

# LINCOLN TRAIL LIBRARIES SYSTEM RESOURCE ACCESS POLICY

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Rules and Regulations adopted pursuant to the Illinois Library System Act provide that systems adopt a Plan of Service describing services provided by the system headquarters and cooperative services of member libraries. The Plan of Service shall include "a plan for access to the total library resources of each public library member of the system by any person holding a valid identification card issued by the library system or any other public library member of that system." (Rules and Regulations, Section 3030.65 (c)). Among other requirements, this plan for access must include a provision for reciprocal borrowing, which must be adopted and observed by all public library members of the system, and a plan for reciprocal access to collections of all libraries within the system area.

In accordance with this requirement, member libraries share their non-confidential resources and information with other member libraries.

Pursuant to Illinois library law, Lincoln Trail Libraries System implements reciprocal borrowing as a service available only to resident cardholders of full member public libraries. In accordance with the provisions of 75 ILCS 5/4-7 (12), boards of member public libraries may extend the privileges and use of the library to persons residing outside of the library's taxing area. Cards issued to such non-residents "shall allow for borrowing privileges only at the library where the card was issued."

## II. SCOPE

In the context of this policy, the concept of Reciprocal Access refers to the intra-system on-site, on-shelf access to the non-confidential resources of any LTLS member library by patrons with valid card or library identification from any other LTLS member library. Reciprocal Borrowing refers to the in-person circulation of materials by any LTLS public library directly to patrons with valid library cards from any other LTLS public library. Multitype Reciprocal Borrowing refers to reciprocal borrowing privileges extended to all cardholders of any group of System member libraries (including at least one non-public library) which voluntarily agree to permit reciprocal borrowing.

## III. DEFINITIONS

Card-issuing Library: The library to which the patron pays taxes (or, in the case of a resident of an untaxed area, the library to which the patron pays a nonresident fee) for library service; the patron's primary library service outlet.

Extreme Delinquency: The circumstances under which a library would bill a patron for outstanding materials.

Imbalance: The difference between the number of items loaned by a library to reciprocal borrowers and the number of items loaned to its patrons by other libraries in a reciprocal borrowing plan or program.

INFOPASS: A referral card issued to patrons whose information needs require the on-site use of the resources of an LTLS non-public library. The INFOPASS entitles the patron to access the resources of the receiving library for on-site use by prior arrangement.

Lending Library: Any participating library other than the patron's home library from which the patron borrows material.

Multitype Reciprocal Borrowing: A voluntary plan for reciprocal borrowing privileges extended to cardholders of any group of System member libraries which includes at least one non-public library.

Nonresident Patron: A nonresident patron is one who lives outside of any public library taxing area. Library cards purchased by nonresident patrons are valid only at the library where the card was purchased. Nonresident library cards are not valid for reciprocal borrowing.

Receiving Library: In a reciprocal access transaction, the library which is making its resources available for on-site use by a patron from another member library.

Reciprocal Access: A plan or program whereby a person who is a registered patron in good standing of any LTLS member library may gain direct on-site access to the resources of any other member library within the System.

Reciprocal Borrowing:

- 1) A plan or program whereby a person holding a valid identification card issued by a full member public library of a system and valid for system-wide use may borrow materials directly from any other participating public or nonpublic library on a personal rather than on an institutional (i.e., interlibrary loan) basis.
- 2) The loan of materials by one public library (the "lending library") to a person who holds a borrower's card issued by a different public library (the "card-issuing library"), while the person is at the lending library.
- 3) The right of a person holding a valid library registration card from a full member public library of a library system, to borrow on site from all other public libraries which are full members of the library system without using interlibrary loan mechanisms. (Rules and Regulations for Library Systems)

Reciprocal Borrowing Patron: Any patron using a public library card at a library other than the card-issuing library under the provisions of a system's reciprocal borrowing program.

Referring Library: In a reciprocal access transaction, the library which is arranging for its patron to obtain on-site access to the resources of another member library.

System-wide Borrowers Card: A card issued by a full member public library to a patron who is a resident of the library's geographic service area. System-wide borrowers cards are valid for reciprocal borrowing at other full member public libraries in the library system. A system-wide borrowers card may not be issued to a non-resident patron. Non-resident patrons may purchase a local use card only.

