



Resource Sharing Operational Policy for Public Libraries

May 2022

Network Policy Statement

The Government of Alberta has established and sustains a network known as the Public Library Network that connects Alberta's public libraries to enable access to public library resources and services for Albertans. The network is coordinated and supported by Alberta Municipal Affairs through Public Library Services Branch (PLSB).

Statement of Purpose

Resource sharing is the lending of local library resources to users of other public libraries, for example via interlibrary loan (ILL). Resource sharing strengthens public library service to Albertans by increasing the range of materials available for borrowing.

Effective resource sharing is reciprocal, with each library service point providing the same level of access to their collections. Users want to be able to find and request items; therefore, libraries need to be able to administer requests, delivery, tracking, and returns of items effectively. This operational policy establishes processes which ensure reciprocity and make effective, consistent workflow and systems possible.

Policy

The Government of Alberta supports resource sharing between network participants to enable equitable access for Albertans.

1. Network Participants share library resources through an organized system coordinated by PLSB in cooperation with the Network Operational Partners.
2. Network participants lend library resources at the level defined in the Operational Guidelines, ensuring reciprocity.
3. Library cards issued by non-network participants are not eligible for resource sharing through the Public Library Network.
4. Albertans have access to library resources provided by Network Participants through the Public Library Network at no additional charge.
5. The local library board has primary responsibility for developing and providing a local library resource collection to meet community needs. Resource sharing, including interlibrary loan service, is supplementary and is not meant to substitute for the local collection.
6. Albertans holding a public library card that is eligible for Alberta-Wide Borrowing may borrow on-site from any Network Participant.

Roles

For the purposes of this policy, Public Library Network Operational Partners are identified as follows:

A. For interlibrary loan management (i.e., administration of the ILL system):

- City of Calgary Library Board
- City of Edmonton Library Board
- City of Red Deer Library Board
- City of St. Albert Library Board
- Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Library Board
- Strathcona County Library Board

- Chinook Arch Library Board
- Marigold Library Board
- Northern Lights Library Board
- Parkland Library Board
- Peace Library Board
- Shortgrass Library Board
- Yellowhead Library Board

The network ILL Network Operational Partners are responsible for:

- Allowing for easy access by partner/member libraries and/or Users to the ILL Software/Platform
- Maintaining appropriate technology to accommodate ILL Software/Platform access
- Having sufficiently trained staff to navigate the ILL Software/Platform
- Responding to ILL requests from Local Users and outside requests in a timely manner
- Forwarding technical concerns to Public Library Services Branch for intervention
- Evaluating the volume and types of requests received and using this information to develop the local collection and/or make collection development recommendations as necessary
- Communicating pertinent ILL Software/Platform information to partner/member libraries

PLSB is responsible for:

- Managing the ILL Software/Platform and all the associated mechanisms
 - Maintaining the contract with the ILL Software/Platform Vendor
 - Paying for the ILL Software/Platform under the contract with the ILL Software/Platform Vendor
- Monitoring the usage of the ILL Software/Platform and making adjustments when/where necessary
- Facilitating technical requests and queries of Network Operational Partners, forwarding to the ILL Software/Platform Vendor for intervention
- Providing statistics generated by the ILL Software/Platform Vendor on a monthly basis
- Communicating pertinent information with ILL Network Operational Partners
- Consulting with Network Participants and ILL Network Operational Partners when necessary

B. For delivery of ILL materials:

- City of Calgary Library Board
- City of Edmonton Library Board
- City of Grande Prairie Library Board
- City of Red Deer Library Board
- Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Library Board
- Chinook Arch Library Board
- Marigold Library Board
- Northern Lights Library Board
- Parkland Library Board
- Peace Library Board
- Shortgrass Library Board
- Yellowhead Library Board

The network delivery Network Operational Partners are responsible for:

- Ensuring items to be delivered are properly packaged in a box or bin (according to Service Alberta standards)
- Redirection and delivery of items received on government courier to partner/member libraries
- Maintaining appropriate delivery channels
- Having sufficiently trained staff in correct packaging/delivery processes
- Communicating pertinent ILL delivery information to partner/member libraries

PLSB is responsible for:

- Managing the model for ILL delivery in Alberta and all the associated mechanisms

- Maintaining the MOU with Service Alberta for government courier service to the delivery Network Operational Partners
- Paying for the government courier service under the MOU with Service Alberta
- Monitoring the usage of the delivery system and making adjustments when/where necessary
- Communicating pertinent information with delivery Network Operational Partners
- Consulting with Network Participants and delivery Network Operational Partners when necessary

Definitions

Alberta-Wide Borrowing: The right of any resident in Alberta holding an eligible public library card to borrow from a Network Participant library service point on-site from any other Network Participant library service point as if they were a local user, without using interlibrary loan mechanisms. Alberta-Wide Borrowing is currently administered through the ME Libraries program.

Guest user(s): User(s) who physically visit a Network Participant library service point that is not their home library for the purpose of borrowing materials.

Home library: A Network Participant library service point which issues the user a library card for the jurisdiction where a user resides.

Host Library: A Network Participant library service point which is physically visited by a guest user for the purpose of borrowing materials.

ILL software/platform: See Appendix A

ILL software/platform vendor: See Appendix A

Interlibrary loan (ILL): The temporary transfer of print and non-print library materials, or a copy of those materials, from one Network Participant library service point to another in response to a specific patron request. This may be done physically or electronically.

Library resources: Any material, regardless of format, that is held in a library service point's collection and includes books, periodicals, audio recordings, video recordings, projected media, paintings, drawings, photographs, micromaterials, toys and games, kits, CD-ROMs and electronic databases. (from: Libraries Regulation – section 1c)

Local user(s): User(s) who physically visit the library service point which issued their library card for the purpose of borrowing materials.

Non-resident(s): A person who does not reside in an area that is served by a Network Participant library service point issuing library cards.

Resource Sharing: Making available to other libraries the library resources owned by a local library board, the information contained in those library resources and the staff expertise required to locate and make available the information or the library resources. (See Libraries Regulation – section 1e) This includes sharing of resources, information, and staff expertise, and allows for other cooperative arrangements.

User(s): A resident of Alberta who has a home library card from a Network Participant library service point in the Public Library Network.

Vendor: an organization that develops custom software for the Government of Alberta. This relationship is established via Request for Proposal (RFP) when the vendor becomes the successful proponent in the RFP process.

Operational Guidelines

Network Participants that participate in the resource sharing process will abide by the following guidelines:

Interlibrary Loan

- a) Alberta's public library service points will not charge for interlibrary loans.

- a) Charges for interlibrary loans acquired via the ILL software/platform from out-of-province or other sector libraries may be passed along to a borrower.
- b) A borrower must be a valid user with a home library card from a Network Participant library service point.
- c) Lending libraries will make all items normally lent by their libraries available to all borrowing libraries.
- d) Notwithstanding section c, lending libraries are not required to share the following:
 - a) Equipment and electronics,
 - b) Oversized items (including kits),
 - c) E-resources,
 - d) Reference material,
 - e) Other items not normally lent by a public library.

Alberta-Wide Borrowing

- a) Guest users shall have borrowing privileges equivalent to local users except where prohibited by law or licensing agreements.
- b) Guest users will access borrowing with the library card issued by their home library.
- c) A user who has acquired a library card at a non-network participant or has paid a non-resident fee for a library card is not eligible for Alberta-Wide Borrowing.
- d) Host libraries may require guest users to have their home library cards in hand to borrow library resources.
- e) Guest users will not be charged an additional borrower's card fee by a host library.
- f) Guest users abide by host library lending rules.
- g) Guest users may be allowed to place holds on items at host libraries.
- h) Late fees and/or replacement costs will be applied to guest users as prescribed by host library policies and will be collectable by host libraries.
- i) Borrowed materials can be returned at any Network Participant library service point in Alberta and these returns will be forwarded to the host library.
- j) Regular evaluation and statistics as required will be identified by the Network Operational Partners and PLSB.

Appendix A

ILL software/platform: As at February 10, 2020, the ILL software/platform is Relais

ILL software/platform vendor: As at February 10, 2020, the vendor providing the ILL software/platform is OCLC, Inc.