



BERKS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES SYSTEM MEMBERSHIP POLICY

Full Members

The benefits of full membership in Berks County Public Libraries (BCPL) include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Share in state and county funding according to the distribution formula determined by the System Advisory Board
- Participation in the shared integrated library system and bibliographic services
- Professional consulting by System staff
- Delivery services as defined in current Delivery of Library Materials Plan
- Share in benefits of grants awarded to the System
- Eligibility for annual awards
- Assistance in development of promotional materials
- Access to continuing education programming
- Other benefits as the System Advisory Board may enact

To retain full membership in BCPL, libraries must:

- Meet or exceed applicable state standards
- Achieve *Uniform Requirements and Responsibilities*
- Participate in the Access PA database
- Participate in the Statewide Library Card program
- Adopt county-wide borrowing policies
- Maintain efforts to secure local funding
- Offer borrowing and return privileges to all County residents
- Abide by System/District interlibrary loan protocols
- Directors and Youth Services Staff (or representatives) attend at least 80% of scheduled Director's and Youth Services Meetings
- Participate in all four System-wide Initiatives provided in one calendar year
- Comply with such other requirements as state laws and System Board policies may establish

Rights and Responsibilities of Member Libraries

A member library shall:

- Retain control of and title to all property, endowments, gifts, and other locally raised funds and dedicate the use of these to public library service
- Make collections and services available on an equal basis to all residents served by the System
- Submit annual reports through the System as required by the Office of Commonwealth Libraries
- Support the System in securing necessary funds for System-wide services
- Maintain an agreement with municipal officials of the municipality or municipalities within the designated service area to provide residents with public library services
- Annually approach these same officials for financial support

- Meet state standards as they apply to the System and to the member library according to its service area

Affiliate Members

A new or existing public library may apply for affiliate membership in Berks County Public Libraries when it has:

- An ADA compliant site in which to serve the public and house the collection
- Equipment and furnishings (shelves, charging desk, etc) adequate for providing basic services as defined by the Pennsylvania Library Code
- Collection of recent, useful books and other materials
- Resolutions or statements of intent from the municipalities in the desired service area to provide annual financial support for the library in the amount of \$5 per capita
- Evidence of a membership/fund-raising drive that reaches every household in the desired service area

To make application for affiliate membership, the library organization must submit a written request for placement on the agenda of a regularly scheduled System Board meeting. This request should be made 30 days prior to the desired meeting date and include details concerning the elements listed above. In addition, the written request must include the library organization's statement of intent to meet the requirements for full membership within three years.

Affiliate members will receive the following benefits:

- Professional consulting by System staff
- Inclusion in the van delivery service route
- Access to continuing education programming
- Assistance in developing promotional materials

Affiliate members must:

- Achieve state standards within three years
- Comply with *Uniform Requirements and Responsibilities* within three years
- Conform to System service policies
- Maintain local funding

An affiliate member may apply for full membership status when it is eligible for state aid; this eligibility is defined in Section 303.2 of *The Library Code*.

Additions to Assigned Service Area of a Full Member Library

A library that is a full member of the System may request that a municipality be added to its legal service area under the following conditions:

- 1) the library meets all state standards that apply for the service area population that will result (i.e. director certification level, hours open, collection size);
- 2) the library provides evidence of a membership/fund-raising drive that reaches a majority of the residents in the municipality to be added;

- 3) the municipality issues a resolution or statement of intent to provide annual financial support for the library in an amount no less than the average annual support provided by the other municipalities in the library service area.

How "average annual support" will be determined: The most recently completed state report will be used to determine the amount of financial support from each of the municipalities in the library service area. The figures will be added together and divided by the number of contributing service area municipalities to arrive at the average.

The member library should notify the System Administrator of its plan to make a service area change request at least 30 days before the next scheduled BCPL Board meeting in order that the request may be forwarded to the System Board for review. A vote of the Advisory Board at a regularly scheduled meeting is required to approve the change.

Amended September 2010
Amended November 20, 2019
Amended November 20, 2024