worked with the APA staff and member leadership to establish two new certification programs. These two programs will consist of self-paced courses focusing on support staff and current and aspiring supervisory staff.

This work was activated as an outcome of conversations with state and institutional partners. We believe that not only is there a major need for these programs, but that this could lead to a significant and sustainable source of revenue for ALA. (See “Library Management Staff Certification Project Summary” page 3 and “Library Support Staff Certification Project Summary” page 9).

We’ve also received inquiries from the international community that indicate that these programs could grow far beyond these initial revenue projections. Former ALA President Emily Drabinski recently traveled to India, meeting with library staff members who expressed interest in these projects.

Simply stated, there is a major appetite for these programs, and they represent a potential source of revenue for ALA and ALA-APA at a time when new revenue is desperately needed.

This moment offers a unique opportunity for ALA, APA and the library community. We have the opportunity to build a new certification program that will provide both a valuable service to library staff throughout the country and a valuable new stream of revenue for APA. By leveraging the content and technological expertise of ALA Continuing Education and the organizational and certification resources of APA, we can accomplish not only this but build a new model for certification that can be replicated and sustained for many years to come.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Library Management Staff Certification Program—Project Summary
- Library and Information Science Certification for Library Support Staff—Project Summary

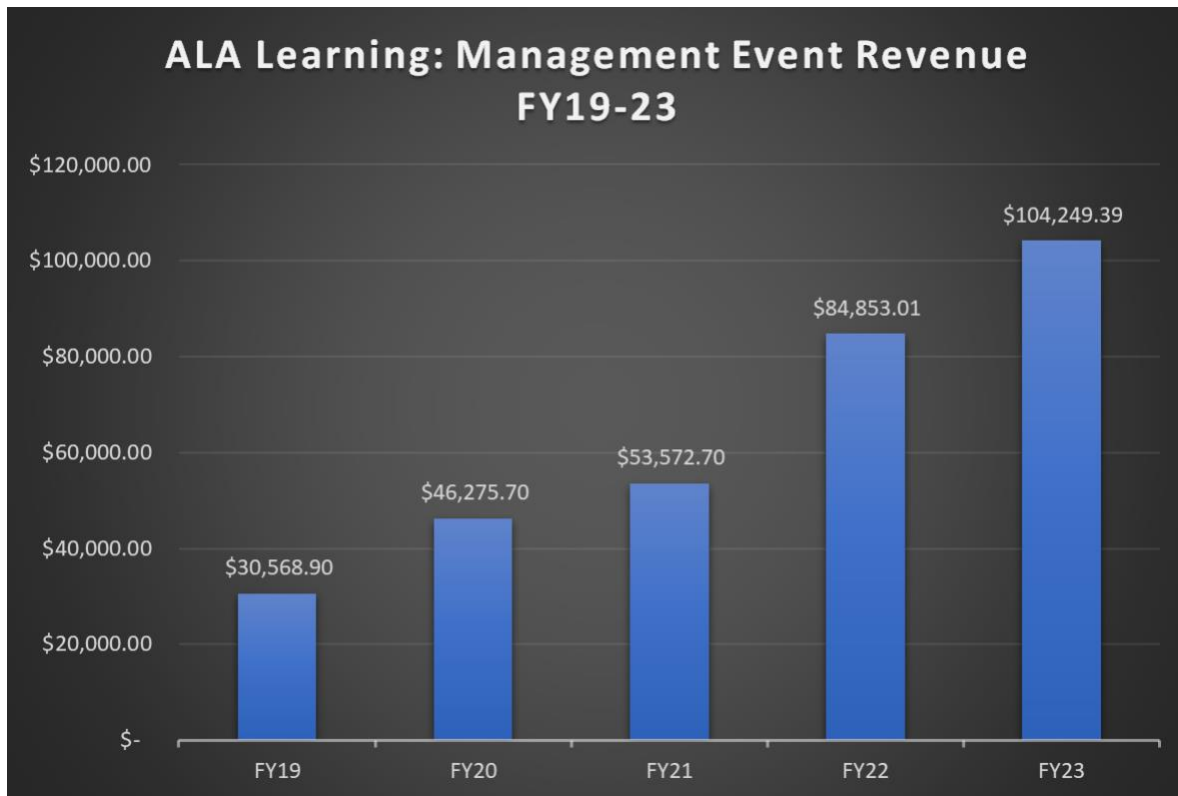
# Library Management Staff Certification Program

Many library managers come into their position without formal management training, and even those that do often come into management positions with gaps in their knowledge and experience that make effective management a major challenge.

