

# NHLA Paralibrarian Certification Guidelines

## 4/14/2017 Update

### Introduction

In fall 2013, the READS section of the NH Library Association presented a program describing the Massachusetts Paralibrarian Certification system. A small group of interested library staff met in January and April 2014. It was determined that the effort would be best served by forming a new section of the NH Library Association. The Executive Board approved the trial section in June 2014, and the Paralibrarian section became official in November 2014.

### Purpose

The Paralibrarian Certification is a voluntary program designed to recognize the involvement and contributions of paralibrarians in New Hampshire. Paralibrarians (nonMLS staff) support the missions of school, public, academic, and special libraries throughout the state by providing important services, being involved in professional development activities, and demonstrating commitment to their work. The certification is not a substitute for a Master of Library Science degree or any other degree or certificate.

### Overview

This program is designed to identify the achievements of participants by assigning point values to various activities. Applicants register for one of four increasingly challenging achievement levels. Each level is reached by accumulating a minimum number of points from within six *Categories of Library Service* (Public Services, Reference and Information Services, Technical Services, Technology, Administration/Management, and General) based on three *Sources of Expertise* (Experience, Education, and Professional Activities). The points needed for certification levels two through four must be earned within the three years immediately preceding the application.

### Application and Fees

Each participant must submit a *Form A* Registration. This form confirms intent to apply and must be sent with the full non-refundable registration fee, made payable to NHLA-Para.

NHLA member . . . . \$20

Non-member . . . . \$50

Applicants are encouraged to apply up to Level II on their first attempt as long as the application can be supported through documentation of their credentials and experience. Applicants need not start at the lowest level.

The completed forms, fee, and all supporting materials must be sent together in the same packet. All claims for points must be documented and verified by the applicant to the satisfaction of the PARA review board. The application must include a presentation copy, a photocopy ready copy and a digital copy.

To apply for a higher level, the applicant must submit a new *Form A* and pay the registration fee. The application fee for the next levels will be waived if the second application is

within three years of the first application. Documentation must include a copy of the previously earned PARA certificate, a copy of the corresponding *Point Summary* and new documentation for all additional points.

### **PARA Levels**

Each level requires an increased breadth of knowledge, demonstrating by earning points from the six *Categories of Library Service*. Level I requires points from at least three Categories; Level II requires points from at least four categories; Levels III and IV require points from at least five categories. Choosing to specialize in an area does not exempt the participant from showing the required breadth of knowledge. In addition, the total points required for a level must be earned from more than one *Source of Expertise*.

Once a PARA level has been earned, that level is considered “locked” for the purpose of any future applications; therefore a PARA level 1 applicant who wishes to apply for PARA level 2 needs only to submit documentation for the 150 point difference between the two levels.

### **PARA Review Board**

The PARA review board consists of three voting members of the NHLA Paralibrarian section, one of whom is a section officer. The President of the Paralibrarian Section, in consultation with the other officers, appoints the review board members. The PARA Review board meets as necessary, but at least semiannually to review submissions and conduct other business. Members of the PARA review board are available to answer questions about the program. The NH Library Association website has a current list of members.

### **Application Review**

The PARA review board will meet to review applications. Once the board approves an application, it will be sent to the NH Library Association Executive Board and the NH State Library for endorsement. The applicant will be notified by the PARA review board, in writing, of the status of his or her application.

Approved applicants will be issued a *Paralibrarian Certification Certificate* signed by the president of the section, the review board, the president of NHLA (or designee) and the State Librarian (or designee). Recipients will be recognized at the NHLA Annual Conference.

A candidate may appeal the decision to the PARA review board in writing within 10 business days of the decision. Appeals may only address issues identified in the letter of denial. All decisions of the PARA review board are final. All candidates are encouraged to reapply. Each re-submission will require a new registration fee.

### **Amendments**

Recommendations for amendments or revisions to the PARA program should be submitted to the PARA review board. Recommendations for change must be approved by the officers of the Paralibrarian section.

## CATEGORIES OF LIBRARY SERVICE

Each participant demonstrates knowledge of library skills in SIX categories. These lists are not all-inclusive but serve to demonstrate the types of knowledge considered appropriate for each type of library service.

