

Bucks County Library System

Circulation Services

LIBRARY CARDS – RESIDENT AND NON-RESIDENT

Policy Statement

Bucks County public libraries issue library cards to facilitate, regulate, track and control use of the library and library resources.

Library cards enable people who live, work, go to school or pay taxes in Bucks County to borrow materials and access services. They define the terms and conditions of privileges extended to residents and non-residents, and balance the libraries' commitment to extend services against their legal, financial and practical ability to do so.

Statistical data about registered library users and library card use is collected and compiled so libraries can plan and target operations to specific community needs, and so they can effectively report statistics required by federal, state, local and private funding bodies. Libraries collect and use information about individual library users for management of individual library accounts. Internal library policies and Pennsylvania privacy laws protect personal data. The Bucks County Free Library policy titled Use of Patron Data for Library Advancement governs use of individual library data for library marketing and fundraising.

RegulationsGeneral

Bucks County public libraries issue library cards at no cost to qualified borrowers in the following categories:

- Resident: a person who lives in Bucks County and can provide evidence of a Bucks County residential address.
- Qualified Access Pennsylvania borrower: a non-resident who holds a card from a state-aided public library which participates in Access Pennsylvania. This category supersedes other non-resident categories; Access Pennsylvania cards must be issued to qualified non-residents.
- Non-Resident: A non-resident is an individual whose primary residence is outside Bucks County. An individual who is staying in Bucks County for fixed or limited time period and whose primary residence is outside Bucks County is not treated as a resident. Bucks County public libraries issue library cards for a fee to non-residents who do not otherwise qualify for free cards. Non-

resident fees are reviewed annually by Bucks County public libraries and posted on the library website together with library fine and fee schedules.

In addition to issuing Access PA library cards to qualified Pennsylvania residents, Bucks County public libraries issue free non-resident cards as follows:

- Non-resident Bucks County student: a person who attends an elementary or secondary public or private school or institution of higher learning in Bucks County and can provide evidence of current enrollment.
- Non-resident Bucks County taxpayer: a person who does not live in Bucks County but can provide evidence of property or business ownership.
- Non-resident employee: a person who is employed at an establishment in Bucks County and can provide evidence of current Bucks County employment.

Bucks County public libraries charge a fee for library cards issued to non-residents who do not otherwise qualify for a free card. Some electronic resources may not be available to non-residents due to licensing. Non-resident fees are reviewed annually by Bucks County public libraries and are posted on the website together with the library fine and fee schedules.

Applicants are required to complete application forms in full in order to receive library cards. Library card applications are available at the circulation or other service desk in each library and on the library's website.

An individual may have only one current library card with the Bucks County public libraries.

An individual must be registered for a library card to checkout material, access electronic borrower services and unique resources on the library's website, and for public computer signup at most locations. In some libraries, a registered borrower who provides the library with a Pennsylvania driver's license or Department of Motor Vehicles issued identification card may use that as a substitute library card for checkout when the library management system is online.

Library cardholders are responsible for the proper care and safe return of all items borrowed and all fees or fines incurred on their cards.

Library Cards for Adults

Adult applicants, who live, work, go to school or pay taxes in Bucks County are required to provide identification, including proof of current address, at the time of application.

Documents accepted as proof of identity and residence are listed in the separate proof of identity and residency table.

Homeless residents

A homeless resident is an individual that lacks housing and resides during the night in a shelter, public place, car, or home of a friend or family member. Homeless individuals must provide proof of *identity* as defined in the Proof of identity and residency table. Homeless individuals that can't provide proof of *residency* as defined in the table are permitted to substitute a letter on shelter letterhead indicating that the applicant is a temporary resident at that address; any piece of mail in the individual's name received at a Bucks County residential address within the prior thirty days; or a letter on letterhead from the Bucks County Assistance Office indicating that the individual is a homeless resident of Bucks County.

Non-residents

Pennsylvania residents who do not live in Bucks County, will be issued a Bucks County Access Pennsylvania card when they present their home library card with an AccessPA sticker and proof of identity and residence. Out-of-state residents will be issued a 3 month card or 12 month card when they present proof of identity and residence and pay the applicable fee.

Library Cards for Children (under age 14)

To apply for a library card for a child, a parent or legal guardian (with official documentation) must present a completed application, identification and proof of residency. Parents and legal guardians must provide the actual birth date on applications for library cards issued to children, defined as those under age 14. Some libraries may require parent's date of birth for bill collection.

