



## **BERKS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

### **Uniform Requirements and Responsibilities For System Member Evaluation**

#### **1. STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE**

Boards of member libraries conduct the business of library governance in accordance with the following procedures:

- 1) Board meetings, with the library director in attendance, are held regularly with a quorum and not less than six times a year;
- 2) An annual notice of the board meeting schedule is published in the appropriate local newspaper no later than two (2) weeks before the first meeting of the year;
- 3) Approved library board meeting minutes must be posted on the library's website within two months of their approval and maintained throughout the calendar year that is being reviewed on the Uniform Requirements & Responsibilities Checklist. Approved library board meeting minutes for the year(s) prior to the calendar year being reviewed may either be posted on the library's website or made available to the public in an alternate manner determined at the library's discretion. If the library elects to make the prior years' approved board meeting minutes available through a means other than the website, the location and/or process for the public to obtain such minutes must be noted on the library's website.
- 4) All forms and reports, as required by the Office of Commonwealth Libraries or by the System are submitted by established deadlines and audits by September 15 annually;
- 5) The calendar year is the library's fiscal year;
- 6) Any changes in library hours, including holiday hours, other than summer changes, are to be reported to the System Administrator by December 1 and become effective the following January 1. Any other changes require a thirty (30) day written notice to the System Administrator, the District Consultant and the Office of Commonwealth Libraries;
- 7) The board operates according to written bylaws which are reviewed annually. Review of the bylaws must be noted in meeting minutes and copies of the bylaws with revised/reviewed dates must be updated on the library's website and when revised, submitted to the System;
- 8) The library may use its discretion to either post its approved budget on the library's website on an annual basis, with revisions posted as needed, or note the process the public should follow to request a copy of the approved library budget, ;
- 9) The library has a mission statement which is reviewed annually. Review of the mission statement must be noted in meeting minutes and copies of the mission statement with revised/reviewed dates must be updated on the library's website and when revised, submitted to the System;

10) The library carries Directors and Officers insurance for Board members and secures necessary bonding for Board Treasurer and employees as appropriate;

11) 80% attendance at bi-monthly System/District joint Director's Meetings and District Youth Services meetings held at System Headquarters is required.

*Compliance with all 11 elements listed above in addition to all other areas of the Uniform Requirements and Responsibilities is required. To confirm compliance as well as all other board actions called for in this document, a packet with materials must be submitted to the System Office by established deadlines noted on the URR Checklist form, found on the System's Intranet site, called The HQ. This is updated yearly by the System Administrator.*

## **2. POLICIES**

The board and library director jointly plan and develop policies; a suggested list can be found in Appendix B. System-wide service and circulation policies conform to standardizations adopted by majority vote of the Library Directors and by signed agreements of participation in the Integrated Library System network. Internet policies are in keeping with the System-wide policy which can be found in Appendix E.

All policies and approved board meeting minutes are to be available to the public upon request and are posted on the Library's website within two months of their approval.

Each local Board determines the review cycle for each policy. The Policy Review Checklist can be found on the System's Intranet site, called The HQ.

Board members plan and develop a personnel policy for employees not covered by contractual agreements or the personnel policies of municipal government. Personnel policies are to be reviewed annually, and revised as needed and in accordance with changes in state and federal employment regulations.

Samples and additional information about these policies are available from the System Office.

*Compliance requires policy development and review in each of the areas indicated. Reviews should be noted in meeting minutes and copies of revisions and/or new policies, if any, submitted to the System Office when approved.*

## **3. SYSTEM PARTICIPATION AND TRUSTEE EDUCATION**

Library boards are represented by at least one trustee at all BCPL Advisory Board meetings. These trustee representatives compose the BCPL System

Member Representatives referenced in the BCPL Bylaws. Each library annually designates one trustee and one alternate to serve as the representative to the System Member Representatives. A library director cannot serve as the library's representative at any Advisory Board meeting.

Member libraries must send no less than two (2) board members from each library to a state **or** System sponsored continuing education event annually. State sponsored continuing education events include those hosted virtually on the Office of Commonwealth Libraries sponsored sites, Webjunction or Niche Academy. These events must be at least one hour in length. Copies of completion certificates must be submitted to the System as proof of completion for this requirement.

