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Montana Interlibrary Sharing Protocol

Introduction

Interlibrary sharing service is essential to the vitality of libraries of all types and sizes as a means of expanding the range of materials available to library patrons. Sharing between libraries is in the public interest. This protocol is intended to make interlibrary sharing policies among Montana libraries as liberal, equitable and as easy to apply as possible.

The sharing of materials between and among libraries has been referred to by many different terms. For the purposes of this protocol, the terms "interlibrary loan," "interlibrary sharing" are used interchangeably and refer to borrowing activity as well as lending activity.

Interlibrary sharing should serve as an adjunct to, not a substitute for, collection development. Libraries are responsible for developing collections that meet the individual and unique needs of their own communities. When resources within the state have been exhausted, loan requests to regional and distant libraries should conform to the provisions of the American Library Association's [*National Interlibrary Loan Code of the United States*](#) (rev. 2008)¹.

Adopted

The original Montana Interlibrary Sharing Protocol was adopted by the Montana Library Commission on December 12, 1990. Revisions were offered by the Montana Library Association's Interlibrary Loan Interest Group in May 1998, and July 2009. The Protocol with revisions was adopted by the Montana Library Commission on August 12, 1998, and [DATE ADOPTED].

Purpose

The purpose of the Montana Interlibrary Sharing Protocol is to bring consistency, equity and efficiency to interlibrary sharing practices among all libraries in the state of Montana, thereby providing Montana citizens with maximum accessibility to the information they require.

Definition

An interlibrary loan is a transaction in which library material, or a copy of the material, is made available by one library to another library upon request. An interlibrary loan request represents a contract between two libraries.

Interlibrary Loan Search Sequence

1. Search your own library collection.
2. Consider purchasing the requested item, bearing in mind the following important points:

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- a. The availability of an item on interlibrary loan does not relieve any library of the responsibility for developing its own collection based on the needs of its community and clientele.
 - b. Titles in high demand, such as those appearing on current best seller lists, talk shows and/or published or produced within the previous twelve-month period are usually in use by the patrons of the holding library and may take a long time to obtain.
 - c. The costs associated with interlibrary loans, including staff time, mailing supplies, postage and any other fees may be more than purchasing an item outright. The most recent research indicates the average cost of an interlibrary loan is \$18.35 for borrowing and \$9.48 for lending.²
 - d. Consideration should be given to the purchase of multiple copies of the same title to be used in the classroom, for reserves, book clubs, etc., as an alternative to borrowing through Interlibrary Loan. It should be noted, however, that there are a number of book club kits available in the Montana Shared Catalog, as well as WorldCat, which may be requested for group use.
3. Check patron accessible libraries before going out of the local area. Refer patron to these libraries if possible and if the service is free to the patron.
 4. Check WorldCat, DOCLINE or other online databases and catalogs in order to locate a library that owns the requested material.
 5. If you are unable to locate an item following the steps listed above, it should be determined if the item requested exists as cited, and if not what the desired item actually is. Some interaction with a specialist librarian and the requestor may be necessary at this point. Once the citation has been verified, check appropriate, alternative interlibrary loan channels such as:
 - a. State libraries
 - b. Depositories and Special Collections
 - c. Historical societies
 - d. Other information centers that may possibly own the item

Interlibrary Loan Request Forms

When possible, requests should be submitted via OCLC Resource Sharing or Docline which allows libraries to set constant data for interlibrary loan request forms, and automatically fills out and delivers ILL request forms to possible suppliers in an electronic environment.

When this is not possible, an interlibrary loan request may be transmitted by fax, Ariel, e-mail or a lending library's website, in accordance with the lending library's published interlibrary loan policies using an [ALA Interlibrary Loan Request Form](#). Please check the [OCLC Policies Directory](#) or the library's website, as some libraries only accept requests through specific channels.