Libraries will accept the parent or legal guardian's identification and proof of residency or other status as listed above for adult applicants on behalf of a child applying for a library card. The same types of library card and library use privileges (resident, non-resident) are extended to the child as to his or her parent or legal guardian.

During library card registration drives at Bucks County schools or other institutions, the library may waive requirements for individual proof of residence at its discretion but will require completed library card applications.

By signing a child's library card application, a parent or legal guardian accepts financial responsibility for the proper care and safe return of all items borrowed and all fees or fines incurred on the child's card.

Parents and legal guardians are ultimately responsible for guiding and monitoring a child's library use. Bucks County public libraries provide a range of materials to suit various reading interests and perspectives. Libraries and their employees do not act on behalf of parents and legal guardians to monitor, control, or restrict what an individual child selects for reading, listening, viewing, and check out when a parent is not present.

Current Pennsylvania privacy law protects the confidentiality of a child's library card record. Library employees must adhere to the law and may not freely share information with parents or legal guardians about what a child has checked out or requested from the library. Those who would like to closely monitor their child's library use are urged to take the following steps:

- Require that the child share his or her library card and PIN as a condition of applying for a card
- Monitor emailed or mailed library notices
- When making a phone or in-person request for information, be prepared to have the child on the phone line or there in person to verify that he or she gives permission to the library to share confidential information with you.
- Use the child's library card and PIN to monitor his or her library records at MyAccount.

Card Expiration and Renewal

Residents

- Resident cards are valid for three years from the application date.
- Cards must be renewed in person at any Bucks County public library. Card holders will be asked to verify current contact information. If there has been a change of address, the card holder must provide proof of residence as listed for first time applicants. Some libraries may require a completed registration form for renewal.
- All fines and fees must be cleared before library cards can be renewed.

Non-residents

- Access Pennsylvania cards and 12 month non-resident are valid for one year from the application date. 3 month non-resident cards are valid for three consecutive months from the application date.
- Cards may be renewed in person at any Bucks County public library. Card holders will be required to verify current contact information by

- providing evidence of current status as a Bucks County student, property owner, business owner, or employee at the time of renewal.
- All fines and fees must be cleared before library cards can be renewed.

Change of Name or Address

Library cardholders are responsible for notifying the library of any change of name, address, email address, telephone number, or other personal data within 60 days. This can only be done in person, with identification and proof of residence as listed above.

Lost, Stolen or Damaged Cards

To prevent and limit misuse, library cardholders are required to notify the library when a card is lost or stolen. The library will immediately suspend a library card when notification is received.

Library cardholders are responsible for all material checked out on a lost or stolen card up to the time the library is notified of the loss or theft.

The library card replacement fee is \$3.00. The replacement fee is waived when the need for replacement results from normal wear and tear or extenuating circumstances.

Users must clear all outstanding fees and fines over \$10.00 and must clear overdue items before a replacement card is issued.

Denial of Service

Library card privileges may be revoked or denied for due cause including, but not limited to, failure to return library materials or pay related charges, and failure to comply with the User's Code of Conduct.

The following internal and external documents apply to the Circulation Policies and Regulations:

- The Library Code, Title 24, Pennsylvania Statutes, Chapter 16, Libraries
- The Library Code, Title 24 § 4428, Pennsylvania Statutes, Library Circulation Records

- Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 18, § 6708, Crimes and Offenses
- Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 18, § 3929.1, Library Theft
- Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 18 § 5903, Obscene and other Sexual Materials and Performances
- Guidelines for Access Pennsylvania Statewide Library Card Program

Adopted by the Board of Directors January 20, 2009

Bucks County Library System

Circulation Services

Borrowing and Renewing Material

Policy Statement

Bucks County public libraries establish loan periods, renewal and loan limits to facilitate equitable access to library materials and information for Bucks County public library users. Loan periods and limits have been established to provide users with adequate time to use library materials and return them for use by others.

RegulationsBorrowing library material (loan period)

A loan period is the total number of days that a user may keep a specific item.

The standard loan period for library material is 21 days. New material and some high demand items may have 7 or 14 day loan periods.

If a library closed due to inclement weather, the loan period is extended 1 day for each day the library is closed.

The library reserves the right to limit the number of items a user may check out within the same subject area.

Users may check out more than one copy of an item at the same time.