The BCPL System Administrator, in collaboration with the District Consultant, will annually conduct a New Trustee Orientation before the end of the first quarter. This orientation will review both System and District services as well as the funding formula and trustee responsibilities. All trustees are entitled and encouraged to attend as part of their annual continuing education requirement. All newly seated board members are expected to attend within their first year of serving as a board member.

#### **4. PLANNING AND EVALUATION**

The library has a strategic plan which includes goals and measurable objectives tailored to meet the needs of the community; the plan is reviewed and updated annually as part of a continuing process of evaluation.

*Compliance requires creation of a planning document which incorporates the elements listed. Materials and assistance in developing strategic plans are available from the System Office. A written evaluation of progress toward library goals must be submitted to the System Office by January 31 following each review year. New plans must be submitted to the System Office once formally adopted by local Boards.*

#### **5. PUBLIC RELATIONS**

The library actively promotes its services and programs through an ongoing public relations plan utilizing sources of print, broadcast and online media. This plan also includes the following:

- a) Presentations to organizations such as service clubs, municipal governments within the library's mandated service area, and other community groups;
- b) Posters, flyers, brochures, and bookmarks advertising library services;
- c) Posting events to the shared System website events calendar (for libraries hosted on the berkslibraries.org website);

- d) An annual report made available to the public on the library's website by March 30 of the year following (i.e. 2024 annual report published by March 2025);
- e) Libraries participate in all System-wide Initiatives coordinated by the System Office.

## 6. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The Library Director attends a minimum of ten (10) hours of continuing education annually; the library board or municipal authority provides paid time off and reimbursement of expenses including mileage reimbursement for this training.

All Library Directors are trained by District and/or System personnel in the use of the Integrated Library System and by System staff for all other network services. This requirement shall also apply to any other staff that may be responsible for library operations in the absence of the library director.

All new Directors must complete a BCPL orientation within the first three months of employment. Other staff responsible for library operations in the absence of the Library Director must attend a BCPL orientation within the first six months of becoming the interim director.

Member libraries will comply with state requirements for staff continuing education. All library staff who work at least 20 hours per week in direct support of library service shall attend six hours of qualifying continuing education every two years.

## 7. COLLECTIONS

At least 3% of the library's materials are weeded annually.

As per PA State Code 9335 b (2) "annually spend not less than 12% of its operating budget on collections", and The System recommends a minimum of 10% of total materials expenditure for Juvenile items and 5% on Young Adult items for a balanced collection.

Weeding should be done in accordance with the criteria outlined in **CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries** (revised and edited by Jeanette Larson); this tool is available for download at [www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/crew](http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/crew)

## 8. PROGRAMMING

The Library participates in a schedule of ongoing activities reflecting community interests and develops and maintains community partnerships of

mutual benefit. The Library participates in the annual Collaborative Summer Library Program (also known as Summer Quest) and complies with reporting requirements of the Office of Commonwealth Libraries. The Library develops a calendar of youth, teen and adult programming that supports life-long learning and the PA Forward framework based on community need.

## **9. SERVICE AREAS**

Service areas of each member library are defined by the Office of Commonwealth Libraries and accepted by the BCPL System and member libraries. Member libraries should follow the procedure outlined in the Library Membership Policy (Appendix F) if they are interested in adding an unclaimed service area in Berks County.

Libraries should make every effort to host programs or events or create financial partnerships with organizations and businesses within their defined service areas. A library that plans to host programs and events and create financial partnerships with organizations and businesses in Berks County at a location outside of its defined service area should consult the service area's library during the planning process. If the service area's library objects, the libraries should try to resolve disputes themselves before the event takes place.

If the libraries cannot agree on a resolution for a service area dispute, the service area library will notify the System Administrator in writing and copy the other library. The System Administrator and the Executive Committee of the BCPL Advisory Board will resolve the dispute within 10 business days from receipt of written notification. They will then notify both libraries in writing of the resolution.