APA's new certification program will provide a unique, flexible, and practical way to fill those gaps and take management skills to a new level. Learners will be able to gain hands-on experience through recorded lectures, interactive assignments and detailed assessments. Experienced managers, new managers and aspiring managers will gain the skills needed to manage library staff, services and facilities more effectively.

## **Program Origin**

ALA Learning has been running management courses and webinars for many years, and one thing is clear—there is always a demand for management training. Between fiscal year 2020 and 2023, the revenue generated from these events actually increased despite the dramatic impact of the pandemic on library budgets.



*Revenue from management events has climbed dramatically over the past five fiscal years.*

During the past several years, an increasing proportion of ALA Learning business has been with institutional partners. Instead of one-off sales to individual customers, these partners—typically consortia, large library systems or state library agencies—purchase large blocks of course seats for dozens or even hundreds of their constituents with the goal of using courses to achieve strategic objectives.

As we’ve built relationships with these partners, they have frequently commented on the need for an updated, flexible certification program for library managers. Library management experts frequently comment on the need for continued training for both new and experienced managers.

### **Program Learning Objectives**

Each course within the program will contain extensive learning objectives and competencies that will be clearly measurable through the coursework and assessments. The program will have three overarching learning objectives.

By attaining this certification, participants will:

- Understand key areas of library management, including employees, trustees, finances, legal issues, library policies, emergency planning and facilities and how these apply to their community and library environment.

- Gain proficiency in at least three key areas of management responsibility through elective courses.
- Have the ability to manage a library facility and staff in a variety of different settings, regardless of prior experience.

### **Courses in the Program**

The program will include a total of six courses. Participants will be required to complete four courses to attain certification. One course--*The Fundamentals of Library Management* is a core course—completion is required for all participants. The remaining five are electives, and participants can choose their remaining three courses from these five:

- The Core Course: The Fundamentals of Library Management
- The electives:
  - Budget and Finance
  - Human Resources/Managing People
  - Library Building and Facility Management
  - Advocacy/Working with Stakeholders
  - Emergency Response

### **Course Format**

When the ALA Learning site was launched in November 2021, a key part of our vision was using the site's scalability and technology to create courses in a wide variety of formats that would accommodate different learning styles and needs for assessment. Our new certification programs will represent a key realization of this vision.

This certification program will consist of completely self-paced courses—learners will work independently at their own pace and will not have an instructor's oversight of the course as they progress. Unlike most self-paced courses, however, our courses will incorporate interactive activities and include rigorous assessments that will accurately measure how effectively learners achieve courses competencies.

### **Contracting with Course Material Developers**

Because courses will be fully self-paced, we will not have subject matter experts in the traditional sense, but the core of all courses will be material developed by subject matter experts who have years of experience teaching, presenting, and writing about library programs and services.

ALA Learning runs over 120 eLearning events annually and has access to an extensive and growing network of subject matter experts, as well as regular contact with ALA Offices, Divisions, and ALA Publishing. Course material developers will be selected based on their experience with teaching and their record of accomplishments in the field.

### **Instructional Design and Course Implementation Process**

In order to ensure that all course materials are well-organized, accessible, mobile-friendly, and built on effective pedagogical structures, ALA Learning will be contracting with outside instructional designers to implement course materials. These designers will interface with our subject matter experts through ALA Learning and work to ensure that course materials, activities and assessments accurately measure and reflect a concrete grasp of learning objectives and competencies.

Not all of our subject matter experts have experience designing exams. Our instructional designers will use their experience to ensure that concepts covered in lectures and reading materials are translated into comprehensive assessments. They will also add knowledge checks, thought activities and open-ended thought exercises to the materials to help learners grasp course concepts.

### **Subject Matter Expert Selection**

All subject matter experts must meet the following criteria:

- At least five years of experience working as a library manager or in a position with authority relevant to the course subject matter.
- At least two years of experience teaching with ALA, with an accredited LIS program or with another reputable professional development institution.
- Publication of at least two articles, books, or online resources on their area of expertise within the last 10 years.

### **Application Process and Qualifications**

Our standards for program participation must ensure that we balance the need to offer learning to a broad, expansive audience with the necessity to confirm that those engaged are in the best possible position to benefit from the course materials and complete the program. Library managers come from a wide variety of educational, demographic, professional and experiential backgrounds. By ensuring that all successful applicants meet the following list of qualifications, we can make this program as beneficial for libraries and the library profession as possible.