Library material is due on the date printed on the receipt issued at checkout. Library users may check the due date online through My Account available at www.buckslib.org or call the library during business hours.

Most library material borrowed from a public library in Bucks County may be returned to any public library in Bucks County. Library material must be returned within the building itself or deposited in the library's official book-drop. The material will be checked in using the actual date returned and then sent to its owning library. Book drop returns processed at the beginning of the business day will be recorded as though they were returned before midnight the day before.

Material borrowed through an Interlibrary Loan transaction must be returned to the library where it was picked up.

Renewing library material (extending the loan period)

Library materials which do not have holds on them can be renewed in person at the library, by phone call made during library business hours, or online through My Account at www.buckslib.org. Library materials do not need to be present to be renewed at the circulation desk of the library.

To renew by phone, a caller must verify the contact information associated with the account. The caller must speak with a staff person; email or voicemail messages are not accepted.

To renew online, a user must have a valid library card and PIN and have overdue fines and fees totaling less than \$10.00.

Loan limits

A loan limit is the total number of items of a specific type that a user may have on loan at one time.

No user may have more than 100 physical items checked out at any given time.

	Loan Limit	Renewals Allowed
Books	Unlimited	2
New books and Rental books	Unlimited	2
Spoken books	Unlimited	2
Video recordings	10	2
Video games	1	2
Music recordings	20	2
Magazines	10	2
Non Book items	10	0

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Bucks County Library System

Circulation Services

FINES AND FEES

Policy Statement

Bucks County public libraries charge fines to encourage prompt return of borrowed material to the library while providing an option for users who must keep material beyond the due date. The prompt return of library material allows access for other users.

Regulations

Library materials not returned by midnight on the date due will incur a fine (listed in Appendix B).

Library users can pay fines with cash, a money order, or a cashier's check. Some libraries accept credit cards, debit cards and personal checks. Some libraries require Photo ID with personal checks or debit card payments over \$50. A receipt will be offered to each person paying a fine or fee.

Late material returned without payment of the fine will be checked in so the material can be made available to others. The fine will not continue to accrue.

Library users will be alerted by staff or an on-screen message of late material and accrued fines when attempting to borrow or renew material.

Two overdue notices for late material are emailed to users. The first is sent 14 days after the item is due and the second is sent 28 days after the item is due. Items not returned after the second notice is sent will be considered lost. Refer to the Library's policy on Lost or Damaged Materials.

Failure to receive an overdue notice is not considered grounds for waiving a fine. Borrowers are responsible for keeping track of the due date of borrowed material. Library users receive a courtesy email three days before material is due.

Borrowing privileges will be suspended when the amount of money owed reaches or exceeds \$10.00. Accrued fees of \$10.00 or more must be reduced for borrowing to resume. When fines are large, at their discretion library staff may set up a payment plan and allow users at least partial use of library services until fines are paid in full.

Accrued fines will remain on the user's account until they have been paid.

Bill collection fees may not be waived.

Information about other fees is addressed in the circulation policies regarding lost or damaged materials and library cards.

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Bucks County Library System

Circulation Services

LOST OR DAMAGED MATERIALS

Policy Statement

Bucks County public libraries provide materials to meet the needs of library users. Library material is purchased with public and/or private funds; library users are financially responsible for the proper use of library material and safe return of material borrowed on their library cards. Bucks County public libraries charge fees for lost and damaged material to offset the cost of replacing lost and damaged materials.

Regulations

Once an item has been kept 28 days after the due date, the item will be assumed to be lost and the user will be responsible for the cost of the item.

Users will be charged for the cost of library material that is returned damaged to the point where the item must be withdrawn from the collection. Reasons for withdrawal include but are not limited to:

- Writing or coloring
- Missing pages
- Item has pages that have been torn or item has been chewed
- Item shows evidence of water damage, mildew or infestation
- Tapes or discs are broken or warped or no longer playable

If damage is noted a fee is assessed on the user's account.

If a lost or damaged item is one piece of a set, the user is responsible for the full price of the set if the library is unable to purchase the lost or damaged piece.

Fees are assessed for each item lost or damaged according to the price listed in the computer record for the item.

If an item is overdue when it is reported lost or determined to be damaged, fines are waived when the item is paid for.

Library users can pay for lost or damaged items with cash, a money order, or a cashier's check. Some libraries accept credit cards, debit cards and personal checks. Some libraries require Photo ID with personal checks or debit card payments over \$50. A receipt will be issued when payment is received.