## **10. LIBRARY FACILITIES**

The member library, or the municipality owning the library's facility, must notify the System Administrator in writing of any proposed new construction or expansion projects that increase the library's usable floor space. This requirement does not apply to routine maintenance projects and renovation projects that do not increase the library's usable floor space.

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Revised November 2014  
Revised August 19, 2020  
Revised August 16, 2023  
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## **Appendix A: Glossary of Terms**

BCPL- Berks County Public Libraries

System Headquarters- Berks County Public Libraries administrative unit located at 1040 Berks Road, Leesport, PA 19533

ILS- Our Integrated Library System used at Member Libraries for daily library functions such as check-in, check-out, holds, etc.

System Administrator- this role is the department head of the County Library System, Berks County Public Libraries

## **Appendix B: Library Service Policies**

*Policies should address the following topics; other issues may be included as local boards determine to be appropriate.*

*The below policy types are based on recommended best practices for libraries and not an endorsement or requirement for BCPL System Membership.*

1. Organization
  - a. Mission Statement/Vision Statement/ Core Values Statement
  - b. Board Governance
    - i. Bylaws
    - ii. Conflict of Interest
    - iii. Meetings of the Board/Right to Know officer, Policy/Minutes Repository
    - iv. Retention of Documents
    - v. Whistleblower policy
    - vi. Equal Employment Statement
    - vii. Board Job Description
    - viii. Library Director Evaluation Policy
    - ix. Volunteer Policy
  - c. Fiscal Authority and Responsibility
    - i. Annual Fee/Charges schedule
    - ii. Fraud prevention
    - iii. Purchasing and Petty cash
    - iv. Monetary Donations, Gifts and Cash Bequests
    - v. Limitations of Acceptance of Gifts
    - vi. Solicitation and Sales Policy
2. Public Service Policies
  - a. Library Patrons
    - i. Confidentiality of Patron Records\*
    - ii. Parental Access to Children's Records
    - iii. Non Resident Borrowing Policy
    - iv. Internet Access Policy\*\*
    - v. Unattended/Abandoned Children
    - vi. Patron Behavior Policies
    - vii. Programming Policy
    - viii. Use of Personal Equipment and Devices
    - ix. Patron Complaints/ Response to Complaints
    - x. Test Proctoring
  - b. Facilities
    - i. Hours of Operation
    - ii. Emergency Closing and Inclement Weather
    - iii. Safety and Security Policies
    - iv. Meeting Room Policies
    - v. Bulletin Board, Display and Exhibit policies
    - vi. Library Equipment and Use
  - c. Integrated library system Borrowing Policies\*\*\*

- i. Registration
    - 1. Out of County residents
    - 2. Cards for Minors
    - 3. Expiration and Invalidation of Library Cards
      - a. Rescindment and Re-instatement of Borrowing privileges
    - 4. Extended Borrower and Outreach Borrower cards
    - 5. Temporary/Internet Access only cards
    - 6. Transfer of Cards- use of cards by family members
  - ii. Circulation Policies
    - 1. Loan Periods/Maximum items (by item type, by patron type)
    - 2. Renewals
    - 3. Requests for Holds
    - 4. Interlibrary Loan
    - 5. Lost and Damaged materials
    - 6. Refunds
    - 7. Claimed returns
    - 8. Staff Override permissions
- d. Collection Management
- i. Selection objectives and priorities
  - ii. Retention of Materials/ Weeding
  - iii. Censorship/Request for Reconsideration
  - iv. Donations

*\*Must conform to Section 428 of The Library Code*

*\*\*Must conform to the BCPL System Internet Policy in Appendix E*

*\*\*\* Must conform to ILS policies as stated in BCPL Borrowing Policy*



## **Appendix C: Personnel Policies**

*A personnel policy should address the following:*

Filling vacancies (recruitment, selection, appointment)

Personnel procedures

- Job descriptions
- Probation
- Performance evaluation
- Conduct on duty
- Grievance procedures
- Personnel records
- Resignation and dismissals

Salaries, position classification

Benefits

- Insurance
- Retirement
- Worker's compensation

Hours, schedules

Staff development

- In-service training
- Certification
- Professional affiliations

Vacation and leave

- Vacation
- Sick leave
- Holidays
- Personal leave
- Professional and educational leave
- Jury duty
- Maternity and paternity leave

## **Appendix D: Training for Network Services**

*Training in the use of technology and network services shall include, but not be limited to, the following areas:*

ILS policies and procedures

Email overview

Training will be scheduled at a time mutually convenient to library personnel and System staff, in conjunction with District Library Center staff as needed. Newly hired library directors without prior ILS experience must complete training within 60 days of employment in a System library. Training on Acquisitions and Cooperative Purchasing will also be given at this time.

