

STANDARDS FOR OREGON PUBLIC LIBRARIES

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1940s it has been a common practice of national and state library associations to adopt standards for public library service. Such standards have generally provided a means by which library managers, citizen library board members, and local officials can assess whether the resources that are being provided for local library service are sufficient. The American Library Association maintained a set of standards for public library services until 1966, when the decision was made to follow a new approach that emphasizes local needs assessment, planning, and evaluation. While more and more public libraries are adopting this new approach, there still appears to be a need for public library standards which represent a consensus of professional opinion on what is necessary to the provision of quality library service.

In response to this need, the leadership of the Oregon Library Association appointed a task force in 1987 to develop a set of standards for Oregon public libraries, *The Standards for Oregon Public Libraries: 1988*. There was a revision of these standards adopted in 1994. The present document represents a major revision of the standards by the Public Library Division of the Oregon Library Association to meet current public library needs.

It should be noted that the standards are not a measurement of effort or dedication of local library staff. It can be difficult for public libraries, particularly smaller libraries, to achieve even the threshold level because of the size of the supporting tax base. Libraries are encouraged to explore the formation of alliances to increase resources available to them.

A. GOVERNANCE (Revised 2010)

Governance Standards ensure that each Oregon public library shall be legally established, publicly funded, and publicly managed in a way that insures transparency and accountability to the taxpayers; shall be responsive to the community served, and shall have policies and procedures in place to establish competent library management and lawful employment practices.

Threshold Standards

In order to meet threshold standards, each Oregon public library shall:

Meet all provisions of the Oregon Library Benchmark (see appendix).

Have a Library Board, which meets at least quarterly and have written bylaws.

Produce an annual statistical report, filed with the state library.

Have a written mission statement.

Adopt and periodically review policies and procedures responsive to the local community, and are modeled on ALA policies when available. Standard ALA policies include:

- Library Bill of Rights
- Confidentiality of Library Records
- Freedom to Read
- Freedom to View
- Free Access to Libraries for Minors

Have written policies and procedures in place, covering:

- Circulation
- Collection Development and Maintenance
- Emergencies and Safety
- Finances
- Gifts and Donations
- Human Resources
- Interlibrary and Interagency Cooperation
- Internet and Other Technology Issues
- Patron Suggestions
- Public Relations
- Rules of Conduct for Library Users

Other policies and procedures should be adopted as appropriate to the library's mission, goals, and facility. These may include:

- Exhibits and Displays
- Programming
- Use of Library Meeting Rooms and Equipment.

Adequate Standards

In order to meet adequate standards, Oregon public libraries shall meet threshold standards and in addition:

- Have a written long range plan, including a technology plan.
- Provide orientation and continuing education for Library Board.
- Create a disaster preparedness plan.

Excellent Standards

In order to meet excellent standards, Oregon public libraries shall meet adequate standards and in addition:

- Hold an annual retreat attended by Library Board and Library Director that includes a self-evaluation process.

B. ACCESS (Revised 2004)

Accessibility is an essential component of good library service. Access includes a quantitative measure (shown in the table) as well as qualitative measures. Library hours should reflect community need with a proportion of open hours in the evenings after 5:00 p.m. and on weekends. Services such as reference, reader's advisory, and services to youth are an integral component of library services and should be available whenever the building is open to the public. Alternate methods of delivery of service need to be explored for populations unable to come to the library facility.

Threshold Standards

In order to meet threshold standards, each Oregon public library shall:

Provide open hours which fit the community's need, including evening and weekend hours, and post them.

Make available all public areas and all basic public services during all open hours. Basic public services include circulation, reference and reader's advisory to all ages, interlibrary loan, and assistance to the public in the use of technology.

Provide an alternate method of access to library services if driving time to a public library exceeds 30 minutes (e.g., online access, kiosk, branch or consortium partner, bookmobile, mail, etc.).

Provide public and staff access to PC's.

Provide checkout resources sufficient to ensure that wait times do not exceed community standards.

Provide access to an electronic catalog of the library's holdings that is web accessible.

Provide sufficient in-house access to the online catalog to ensure that wait times do not exceed community standards.

Provide in-house and remote access to the full-text state newspaper of record and all databases offered through the subsidized statewide database program.

Offer a simple web page with current basic library information (contact information, hours, directions), a local email contact, and links to the statewide database program and the statewide digital reference program.

Adequate Standards

In order to meet adequate standards, Oregon public libraries shall meet threshold standards and in addition:

Provide sufficient resources to ensure, on average, no wait times for in-house access to the online catalog.

Provide remote online access to the library catalog 24 hours per day.

Provide remote access to additional general and specialized databases to meet community needs. Participate in the development and maintenance of a web page, either independently or through a consortium, including portals to multiple online resources appropriate to the community and which support library programs.