Regardless of how the request is transmitted, all relevant elements of an interlibrary loan form must be correctly and completely filled out. Incomplete request forms may result in requests being returned unfilled. Only one request is allowable per request form. The following are standard elements of an interlibrary loan request form:

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- **Date** – Date on which the borrowing library processes the request, usually today's date.
- **Need Before Date** – The date by which the borrowing patron needs requested material. This should be left blank unless the patron has provided a specific Need Before Date when placing the request. A firm Need Before Date may result in the automatic cancellation of a request if it has not been filled by the time that date is realized in the routing sequence.
- **From/Ship To** – The borrowing library's complete mailing address. Incorporate the library's OCLC or DOCLINE symbol into the address.
- **Patron Statement** – The requesting patron's ID number or patron code. The requesting patron's right to privacy requires that his/her name and other personally-identifiable information not be used on the interlibrary loan form that will be routed to other libraries ([Montana Code Annotated 22-1-1101 to 22-1-1111](#)).
- **Request Type** – Loan or photocopy.
- **Bibliographic Information** – Sufficient information must be provided to assure that the lending library will be able to locate the requested material efficiently. Such information includes: Author, title, publisher, date, article title, volume, issue, pages, ISSN/ISBN, etc. Include as much information as possible about the item; it is the responsibility of the borrowing library to verify and complete citations before submitting requests to possible lending libraries.
- **Verified** – The borrowing library should identify the catalog or database in which it verified that the possible lending library owns the requested item.
- **Borrowing Notes** – These can be inserted as necessary and should be used only as they specifically relate to the citation and requested material. Examples include: "Patron requires this specific edition," "Patron needs microfilm reels covering 1955-1960," "Please include plates associated with cited article," etc.
- **Cost Statement** – The maximum amount your library or patron is willing to pay for the desired item. If the borrowing library participates in an electronic fund transfer system such as IFM or EFTS, this information should also be included in the Cost Statement. Set your payment limit in writing before you submit the request. Be realistic in setting cost limits. If the borrowing library or patron cannot pay to borrow an item, fill in the cost field with a "-0-" or "will accept zero charges." If there will be any interlibrary loan fees, notify the patron before submitting the request if you expect reimbursement from the patron.
- **Affiliations** – List any reciprocal groups to which the borrowing library belongs, such as LVIS, so the library is sure to receive the cost benefits of belonging to such groups.
- **Routing Sequence** – Enter the library symbols to which the request should be routed. The borrowing library may choose to route to any number of libraries up to the maximum that the system will allow. A standard ALA paper form will allow routing to only one location.
- **Copyright Statement** – It is the borrowing library's responsibility to decide if a request more properly conforms to copyright guidelines (CCG) or copyright law (CCL). Either way, the Copyright Revision Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-553) requires that a copyright statement be included on all interlibrary loan requests when photocopies or scanned documents are furnished. For more information regarding copyright, please visit the [United States Copyright Office](#).
- **Ship Via** – Borrowing libraries should indicate if they would like material delivered via a specific channel, i.e. Ariel, Odyssey, e-mail, etc.

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- **To/Lending Library Address** – The address of the possible lending library to which a request is sent.
- **Date Shipped** – The lending library will enter the date on which the requested item was shipped.
- **Date Due** - The lending library will identify when the material is due back at that library.
- **Charges** – The lending library will include any fees in this field for which it expects payment, including fees for lending services, postage, etc.
- **Date Received** – The borrowing library supplies the date when requested material is received. This facilitates calculation of turnaround time, length of loan period, follow up with lending/borrowing library, etc.
- **Date Returned** – The borrowing library supplies the date material is sent back to the lending library.
- **Notes** – This space may be used by the lending or borrowing library to add any necessary remarks such as “Please return via courier insured for \$100,” or “Please include any plates associated with the cited article.”

If a lending library can fill the request, the lending library will indicate the due date and other pertinent notes on the form, send a copy of the form with the requested item to the borrowing library, and retain record of the request until the material has been returned. The borrowing library will return any traveling copies of the request when returning the item.

When placing a RUSH request, call the lending library to verify that action can be taken. Consider that many libraries and ILL departments may have limited hours and staff. Do not assume that a staff person is available to act on requests immediately after they are sent. Refer to the library’s policies in the [OCLC Policies Directory](#) or the library’s website for information regarding how RUSH requests are handled and whether there is a fee for this type of service

When requesting special mail handling (such as overnight delivery) from the lending library, the borrowing library should be willing to assume the cost of the special service.

Unless a specific response method is requested, the lending library will determine the method to be used in delivering materials such as Ariel, Odyssey, e-mail or fax. No additional fees or handling charges should be levied by the lending library for a request received or response sent via fax, Ariel or e-mail.

Routing and Load Leveling Technique

Each library will have unique considerations when deciding from which libraries to borrow. These may include speed of service, method of transmission, quality of service and cost. Each library must balance how best to serve its patrons while being courteous to other libraries, being sure not to inundate any specific library with borrowing requests.

