In order for the Library to be certified by the Mass. Board of Library Commissioners, there are several criteria we must meet. These include being open a minimum number of hours, lending our materials at no charge, and spending a percentage of our budget on books and other material to keep our collection current. It is also required that town government show its support for the Library in our annual budget appropriation.

Difficult economic times are taken into account this way: if the Library’s budget is cut, other town department’s budgets must also be reduced. If the Library’s budget is cut disproportionately, the Library can be decertified. Once decertified, other libraries are not required to loan material or provide services to Berkley residents. Unable to borrow from other SAILS libraries, residents of Berkley would be limited to only those materials owned by the Berkley Public Library.

The rationale behind certification is that it is each city or town’s responsibility to provide library services to its residents. No town can simply rely on another to do so.

This year Wareham, and in recent years, Bridgewater, Freetown and Norton have all at one time or another been decertified. After decertification it takes a minimum of three years before a library can regain its certification. In order to provide you with the best services possible, and make the most material available to you, we take our certification very seriously.

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