#### **IV. RECIPROCAL BORROWING**

##### **A. PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of the Reciprocal Borrowing section of the policy is to describe the cooperative activity by which patrons with valid library cards from one LTLS member public library (card-issuing library) may borrow library materials in person from any other LTLS member public library (lending library) on the same basis and at the same fees as local patrons of the lending library.
2. The principles described in this policy are implemented through Reciprocal Borrowing Procedures established by the System.
3. Reciprocal borrowing is intended to be a device for resource sharing. The provision of reciprocal borrowing--combined with reciprocal reference service, reciprocal access, and reciprocal interlibrary loan--should not lead to extreme imbalances in reciprocal loads placed on member libraries. Imbalances in reciprocal borrowing are usually referred to as "net lending" and "net borrowing."
4. The basic principle in reciprocal borrowing is that the patron is responsible for all materials borrowed. Whenever materials are overdue or lost, the first recourse of the lending library shall always be to use all reasonable efforts, including direct billing of the delinquent patron by the lending library, to recover overdue materials or secure payment for lost materials directly from the patron. When these efforts by the lending library fail to recover the materials, the next recourse of the lending library is to bill the card-issuing library for materials lost by its cardholders.

##### **B. ELIGIBILITY**

1. All member public libraries are required to extend reciprocal borrowing privileges to patrons with valid system-wide borrowers cards issued by other LTLS member public libraries, according to the "Responsibilities of the Lending Library" as enumerated in section IV. C. of this policy. Each member public library is required to provide Reciprocal Borrowing services (as a lending library) at all times including any period during which the reciprocal borrowing privileges of its local patrons may be suspended due to the library's failure to meet the eligibility requirements described in Sections IV. B, IV. C, and IV. D of this policy.
2. Patrons with valid system-wide borrowing cards from any LTLS member public library shall be eligible to receive reciprocal borrowing privileges at other LTLS member public libraries provided their home library (card-issuing library) meets the following eligibility criteria:

- a) Accepts responsibility for materials lost or damaged by their patrons through reciprocal borrowing, when all reasonable efforts to recover materials or secure payment directly from the patron have failed.

- b) Maintains a level of local effort in the provision of direct local service to the library's patrons at the following minimum levels:
  - 1) Be a full member public library making tangible progress towards meeting the minimum statewide standards for hours and days open as appropriate to the library's size.
  - 2) Meet the eligibility requirements for the Illinois State Library Per Capita Grant.
  - 3) Provide telephone access to the library.
  - 4) Provide at least 60% of local needs to its patrons through direct service, as calculated using the formula described in section IV. B. 4. below.
  
- c) Works carefully and responsibly to meet specified minimum standards for the issuance and renewal of patron cards, and for the maintenance of patron records. The minimum acceptable criteria for issuance of library cards intended to be valid for system-wide use for reciprocal borrowing are:
  - 1) The individual to whom the card is issued must be a resident of the library's taxing area in order for the card to be valid for reciprocal borrowing.
  - 2) Cards must be issued for periods not to exceed three years.
  - 3) The expiration date must appear on the card.
  - 4) The borrower's full name must appear on the front of the card. If the borrower's address does not appear, the library must provide full address upon request by other libraries during all open hours of the card-issuing library.
  - 5) A unique number identifying the individual borrower must appear on each card. This number will be either the patron's bar code number (for patrons of LINC online libraries) or the library's two-digit identification number followed by the patron's unique local identification number (for patrons of non-automated libraries). Once issued to a patron, this unique identifying number must not be re-issued to any other patron.
  - 6) The name and mailing address of the issuing library must appear on the front of the card.
  - 7) Each library card shall be issued only in the name of an individual, not a "family." Cards are non-transferable and may be used only by the individual named on the card.
  - 8) Each card issued to a non-resident of the library's taxing area will be valid for borrowing privileges only at the library where it is issued, and will not be valid for reciprocal borrowing.
  - 9) All cards issued to nonresidents must be clearly marked "Local Use Only" on the front of the card.
  
