



Library Policies

Small and Medium Libraries

Policy Often About Relationships



Policy: Written policies ensure effective and efficient running of library

- Supports the library & staff
- Guiding principle for decisions and actions
- Prevents confusion
- Promotes consistency



Policies

- Operational

- Deals with functions that support library service objectives
 - Collection Development
 - Public Relations
- Deal with interactions with the public
- Guide patrons and staff

- Managerial

- Deal with functions related to planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling



Need

- Recurring problem(s)
- New service(s)
- Inconsistency in how things happen in practice

How to tell if you need a policy

- Different staffers and/or volunteers are enforcing standards differently.
- **EXAMPLE:** One staffer is very strict about noise in the library, and will expel teens who get rowdy. Another is lenient and enjoys kidding with the teens.
- **EXAMPLE:** Some staffers aren't offering services that the library can make available.
- A policy would provide standards for staff and library user behavior and for consequences of not meeting those standards.



Creating Policy

Background and Issues



Process

1. Research

2. Writing

3. Revision

4. Library Approval

5. Board Approval

6. Distribution

Writing

- Understandable to a wide range of readers
- Text clear, brief, free of jargon



POLICY

A hand is shown writing the word "POLICY" in blue capital letters on a white surface. A blue horizontal line is drawn underneath the word.

Valid and Legally Enforceable

- Conforms to current law
- Reasonable
- Nondiscriminatory
- Measurability
 - For example, dress codes: “appropriate shirts” versus “no tank tops”
 - Not open for interpretation



Policy Statement

Brief statement that describes why the library does something.

Example:

“To ensure that all patrons and visitors are able to use the Library’s resources and services effectively, the Indiana State Library requires all visitors to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws as well as the following rules and regulations.”

<http://www.in.gov/library/2435.htm>

Criteria for a Policy Statement

A policy statement

- is brief.
- describes what is to be accomplished and why.
- is written from the customer's point of view.
- has been developed and approved by the library's governing authority.

APPROVED

Ethics and Confidentiality/Privacy

- Code of Professional Ethics for Librarians

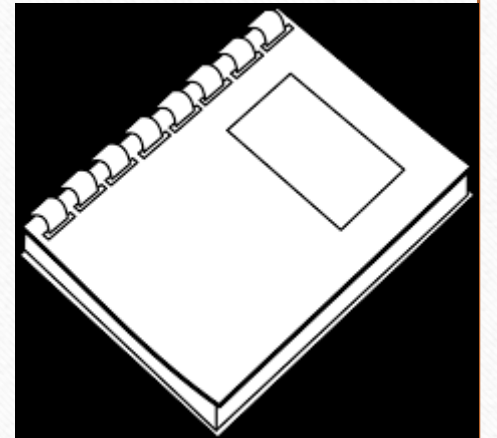
- It is the librarian's responsibility to make the resources and services of the library known to its potential users. Impartial service should be rendered to all who are entitled to use the library.
- It is the librarian's obligation to treat as confidential any private information obtained through contact with library patrons.
 - Purge personally identifiable information regularly

Board Deliberation

- Really necessary?
- Consistent with our mission statement?
- Within the scope of our authority as a board?
- Consistent with our other policies?
- Compatible with our other policies?
- Practical?
- Broad enough to cover the subject completely?
- Enforceable?
- Affordable?

Board Approval

- Simple majority approval
- Sign and date the policy
- Maintained in a Policy Manual



Types of Policies

General

- Staff Conduct
- Patron Conduct
- Access
- Reference
- Use of Resources
- Collection Development

Specific

- Computer Use Policy
- Internet Use Policy
- Meeting Rooms
- Displays
- Filtering Software
- Service Animals

Access Policy

- Principles of Access
- Access will not be denied or abridged because of religious, racial, social, economic, or political status; or because of mental, emotional, or physical condition; age; or sexual orientation. The Library abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act and will endeavor to make reasonable accommodation to provide access to library materials for people with impairments.
- Rights of Library Users
 - Responsibilities – circulation rules

Collection Development Policy

- American Library Association
 - Library Bill of Rights
 - Freedom to Read
- Broad-based on providing materials for recreation, education and information
 - All ages and all viewpoints

ALA American
Library
Association

Procedure for Complaints or Challenges

- Challenged Materials Forms
 - Bibliographic Information
 - Page number or scene of objectionable material
 - Reason for objection
- The Librarian shall read the book or view the material, noting the objections. The Library Board shall also review the material and consider the objection.
- Personal bias or prejudice is not a valid reason for objection.
- The decision to remove the material from the collection will be based on the same considerations used when selecting new material.
- The complainant will be notified of the decision of the Librarian and the Library Board.

Internet Use Policy

- **IC 36-12-1-12**

(c) The board of a public library shall adopt a policy concerning the appropriate use of the Internet or other computer network by library patrons in all areas of the library.

(d) The board shall make the policy adopted under subsection (c) readily available to all library patrons.

(e) The board of a public library shall annually review the policy adopted under subsection (c).

Hearing for Internet Use Policy

- 47 CFR 54.520

Public Notice and Meeting or Hearing: Libraries must provide reasonable public notice and hold at least one public meeting or hearing to address the proposed filter and the Internet safety policy. Additional meetings are not necessary – even if the policy is amended – unless required by local or state rules or the policy itself.

Policy Review

- Periodic
- Weed out old and obsolete policies





Policy tells what

Procedure tells how

Summary

- Operational Policies and Managerial Policies
- Govern relationships between library staff and the public
- Need for Policy
- Written by library board with input from director and staff
- Gather in a Manual
- Weed and Update Annually

Resources: Books, Webpage, Slideshow

- IN Public Trust Chapter 3 “The Board Develops Policy,”
[http://www.in.gov/library/files/In the Public Trust 20141001 Chap 03.pdf](http://www.in.gov/library/files/In_the_Public_Trust_20141001_Chap_03.pdf)
- Larson, Jeanette C. and Herman L. Totten. The Public Library Policy Writer: a guidebook with model policies on CD Rom. NY: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc. c2008. 279 pp.
- Library Trustees Association of New York State. ITA Policy Database; search hundreds of library policies. Available: <http://www.librarytrustees.org/policies.php>

Resources: Books, Webpage, Slideshow

- Sauers, Michael, “Library policies: the good, the bad, and the ugly,” Slideshow found on www.slideshare.net on August 24, 2017. Published April 23, 2015, presented for the Education Institute on April 23, 2015.

Resources: Recordings

- Giacomantonio, John. “Social media, library meeting rooms, and the First Amendment.” Webinar at Indiana State Library on June 26, 2013. Available: <http://www.in.gov/library/law.htm>. 60 minutes.
- Moore, Angela. “Library Behavior Policies,” webinar at Indiana State Library on July 17, 2013. Available: <http://www.in.gov/librry/law.htm>. 60 minutes.

Websites

- American Library Association. Available: <http://www.ala.org> resource for
 - ALA Library Bill of Rights.
<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/intfreedom/librarybill/lbor.pdf>
 - Freedom to Read Statement
<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/LBOR%20%26%20FTR%20Statement.pdf>

Websites

- Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies. American Library Association. “Accessibility for patrons with service or support animals: what you need to know.” Library Accessibility Tip Sheet 8. Available: <http://www.ala.org/ascla/resources/tipsheets/service-animals>.
- Indiana State Library. “Legal Memo: ADA & Service Animals.” May 20, 2016. Available: <http://www.in.gov/library/law.htm>.