

# Professional Development and Training

Regularly participating in professional development (PD) and training opportunities is an important part of library management. Doing so will help you gain the knowledge and skills necessary for providing excellent library services to your patrons.

There are a variety of both paid and free options available to you for to engage in professional development, including conferences, the biennial Shortgrass-sponsored PD Day, managers meetings, local training events, webinars, online courses, and more. Whenever possible, Shortgrass will try to make you aware of such events, but do not be afraid to seek them out on your own.

## Regular Conferences and Training Days

**Shortgrass Library System Professional Development Day.** Sponsored by Shortgrass and held every two years, this one-day event is an excellent opportunity for you to gain knowledge and develop new skills close to home. This is a great event for library managers, staff, and board members to learn alongside their peers. Shortgrass invites a variety of speakers to share their knowledge of library and library-adjacent topics, including library accessibility, Indigenous library services, effective board leadership, library programming, collections management, general workplace management, and more.

**Southern Alberta Library Conference (SALC).** An annual two-day event hosted by Chinook Arch Regional Library System in Lethbridge. This is an excellent opportunity for southern Alberta library workers who are interested in a bigger conference experience without having to travel long distances or incur large expenses. The target audience for this conference is typically rural library staff and board members, and many of the conference sessions are directly applicable to these groups. This cozy conference is also perfect for networking with those who work in libraries of similar scope and size to your own.

For more information, visit: <http://salc.wildapricot.org>

**Alberta Library Conference (ALC).** The annual conference hosted by the Library Association of Alberta. This event is held each year at the Jasper Park Lodge and draws library staff, board members, and library-adjacent participants from all over Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and northern Canada. ALC boasts a large number of sessions on a variety of topics pertaining to public, academic, and special libraries, as well as special events encouraging networking with your peers. This is a great conference, but the long travel distance and relatively high cost of attendance must be considered. Many of the sessions delivered at ALC are also available to you elsewhere, either at other conferences and PD events during the year or through webinars.

For more information, visit: <http://albertalibraryconference.com>

**Alberta Association of Library Technicians (AALT) Conference:** The AALT conference is held annually in various locations around the province. This conference is aimed especially at library technicians working in schools, academic, and public libraries, though it is open to anyone who wishes to attend. It offers sessions, workshops, and networking opportunities that will help you develop your skills and meet library technicians from across the province. The AALT conference is usually smaller in size and more affordable than ALC, making it a great PD opportunity.

For more information, visit: <https://aalt.org/>

## Webinars and Online Courses

Webinars and online courses are an effective tool for engaging in regular professional development at low or no financial cost and a lower time commitment than, say, conferences or onsite classes. Webinars are available on a variety of topics and are an especially great way to stay current on emerging trends in librarianship, including new technologies, programming ideas, collection development, and more.

**Information on upcoming webinars and courses can be found in a variety of places:**

- **The Education Institute:** a continuing education service for library workers maintained by The Partnership (a national network of Canadian library associations). This service is an excellent resource for webinars and courses on topics pertaining to Canadian libraries; however, please be advised that the majority of these are paid, ranging from between \$20-\$55 per webinar. Visit [thepartnership.ca](http://thepartnership.ca) for more info.
- **Marigold Library System Professional Development Newsletter:** Delivered monthly, this newsletter always contains a wealth of information about professional development topics, including links for upcoming webinars. You can subscribe to this newsletter at: <https://libraryaware.com/472/Subscribers/Subscribe?optInPageId=b3d05855-ef19-4575-afd7-780b114d6049>
- **CharityVillage:** While not library-specific, Charity Village offers webinars and courses aimed at Canadian nonprofit organizations. Many of these are free and on-demand (i.e., can be accessed as needed and not only at a specific time). Topics include applying for grant funding, board development, volunteer management, and more. Visit [charityvillage.com](http://charityvillage.com) for a full, updated listing of currently available and upcoming webinars. Visit: [charityvillage.ca](http://charityvillage.ca)
- **Gale Courses:** Free, online, six-week courses that you already have access to via Shortgrass. The many management, nonprofit, and business-focused courses will help you develop the skills you need for more effective library management. Potentially relevant courses include “Fundamentals of Supervision and Management”, “Managing Customer Service”, and “Business Finance for Non-Finance Personnel”. Gale Courses

can be accessed via your own library's website, and are found by navigating to the "Online Courses" section of the Books and More header tab.

## In-Person Events

Periodically, you may wish to participate in in-person professional development events, including workshops or courses.

- **Shortgrass-sponsored training:** When applicable, Shortgrass may choose to offer professional development training to member library managers. This training will often take place at Shortgrass managers meetings and cover a variety of topics. Recent training has covered such topics as accessible library services, grant funding options, and board relationships. Training may also be provided by Shortgrass staff as needed.
- **Courses and workshops.** You are encouraged to explore professional development options available to you through local educational institutions. Medicine Hat College, for example, periodically offers short courses, workshops, or certificates in topics potentially pertinent to your professional growth, including human resources management, occupational health and safety, and leadership.

## Presenting at Conferences and Events

Have you come up with a really fantastic program this year? Worked together to build a new community partnership that you're really proud of? Consider sharing your ideas with the world by presenting at one of the above events!

Conference presentations can take a variety of forms, including 10-15 minute "lightning" talks, poster sessions, and full-length, (45 minutes to an hour) presentations. Depending on your topic and comfort level with public speaking, one of these may be more desirable than another.

Generally, a call for presentation proposals will be made a few months in advance of a conference. You will usually be asked to submit a brief description (100-250 word) of your presentation topic, as well as a short personal bio. Once your submission has been reviewed, you will be notified as to whether you have been selected. If it's a yes, start preparing!