Responsibilities of Borrowing Libraries

- Interlibrary loan policies and workflows should be established, managed and measured in order to provide the highest quality service to all patrons.

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- Interlibrary loan policies and workflows should be established to protect the privacy of patrons. The patron's name and any other personally-identifiable information should only appear on in-house records at the borrowing institution so that requested material can be routed to the patron upon receipt. Any personally-identifiable information about the patron should be dissociated from the request record once the patron is no longer responsible for requested material.
- Interlibrary loan borrowing policies should be made available to patrons.
- The borrowing library has an obligation to develop its own collection and evaluate its interlibrary loan requests accordingly.
- Students, patrons and librarians should use their library's resources first before going to another library via interlibrary loan.
- The borrowing library is responsible for copyright compliance and payment of any permissions required.
- The borrowing library is obligated to provide complete and accurate information on interlibrary loan requests when submitting to possible lenders.
- Honor the lending library's lending conditions, as well as special use, return shipment or any other instructions. The borrowing library is responsible for the borrowed item until it is received back by the lending library in the same condition in which it was sent.
- Borrowing libraries should take care when packaging and shipping returned material to ensure that items are received back by the lending library undamaged. Various postage rates are available through the USPS and other parcel delivery services. "Library Mail" is applicable for most library materials and is generally the least expensive method. Parcels sent to Canada and other foreign countries may require a customs declaration; libraries should check with their local post offices.
- Return materials by the due date. Factor in adequate time for item to go through the mail.
- Request renewals before the due date. Before making a renewal request check the lending library's renewal policy. Do not ask for a renewal if an item has been identified as non-renewable. Do not instruct or encourage your patrons to call the lending library directly for renewals.

Responsibilities of Lending Libraries

- Interlibrary Loan policies and workflow should be established, managed and measured in order to provide the highest quality service to all patrons.
- Interlibrary lending policies should be made available and maintained in the online [OCLC Policies Directory](#) or the library's website.
- If the item requested is not available for loan within five working days, the request should be routed to the next holding library. The only exceptions would be if the lending library is the only or last location in the Routing Sequence and the item requested will not be available within five working days. The item may be reserved, if possible, and the borrowing library should be notified.
- A negative response to a RUSH request should be transmitted the same working day when possible; a negative response to a Docline Urgent Patient Care request should be transmitted as soon as it is verified that the request cannot be filled.

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- Lending libraries should not send material in a non-requested format or through a non-requested channel without prior notice. However, when possible and within Copyright Compliance Guidelines, lending libraries may choose to fill loan requests as “article” requests by scanning and sending the entire item requested. Not only does this expedite the service to the borrowing patron by eliminating mail time, but it ensures that some items remain secure and available in their home libraries, among other benefits.
- Lending libraries are obligated to make their interlibrary loan lending policies and fee schedule available to borrowing libraries.
- Lending libraries are obligated to review borrowing requests and determine the borrowing library’s authorized and maximum costs. Lending libraries should not ship material to borrowing libraries if the lending library’s fees exceed the established maximum cost set by the borrowing library.
- Lending libraries should clearly indicate the due date on the request form.
- Lending libraries should absorb nominal costs of postage and insurance wherever possible.
- Lending libraries should ensure their materials are clearly marked with property stamps so borrowing libraries can return them to the correct library if paperwork is missing.
- Lending libraries should take care when packaging and shipping material to ensure that items are received by the borrowing library undamaged. Various postage rates are available through the USPS and other parcel delivery services. "Library Mail" is applicable for most library materials and is generally the least expensive method. Parcels sent to Canada and other foreign countries may require a customs declaration; libraries should check with their local post offices.
- Special handling and delivery requests may be submitted by the borrowing library. The lending library should accommodate these requests if they fall within the scope of their interlibrary loan policy, or ask the borrowing library to pay for the special shipping charges or delivery.

This Interlibrary Sharing Protocol is not comprehensive. Attention should be given to other relevant guidelines such as: [US Copyright Law](#) (Title 17 of the United States Code), [National Commission on New Technological Uses of Copyrighted Works](#) (CONTU) and the ALA/RUSA’s [Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States](#).

¹ American Library Association. (2001). *Interlibrary loan code for the United States* (rev. 2008). Retrieved June 18, 2009, from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/interlibrary.cfm>.

² American Library Association/Association of Research Libraries (1998). *Measuring the performance of interlibrary loan and document delivery services*. Retrieved June 18, 2009, from <http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/ildds.pdf>.