Provide outreach programs, either independently or through a consortium, to at least one selected underserved group; e.g., preschool, non-English speaking, homebound, prison.

Excellent Standards

In order to meet excellent standards, Oregon public libraries shall meet adequate standards and in addition:

Offer the same level, quality, and spectrum of services during all open hours.

Provide a branch within 15 minutes driving time in an urban setting; in a rural setting, provide a physical presence in every population center. Physical presence includes a kiosk, branch, bookmobile, or station.

Provide outreach programs to all significant underserved groups; e.g., preschool, non-English speaking, homebound, prison.

Provide separately networked wired or wireless internet connection for patrons, for personal laptop usage and access to the Internet for personal convenience.

Create, maintain, and offer remote access to databases of value to the community (e.g., I&R, local history, local newspaper indexing, etc.), either independently or through a consortium.

Provide patrons with seamless access to materials beyond their local collection; e.g., sharing an online catalog with another library or library system, print on demand, etc.

Quantitative Standards

Total unduplicated hours the library is open to the public at all facilities

Population served*	Threshold	Adequate	Excellent
0 - 4,999	20	35	50
5,000 - 9,999	30	45	60
10,000 - 24,999	40	55	70
25,000 +	50	60	75

*For service population, use the figure determined annually for each public library by the Oregon State Library.

C. STAFF (Revised 2006)

Public libraries are primarily service organizations, and as such, the quantity and qualifications of staff are an essential component of good library service. Staffing needs will vary depending on a library's mission and goals. Note that the standards require a paid staff member to be present whenever the building is open to the public and also require certain service skills to be available, such as assistance to the public in use of technology. These are not necessarily the same people.

Threshold Standards

In order to meet threshold standards, each Oregon public library shall:

Have access to a paid MLS librarian (on staff, contract, shared with other libraries) who makes recommendations for decision-making in youth, adult, and technical services.

Hire a paid Library Director, who works the number of hours per week that the library is open to the public (up to 40 hours/week).

Make available paid library staff 100% of the time that the library is open to the public.

Make available, during all open hours, person(s) trained to provide basic library services to all ages, including reference service, reader's advisory, and technology support.

Have available written job descriptions for library staff. There should be a defined salary and benefits package for each job description that falls within the range of the average of all library services staff in each category for similar-sized entities. These are based on established norms, such as defined by the Oregon Local Government Personnel Institute.

Provide a salary and benefits package at or above the median of that for all library services staff in each category for similar positions in same jurisdiction or in other local government bodies in the community.

Budget funds equal to 1% of the total salaries and wages budget for staff development direct costs.

Adequate Standards

In order to meet adequate standards, Oregon public libraries shall meet threshold standards and in addition:

Make available, during all open hours, sufficient trained staff to provide a professional level of library services to all ages, including reference service, reader's advisory, and technology support.

Provide a salary and benefits package at or above the median of that for all library services staff in each category for similar positions in same jurisdiction or in other local government bodies in the community.

Budget funds equal to 2% of the total salaries and wages budget for staff development direct costs.

Excellent Standards

In order to meet excellent standards, Oregon public libraries shall meet adequate standards and in addition:

Make available during all open hours, sufficient trained staff to provide an advanced professional level of library services to all ages, including reference service, reader's advisory, and technology support.

Staff at all levels shall receive salary and benefits package within 10% of the highest for similar positions in same jurisdiction or in other local government bodies in the community.

Budget funds equal to 3% of the total salaries and wages budget on staff development direct costs.

Staff create an annual staff development plan supported and funded by library management.

Quantitative Standards

Number & Qualifications of Staff employed by the Library at all facilities

Staff qualifications are listed in the table below for Library Director and professional staff only. Other staff will have appropriate education and training for their positions.

Libraries with more than one staffed service outlet, e.g. branch, bookmobile, should add approximately 0.01 FTE/1,000 served to the staffing requirement for each additional outlet. For example, a library serving 50,000 with a main library and two branches should have 0.42 FTE/1,000 served to be considered adequate. The figure will vary with outlet size and proportion of duplicated service hours.

Population served*	Threshold	Adequate	Excellent
0 - 2,499	0.5 FTE, with high school diploma	1 FTE or 0.5 FTE/1,000 served , whichever is greater. Director has a B.A.	2 FTE or 1 FTE/1,000 served, whichever is greater. Director has a B.A.
2,500 - 4,999	0.35 FTE/1,000 served. Director has a B.A.	0.5 FTE/1,000 served. Director has a B.A.	1 FTE/1,000 served. Director has an MLS.
5,000 - 9,999	0.35 FTE/1,000 served. Director has a B.A.	0.5 FTE/1,000 served. Director has an MLS.	1 FTE/1,000 served. Director has an MLS. 1/4 of staff has MLS.
10,000 - 24,999	0.35 FTE/1,000 served. Director has an MLS.	0.5 FTE/1,000 served. Director has an MLS. 1/4 of staff has MLS.	0.7 FTE/1,000 served. Director has an MLS. 1/3 of staff has MLS.
25,000 - 49,999	0.35 FTE/1,000 served. Director has an MLS. 1/5 of staff has MLS.	0.5 FTE/1,000 served. Director has an MLS. 1/4 of staff has MLS.	0.7 FTE/1,000 served. Director has an MLS. 1/3 of staff has MLS.

