MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF SENIOR CENTERS

Working to Make Michigan's Senior Centers Even Better

SENIOR CENTER DIRECTOR CERTIFICATION (SDC)

Introduction

Across Michigan, Senior Center Directors bring a wide range of educational backgrounds and professional experiences to their roles. Some directors hold high school diplomas, while others have advanced degrees. There is no single academic pathway for becoming a Senior Center Director, and most directors receive the majority of their training on the job.

The role of a Senior Center Director is complex and multifaceted. Directors must possess skills in personnel and facility management, fiscal oversight, fund development, program planning, and volunteer coordination. They are often responsible for managing large facilities, diverse staff teams, and extensive community partnerships, frequently working long hours for compensation that does not reflect the level of responsibility required.

The purpose of certification is to establish a statewide professional standard for Senior Center Directors. Certification serves as a measure of professional competence, promotes continued professional growth, and supports the recognition of senior center leadership as a specialized profession.

Purpose of Certification

The Senior Center Director Certification is intended to:

1. Promote professional credibility and visibility.
2. Identify to the public and professional peers those directors who have met established professional standards.
3. Encourage ongoing professional growth and development among Certified Senior Center Directors.

Definition of a Senior Center Director (or Comparable Title)

A Senior Center Director (or comparable title) is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of a senior center. Duties typically include budget management, record keeping, personnel supervision, service coordination, and overall organizational management.

Directors are often responsible for the operation and management of the facility in which the center is housed.

Applicants must be actively employed as a Senior Center Director during the year in which the application is submitted. Applicant must work a minimum of twenty (20) hours per week in a senior center director role

Minimum Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must meet **one** of the following qualification options:

Option A

- Associate's degree (minimum)
- Three (3) years of experience as a Senior Center Director

Option B

- Seven (7) years of experience as a Senior Center Director
- One (1.0) CEU or nine (9.0) classroom credit hours earned within the past four (4) years in job-related training or the field of aging

All applicants must complete a **Body of Knowledge portfolio** for review and approval by the MASC Standards Committee.

Applicants must be employed at a senior center that:

- Meets MASC Senior Center Criteria
- Is a current member of the Michigan Association of Senior Centers

Required Application Materials

Applicants must submit the following through the online application portal:

- Letter of support from immediate supervisor (or comparable position)
- Current résumé
- Current position description
- Organizational chart identifying the applicant's position
- Narrative demonstrating how the applicant's center meets Senior Center Criteria
- Body of Knowledge portfolio documenting professional competencies

All required materials must be submitted electronically through the online application portal. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Senior Center Criteria

To be eligible, the applicant's senior center must demonstrate the ability to meet the service needs of older adults and must document the following:

The center must demonstrate:

- Ability to provide access to information, referral, and emergency services
- A concentration of older adults in the service area
- Ability to serve low-income, minority, frail, and disabled older adults
- Capacity to accommodate and coordinate additional services on-site
- Operation for a minimum of twenty (20) hours per week
- A barrier-free, accessible facility
- Accessibility to transportation (public or private)

In addition, the center must provide **at least four (4)** of the following on-site services and/or demonstrate the ability to assist older adults in accessing these services:

- Adult Day Services
- Care Management
- Caregiver Support
- Chore Services
- Congregate Meals
- Counseling Services
- Educational Classes
- Fitness Offerings
- Health Screenings
- Healthy Living Programs
- Home Delivered Meals
- Home Repair
- Homemaking
- Information & Assistance
- Legal Assistance
- Outreach
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Volunteer Opportunities

Applicants will provide a brief narrative and supporting documentation demonstrating how their center meets these criteria.

Body of Knowledge Requirement

Because the role of a Senior Center Director encompasses organizational leadership beyond individual program management, the Body of Knowledge for Director certification includes additional domains in personnel management, fiscal management, and professional leadership. This broader documentation reflects the expanded scope of responsibility and decision-making inherent in senior center executive leadership.

Applicants must submit a Body of Knowledge portfolio demonstrating professional competence in four domains:

- Programming
- Personnel and/or Volunteer Management
- Fiscal Management
- Professionalism / Advocacy

Programming

Applicants will select **three (3)** of the following six areas and provide **one detailed program example** from each selected area that they personally created, implemented, and/or supervised within the past three (3) years:

- Recreation
- Education
- Health Promotion / Wellness
- Social Services
- Fundraising
- Volunteer Management

For each program example, applicants must address all of the following elements:

- Program planning and development
- Implementation
- Fiscal management
- Use of staff and/or volunteers
- Publicity and public relations
- Program evaluation and outcomes

Supporting documentation may include newsletters, flyers, brochures, photographs, reports, letters of support, or other relevant materials.

Personnel and/or Volunteer Management

Applicants must address and document all applicable areas below. If both paid staff and volunteers are utilized, both categories must be addressed.

- Staffing
- Job descriptions

- Training
- Staff meetings
- Organizational chart
- Evaluations
- Recognition

Fiscal Management

Applicants must document the following areas (grant writing is optional):

- Budget writing (copy of most current budget)
- Financial reports (monthly and/or annual reports)
- Date and firm of most recent financial audit (do not include full audit)
- Grant proposals (summary and introductory pages of up to three applications, approved or denied)

Professionalism / Advocacy

Applicants must address and document:

- Current résumé
- Current job description
- Professional associations and board/commission affiliations
- Community and public relations activities
- Advocacy efforts
- Published articles, newsletters, or professional presentations

What Reviewers Are Looking For

Applications are evaluated based on:

- Demonstrated leadership and professional judgment
- Evidence of program planning, management, and evaluation
- Clear supervisory and management role
- Alignment with the mission and purpose of senior centers
- Quality and completeness of documentation

Certification Renewal

Certification is valid for three (3) years.

To renew, applicants must document:

- A minimum of sixteen (16) hours of approved professional development
- Continued employment in a senior center director role
- A brief narrative describing three to five (3–5) new or significantly expanded programs developed during the certification period

Application Process and Timeline

- Applications accepted annually: January 1 – September 30
- Reviewed by the MASC Standards Committee
- Applicants notified prior to the MASC Annual Conference
- Incomplete applications will not be reviewed
- One opportunity to correct deficiencies, if identified

Fees (MASC Members)

- Initial Certification: $50
- Renewal Certification: $25

An invoice is generated upon submission. Payment may be made by check or credit card.

Questions and Assistance

For questions regarding the certification process, please contact:

MASC Standards Committee
Email: miseniorcenters@gmail.com