### PUBLIC SERVICES

Children's services  
Readers' advisory  
Information literacy

Young adult services  
Programs and activities

Adult services  
School/community outreach

### REFERENCE/INFORMATION

Interlibrary loan  
Government documents  
Local history

### SERVICES

Database use/access  
Genealogy/special collections  
Medical/legal assistance

Online learning resources  
Community resources  
Copyright law  
Collection maintenance

### TECHNICAL SERVICES

MARC/RDA  
Preservation  
Digitization

Metadata  
Acquisitions  
Periodicals/serials

Processing  
BISAC/Dewey

### TECHNOLOGY

Assistive/adaptive technology  
Networking  
Data security

Office software  
Web design  
Tech troubleshooting

Multimedia software  
Library automation  
Social media

### ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

Accounting/record-keeping  
Fundraising  
Library marketing/public relations

Staff/volunteer supervision  
Staff/volunteer training  
Library policy/planning

ADA compliance  
Public safety  
Disaster planning

### GENERAL

Public speaking  
Association membership

Professional writing  
Committee membership

## SOURCES OF EXPERTISE

### Experience (Form B)

Points for experience are based on Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) as defined by your institution, 12 months per year, paid employment or volunteer work. Related library experience includes work in media centers, special libraries, and other areas. Points granted for experience are intended to reward the completion and mastery of regular work tasks, as defined by the role

and situation in which the applicant served.

Claims for points must have verification for both number of hours per week worked and the length of time. A letter from each employer must be included, fully verifying the employment. Points are granted for tenure only and not for job responsibilities.

### **Education (Form C)**

Points are awarded for degrees or certificates from an accredited college or university. These may include a non-MLS graduate degree, bachelor's degree, associate's degree or professional certificate. Degrees or certificates are verified by transcripts or official statements from the institution.

### **Professional Activities (Form D)**

Included within this category is participation in workshops and programs, expertise gained from special projects and assignments, and other experiences that broaden the participant's skills and knowledge as outlined below. If a topic is not of an obviously library related nature, participant must give a clear explanation of how or why this contributes to his or her skill set for library work.

All points requested on each *Form D* must be assigned to the appropriate *Category of Library Service* and be accompanied by a certificate of attendance/completion or a signature verifying attendance/completion on *Form D*. Applicant is expected to briefly summarize the training topic and its value.

Library Workshops and Programs: Instructional programs which bring library workers together for intensive training and for which academic credit is not offered (45 minutes or longer)

Conference: Applicant may request points for each session attended at a conference under the correct subject area.

College Course: classes taken, either in person or online, in a non-matriculating capacity. A copy of the course description or syllabus and final grade statement must be submitted. Undergraduate and graduate level courses qualify for different point values.

Non-credit/Adult Ed./Short Courses: Non-credit instructional programs or learning activities offered through adult and continuing education departments, online learning venues and similar learning events. A copy of the course or program description including number of hours, proof of attendance/completion, and a statement of learning must be submitted.

American Library Association e-courses: multi-week online program in specific library-related areas offered by the American Library Association

Participation/Membership in a Library Organization: Credit may be claimed for holding an association office, for serving as a committee member or chair or as a delegate to a regional or national activity. Credit will also be granted for membership in a library association. Verification of membership or office held is required.

Merit/Performance/Scholarship Awards: Merit/performance awards are given to recognize exemplary service and/or performance beyond the basic requirements of an employee's job description.

### **Professional Activities (Form E)**

Presentations and Teaching: Credit is given for first-time presentations, exhibits, or teaching in library, media-related or educational workshops and programs. Credit may not be claimed for events which are part of the regular required duties. For repeat presentations, subject matter presented requires proof of additional study, research, or preparation. Documentation should include materials used/presented and verification that the class or workshop was held.

Publications: Points may be claimed for an article or review published in a recognized information, library, or media publication, print or electronic, or for blog posts. Length and breadth of article determines point value. Points may only be claimed for the first publication of the article. Verification should include a copy of the published piece showing publication name and date.

### **Other Learning/Teaching/Participation Experiences (Form E)**

This section is intended to provide applicants with a way to document, and receive credit toward certification, for work-related activities that fall outside the scope of the applicant's day-to-day work duties. Applicant must include a detailed narrative of the event/training/experience and how it relates to their current job or career goals. Verification may include, but is not limited to, one or more of the following: letter of commendation, letter of corroboration, samples of work produced, explanations of tasks performed, and newspaper or magazine clippings.

