

**Mississippi Library Commission  
Personnel Incentive Grants Program**

**Maintenance of Eligibility—Director Qualifications  
Small Library Exemption Instructions & Requirements**

**Introduction**

The Mississippi Library Commission (MLC) understands the complexities involved in seeking and employing a director who meets local needs and has the appropriate academic credentials. The agency also understands that Personnel Grant funds represent a significant source of salary funding for many public library systems, especially those with a service population under 15,000. If the administrative board of a library system with a service population of or less than 15,000 chooses, they may employ a library director with a bachelor's degree who agrees to a series of educational opportunities in lieu of a library director with a master's degree in library science (MLS).

While there is a waiver process intended to assist in hiring a director with an MLS, small systems with lower service populations are frequently finding it difficult to permanently fill director positions with the MLS requirement. On July 1, 2017, to offset this issue, MLC implemented the Small Library Exemption, an alternative educational requirement in the Accreditation Program Service Measures:

*18. S1b. A library system, whose service area population is 15,000 or less, may employ a permanent, paid, full-time director who has a bachelor's degree, and who agrees to complete three specific master's level classes (at least one per year for three years) from a school accredited by the American Library Association; attend specific continuing education workshops, annually, as offered by MLC; and submit Annual Reports, completed by the Chair of the Administrative Board of Trustees.*

It is the responsibility of the local administrative library board to ensure compliance with the requirements of this measure.

**Requirements**

1. The director must have a bachelor's degree.
2. The director must enroll in an ALA-accredited master's level library science program as a non-degree seeking student (the director may enroll as a degree seeking student if he or she wishes). While not required, the University of Southern Mississippi is recommended.
  - 2a. The director must take and pass three classes in that ALA-accredited library science program within a three-year period (at least one class per year). Specific classes taken will be approved by the MLC Deputy Executive Director. Requests for course consideration must be submitted in writing to the MLC.
  - 2b. MLC will provide support for textbooks for these classes.
3. The director must develop an annual training plan with the MLC Deputy Executive Director and annually attend at least 15 hours of continuing education provided by MLC. Any virtual attendance will require the camera to be on during the training for credit. The training plan will take into consideration attendance at the following programs:
  - a. E-Rate Training
  - b. LSTA Workshop
  - c. Statistics

Approval for changes in the training plan will be sought prior to action being taken.

4. The director must attend at least one (1) directors' meeting per year.
5. The Chair of the Administrative Board of Trustees must submit an annual report each year.

### **Implementation**

- Library Administrative Board of Trustees contacts MLC and indicates they want to request the Small Library Exemption, at which time an Agreement will be sent to the Library Administrative Board of Trustees for signatures and to be returned to MLC.
- Complete and submit the *Maintenance of Eligibility – Small Library Exemption* form.
- Request an official college/university transcript be sent directly to MLC.
- Incoming library director must contact the MLC Deputy Executive Director to create the required annual training plan.
- Annual training plan is drafted, signed by library director and board chair, and submitted to the MLC within 30 days of hire. As CE events are attended, library director submits proof of attendance.
- Letter of Acceptance into a Library Science Program is required and must be submitted to the MLC within 6 months of hire.
- Class schedules must be agreed upon by library director and the MLC Deputy Executive Director.
- Library director must send proof of course completion to the MLC at the end of each semester a class is taken. Library director must also request that a transcript be sent directly to MLC upon completion of the three master's-level library science classes.
- Annual reports must be submitted to the MLC by Chair of the Administrative Board of Trustees while the library system is under the Small Library Exemption.