50,000 - 499,999	0.33 FTE/1,000 served. Director has an MLS. 1/5 of staff has MLS.	0.4 FTE/1,000 served. Director has an MLS. 1/4 of staff has MLS.	0.5 FTE/1,000 served. Director has an MLS. 1/3 of staff has MLS.
500,000 +	0.33 FTE/1,000 served. Director has an MLS. 1/8 of staff has MLS.	0.4 FTE/1,000 served. Director has an MLS. 1/6 of staff has MLS.	0.5 FTE/1,000 served. Director has an MLS. 1/5 of staff has MLS.

*For service population, use the figure determined annually for each public library by the Oregon State Library.

D.MATERIALS AND SERVICES (Revised 2006)

Materials and services are integral to the public library. These standards address quantity and currency of the book, periodical, and other collections, as well as ease of access to them.

In addition to providing collections of materials, libraries encourage and provide reference and reader's advisory services to users of all ages. Libraries provide access to both print and online resources, with onsite public access to the Internet and instruction in its use. Libraries provide support to programs that encourage literacy and culture.

Threshold Standards

In order to meet threshold standards, each Oregon public library shall:

Make available to the public a library collection organized according to accepted cataloging and classification principles.

Each year, evaluate 20% of the library's materials collection, to consider for withdrawal based on criteria such as use, currency, and condition.

Provide a periodical and newspaper collection for browsing of 5 print subscriptions per 1,000 served.

Provide remote access to the full-text state newspaper of record and at least one full-text online periodicals database, including all databases offered through the subsidized statewide database program.* (*from the Access section of these Standards, revised in 2004*)

Provide access to Oregon virtual reference services and recommend web based resources to satisfy local informational needs.

Provide Interlibrary Loan service either free of charge or for recovery of direct costs.

Provide regular free summer reading and regular story time programs for youth.

Invite patrons to provide written feedback on library services and collections (i.e. suggestion box).

Adequate Standards

In order to meet adequate standards, Oregon public libraries shall meet threshold standards and in addition:

Each year, evaluate 25% of the library's materials collection, to consider for withdrawal based on criteria such as use, currency, and condition.

Provide free educational or cultural programs for adults.

Excellent Standards

In order to meet excellent standards, Oregon public libraries shall meet adequate standards and in addition:

Each year, evaluate 33% of the library's materials collection, to consider for withdrawal based on criteria such as use, currency, and condition.

Provide regular free programs serving informational, recreational, cultural, and educational needs to library users of all ages.

Survey patron satisfaction with services and collections on an annual basis.

Quantitative Standards

A public library should collect in a variety of media to meet the community's needs. Audiovisuals and other media should be a percentage of the materials budget as determined by community need, the library's service goals, and costs and availability of materials in a rapidly changing industry.

Number of holdings in the Library's total collection

Population served*	Threshold	Adequate	Excellent
0 - 49,999	Materials count of 5,000 or 2 items/capita, whichever is greater.	Materials count of 10,000 or 3 items/capita, whichever is greater.	Materials count of 20,000 or 4 items/capita, whichever is greater.
50,000+	Materials collection of 2 items/capita.	Materials collection of 150,000 or 2.5 items/capita, whichever is greater.	Materials collection of 200,000 or 3 items/capita, whichever is greater.

*For service population, use the figure determined annually for each public library by the Oregon State Library.

Use the ALA/PLA Public Library Data Service Statistical Report definition for physical materials: Holdings will be defined as the number of print and non print cataloged and uncataloged items (NOT number of titles). Do not include periodicals.

E. TECHNOLOGY (Revised 2004)

Various computer technologies have rapidly become an integral part of modern public library service. This is reflected throughout these standards; for example, the most current information (formerly provided only through periodical and newspaper subscriptions) is now provided through a combination of public Internet access, full-text periodical database access, and a small periodicals browsing collection. This section gives public libraries standards for level of Internet connection and planning guidelines for equipment replacement.

Threshold Standards

In order to meet threshold standards, each Oregon public library shall:

Provide public access to the Internet and its resources.

Have a permanent connection to the Internet of at least 256K.

Establish the means to fund equipment replacement and upgrade equipment as necessary, based on 5 year life span.

Provide a budget for maintenance and troubleshooting of equipment.

