# Berks County Public Library System
# Borrowing Policies

Library Card Registration

The Berks County Public Library System (BCPL) provides services to all residents of the County of Berks without discrimination in fulfillment of its mission to develop services, resources and collections to meet the cultural, informational, educational and recreational needs of its diverse community.

All library transaction records are confidential under Article IV. Section 428 of the Public Library Code (24 PA C.S.).

BCPL member libraries issue library cards to establish a patron account, facilitate loan of materials and use of online resources, and to enable the member libraries to keep a record of which materials are on loan to patrons. Individuals who live, own property, work, or attend school in Berks County are eligible for a free library card. This card is also referred to as an Adult/Juvenile/YA 3 year or Academic/Employment library card.

Library cards are valid for use at all BCPL member libraries and Reading Area Community College.

To borrow materials from a BCPL member library, a person must register for a library card. Applicants must present proper proof of residency and identity, and complete and sign a library card application. By virtue of registering for a card, the applicant agrees to accept responsibility for all fines, fees, or charges incurred through library transactions. Applicants are able to obtain a registration form online; but must present proof of residency and identity before receiving a physical library card.

Anyone under the age of 18 may receive a library card after completion of an application by a parent or legal guardian presenting proper proof of residency and/or identity. At their discretion, member libraries may allow those under the age of 18 to assume responsibility and register for their own card. By virtue of registering, the person agrees to be financially responsible for all fines and other charges incurred. At the discretion of the Library Director and under certain circumstances, another adult may register as the responsible adult on behalf of a minor child. By virtue of completing registration for a minor the adult agrees to be financially responsible for the use of the card and all fines and other charges incurred pursuant to the Borrowing Policies. The adult applying for a juvenile card on behalf of a child must be in good standing (no fines/fees over $10). A juvenile card will be linked to the library card account of the signing adult. Member libraries may require adults registering on behalf of a minor child to apply for a library card if an account is not already opened.

Upon turning 18, a minor who has a library card will need to apply for a new card or update their current card and thereby assume financial responsibility for the new account.

BCPL member libraries and staff do not act *in loco parentis.*

BCPL member libraries are participants in the ACCESS PA Statewide Library card program and adhere to its rules and regulations for free reciprocal library cards. Pennsylvania residents who hold a valid library card from an out–of-county library or a State library card are eligible for a BCPL library card without fee. This card is also referred to as an Adult/Juvenile/YA 1 year library card. Such non-residents of Berks County are required to register and provide proof of identity.

Non-residents of Pennsylvania may be issued a borrower card upon providing proof of identity in the same manner as county residents in addition to proof of local academic/employment status. This card can be used only in BCPL member libraries. These cardholders receive an Adult/Juvenile/YA 1 year library card.

Library Card Information

*Identity and Residency Requirements*

The applicant must provide full legal name, address and date of birth.
Applicants are encouraged to provide valid photo identification that verifies name and current address. At their discretion, member libraries may accept other documentation to verify current address.

*Adult 1 year and Juvenile/YA 1 year*

This card type is issued to any patron who lives outside of Berks County and allows the cardholder to borrow physical materials at any BCPL location. This card does not include access to any digital/downloadable media type nor provide the ability to utilize out-of-System Interlibrary Loans (ILL) to request materials from libraries outside of the Berks County Public Libraries System with the exception for those who work or attend school within Berks County. This card does not give access to the ACCESS PA Statewide Library Card program.

*Adult 3 year and Juvenile/YA 3 year*

This card type is given to individuals who live in Berks County. Cardholders can access and borrow physical materials including but not limited to books, DVDs, CDs, audiobooks, museum passes, etc. In addition, patrons can access countywide digital/downloadable services and any specialty resources provided by the registering library. Cardholders may request out-of-System Interlibrary Loan (ILL) materials available from libraries outside of the Berks County Public Libraries System. Adult/Juvenile/YA 1 year library cardholders will be granted full-service access upon confirmation of their Academic/Employment status within Berks County.

*Institutional and Homeschooling Requirements*

Institutions may receive an *Extended borrower card*, providing the Director or other authorized person of the agency signs the application and commits to the financial responsibility of all fees and charges incurred pursuant to the Borrowing Policies.

Homeschooling educators may apply for an *Outreach borrower card* upon presentation of an affidavit as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and issued by the local school district. The affidavit covers the school year, and the borrower card registration must be renewed annually. An outreach card enables the cardholder to borrow up to 150 items at one time and place 50 hold requests.

Because Pennsylvania Law does not require homeschooling educators working with children younger than 8 to have an affidavit, those educators working exclusively with students under 8, may receive an Outreach card at the discretion of the Library Director.

*Internet Only*
Internet only cards enable users to access digital materials only. In order to obtain an internet only card, users are encouraged to provide proof they live, work or attend school in Berks County.

*Limited 6 months*
Member libraries may issue limited 6 month library cards with specific restrictions or limitations to new library patrons; no more than 5 holds and 5 items checked out a time. These cards lose their good standing after $5.00 in fines or fees are accrued.

Cardholder Responsibilities
Cardholders should present a valid library card in order to check out materials and to use library computer resources. If a library card is not available, the cardholder must provide an ID and proof of address that exactly matches the address on the account. Library cards are not transferable and may only be used by the person to whom it is issued or with the following exception stated in the next paragraph.

