

Bucks County Free Library

Circulation Services

Library Cards Policy

Policy Statement

Bucks County District member libraries issue library cards so people can borrow material and access library resources. Library card applications are available at any Bucks County District member library or may be downloaded from the library's website. In addition, online applications can be completed and submitted via the library's website.

A Bucks County Library District card can be used to borrow material and access library resources at any District member library. Through the Access PA program, cardholders who are Bucks County residents are entitled to get library cards, borrow materials, and access library resources at public libraries throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

A person may have only one current Bucks County Library District card at a time. Library cardholders are responsible for the proper care and safe return of all items borrowed and all fees or fines incurred on their cards.

A person under age 14 is defined by the library as a child and they may apply for a card in person together with a parent or legal guardian. A person age 14 or older may apply for a library card on their own.

Bucks County District member libraries collect and compile anonymized statistics about library users and card use so libraries can target operations to community needs and report required information to public and private funders. Libraries collect and use information about cardholders for management of individual accounts. Internal policies and Pennsylvania law protect the privacy rights of library users, including children.

Regulations

LIBRARY CARD TYPES

Resident:

A person who lives in Bucks County and can provide evidence of a Bucks County residential address is entitled to a free Resident card.

- Resident Cards are valid for three years from the application date.

- Applicants are required to show identification, including proof of current address. Documents accepted as proof of identity and address are listed in the Proof of Identity and Address document.

Access PA:

A person who does not live in Bucks County but has a library card from a state-aided public library that participates in the Access PA program is entitled to a free Access PA card.

- Access PA cards are valid for one year from the application date.
- Applicants are required to show identification, including proof of current address. Documents accepted as proof of identity and address are listed in the Proof of Identity and Address document.
- Applicants also must show their home library card with an Access PA sticker.
- Some e-library resources may be unavailable to cardholders because of licensing restrictions.

Access Bucks County:

A person who does not live in Bucks County but goes to school, pays business or property taxes, or works in Bucks County is entitled to a free Access Bucks County card. Also, a person who lives in Bucks County in temporary or transitional circumstances is entitled to a free Access Bucks County card. Access Bucks County cards are issued only to people who are not eligible for Access PA cards.

- Access Bucks County cards are valid for one year from the application date.
- Applicants are required to show identification, including proof of current address or the equivalent. Documents accepted as proof of identity and address are listed in the Proof of Identity and Address document.
- Students who attend public or private schools at any grade level must provide evidence of current enrollment.
- Business and property owners must provide evidence of current business or property ownership.
- Employees of Bucks County businesses must provide evidence of current Bucks County employment.
- People in temporary or transitional circumstances must show identification. They may substitute documentation from social services or other agencies for proof of residential address. Documents accepted as proof of identity and address are listed in the Proof of Identity and Address document.
- Some e-library resources may be unavailable to cardholders because of licensing restrictions.

Non-Resident- Paid:

A person who does not live in Bucks County and is not eligible for an Access PA or Access Bucks County card may pay a fee to access library resources and services.

- Non-Resident cards are valid for three-months or twelve months after the application date depending on the fee paid. See the Fines and Fees Schedule for rates.
- Applicants are required to show identification, including proof of current address. Documents accepted as proof of identity and address are listed in the Proof of Identity and Address document.
- Some e-library resources may be unavailable to cardholders because of licensing restrictions.

Library Cards and Relationships

User accounts can be linked within the Bucks County Library District's system via the Relationships function. Relationships give permission for account holders to renew materials and pay fines on one another's accounts both online and in-person. Cardholders who establish Renewal Relationships will be allowed to check out holds and other items for each other at the library.

The library encourages cardholders who pick up items for each other to establish Renewal Relationships in their accounts.

Library Cards for Children

A person under age 14 is defined by the library as a child and they may apply for a card in person together with a parent or legal guardian. Both the parent or legal guardian and the child must be present for a card to be issued.

- A person under age 14 is entitled to all card types. The card is valid for the number of months or years that applies to that card type.
- The same types of library card and library use privileges are extended to a child as to an adult cardholder.
- Parents or legal guardians are required to show their own identification, including proof of current address, on behalf of the child. Documents accepted as proof of identity and address are listed in the Proof of Identity and Address document.
- Parents or legal guardians are required to accept financial responsibility for fines and fees applied to materials checked out on the child's card.

CARD RENEWAL AND UPDATES

Renewal

For all card types, when a card has expired it must be renewed in person at any Bucks County District member library. Library cards may not be renewed over the phone or by e-mail. Accounts must be in good standing to be renewed, with fines below \$20.

Expired cards are blocked from e-resource access and cardholders are not able to check out physical materials until the account is updated.

Cardholders will be asked to verify current contact information, provide proof of identity or address, and may be asked to complete a new application form.

When Resident Adult Accounts reach their expiration date, they will be moved to a three month limited access account. Cardholders may place holds and access e-resources but are unable to check out physical items until the account is renewed. After three months, the account will expire and the user will be blocked from e-resource access and unable to check out physical materials until the account is updated.

Updates to Card Information

For all card types, if there has been a change of address the change must be reported in person at any Bucks County District member library. Cardholders will be asked to show proof of identity and/or address and verify current contact information.

Email addresses and phone numbers can be updated by the cardholder through their online account.

Lost or Stolen Cards

Cardholders are encouraged to report lost or stolen cards through their online account and notify the library immediately when a card is lost or stolen. The library will suspend an account 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.

Replacement Fees

Bucks County District member libraries charge replacement fees for lost cards. Fees are waived when the need for replacement results from normal wear and tear or extenuating circumstances. See the Fines and Fees Schedule for rates.

CHILDREN AND PENNSYLVANIA PRIVACY LAW

Parents and legal guardians are ultimately responsible for guiding and monitoring a child's library use. Bucks County District member 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.

Pennsylvania privacy law protects the confidentiality of a child's library card record. Library employees must follow 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 card account have the following options:

- Require that the child share their 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 they give permission to the library to share confidential information with you.
- Use the child's library card and PIN to monitor their library records through their online account.
- Through the online account, set up a relationship between family members to authorize renewals and fine payments for the child.

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 library behavior policies.

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

- Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 24, Chapter 93, Public Library Code
- Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 24, § 9375, Privacy of circulation records
- Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 18, § 6708, Retention of library property after notice to return
- Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 18, § 3929.1, Library theft
- Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 18 § 5903, Obscene and other sexual materials and performances
- Guidelines for the Statewide Library Card System

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