

PS 4 Public Access to Library Records

PS 4.1 Public Records Policy

It is the policy of the Library that openness leads to a better informed citizenry, which leads to better government and better public policy. (See **Appendix G: Public Records Policy**)

PS 4.11 Definition of Public Records

In accordance with the Ohio Revised Code and applicable judicial decisions, records are defined as any item that (i) contains information stored on a fixed medium (such as paper, electronic – including but not limited to email – and other formats); (ii) is created or received by, or sent under the jurisdiction of a public office and (iii) documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities of the office.

PS 4.12 Organization of Records

As required by Ohio law, records will be organized and maintained so that they are readily available for inspection and copying. Records will be available for inspection and copying at all reasonable times during regular business hours.

PS 4.13 Record Requests

The Records Custodian for the Library is the Library Director or designee. Each request for public records should be evaluated for a response using the following guidelines:

PS 4.13a Ambiguous Request

If a requester makes an ambiguous or overly broad request or has difficulty in making a request for copies or inspection of public records under this section such that the public office or the person responsible for the requested public record cannot reasonably identify what public records are being requested, the public office or the person responsible for the requested public record may deny the request but shall provide the requester with an opportunity to revise the request by informing the requester of the manner in which records are maintained by the public office and accessed in the ordinary course of the public office's or person's duties.

PS 4.13b Requester

The requester does not have to put a records request in writing, and does not have to provide their identity or the intended use of the requested public record. Those seeking public records will be charged only the actual cost of making copies. Requesters may ask that documents be mailed to them. They will be charged the actual cost of the postage and mailing supplies.

PS 4.13c Records Availability

Public records responsive to a request are to be available for inspection during regular business hours. Public records must be made available for inspection promptly. Copies of public records must be made available within a reasonable period of time. "Prompt" and "reasonable" take into account the volume of

records requested; the proximity of the location where the records are stored; and the necessity for any legal review of the records requested.

PS 4.13d Time Estimate

Each request should be evaluated for an estimated length of time required to gather the records.

PS 4.13e Exempt Portions

If portions of a record are public and portions are exempt, the exempt portions are to be redacted and the rest released.

PS 4.2 Confidentiality of Library Records

PS 4.21 Confidentiality of Patron Records

The Library recognizes that Library records and patron information are confidential. Library records are defined as a record in any form that is maintained by the Library and that contains any of the following types of information:

- Information an individual is required to provide in order to be eligible to use Library services or borrow materials.
- Information that identifies an individual as having requested or obtained specific materials or materials on a specific subject.
- Information that is provided by an individual to assist a staff member to answer a specific question or provide information on a particular subject.

Information that does not identify an individual and that is retained for studying or evaluating the use of the Library is not considered confidential and is not subject to this policy.

PS 4.22 Exceptions to Confidentiality

Under Ohio law, a patron's Library records or information shall not be made available to any agency of federal, state, or local government, or to any spouse or other individual except as follows:

- For the records or patron information pertaining to minor children when requested by parents, guardians, or custodians.
- In accordance with a subpoena, search warrant, or other court order, or to a law enforcement officer who is investigating a matter involving public safety in exigent circumstances.
- Upon the request or with the consent of the individual who is the subject of the record or information.
- For Library administrative purposes as defined by Ohio Revised Code 149.432 including establishment or maintenance of a system to manage the Library records or to assist in the transfer of Library records from one records management system to another, compilation of statistical data on Library use, and collection of fines and penalties.

PS 4.23 Releasing Patron Information

PS 4.23a Adult Identification

Library staff will provide access to patron account information to a patron who has the Library card in hand for that account, who shows a valid photo ID, who is listed as an acceptable user on the account, or who can provide their Library card number and birth date. Staff may choose to ask for additional identification.

Library staff will provide access to patron account information over the telephone to a caller who can provide both the Library account number and the patron's birth date associated with that account. Because identification is difficult to verify over the telephone, Library staff will provide only limited access to patron account information to the caller who does not have the patron's Library account number but can provide the patron's name, address, and birth date.

PS 4.23b Minor Identification

Library staff will release Library information or Library records pertaining to a minor child to that child's parent, guardian, or custodian upon presentation of the child's Library card, or patron number, or sufficient information to both identify the child's Library record, and to provide Library staff with a reasonable assurance that the person requesting the information is indeed the child's parent, guardian, or custodian.

PS 4.23c Lost Card

When a lost card is reported over the telephone, the patron account associated with that card will be blocked.

PS 4.24 Records Commission & Records Retention

In accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 149.411, the Board hereby creates a Library Records Commission comprised of the Board members and the Fiscal Officer of the Library.

The Director of the Library who serves as the Custodian of the Records shall be an ex officio, non-voting member of the Library Records Commission. The records commission shall meet at least once every twelve months. The commission shall review applications for one-time disposal of obsolete records and schedules of records retention and disposition submitted by an employee of the Library. The commission may dispose of records pursuant to the approved schedule. The commission, at any time, may review any schedule it has previously approved and, for good cause shown, may revise that schedule. The commission shall be responsible for overseeing the Library's compliance with Ohio's Public Records Act. **(See Appendix H: Records Retention Schedule).**