- d) Pays all valid charges for lost or damaged materials incurred pursuant to the reciprocal borrowing activity of its cardholders to any LTLS member public library, or to LTLS, within 60 days of receiving a bill from a lending library for such payment.
  
- e) Provide a bill to any other LTLS member public library for the cost of reciprocal borrowing materials lost by its cardholders. Such billing may be made only after all reasonable efforts to recover the material directly from the reciprocal borrowing patron, including direct billing of the patron by the lending library, have failed. Billing by the lending library must not be

sooner than four months, and not later than six months, after the due date of the material in question.

- f) Refund to the card-issuing library any amount paid by them for lost materials in the event such materials are recovered from or paid for by the patron within one year following the due date of the material.
  - g) Disputes arising from billing for lost reciprocal borrowing materials may, by agreement of both parties, be submitted to the LTLS Executive Director for resolution.
3. At least annually, in conjunction with the regular LTLS review of the library's membership eligibility, LTLS will review the library's eligibility for participation in reciprocal borrowing according to the criteria described in Sections IV. B, IV. C, and IV. D of this policy. Any LTLS member library may submit in writing to LTLS information relating to any perceived violation of the provisions of this policy by another library.
4. The formula to be used to determine the percent of the local needs of a library's patrons which is being met by the library will be as follows. The library must meet at least 60% of local needs for continued eligibility for reciprocal borrowing.

$$\frac{A + B}{A + C} = \text{PERCENT OF LOCAL NEEDS MET BY LIBRARY}$$

A + C

WHERE: A = Items loaned by this library to cardholders from this library.  
B = Items loaned by this library to cardholders from other libraries.  
C = Items loaned by other libraries to cardholders from this library.

5. Each full member public library shall have a local option to suspend reciprocal borrowing privileges to cardholders of any member public library determined to be eligible for suspension pursuant to a review of eligibility criteria by the LTLS Board of Directors.
- a) LTLS will develop a plan for collecting baseline statistical data to review the eligibility criteria described in this policy. Cardholders of libraries not meeting the criteria in Sections IV. B., IV. C., or IV. D. of this policy will be eligible for suspension of reciprocal borrowing privileges by the other full member public libraries of the system.
  - b) LTLS will notify all full member public libraries in writing of the names of those libraries which are eligible for suspension of reciprocal borrowing privileges, and will notify libraries in writing of the suspension actions being taken by other libraries.
  - c) Suspensions based on Section IV.B.2(b)(4) of this policy will be for a six month period beginning on the next January 1st or July 1st following the notice described in paragraph b) above. Eligibility will be reinstated at the end of the suspension period.

- d) Suspensions based on any part of Sections IV. B., IV. C., or IV. D. of this policy except Section IV.B.2(b)(4) will continue until the library notifies LTLS in writing of action taken by the library which will cause the library to meet the criteria involved.
  - e) During any period of suspension of privileges, member public libraries which exercise their local option will refuse reciprocal borrowing to patrons carrying cards issued by the suspended library.
6. In case of disputes arising from the application of the suspension provisions of the Resource Access Policy, the procedures described in the LTLS Grievance Policy will be used. If a grievance is filed in response to any suspension of reciprocal borrowing privileges pursuant to this policy, the suspension shall not be enforced during the course of the grievance procedure.

#### C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LENDING LIBRARY

The lending library shall:

1. Lend to reciprocal borrowers all materials in any format which are available for loan to local borrowers on the same basis as for local borrowers.
2. Maintain adequate statistics concerning reciprocal borrowing using a form distributed by LTLS.
3. Notify reciprocal borrowers of overdue materials in order to recover materials or collect payment directly from the patron.
4. Notify the card-issuing library for assistance in retrieval and/or for reimbursement for lost material when efforts to contact the patron directly have failed.
5. Refuse reciprocal borrowing privileges to patrons reported as extremely delinquent by the card-issuing library until the delinquency is cleared.
6. Refuse to honor any card which does not meet the minimum criteria established for issuance of reciprocal borrowers cards.
7. Refuse to honor cards from cardholders of any library determined to be eligible for suspension of reciprocal borrowing, and for which the lending library has exercised its local option to suspend privileges.