If a user finds a previously paid for lost item and returns it with the receipt within 3 months of the date on the receipt, the library will issue a refund for the amount paid less the fine.

If a user finds a previously paid for lost item after 3 months of the date on the receipt, no refund will be issued.

Damaged items that are paid for become the property of the library user.

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Bucks County Library System

Circulation Services

HOLDS

Policy Statement

Bucks County public libraries allow users to place holds on items that are owned by a Bucks County public library but not currently available for checkout.

Regulations

Library users may place holds in person at the library, by phone if they can provide a library card number, or online at www.buckslib.org. Only users who have overdue fines and fees less than \$10 may place holds.

Library users may have up to 15 items on hold at any given time.

When the material becomes available for pickup, the library user is notified via email and the My Account 'Holds' tab shows the pickup location and hold expiration date. The material will be held 7 days from the date of the email. Some Bucks County public libraries offer courtesy phone calls to notify users when items on hold are available.

In order to check out a item on hold, the person checking out the item must use the library card used to place the hold or be designated by the cardholder as able to check out the item.

Library users are responsible for notifying the library if an item with a hold is no longer needed.

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Bucks County Library System

Circulation Services

CLAIMS RETURNED or CLAIMS NEVER HAD

Policy Statement

Bucks County public libraries extend the privilege to users of claiming that they have returned materials that the circulation system indicates are still checked out to them. Library material is purchased with public and/or private funds; library users are financially responsible for the proper care and use of library material and the safe return of material borrowed on their library cards. This policy acknowledges that staff occasionally errs in discharging items from a user's record.

Regulations

Library users who receive an overdue notice for an item they believe has been returned or was never borrowed, or who see an item on My Account that they believe was returned or never borrowed, must notify the library.

Bucks County public libraries work with users to locate the item they claim has been returned. The shelves will be searched, and other libraries may be contacted. The item will be renewed 1 time while the user and library search for it.

If the user finds the item at home or in his or her possession, all applicable fines and fees remain assessed.

If the item is found on the shelves by library staff, all applicable fines and fees will be cleared.

If the item is not located, library staff will identify an item as CLAIMS RETURNED in the user's computer record. A user may have only 1 CLAIMS RETURNED listed on their account. If a user reports additional items have been returned but are still showing on the account, staff will renew the item 1 time and search for it. If the item is not found, it will be marked LOST and user is responsible for the cost.

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Bucks County Library System

Circulation Services

INTER-LIBRARY LOAN

Policy Statement

Bucks County public libraries allow users to request material that is not owned by a Bucks County public library. This allows the library to offer wider access to materials while remaining within its financial constraints. As a condition of acceptance of funding from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the library does not charge a fee for placing an interlibrary loan request.

Regulations

There is no fee for placing an interlibrary loan (ILL) request.

If the item requested fits the collection development policy of the library, a copy may be purchased. If the material is not purchased, library staff will attempt to borrow the item from a library outside the Bucks County public libraries.

Library staff will not borrow material from libraries charging a fee unless the item is not available for free from any other source. If the item is only available from an institution charging a fee, library staff will procure it if the user agrees to pay the fee.

Interlibrary loan material circulates for 2 weeks.

Library staff will notify the user via email when the item is available for pickup.

Some items may be eligible for renewal. If the user requests a renewal, library staff must check OCLC to see if the lending library allows renewals. Once a renewal is requested via OCLC, the user will be allowed to renew the item with the understanding that the item is subject to recall if the lending library refuses the renewal request.

The lending library's borrowing policies and procedures are followed if they differ from those of the Bucks County library requesting the material.

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Bucks County Library System

Circulation Services

MATERIAL RECOVERY

Policy Statement

To assist in material recovery, some Bucks County public libraries use a collection agency, Unique Management Services, to collect outstanding overdue items on the library's behalf. Other libraries use the Magisterial District Court to enforce the PA Criminal Code.

Bucks County public libraries that use materials recovery processes notify library users of this process at the time of library card application and signs posted at service desks or other visible areas of the library. A list of these libraries is provided in an appendix to this policy.

Regulations

Library users who borrow items owned by a library that uses a materials recovery process will be subject to that process for those items even if the library they borrow from does not use a materials recovery process.

Library user accounts are sent to the collection agency or Magisterial District Court when:

1. Material is overdue by 55 or more days
2. Cost of the overdue material plus any outstanding fines for the material totals \$25.00 or more

Users are notified by email 3 days before the due date, 14 days past the due date and 28 days past the due date.