To qualify for participation in the program, all applicants must:

- Hold a high school diploma or GED.
- Be currently employed in a library management position or have at least two years of library work experience.

Application for the program is done through APA via the ALA Learning site. There is no cost for application. Applicants will apply by filling out an online form which provides them with the ability to attach supporting documentation and includes open-ended fields for those who may wish to provide additional information about their background.

### **Process for Certification**

To maintain the integrity of the program, it's crucial to verify that all course objectives have been met and that learners achieve assessment scores that indicate a thorough grasp of the competencies. The

ALA Learning site tracks and records when learners view and complete videos, when they submit assignments and their scores on all assessments. This data is recorded and accessible to ALA Learning staff and APA staff.

In order to complete a course in the program, learners must:

- View all course videos and course reading materials.
- Complete and submit all written assignments.
- Achieve a score of 75% or greater to move onto the next module and pass a course.

Learners will not be able to move from one module to the next without achieving all of these objectives and will not be able to complete a course without doing so for each module within the course.

Once learners have completed the four courses required for certification, they will fill out a form on the eLearning site notifying APA Staff that they have completed their coursework and attesting that they completed the work independently. APA will review the records and award certification—including a paper certificate by mail—to those who have completed the requirements.

*For details on the certification process, see Appendix A.*

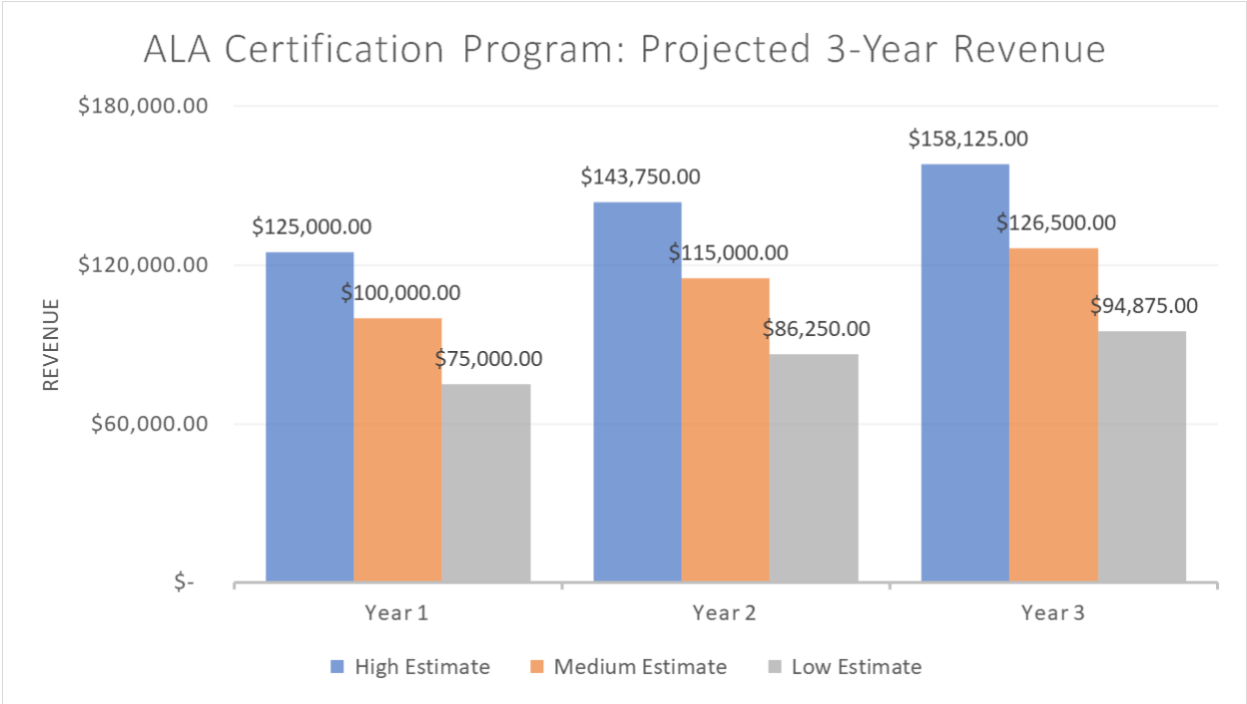
### **Ongoing Content Evaluation and Revisions**