#### D. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CARD-ISSUING LIBRARY

The card-issuing library shall:

1. Provide the best, most comprehensive service possible to its primary service population. Reciprocal borrowing is not a replacement for, but a supplement to, services provided to the patron by the home library.
2. Provide information to patrons on the reciprocal borrowing rules and procedures in the System, and encourage patrons to use the home library for their primary library services and use reciprocal borrowing for supplemental services.

3. Maintain accurate registration and reciprocal borrowing validation information for its patrons.
4. Assist with the retrieval of delinquent material borrowed by one of its registered patrons.
  - a) This policy recognizes a distinction between "regular" delinquency and "extreme" delinquency for the purpose of notification among libraries. Libraries which are on-line participants in LINC provide automatic mutual notification of all delinquent patrons through the on-line database.
  - b) Automated libraries agree to honor the delinquency thresholds of all other automated libraries as reflected in the on-line database, and agree not to circulate materials to any patron, whether a local patron or a patron of another automated library, with delinquent status until the delinquency is cleared.
  - c) Libraries not automated on LINC will enter patron records for their delinquent patrons whose cards should not be honored for reciprocal borrowing directly into the LINC database. It is the intention of this policy that only patrons with extreme delinquency status be reported. However, each library may determine its criteria for reporting extreme delinquent patrons consistent with its local delinquency thresholds, provided that the criteria used are non-discriminatory, and are applied equally to all patrons, and that all patrons so reported must also be delinquent (not eligible for circulation of materials) at the home library.
5. In the case of loss of materials through reciprocal borrowing, the card-issuing library is financially responsible for the losses incurred by its patrons in good standing (not reported as delinquent), provided that the lending library took adequate precautions to assure that the borrower was in good standing at his local library.
6. When a card-issuing library pays a lending library on behalf of a delinquent patron for items borrowed but not returned, the patron's delinquency shall not be cleared. The patron must continue to be listed as delinquent whether or not the card-issuing library is on-line, until he has paid the card-issuing library for the materials he borrowed. The card-issuing library shall then report the clearing of the patron's delinquency.
7. Annually review its non-resident fee policy and report to LTLS the method adopted by the library to determine the local use non-resident fee, the amount of the fee, and the effective date of the fee.

#### E. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SYSTEM

The System shall:

1. Provide informational brochures to participating libraries on reciprocal borrowing rules and procedures.
2. Coordinate the collection of intra-system reciprocal borrowing statistics from member libraries.

3. Monitor reciprocal borrowing use patterns.
4. Annually calculate the minimum local use non-resident fee for each member public library using the standard state-approved formula, and notify all libraries of the actual non-resident fees set by other member public libraries.
5. Provide a means for notifying member public libraries of patrons reported as extremely delinquent by other member libraries.
6. Provide an opportunity to purchase standard library cards for system-wide reciprocal borrowing for use by member libraries.
7. Provide a means to notify libraries of any member library whose reciprocal borrowing privileges have been suspended by another member library.
8. Provide training for staff of non-automated libraries to enter patron records for their delinquent patrons directly into LINC.

## **V. RECIPROCAL ACCESS**

### **A. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Reciprocal Access section of the Resource Access policy is to provide a plan by which the non-proprietary, non-confidential library resources of all LTLS member libraries are made available for limited on-site/on-shelf access to patrons in good standing of all member libraries.

### **B. ELIGIBILITY**

Patrons in good standing at any LTLS member library of any type are eligible to utilize the Reciprocal Access program. Valid library identification may be required by the library providing access. A valid library card or written verification of the patron's status is required for eligibility. Libraries which do not issue library cards to patrons may provide written verification that the patron is an authorized library patron in good standing. Such verification must include the patron's name, library name, expiration or renewal date of the patron's status at the library, and must be signed by an authorized library staff member.

Libraries may place reasonable restrictions on physical access to their facilities by patrons of other libraries. All libraries are encouraged to provide the most open, least restrictive access possible.

