

# Resource Sharing Operational Policy for Public Libraries

## Network Policy Statement

The Government of Alberta has established and sustains a network known as the Alberta 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 must be reciprocal, with each library providing the same level of access to their collections. Users must be able to find and request items, and libraries must be able to administer requests, delivery, tracking, and returns of items effectively. This operational policy establishes processes and rules which enforce 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 will share library resources through an organized system coordinated by PLSB in cooperation with the Nodes.
2. Network participants are obligated to lend 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 resources provided by Alberta public libraries through the network at no additional charge.
5. The local public library 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 public library participating in the network.

## Definitions

**Alberta-Wide Borrowing:** The right of any resident in Alberta holding an eligible public library card to borrow on-site from any other network participant as if they were a local user, without using interlibrary loan mechanisms.

**Interlibrary Loan (ILL):** The transfer of print and non-print library materials, or a copy of those materials, from one participating library to another in response to a specific patron request. This may be done physically or electronically.

**Interlibrary Loan Broker:** The library board or other agency contracted to provide facilitation of the ILL software within Alberta and expedite requests that go out-of-province.

**Library Resources:** Any material, regardless of format, that is held in a library'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. (See *Libraries Regulation* – section 1c)

**Resource Sharing:** Making available to other libraries the library resources owned by a board, the information contained in those 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:** Albertan who has a home library card from a participating library in the Alberta Public Library Network.

**Local Users:** Users who physically visit the library which issued their library card for the purpose of borrowing materials.

**Guest Users:** Users who physically visit a network participant library that is not their home library for the purpose of borrowing materials.

**Home Library:** A network participant which issues the user a library card for the municipality where a user resides.

**Host Library:** A network participant library which is physically visited by a guest user for the purpose of borrowing materials.

**Non-resident:** A person who does not reside in an area that is served by a network participant issuing library cards.

## Operational Guidelines

Public library boards that participate in the resource sharing process will abide by the following guidelines:

### Interlibrary Loan

- a) The interlibrary loan broker will not accept requests from libraries that are non-network participants.
- b) Alberta's public libraries will not charge for interlibrary loans.
  - a. Requesting libraries may pass on charges for interlibrary loans from other lending libraries (out-of-province or other sector libraries).
- c) A borrower must be a valid user with a home library card from a participating 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 customer who has acquired a library card as 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 resources.
- e) Guest users will not be charged an additional borrower's card fee by a host library.
- f) Local lending rules apply. Guest users must abide by host library lending rules.
- g) 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.
- h) Borrowed materials can be returned at any participating public library in Alberta and these returns will be forwarded to the host library.
- i) Regular evaluation and statistics as required will be identified by the Nodes and PLSB.