> Adult cardholders can designate others to pick up holds, check out items, or place holds for them by completing the "Allow others to use my account" section of their registration. This authorization is specifically noted in the cardholder's account. Designated persons may be asked to provide photo identification to verify they are authorized to use the cardholder's account.

A cardholder is responsible for all materials checked out on their library card and on the cards of minor children for whom they have assumed responsibility on a library card application.

Cardholders are responsible for all charges on their account including payments for any lost or damaged items borrowed on their card.

Cardholders are responsible to report address, telephone and/or email changes.

Lost or stolen library cards must be reported immediately so that the card can be invalidated. The owner of the card is responsible for all items checked out on the card until the card is reported lost or stolen.

Suspension of Cardholder Privileges
A cardholder's account is considered delinquent when items are overdue or money is owed. This status may affect the cardholder's ability to borrow materials, place holds or use electronic/digital resources.

Privileges will be suspended when:

- There are accumulated charges of more than $10.00.
- The count of overdue items on the cardholder's account exceed 10.
- The count of items checked out on the cardholder's account exceed 50.
- There are fines and fees from a previous calendar year. A library may require accounts to be paid in full by the end of each calendar year before items may be borrowed in a new calendar year.

Expiration of Library Cards
All library cards must be renewed every three years. If there has been no activity on the account, and there are no outstanding charges or unreturned materials, the account is

considered inactive after three years and deleted after seven years.

Material Loan Periods

*Loan periods*

- 21 days - audio materials, books, DVD series, and magazines.
- 7 days – DVDs and Museum and other Admission Passes.

Non-standard item loan periods, including loans from the Library of Things collection, are set by owning libraries.

Hold Limits

Most cardholders can request 20 items of any type. These hold limits cannot be overridden.

Renewals

Most materials, unless on reserve for another patron, will be automatically renewed for up to two additional loan periods. An additional subsequent renewal may be available; please consult your library for more information. Renewals for longer loan periods are granted on an exception basis.

Nonrenewable items may include Museum and other Admission Passes, HotSpots, electronic devices, and out-of-System Interlibrary Loans (ILL). For more information, contact your local library.

Items may be renewed at the library, online through the library website, or by phone. The cardholder's barcode number is required for telephone renewals.

Maximum number of items

The maximum number of physical items that can be borrowed is determined by each library card type. Some limits do vary by library. Please consult your library's local service policies to learn the limits on the number of items that can be borrowed.

- Adult 3 year and Juvenile/YA 3 year - 50 items
- Adult 1 year and Juvenile/YA 1 year - 50 items, no access to digital materials unless the Academic/Employment status is confirmed
- Extended – 200 items
- Outreach - 150 items
- Limited 6 months - 5 items
- Internet only - 0 items, access to digital materials only

Placing a Hold (or Request/Reserve)

If an item is not available at the time and place that it is sought, cardholders can place a hold (request/reserve) on the item at any member library, by phone, or online. Cardholders will be notified when the item is available.

Items placed on hold (requested/reserved) may be picked up at the BCPL library that was specified at the time the hold was placed. Member libraries may restrict or limit pick-up options for certain items. Held items must be picked up within 7 days of notification. Hold periods for special materials may vary by library.

Fines

Cardholders are responsible for returning library materials on time. There are no overdue fines on standard library materials such as Books, Audiobooks, DVDs, CDs, or Magazines. Member libraries may charge fines on special materials, out-of-System Interlibrary Loans (ILL), and Library of Things.

Fines are calculated based on the open dates of each individual library and vary by material type. The current fine table, as amended from time to time is posted at the Circulation Desk and online.

- Museum and other Admission Passes - $1.00/day Overdue Fine
- Special Materials (such as hotspots, tablets. etc. that only a few libraries carry), out-of-System Interlibrary Loans (ILL), and Library of Things. Overdue Fines are determined by the library that circulates the items.

Overdue Notices

Cardholders are notified when items checked out become delinquent. A billing invoice is sent if, after 2 overdue notices, the items have not been returned. Patrons receive overdue notices from the library using the notification preference listed in their library card account.

- 5 days after an item has become due, patrons are sent an overdue notice.
- 15 days after an item has become due, patrons are sent a second overdue notice.
- 30 days after an item has become due, patrons are sent a billing notice.

Section 6708 of Title 18, Pennsylvania Code makes it a summary offense to retain library property after being notified to return it.

Fees may be charged for

- Lost/damaged museum pass and all other lost/damaged items: Replacement value of the item.
- Special materials, including but not limited to Library of Things, related to the maintenance, cleaning or upkeep of the item.

Damaged items

Damaged materials will be immediately discarded if moldy, infested, or in a condition that will jeopardize library staff or other materials. After paying any related fees for a damaged item, a patron may request to keep the item. Please consult your library's local disposal policy for more information.

Returns and Book Drop Policy

Most items belonging to any Berks County public library may be returned at any Berks County public library. Book drops are available at each library for the return of materials when the library is closed. Exceptions may include museum passes, e-book readers, hotspots, Library of Things, and out-of-System Interlibrary Loans (ILL). These items must be returned inside the lending library at the circulation desk.

Please note: RACC's Yocum Library has their own Circulation Policy. Please check www.RACC.edu for the policy.

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