Because the LIS field is fluid and changes are constant, we must constantly evaluate our material to ensure that it is both current and effective. To do this, we will employ the following techniques from the launch of the program:

- Each course will include a survey that contains both multiple choice and open-answer questions. Learners will be required to complete the survey to move onto the next course.
- The ALA Learning site makes it easy to track and collate engagement and completion data for all courses. APA and CE will create standard metrics to track these and meet quarterly to report and analyze the data.
- We will hold annual focus groups, contacting program participants and offering an incentive to participate in a 1-hour session where learners will share their experience and provide feedback.
- Our standard subject matter expert agreement structure calls for regular assessment and updates to course content.

### **Enrollment and Financial Outlook for the Program**

This program should be an excellent revenue opportunity for APA and ALA. The following three-year estimates are based on discussion with state agencies and consortial stakeholders, and past sales data from events on similar topics.



	High Estimate	Medium Estimate	Low Estimate
Year 1 Revenue	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 75,000.00
Year 2 Revenue	\$ 143,750.00	\$ 115,000.00	\$ 86,250.00
Year 3 Revenue	\$ 158,125.00	\$ 126,500.00	\$ 94,875.00

*For details on cost of certification and revenue sharing between ALA and APA, see Appendix B.*



# Library and Information Science Certification for Library Support Staff

In the wake of the pandemic and the great resignation, the financial picture for libraries and the library job market has shifted. In libraries of all types and sizes, staff who do not hold a Master's in Library Science are moving into positions of increasing authority and responsibility, in many cases even serving as library directors.

While on-the-job experience is extremely valuable, many of these staff members enter their positions with crucial gaps in the fundamental skills and knowledge that they would have attained in a graduate-level LIS program. This new certification program will provide a modern, comprehensive foundation in Library and Information Science that will put library staff in a position to serve their community and advance their career more effectively.

## **Program Origin**

For many years, ALA staff, members and affiliated researchers have been hearing that the proportion of library staff who hold a Master's in Library and Information Science has decreased, and that consequently, staff who do *not* hold these degrees are being placed in positions of increasing responsibility in the library.

During the past several years, an increasing proportion of ALA Learning business has been with institutional partners. Instead of one-off sales to individual customers, these partners—typically consortia, large library systems or state library agencies—purchase large blocks of course seats for dozens or even hundreds of their constituents with the goal of using courses to achieve strategic objectives.

As ALA has built relationships with these partners, they have frequently commented on the need for an updated, flexible certification program for non-MLS holding staff. In discussion with other state partners, as well as Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), we heard more of the same: if APA built a self-paced certification program for non-MLS library staff, they would be eager to work with us to bring staff members from their state into the program. At least 8 states have already indicated a willingness to work with us, and COSLA is willing to be a resource to help us communicate with other stakeholders in the field about the program.

## **Program Learning Objectives**

Each course within the program will contain extensive learning objectives and competencies that will be clearly measurable through the coursework and assessments. The program itself will have three key overarching learning objectives.

By attaining this certification, participants will:

- Understand the fundamental concepts of information sciences and current developments and challenges in the modern information landscape.
- Understand the core principles of library and information ethics and have the ability to apply them to basic service work in a variety of library settings.
- Attain basic proficiency in at least three areas of library services.

### **Courses in the Program**

The program will include a total of six courses. Participants will be required to complete four courses to attain certification. One course--*Fundamentals of Library and Information Science* will be a core course—completion will be required for all participants. The remaining five will be electives, and participants can choose their remaining three courses from those five.

### **Program Courses**

- Core Course: The Fundamentals of Library Services
- The electives
  - Reference and Information Services
  - Collection Development
  - Cataloging
  - Programming and Outreach
  - Library Management

### **Course Format**

When the ALA Learning site was launched in November 2021, a key part of ALA’s vision was using the site’s scalability and technology to create courses in a wide variety of formats that would accommodate different learning styles and needs for assessment. These new certification programs will represent a key realization of this vision.

This certification program will consist of completely self-paced courses—learners will work independently at their own pace and will not have an instructor’s oversight of the course as they progress. Unlike most self-paced courses, however, our courses will incorporate interactive activities and include rigorous assessments that will accurately measure how effectively learners achieve course competencies.

