

Certification

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Becoming a Better Public Library Manager with CPLA®

The American Library Association (ALA) wants to help. In addition to the myriad of professional development offerings from ALA divisions and units, ALA is the sponsor of a national certification program for public librarians who want to improve their management skills. The Certified Public Library Administrator Program (CPLA®) is a key tool for librarians who envision management in their futures, who are already managers but need to acquire or refresh their skills. Candidates and graduates cite many benefits to the program such as networking, finding solutions to problems, and being promoted and appointed as directors. Cathy Hakala-Ausperk said, “My CPLA classes are helping me be better at what I do, at a time when we all need to be at our best.”

Those who were skeptical about how much the program could improve their proficiency, and those who have no intention of leaving their current positions are remarking about how much CPLA learning is helping them every day. Cheryl Garrison said, “I have worked in the same public library for over 21 years in various managerial roles. Even with that experience, I have found the CPLA courses to be extremely helpful.”

There are more than 115 candidates and more than 10 graduates. They are working in libraries of all sizes and are from 32 states, the Bahamas and Canada. Candidates have an average of 10 years supervisory experience.

Members of the Public Library Association (PLA), Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA) and Association for Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) developed the program's standards to give training on critical topics in public library management, namely:

Core Competencies

- Budget and Finance
- Management of Technology
- Organization and Personnel Administration
- Planning and Management of Buildings

Elective Competencies

- Current Issues
- Fundraising
- Marketing
- Politics and Networking
- Service to Diverse Populations

Candidates learn by taking courses face-to-face or online. The first four are required and candidates take courses in three of the five electives. CPLA® approved courses are 12 contact hours and include projects that are related to candidates' library situations. By the way, you don't have to be a candidate to take a course—<http://www.ala-apa.org/certification/cplacourses.html>. They are currently being offered by PLA, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and University of North Texas LE@D program. Instructors are practitioners, professors and consultants.

Becoming a candidate is a simple process. If you have three or more years of supervisory experience in a public library, a graduate degree in library and information studies from an ALA-accredited program, and the desire to share with and learn from your colleagues and instructors, complete the application, <http://www.ala-apa.org/certification/cplaapplication.html>, email your resume to cpla@ala.org and pay the fee of \$250. The CPLA® Certification Review Committee reviews applications four times a year, spring and fall and at the ALA Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. Deadlines are posted on the CPLA® website—<http://www.ala-apa.org/certification/cplacandidates.html#deadline>.

Over the five years you have to complete the program, your investment, including the application fee, will be approximately \$2710. Candidates take seven courses, which cost approximately \$300 each. After completing a course, candidates submit a Course Completion Form detailing the impact of the course on their professional growth and a \$45 fee. There is a final review in which candidates submit two projects and the \$45 fee, which is waived if the candidate recommends CPLA® to a colleague who is admitted into the program. Graduates are permitted to use the designation of CPLA® after their names in professional contexts, such as resumes and business cards. Denise Zielinski, former Chair of the CPLA Certification Review Committee, echoes a sentiment that candidates have shared, “This certification program classes are great because they are totally focused on the library perspective, don't cost as much as an MBA or MPA, and are an excellent way of getting that administrative edge to compete for those higher level jobs.”

If you have questions about your qualifications, courses, logistics or benefits of the program, contact the American Library Association-Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA), which manages the program for ALA, at 800-545-2433, x2424 or cpla@ala.org.

So the question is, “Do you want to be a better public library manager?”

Certified Public Library Administrator Program (CPLA®) Seeks Courses and Instructors

The American Library Association is the headquarters for the Certified Public Library Administrator Program (CPLA®) which is a national certification program. The CPLA® program model focuses on giving public library managers competency in nine standard areas:

Core Competencies

- Budget and Finance
- Management of Technology
- Organization and Personnel Administration
- Planning and Management of Buildings

Elective Competencies

- Current Issues
- Fundraising
- Marketing
- Politics and Networking

Service to Diverse Populations

The program invites all state libraries, state associations, library schools, trainers and independent consultants that have expertise in offering coursework in these areas to consider becoming CPLA® approved providers.

Courses have had more than 570 students. Students do not have to be CPLA® candidates, which means the courses can be promoted to a wide audience.

The process of becoming a provider is simple: Submit an application—<http://www.ala-apa.org/certification/cplarfp.pdf>—and concise response to the CPLA® Request for Proposals, answering

- how the course will utilize 12 or more contact hours to convey the elements of the standard (detailed instructions are on page 3 and 4 of the RFP)
- who the instructor(s) will be
- how the course will be delivered (face-to-face, online, hybrid, etc.)
- what technological requirements the student must have to participate

The provider application fee is discounted for first-time providers to \$250, a \$100 savings through August 31, 2009. The CPLA® Certification Review Committee reviews applications four times a year, spring and fall and at the ALA Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. Deadlines are posted on the CPLA® website—<http://www.ala-apa.org/certification/cplacandidates.html#deadline>.

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We would love to have your **feedback on this article(s)!**

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