



*North Dakota  
State Library*

# Writing Policies

# Before We Begin...

- This is our first conference using Microsoft Teams. Please be patient as we work through any kinks.
- If you were placed in this session in error, please hit the return button and let Cindy know which session you are meant to be in.
- Let's go learn stuff!

# What makes a good policy?

- Concise
- Adaptable
- Plain Language
- Specific
- In line with the law
- Separate from procedure

# The Path Toward Policy in ND



# Before you start writing a policy...

- Make sure it is actually needed.
- Investigate how other libraries are handling the issue.
- Consult stakeholders.

# Drafting a Policy

- Don't reinvent the wheel!
- Include staff who will be enforcing the policy in the process.
- Define the purpose and scope of the policy.
- Identify responsibilities and procedures (but keep them separate!).
- Keep it professional.

# Policy vs. Procedure

- Sets the what and why for library operations
  - Broad overview
  - Provides a framework
  - Adopted by the library board
  - Can only be changed by the library board
  - Reviewed every 1-3 years
- Sets how the library operates
  - Very specific, step-by-step
  - Written by the library director with staff input (when applicable)
  - Can be changed as needed
  - Reviewed and updated constantly

# 4 Measures of Legally Enforcable Policies

1. Does the policy comply with current statutes?
2. Is the policy reasonable, including reasonable penalties?
3. Could there be discriminatory application of the policy?
4. Is the policy measurable?

Credit: New York State Library <https://nysllibrary.libguides.com/publiclibrarystandards/policies>



# External vs. Internal policies

External: Any policy that applies to patron use of the library

Examples:

Circulation

Computer Use/Social Media

Patron Privacy (aka Patron Confidentiality)

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Collection Development & Reconsideration

Internal: Any policy and procedures that applies to staff

Examples:

- Staff handbook (pay, benefits, schedules, dress code, etc.)
- Social media guidelines
- Personal use of equipment such as a copier
- Workplace safety
- Programming and events

# Common Library Policies

- Board Bylaws
- Circulation
  - May include ILL or ILL may be separate
- Collection Development & Reconsideration
  - may be one or separate policies
- Computer Use/Internet Use
- Disaster/Emergency Preparedness
- Patron Behavior Policy
- Patron Privacy (Patron Confidentiality)
- Personnel Policy/Employee Handbook
- Programs
- Social Media
- Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults

# Resources

- [North Dakota State Library](#)
- [United for Libraries](#)
- [Central Kansas Library System](#)
- [OWLS](#)
- [CLiC](#)

# Questions?





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