Have a technology plan updated a minimum of every three years and evaluated annually.

Have staff trained to provide basic troubleshooting of equipment in use.

Adequate Standards

In order to meet adequate standards, each Oregon public library shall meet threshold standards and in addition:

Have high speed permanent Internet access.

Establish the means to fund equipment replacement and upgrade equipment as necessary, based on 3 year life span.

Have access to IT support staff, through either local government, a library system, or an on-call contractor, with expertise to ensure system and electronic resources are accessible 24/7.

Have a WAN among branches.

Excellent Standards

In order to meet excellent standards, each Oregon public library shall meet adequate standards and in addition:

Have a permanent high-speed Internet connection with resources to support library applications of emerging technologies.

Offer information/technology literacy classes using public computers on premises.

Have staff competent to offer computer/Internet classes to public.

Have a written plan in place designed to regularly review and employ emerging technologies to maximize library services to public and staff.

Have an IT staff member (may be shared with other partners) dedicated to ensuring that the services and equipment are available to the staff and public 24/7.

Quantitative Standards

Staff PC's with Communication Tools	Threshold	Adequate	Excellent
Management & Technology Staff	1 per FTE	Same	Same
Professional Staff	Ready daily access in staff work area to communication tools	1 per 2 FTE	1 per staff member
Support Staff	Ready daily access in staff work area to communication tools	Same	Same

F. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (Revised 2007)

Libraries today should be proactive in meeting community needs and affecting the local quality of life. As libraries evolve and change, the need for visibility of libraries and library services increases. Involvement from the staff, volunteers, Friends, Foundation trustees and Library Board members are key to connecting each local community to the library's resources, services and potential for contributing to the community.

All supporting groups share the same vision for the library (Library Board, Friends, and Library Foundation) and work together supporting each other and the future of each library.

Threshold Standards

In order to meet threshold standards, each Oregon public library shall:

Have an active Friends group assisting the library.

Encourage the Director's involvement in local community through civic organization or cooperation with local schools and human service agencies.

Use volunteers, as opportunities arise, but not to displace paid staff.

Adequate Standards

In order to meet adequate standards, Oregon public libraries shall meet threshold standards and in addition:

Have an active Library Foundation that relies on contributions of citizens to supplement tax revenue (e.g.: annual contributions, wills and bequests could be made to the library foundation).
Have a volunteer program coordinated by a staff member, among other responsibilities.

Excellent Standards

In order to meet excellent standards, Oregon public libraries shall meet adequate standards and in addition:

The Library Foundation shall have an endowment policy, investment structure and a long-range fund raising strategy.

Encourage all professional staff members' involvement in one local civic organization or other agency.

Collaborate with local human service providers (non profits, city, county) to provide better visibility and outreach.

Have a designated position of "Volunteer Coordinator."

G. FACILITIES (Revised 2008)

Spacious, modern facilities are essential for good library service. Library facilities should be conveniently located and easily accessible to all segments of the population. The minimum space requirements shown below refer to the total gross square footage in all library facilities, including branches and mobile or portable facilities. The minimum space requirements are only a rule-of-thumb for facilities planning. Space needs of a facility may be less if significant library activities are being provided by contract or by another branch. Projecting space needs based upon local library service goals, as part of the development of a library building program, is recommended as the most reliable method of planning library facilities.

Threshold Standards

In order to meet threshold standards, each Oregon public library shall:

Provide a book drop when library is closed.

Provide a designated area to meet the needs of children.

Provide separate staff work area.

Provide a business telephone with a listed number.

Comply with ADA standards.

Provide sufficient parking.

Provide sufficient signs identifying the library, directing the public to the library, and within the library.

Provide a facility that is safe, secure, and well lighted.

Provide a public restroom, sufficient heating, and ventilation.

Provide facilities that are adaptable for technology.

Analyze space needs not less than every ten years, using current library facility planning materials.

Population served*	Minimum space requirements
0 - 3,999	3,050 square feet
4,000-49,999	3,050 square feet for the first 4,000 population and 0.76 square feet per capita in excess of 4,000 population
50,000+	38,750 square feet for the first 50,000 and 0.61 square feet per capita in excess of 50,000 population.

*For service population, use the figure determined annually for each public library by the Oregon State Library.

APPENDICES

Oregon Library Benchmark: http://data.memberclicks.com/site/ola/olaq_5no1.pdf

Local Government Personnel Institute: The Association of Oregon Counties and League of Oregon Cities maintain the Local Government Personnel Institute (LGPI) to provide their members with professional assistance in personnel administration. Services include classification and pay analysis, training workshops, and labor contract negotiations. Each year LGPI conducts a statewide salary and fringe benefit survey and provides copies of its report to each member city and county. The Institute is located at 680 State Street, Suite 180, Salem, OR 97301, (503) 588-2251.

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