### **Contracting with Course Material Developers**

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ALA Learning runs over 120 eLearning events annually and has access to an extensive and growing network of subject matter experts, as well as regular contact with ALA Offices, Divisions and ALA Publishing. Course material developers will be selected based on their experience with teaching and their record of accomplishments in the field.

### **Instructional Design and Course Implementation Process**

In order to ensure that all course materials are well-organized, accessible and mobile-friendly and built on effective pedagogical structures, ALA Learning will be contracting with outside instructional designers to implement course materials. These designers will interface with our subject matter experts through ALA Learning and work to ensure that course materials, activities and assessments accurately measure and reflect a concrete grasp of learning objectives and competencies.

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### **Subject Matter Expert Selection**

All instructors must meet the following criteria:

- At least five years of experience working as a librarian.
- At least two years of experience teaching with ALA, with an accredited LIS program or with another reputable professional development institution.
- Publication of at least two articles, books, or online resources on their area of expertise within the last 10 years.

### **Application Process and Qualifications**

Library support staff come from a diverse set of educational, demographic, professional and experiential backgrounds. Some participants in this program may be new to library work, while others may have many years of experience. Our standards for program participation must ensure that we balance the need to offer teach the fundamentals of library and information science with the need to provide practical skills in areas like reference and cataloging that will be immediately applied in day-to-day work. By ensuring that all successful applicants meet the following list of qualifications, we can make this program as beneficial for libraries and the library profession as possible.

To qualify for participation in the program, all applicants must:

- Hold a high school diploma or GED.
- Be currently employed in a library management position or have at least six months of library work experience.

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### **Process for Certification**

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*For details on the certification process, see Appendix A.*

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*For details on cost of certification and revenue sharing between ALA and APA, see Appendix B.*

## Appendix A: Certification Process Draft for APA Website

### Earning your certification is as easy as 1-2-3.

Step 1: Determine your eligibility and apply.

- Determine your eligibility:
  - Eligibility for Management Program
  - Eligibility for Paraprofessional Program
  - Get answers for Frequently Asked Questions about eligibility
- Apply:

To apply, complete the application. Input your personal information (Name, e-mail, address, current job title) and attest that you meet the qualifications for the program. Once you complete the application, APA's team will review, and you'll hear from us within 3 Weeks.

- Application form for Management Program
- Application form for Paraprofessional Program

Step 2: Successfully complete the courses.

- Take your courses:
  - Once admitted, you'll be prompted to pay your enrollment fee and receive access to your courses!
  - The program consists of six total courses, with one required course and three required electives. You'll be prompted to select your course and provided with sequential access to courses and materials.
  - As you progress through course materials at your own pace, your completion of each module and a passing grade on the exam will unlock access to the next module. Completion of a course will unlock the next course in your sequence.

Step 3: Get your certification.

- Receive your certification:
  - Once you complete all your coursework, you will be prompted to fill out an attestation that all work done in the program was your own original work.
  - Once you've filled this out, APA staff will review your coursework, and you'll be provided with a certificate of certification by mail.

Now that you've got your certification, get recognized!

- When you earn your certification, plan to be celebrated at the next ALA Annual Conference!
- Also:
  - Share your accomplishment with others via a letter of support from ALA-APA.
  - Brag a little with merchandise bearing the APA logo.
  - Add digital recognition to your social media, email, and web profiles.

## Appendix B: Cost of Certification and Revenue Sharing Between s and APA

The base price for an individual registrant to participate in the certification program will be **\$1,500**. Application will be open—there will not be any application fee.

ALA members registering as individuals will receive an automatic 10% discount as they do with all online purchases of ALA products. The cost for individual members will be **\$1,350**.

ALA anticipates that the majority of participants will come in through a state agency, consortium or other library agency that will fund and facilitate their participation. We propose the following discounts for these bulk agreements:

<b>Amount of Financial Commitment</b>	<b>Percentage Discount</b>	<b>Price per Participant</b>
\$5,000-\$10,000	12%	\$1,320
\$10,000-\$20,000	15%	\$1,275
\$20,000-\$35,000	20%	\$1,200
\$35,000-\$50,000	25%	\$1,125
\$50,000+	30%	\$1,050

### **Revenue Sharing Between ALA and APA**

All revenue for certification will be collected by APA, as APA is the only entity with the authority to offer certification. For each participant in the program, APA will reimburse ALA for staff time and marketing budget with the full amount of revenue, less \$350 per registrant to cover APA staff and administrative expenses.