

V. PINELLAS PUBLIC LIBRARY COOPERATIVE PUBLIC SERVICES POLICIES

The Pinellas Public Library Cooperative is designed to provide free public library service to all eligible residents of Pinellas County in accordance with the Library Interlocal Agreement by which the Cooperative was created. The key to this service is a uniform library card recognized by each member library.

PPLC Member libraries utilize the Pinellas Automated Library System (PALS), administered by the PPLC Executive Director. Policy and fiscal decision-making authority is vested in the Library Directors Advisory Council (LDAC). Each library is responsible for any changes beyond shared fees. Any changes to the policies in this document, no matter how significant, must be approved by the LDAC at an LDAC meeting (as per the PPLC Interlocal Agreement).

Although each library is operated by a separate local governmental unit which retains the power to approve any policy decisions for internal operations and the use of local funds, member libraries have agreed, wherever possible, to work together to establish consistent public service policies. In keeping with the intent of the Interlocal Agreement, which supports member library's autonomy, individual libraries are free to set additional policies. Therefore, variations of procedure may exist based on staffing levels, the size and nature of a library's collection, the physical facility and community needs.

POLICY REVIEW STATEMENT

The Library Directors Advisory Council (LDAC) shall review the public service policies of the Cooperative annually. Policies may be changed, added or deleted at any time during the year by the LDAC.

These policies cover, at a minimum, circulation, registration, fines and fees, reserves and interlibrary loans. Copies of these policies will be distributed to member libraries upon adoption by the LDAC and posted to PPLC's policy manual page.

PUBLIC SERVICE POLICIES

The following statements are those policies which were agreed upon by all member libraries in the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative in the provision of patron service. The basis for the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative policies shall be the Library Interlocal Agreement and Articles of Incorporation.

1. PATRON REGISTRATION

- Eligible patrons may register for a free Cooperative library card at any member library.
- Library cards are issued to patrons 16 and older living within the unincorporated areas of Pinellas County, or those areas participating in the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative, and to nonresidents owning property/businesses within the area.
- Library cards are issued to children under age 16 with signature of parent or legal guardian. Circulation information may be disclosed to parent or guardian under age of 16 as outlined in FL Statute 257.261 (B.2.)
- Acceptable proof of residence, application, and sufficient information are required. Library cards are valid for three years. All patron records are confidential and will not be surrendered or made available to the public except by properly executed court order.

1a. Nonresident

Patrons not living within an area participating in the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative may purchase a one-year membership for \$100.00 per household. The same identification process as for a resident is necessary. The following communities are not members of the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative: Belleair, Belleair Beach, Belleair Bluffs, Belleair Shore, Indian Shores, Kenneth City and South Pasadena.

Pro-rated fee for property owners residing in the county less than 12 months per calendar year:

\$25.00 fee for 3 months residence

\$50.00 fee for 6 months residence

\$100.00 fee for those residing more than 6 months per calendar year.

1b. In-County Reciprocal Borrowing

Municipalities qualifying for and receiving operating grants through the State Aid to Libraries Grant program from the State of Florida will be eligible for reciprocal borrowing privileges. Current eligibility: Indian Rocks Beach.

1c. Visitor Card

Member libraries may elect to issue a Visitor Card, valid only in the individual library and only for a specific, limited time. Fee structure may vary by library.

1d. Special Circumstances Cards

Every PPL Member library recognizes the challenges of meeting Patron Registration Policies. Temporary accommodations may be made for persons establishing Pinellas County residency with local, state, or federal assistance.

PPLC Member libraries may issue special cards for pilot programs, library anniversaries, and other countywide initiatives with approval from the LDAC.

2. CIRCULATION

One card is valid at all Cooperative libraries that are sharing one county-wide automation system to facilitate direct access to all materials.

The availability of a Cooperative delivery service makes it possible for patrons to return materials to any Member library. Most library accounts will automatically expire after 3 years to facilitate checking the accuracy of patron information. Staff may manually expire an account before 3 years, in correlation with the type of card issued and/or the documentation provided by a cardholder. Patron accounts will be purged after 3 years of inactivity, or 3 years after expiration unless there are lost materials on the account (*Florida Department of State General Schedule for Public Libraries GS15*).

It is PPLC policy that all fines and fees on an expired account must be cleared in order to renew the cardholder's account and extend borrowing privileges for a new term. To avoid account blocks before the expiration date, no items must be in "lost" status, no collection fees must exist on the account, the number of overdue or claimed items must not exceed established limits, and any other fine or fee balances must remain below \$10.00.

Some libraries will give parents the choice to restrict their children's account privileges to prevent them from checking out DVDs. The patron account type "No DVD Juvenile" will block that cardholder from checking out DVDs at any cooperative library. This restriction may only be applied to accounts of people 17 years old and younger. Not all libraries offer this option but all honor the restriction.