### **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

When preparing your documentation:

1. Determine the *Source of Expertise*, whether from
  - a. Experience (Form B)
  - b. Education (Form C)
  - c. Professional training/activity (Form D)
2. Refer to the *Conversion Guidelines for Points* to determine point value
  - a. Experience (Form B): no further documentation necessary
  - b. Education (Form C): no further documentation necessary
  - c. Professional training/activity (Form D)
    - i. Assign points to one of the *Categories of Library Service*
    - ii. Include a brief narrative describing content and value
    - iii. Attach a certificate of attendance or include a verification signature
  - d. Presentation of publication (Form E)
    - i. Assign points to one of the *Categories of Library Service*
    - ii. Include a detailed narrative of your presentation or a copy of your article

3. If an activity/training does not clearly fit into one of the listed Professional Activities
  - a. Complete a Competency Statement (Form E)
    - i. Assign points to one of the *Categories of Library Service*
    - ii. Include a detailed narrative of the event/training/experience and how it relates to your current job or career goals
    - iii. Include a signature of verification
4. The application must include a presentation copy, a photocopy ready copy and a digital copy.

## DETAILS OF PARA LEVELS AND REQUIREMENTS

	First Time Applicants	Continuing Applicants	All Applicants
<b>PARA LEVEL I</b>  <b>200 points minimum</b>	100 points maximum from any ONE of the <b>Sources of Expertise</b>  - AND -  Points from <b>Professional Activities</b> must come from at least three of the six <b>Categories of Library Service</b>	N/A	All points earned within the <b>ten years</b> preceding the application
<b>PARA LEVEL II</b>  <b>350 points minimum</b> - OR - <b>PARA LEVEL I certification + 150 additional points</b>	175 points maximum from any ONE of the <b>Sources of Expertise</b>  - AND -  Points from <b>Professional Activities</b> must come from at least four of the six <b>Categories of Library Service</b>	<b>Completion of PARA LEVEL I</b> - AND - 75 points maximum from any ONE of the <b>Sources of Expertise</b> - AND - <b>Professional Activities</b> points earned in at least one category not covered during <b>PARA LEVEL I</b> certification	All points earned within the <b>three years</b> preceding the application
<b>PARA LEVEL III</b>  <b>600 points minimum</b> - OR - <b>PARA LEVEL II certification + 250 additional points</b>	300 points maximum from any ONE of the <b>Sources of Expertise</b>  - AND -  Points from <b>Professional Activities</b> must come from at least five of the six <b>Categories of Library Service</b>	<b>Completion of PARA LEVEL II</b> - AND - 125 points maximum from any ONE of the <b>Sources of Expertise</b> - AND - <b>Professional Activities</b> points earned in at least one category not covered during <b>PARA LEVEL II</b> certification	All points earned within the <b>three years</b> preceding the application
<b>PARA LEVEL IV</b> <b>1000 points minimum</b> - OR - <b>PARA LEVEL III certification</b>	500 points maximum from any ONE of the <b>Sources of Expertise</b>  - AND -  Points from <b>Professional Activities</b> must come from at least	<b>Completion of PARA LEVEL III</b>  - AND -  200 points maximum from any	All points earned within the <b>three years</b> preceding the application

<b>+ 400 additional points</b>	five of the six <b>Categories of Library Service</b>	ONE of the <b>Sources of Expertise</b>	
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### CONVERSION GUIDELINES FOR POINTS

Source of Expertise	Unit of Measure	Points
<b>Library experience (FTE) Form B</b>	12 months	60
<b>Education Form C</b>	Non-MLS graduate degree	60
	Bachelor's degree	60
	Associate's degree	25
	Professional certificate	20
<b>Professional Activities Form D</b>		
Library related workshop/program/webinar	per hour	5
Professional reading	per hour	2
Undergraduate college course	per credit/CEU	5
Graduate college course	per credit or SEU	6
Non-credit/Adult Ed./short course	per course	5
A.L.A. e- courses	per hour	2
Conference sessions	per session	4
Participation/membership in library organization		
Officer/director/president of association	1 year	15
Committee chair	1 year	15
National/regional delegate	1 year	10
Committee member	1 year	8
Member of a library association	1 year	8
Merit/performance award	Nomination	5
	Award	10
<b>Competency Statement Form E</b>		
Presentation and teaching	Based on individual competency statement	To be determined
Publications	Based on individual competency statement	To be determined
Other learning experiences	Based on individual competency statement	To be determined

**NHLA Paralibrarian Certification  
Form A – Registration/Application**

Please print legibly in ink or type. Fill out completely.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title/position \_\_\_\_\_

Library Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Ext. \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Library      Academic \_\_\_\_\_ Public \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Special \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I am applying for

PARA Level I \_\_\_\_\_ PARA Level II \_\_\_\_\_ PARA Level III \_\_\_\_\_ PARA Level IV \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would like my Library Director or immediate supervisor to be notified that I am receiving a Paralibrarian Certification.