Bucks County Public Libraries offers its users several ways to manage accounts so that materials do not become overdue:

1. Users can return materials to the library's return drop 24/7.
2. Users may renew library materials in the library unless the item is on hold for someone else.

3. Users can access the MY ACCOUNT feature at www.buckslib.org 24/7 to renew items unless the item is on hold for someone else.

Libraries using a Collection Agency

At 55 days overdue, the library user's account is sent to Unique Management, and an additional non-refundable fee of \$10 is added to the user's account to pay for the services of the collection agency.

Unique Management contacts users with delinquent accounts until the account balances are at zero, or until arrangements are made for repayment of amounts owed and return of overdue materials.

Unique Management follows this schedule when corresponding with users:

- Material 55 days overdue -- Letter 1 mailed
- 76 days overdue -- Letter 2 mailed
- 90–113 days overdue -- Initial Placement Phone Call
- 120 days overdue -- Letter 3 mailed
- 134-146 days overdue -- Secondary Placement Phone Call

Users who have filed bankruptcy may provide documentation to Unique Management Services. Users with a discharged bankruptcy case will have late fines and fees waived. The borrowed items must still be returned, or replacement costs must be paid.

Libraries using the Magisterial District Court

At 60 days overdue a final shelf check is conducted and if not found a reminder letter is sent to the patron's address of record to return overdue material(s).

After 3-4 weeks of no response a second letter is sent informing patron that if item(s) are not returned in two weeks a certified letter will be sent and the additional charge posted to their account.

Final (third) letter is sent regular and certified mail informing patron that they have 30 days to clear account before the library will proceed with filing a criminal complaint with the District Justice.

Several days before the expiration of the final 30 days a phone call is made to the patron's registered phone number as a final attempt to reclaim overdue items before court action.

After all the above measures are taken the patron is cited with court action per Pennsylvania Criminal Code P.L. No. 334, Section 6708A. This action, once taken, cannot be reversed.

Bucks County Library System

Libraries will accept the following documents as proof of identification and residence or other status for adult library card applicants, defined as persons age 14 or older.

Column A	OR	Column B	AND	Column C
This item establishes identity and residency		This item establishes identity		This item establishes residency and must have applicant's name
Valid PA driver's license with current street address		Dept. of Motor Vehicles driver's license or identification card without current address		Current vehicle registration
Valid PA driver's instruction permit with current street address		Unexpired U.S. passport		Current bank statement
Valid PA Dept. of Motor Vehicles identification card with current street address		Military photo ID		Current utility, credit card, or property tax bill
		School photo ID		Current deed, rent or lease bill or property insurance bill
		Employment photo ID		Current secondary school report card, class schedule or bus card
		U.S. Permanent Resident card with photo (Green card)		

Non-residents who are not Bucks County property or business owners or employees or entitled to an Access Pennsylvania library card* must additionally supply one of the following:

Access PA card	Students	Employees
Local library card with an Access PA sticker	Official photo ID from high school or institute of higher education	Current payroll check or pay voucher. If check does not have a Bucks County address, a letter on the employer's letterhead must also be presented
	Current tuition receipt or financial aid agreement	Official photo ID from employer

Bucks County Library System

FINES AND FEES SCHEDULES

Non-resident library card fees

- 3 consecutive month card is \$25
- 12 consecutive month card is \$35

Lost card replacement fee: \$3.00

Ecard service fee: \$1.00

Library Fines

	Fine	Maximum Fine
Books	\$.25 per day	\$10
New books	\$.25 per day	\$10
Rental books	\$.25 per day	\$10
Paperbacks	\$.25 per day	\$10
Spoken books	\$.25 per day	\$10
Music recordings	\$.25 per day	\$10
Magazines	\$.25 per day	\$10
Non Book items	\$.25 per day for most items. Some may have higher fines.	\$10
Video recordings and games	\$1.00 per day	\$10

Bucks County Library System

Libraries Using Material Recovery Agents

Libraries using Unique Management Services, LLC, Library Division

Bucks County Free Library branches in
Bensalem
Doylestown
Langhorne
Levittown
Perkasie
Quakertown
Yardley

Township Library of Lower Southampton

Free Library of Northampton Township

Southampton Free Library

Village Library of Wrightstown

Libraries using Magisterial District Court

Warminster Township Free Library