## Appendix E: Internet Policy

### POLICY ON INTERNET ACCESS FOR BERKS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES

#### **Purpose**

The public libraries of Berks County are committed to the promotion of lifelong learning. As part of that commitment, the libraries will provide public access to the diverse and unique resources available via the internet and the World Wide Web.

#### **Children and the Internet**

The *Children's Internet Protection Act* (pub. L. 106.554) requires that a library receiving federal funds must "have in place a policy of Internet safety for minors that includes the operation of a technology protection measure with respect to any computers with Internet access..." In compliance with this provision of federal law, the public libraries have installed a filtering mechanism on all computers and library provided internet connections to protect young users from inappropriate material.

Parents are reminded that filtering is not foolproof. It diminishes the likelihood that searchers will inadvertently retrieve text or images that they may find offensive, but does not completely eliminate that possibility. Filters may also block access to sites that users would consider both inoffensive and useful. Parental supervision of young children searching the Internet is strongly advised.

#### **Rights of Adults**

Adults (those 17 and older) may request unfiltered access to the Internet for any purpose that does not violate the law or the libraries' policies. The filter on an individual library-owned computer will be disabled in response to such a request. Library staff may not disable the filter on patron-owned laptops or other wireless access devices.

#### **Right to Privacy**

All library users have the right to expect that their information-seeking activities in the library are private and confidential with the understanding that no records of internet use are being retained. While the Berks County Public Libraries and member libraries do not retain internet usage records or history and works to protect patron's privacy, they are not responsible for insuring the privacy of any information or data sent or received by patrons while using the libraries PC's, laptops, tablets, network, or Wi-Fi.

#### **Conditions and Terms of Use**

1. Information available via the Internet may be protected by copyrights or trademarks; use of such information must not violate any copyright or trademark law.
2. Because the Internet allows access to ideas, information and commentary from sources around the world, the libraries cannot control its content. Therefore, individual users must accept responsibility for

determining the validity and accuracy of information located on the Internet. The libraries are not responsible for any use made of information obtained from Internet resources.

3. The Internet and its available resources may contain material and ideas that are controversial and conflict with the personal beliefs of users. Parents or guardians, not library staff, are responsible for the information selected and/or accessed by their children.
4. Viewing of certain materials in the public library may be considered improper in time, place or manner. Libraries reserve the right to terminate an Internet session that disrupts library services or involves user behavior that violates library policy.
5. Patrons may not use public library Internet connections for any commercial or for-profit purpose.
6. A cost-recovery fee for print-outs may be charged.
7. The County of Berks, Berks County Public Libraries, member libraries, member library board members, or any employees are not responsible for damages to patron owned equipment including but not limited to, laptops, tablets, cell/smart phones, gaming devices, lot devices, etc. while using the libraries wireless internet connection. This includes but is not limited to, damage caused by configuration changes, viruses, spyware, malware, or other malicious code received via the libraries wireless connection.
8. Printing is not available through the library's wireless connection.

### **Limitations**

Some libraries do not provide access to subscription services, e-mail, or chat lines; use of such web-based services as "Hotmail" may be permitted at the discretion of the local library.

### **User Responsibilities**

1. Users will sign an Internet use agreement; agreements for those under 18 years of age will require parent or guardian signature.
2. Users must observe time limits and other procedural guidelines set by individual libraries for use of the Internet terminals.
3. Users are responsible for damage to equipment beyond what occurs with normal usage; hardware and software may not be abused, modified, or destroyed.

**Staff Assistance**

Library staff have received training in Internet searching and are capable of offering basic instruction in how to navigate. However, due to limited staffing and time constraints, patrons are encouraged to take the initiative and explore on their own.