Library Director's name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I would not like my Library Director notified.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am a member of NH Library Association. I have enclosed my \$20.00 registration fee.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am not a member of NH Library Association. I have enclosed my \$50.00 registration fee.

**Make check payable to NHLA-PARA and mail form and check to**

New Hampshire Library Association

Paralibrarian section

c/o Heather Rainier

[hshumway@hooksettlibrary.org](mailto:hshumway@hooksettlibrary.org)

31 Mount Saint Mary's Way Hooksett NH 03106

Van stop: Hooksett/Hooksett Public Library

Send Heather an e-mail to let her know to expect your packet.

**NHLA Paralibrarian Certification  
Form B – Experience**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Verification attached

*The following formula is offered to help you determine your points (if part time) based on FTE (full time equivalency).*  
I worked (a) \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week. (b) \_\_\_\_\_ number of hours considered full time at my library.  
So (a) divided by (b) = (c) \_\_\_\_\_% of FTE  
FTE earns 60 points per year and (c) % of 60= (d) \_\_\_\_\_.  
Therefore, I am requesting \_\_\_\_\_ points for experience

Total points requested \_\_\_\_\_

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Needs Clarification \_\_\_\_\_ Denied \_\_\_\_\_

Para Review board member \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

**NHLA Paralibrarian Certification**  
**Form C – Education**

NOTE: A separate form is required for each request and documentation must be provided.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Non-MLS graduate degree \_\_\_\_\_

Bachelor's degree \_\_\_\_\_

Associate's degree \_\_\_\_\_

Professional certificate \_\_\_\_\_

Types of verification attached (copies only please)

Diploma \_\_\_\_\_

Transcript \_\_\_\_\_

Certificate \_\_\_\_\_

Total points requested \_\_\_\_\_

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Needs Clarification \_\_\_\_\_ Denied \_\_\_\_\_

Para Review board member \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

**NHLA Paralibrarian Certification  
Form D – Professional Activities**

NOTE: A separate form is required for each request and documentation must be provided.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Event/Activity \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Professional Activity \_\_\_\_\_

Type of documentation attached \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate the number of points you are requesting in the appropriate *Category of Service*. Justification of the number of points should be clearly indicated in the supporting documentation. Sessions must be 45+ minutes.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Public Services      \_\_\_\_\_ Reference Services      \_\_\_\_\_ Technical Services  
\_\_\_\_\_ Technology      \_\_\_\_\_ General      \_\_\_\_\_ Administration/Management

**Verification** (To be filled in by the event coordinator/presenter. Or attach certificate of attendance.)

Presenter name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Library/Institution/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Contact info \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of event and how it relates to your present position or career development:**

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Needs Clarification \_\_\_\_\_ Denied \_\_\_\_\_

Para Review board member \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

**NHLA Paralibrarian Certification  
Form E – Competency Statement**

NOTE: A separate form is required for each request and documentation must be provided.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Event/Activity \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Type of documentation attached \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate the number of points you are requesting in the appropriate *Category of Service*. Justification of the number of points should be clearly indicated in the supporting documentation.

\_\_\_\_\_ Public Services      \_\_\_\_\_ Reference Services      \_\_\_\_\_ Technical Services  
\_\_\_\_\_ Technology      \_\_\_\_\_ General      \_\_\_\_\_ Administration/Management

**Verification** (To be filled in by the event coordinator/presenter. Or attach certificate of attendance.)

Presenter name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Library/Institution/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Contact info \_\_\_\_\_

**Attach a typed narrative describing the event/training/presentation and how it relates to your present position or career development**

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Needs Clarification \_\_\_\_\_ Denied \_\_\_\_\_

Para Review board member \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:



# NHLA Paralibrarian Certification

## PARA Level \_\_\_\_\_ Checklist

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please keep for your records.

	Completed
<i>Form A</i> Registration/Application	
Registration fee attached	
<i>Form B</i> Experience (one form for each place of employment)	
Verification attached	
<i>Form C</i> Education (if applicable)	
Verification attached	
<i>Form D</i> Professional Activities (one form for each request)	
Selected <i>Category of Library Service</i> contains # of points requested	
Verification attached or signature included for each form	
Short narrative included for each form	
<i>Form E</i> Competency Statement	
Selected <i>Category of Library Service</i> contains # of points requested	
Verification attached or signature included for each form	
Typed narrative included for each form	
PARA Point Summary completely filled in	
Prior PARA notification/Certification earned (if applicable)	
Prior PARA Point Summary (if applicable)	