### C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL MEMBER LIBRARIES

1. Provide information describing local access requirements for dissemination to other libraries by LTLS.

This information should include at a minimum:

- a) Staff contact name and telephone number.
- b) Statement of whether advance referral is required for Reciprocal Access or not.
- c) Description of special procedures, if any, for access to the library's collection by Reciprocal Access patrons.
- d) Directions to the library within the institution.
- e) Circulation privileges offered to Reciprocal Access patrons, if any.
- f) Subject strengths in the library's collection.

### D. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RECEIVING LIBRARY

1. Participate in the Reciprocal Access program by making its library resources available to patrons of other member libraries in the least restrictive way possible.
2. Make available all non-proprietary, non-confidential resources of the library for on-site use by Reciprocal Access patrons from other LTLS libraries.

### E. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REFERRING LIBRARY

1. Encourage and inform patrons of the availability of reciprocal access as appropriate to their information needs.
2. Follow the procedures for advance referral or special access procedures set by the receiving library, if any, when referring a patron.
3. When required by the receiving library, issue an INFOPASS referral card for patrons to take to the receiving library.

### F. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SYSTEM

1. Provide a standard INFOPASS referral card to be issued by referring libraries to patrons seeking Reciprocal Access to other member library collections.

The INFOPASS form will include, at a minimum, the following information:

- a) Name of referring library and staff member making the referral.
- b) Name, address, and verification of the patron's status.
- c) Date of referral telephone contact with receiving library.
- d) Date and time most convenient for on-site access library staff to meet with patron.
- e) Relevant reference information pertaining to the patron's information request.

2. Monitor the INFOPASS program.

3. Provide informational brochures to member libraries on Reciprocal Access in order to promote awareness and encourage use of the program by all System member libraries.
4. Consult with member libraries on their use of the INFOPASS program in the context of the overall resource sharing goals of the System.

## **VI. INTERSYSTEM RECIPROCAL BORROWING**

### **A. PURPOSE**

In order to promote the widest possible access for patrons of public libraries within LTLS to the resources in libraries in other library systems, LTLS is party to the Illinois Intersystem Reciprocal Borrowing Covenant (the Covenant) (See Appendix A).

### **B. ELIGIBILITY**

1. Since LTLS is party to the Covenant, all LTLS public library members are eligible to elect to participate.
2. Under the terms of this covenant, incorporated herein by reference, "any person holding a borrowers card valid for reciprocal borrowing issued by a library...which...is participating in the intersystem reciprocal borrowing program...(shall have) access to any or all of the other similarly participating libraries belonging to systems which are party to the (Covenant)."

### **C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LIBRARY**

1. All participating libraries agree to honor valid borrowers cards for reciprocal borrowing from all other participating libraries in other library systems.
2. Any library which is not a participant in the Covenant shall formally review its decision regarding participation in the Covenant at least once each year, and communicate the result of this annual review to LTLS.

### **D. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SYSTEM**

1. Encourage all member public libraries to participate in the Intersystem Reciprocal Borrowing Covenant.

## **VII. MULTITYPE RECIPROCAL BORROWING**

### **A. PURPOSE**

The purpose of Multitype Reciprocal Borrowing is to provide a means by which a group of full member libraries which includes at least one non-public library may voluntarily agree to provide reciprocal borrowing for cardholders of each of the participating libraries.

## B. ELIGIBILITY

Any full member library may enter into a multitype reciprocal borrowing agreement with other full member libraries of the System. Multitype reciprocal borrowing agreements must include at least one non-public library.

## C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING LIBRARIES

1. Assess the library's potential for entering into a multitype reciprocal borrowing agreement with libraries of other types at least annually.
2. Notify Lincoln Trail Libraries System of the library's intention to enter into a multitype reciprocal borrowing agreement by written notice including the names of the libraries involved in the prospective agreement.
3. Notify Lincoln Trail Libraries System of the library's participation in an agreement by forwarding a copy of the written agreement to LTLS within 30 days of entering into the agreement.

## D. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SYSTEM

1. Encourage libraries to evaluate the benefits of entering into multitype reciprocal borrowing agreements.
2. When notified of the intent of member libraries to enter into a multitype reciprocal borrowing agreement, provide consulting assistance to the libraries.
3. Monitor the status and progress of multitype reciprocal borrowing agreements among member libraries.