2a. Loan Periods

The following common loan periods have been established by all Cooperative libraries:

28 days: General Book Collection

14 days: New/Best Seller/High Demand Books; Music CDs; Magazines

7 days: DVD and Blu-ray movies

Loan periods for special collections are set at individual libraries in accordance with collection size and community needs. Reference materials and some special collections may not be loaned.

2b. Renewals

*All items in the PALS system may be renewed up to three (3) times, unless there are outstanding requests by others. The due date of a renewed item is extended from the date the renewal is made and is extended by the item's standard loan period.

*Exceptions are Inter-library Loan (ILL) materials. ILL renewals vary by owning library's policy.

2c. Holds and Reserves

The integrated PALS system allows cardholders access to material throughout the system. The holds queue is a prioritized list of active or pending requests for a specific title or item. By default, hold requests are listed in chronological order according to the original entry date of the request; "holds" with earlier entry dates are listed higher than holds entered more recently.

However, holds are not filled in exact order; patrons who pre-select the owning library of a title as their pick-up location will receive priority over patrons who select a non-owning library as their pick-up location. Cooperative libraries have chosen to satisfy all requests for a title at the owning library and its associated branches before sending the material elsewhere. Each library strives to follow a 1:4 purchasing ratio for print materials, meaning that one copy of each title will be purchased for every four requests at a library. The ratio for audio-visual materials is 1:8. This helps to maintain consistent wait times for holds at all locations.

Users can choose to suspend requests, which will temporarily remove their request from the master list. When a suspended hold request is re-activated, it reappears on the list according to its original entry date.

Non-resident card fees and all fines are retained by the issuing or collecting library. Fines and fees for other materials and services, such as meeting rooms and photocopies, are set and collected by individual libraries.

A cumulative past due fine or fee of \$10.00 or more owed at one or more Cooperative library will result in the suspension of borrowing privileges at all Cooperative libraries.

Libraries may not waive collection agency fees assessed by another library.

Overdue fines are assessed to a patron's account when an overdue item is returned or renewed. Overdue fines are calculated from the first day after an item's due date, with one (1) free day automatically factored in to the assessed fine.

2f. Damaged or Lost Materials

Fees for lost or damaged material are assessed by the owning library, as are collection agency fees.

- For lost or damaged items, the billed item fee plus a processing fee of up to \$10.00 is assessed.
- In lieu of the replacement cost, some libraries may accept an exact replacement copy in new or like-new condition. The patron must get prior approval from the owning library and the item must meet the specifications agreed upon, such as a matching ISBN. The \$5.00 processing fee still applies.
- Receiving libraries will be responsible for notifying patrons of items that are missing parts or items that have damage that requires immediate care, such as water damage, and will make every reasonable effort to ensure items are whole before checking them in.
- Damaged material or material with lost parts will NOT be checked in but will be returned to the owning library for the determination of any fees. The owning library will be responsible for notifying patrons of any charges imposed.
- Communication with the owning library is crucial throughout this process.

Any library receiving damaged material or payment for lost material, processing fees and/or collection agency fees will forward such to the owning library.

2g. Damage caused by pest infestation or exposure

When addressing damage to library materials caused by pest infestation or exposure, member libraries will follow the *Collection Materials Policy and Procedures for Potentially Pest-Infested Materials*. When materials undergo localized treatment for pest exposure, residual damage may require additional attention. The owning library may assess damage fees to clean materials and also reserves the right to assess full replacement cost if the damage cannot be adequately remedied to maintain the item in the collection.

2h. Claims Returned

The “claims returned” option should be applied when, in good faith, neither the patron nor the library can locate a disputed item for which the patron makes the claim. The PALS system will allow up to 9 active claims before suspending the patron’s circulation privileges for the remainder of the activation period of the card. To continue to borrowing materials, any PPLC library circulation services, a senior staff member, manager, or director will need to address the situation with the patron and assist in resolving the matter. “Claims returned” records and the associate link to patron record will be purged from the system after 5 years.

2i. Summary of Circulation Rules for Most Common Items

Material Type	Checkout Limit*	Loan Period	Renewals **	Overdue Rate (per item, per day)	Maximum Fine, per item	Hold Request Limit***
Audiobooks	25	28 days	3	.20	\$5.00	25
Blu-rays	25	7 days	3	.50	\$5.00	25
Books-most	50	28 days	3	.20	\$5.00	25
Books - NEW	50	14 days	3	.20	\$5.00	25
DVDs	25	7 days	3	.50	\$5.00	25
Electronic Games	5	14 days	3	.50	\$5.00	25
Inter-Library Loans (ILL)	5	Varies	Varies	.25	\$5.00	5
Magazines	50	14 days	3	.20	\$5.00	0
Music CDs	25	14 days	3	.20	\$5.00	25

* Checkout Limits: Individual accounts are limited to a cumulative total of 50 items.

**Renewals will not be granted if outstanding requests are pending for a title.

***Hold Request Limit: Individual accounts are limited to a cumulative total of 25 pending requests.

Some individual libraries offer unique collections of items with different loan periods, hold restrictions, and/or fine structure.