

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.

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. The child must be present for a card to be issued.

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

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