Policy on Internet Access revised and approved by the Berks County Public Libraries Board of Trustees 11.20.2019

## Appendix F: Library Membership Policy

### BERKS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES SYSTEM MEMBERSHIP POLICY

#### **Full Members**

The benefits of full membership in Berks County Public Libraries (BCPL) include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Share in state and county funding according to the distribution formula determined by the System Advisory Board
- Participation in the shared integrated library system and bibliographic services
- Professional consulting by System staff
- Delivery services as defined in current Delivery of Library Materials Plan
- Share in benefits of grants awarded to the System
- Eligibility for annual awards
- Assistance in development of promotional materials
- Access to continuing education programming
- Other benefits as the System Advisory Board may enact

To retain full membership in BCPL, libraries must:

- Meet or exceed applicable state standards
- Achieve *Uniform Requirements and Responsibilities*
- Participate in the Access PA database
- Participate in the Statewide Library Card program
- Adopt county-wide borrowing policies
- Maintain efforts to secure local funding
- Offer borrowing and return privileges to all County residents
- Abide by System/District interlibrary loan protocols
- Directors and Youth Services Staff (or representatives) attend at least 80% of scheduled Director's and Youth Services Meetings
- Participate in all four System-wide Initiatives provided in one calendar year
- Comply with such other requirements as state laws and System Board policies may establish

#### **Rights and Responsibilities of Member Libraries**

A member library shall:

- Retain control of and title to all property, endowments, gifts, and other locally raised funds and dedicate the use of these to public library service
- Make collections and services available on an equal basis to all residents served by the System
- Submit annual reports through the System as required by the Office of Commonwealth Libraries
- Support the System in securing necessary funds for System-wide services

- Maintain an agreement with municipal officials of the municipality or municipalities within the designated service area to provide residents with public library services
- Annually approach these same officials for financial support
- Meet state standards as they apply to the System and to the member library according to its service area

### **Affiliate Members**

A new or existing public library may apply for affiliate membership in Berks County Public Libraries when it has:

- An ADA compliant site in which to serve the public and house the collection
- Equipment and furnishings (shelves, charging desk, etc) adequate for providing basic services as defined by the Pennsylvania Library Code
- Collection of recent, useful books and other materials
- Resolutions or statements of intent from the municipalities in the desired service area to provide annual financial support for the library in the amount of \$5 per capita
- Evidence of a membership/fund-raising drive that reaches every household in the desired service area

To make application for affiliate membership, the library organization must submit a written request for placement on the agenda of a regularly scheduled System Board meeting. This request should be made 30 days prior to the desired meeting date and include details concerning the elements listed above. In addition, the written request must include the library organization's statement of intent to meet the requirements for full membership within three years.

Affiliate members will receive the following benefits:

- Professional consulting by System staff
- Inclusion in the van delivery service route
- Access to continuing education programming
- Assistance in developing promotional materials

Affiliate members must:

- Achieve state standards within three years
- Comply with *Uniform Requirements and Responsibilities* within three years
- Conform to System service policies
- Maintain local funding

An affiliate member may apply for full membership status when it is eligible for state aid; this eligibility is defined in Section 303.2 of *The Library Code*.

## **Additions to Assigned Service Area of a Full Member Library**

A library that is a full member of the System may request that a municipality be added to its legal service area under the following conditions:

- 1) the library meets all state standards that apply for the service area population that will result (i.e. director certification level, hours open, collection size);
- 2) the library provides evidence of a membership/fund-raising drive that reaches a majority of the residents in the municipality to be added;
- 3) the municipality issues a resolution or statement of intent to provide annual financial support for the library in an amount no less than the average annual support provided by the other municipalities in the library service area.

*How "average annual support" will be determined:* The most recently completed state report will be used to determine the amount of financial support from each of the municipalities in the library service area. The figures will be added together and divided by the number of contributing service area municipalities to arrive at the average.

The member library should notify the System Administrator of its plan to make a service area change request at least 30 days before the next scheduled BCPL Board meeting in order that the request may be forwarded to the System Board for review. A vote of the Advisory Board at a regularly scheduled meeting is required to approve the change.

Amended September 2010  
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