

MVLS Policy Outline

This outline serves two purposes. It will become the table of contents for the planned MVLS Policy Manual, and it will guide the process of assisting MVLS member libraries with policy development. The Policy Manual will be developed according to the following schedule. It is anticipated that this will become a rolling schedule for regular policy review.

Fall 2013 - Library Collections	Spring 2014 – Finance & Admin
Fall 2014 - Library Use	Spring 2015 – Board & By-Laws
Fall 2015 - Library Circulation	Spring 2016- Personnel

Internal Policies

1. Board Governance

Policies in this section must include Bylaws (minimum standard #1), address Conflict of Interest, and include a Code of Ethics. It is good practice for all libraries to have a Mission Statement, and all libraries in New York State are required to have a board approved Plan of Service (minimum standard #2).

1.1 Bylaws

Bylaws articles should address Name & Location, Purpose, Trustees (number, how elected/appointed, terms, duties, removal), Officers, Meetings (minimum number, agenda/authority [Robert's Rules?], open meetings language), Committees, the Executive Director, and Amendment procedures. The IRS likes to see a dissolution clause.

1.2 Conflict of Interest Policy (may be incorporated into the Bylaws)

1.3 Institutional Code of Ethics (may be incorporated into the Bylaws)

1.4 Mission Statement (could be the "Purpose" article of the Bylaws)

1.5 Plan of Service (5 Year)

1.6 Board Development Policy

This optional but important policy addresses board member orientation and continuing education. It can also include a trustee job description, qualifications of board members (collectively and individually) and a plan for board development.

2. Administrative

Administrative policies should include information on Budget & Finance (minimum standard #5), Records Retention, Building Maintenance, an Emergency/Disaster Plan, and Public Relations.

2.1 Finance Policies

The sections below may be incorporated into a single Finance Policy or they may stand as individual policies within the Finance section

2.1-1 Budget Development and Amendment

2.1-2 Purchasing/Payment Authorization/Internal Audit

- 2.1-3 Cash Management/Income Tracking**
- 2.1-4 Investment Policy**
- 2.1-5 Fixed Assets/Capitalization/Disposition of Surplus**
- 2.1-6 Gifts & Contributions/Fundraising**
- 2.1-7 External Audit**
- 2.1-8 Relationship with Members/Friends/Foundation etc.**

2.2 Records Retention/Disposal Policy This includes a list of statistics kept. In addition to retention lists, it should also include information on public access to records.

2.3 Building Maintenance Policy

2.4 Emergency Plan

2.5 Public Relations

3. Personnel

Personnel Policies are commonly grouped together in a Personnel Manual. I prefer to treat the policy as a whole rather than as individual policies since it simplifies updating, but that is just a matter of personal preference. Personnel policies are by far the most regulated and risk-heavy policies that a library has. Nearly every section listed below is required. All employees should annually sign off on having received a copy of the personnel manual, along with information on their specific salary and hours.

3.1 Conditions of Employment Includes authority for selection/appointment, at will employment (if applicable), probationary periods, anti-discrimination/harassment, nepotism, and other conditions of employment.

3.2 Employee Responsibilities & Privileges includes a code of conduct, opening/closing responsibilities, use of equipment/social software, dress code, perks, workplace safety, etc.

3.3 Training, Evaluation & Discipline includes orientation, job descriptions, continuing education, evaluation procedure, discipline, grievance procedure, and whistleblower/non retaliation protection.

3.4 Schedules address workplace hours, lateness, timesheets/recordkeeping, lunches & breaks, emergency closing

3.5 Leave Policy Holidays, Sick time, Vacation time, Bereavement Leave, Personal time, Family & Medical Leave, other paid & unpaid leave

3.6 Salary include salary base or ranges, authority/schedule for setting salaries, payment schedule, salary reduction agreements/opportunities, executive compensation

3.7 Benefits Health Insurance, Retirement, Social Security, Disability, Unemployment, and any salary reduction opportunities offered

3.8 Termination Processes and procedures concerning retirement, resignation and dismissal

3.9 Volunteers

External Policies

4. Library Collections

Every library should have policies that address selection, weeding and censorship. All libraries should officially accept the following ALA statements: Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read statement and Freedom to View statement. In addition, every library should have an official form for users to request reconsideration of library materials, and should have a policy that addresses copyright and the copying of library resources.

4.1 Selection of Library Materials Address formats, neutrality, authority (who does it?), collection scope and sample criteria

4.2 Weeding Similar to selection - same sections

4.3 Reconsideration/Censorship - Include a form!

4.4 Gifts of Library Materials Make sure you have a policy stating that gifts must be selected for the collection in the same way as purchased materials

4.5 ILL and Reference

4.6 Copyright When is it appropriate to make a copy, and when is it not?

5. Library Use

Every library should have rules for use or a Patron Code of Conduct. It is best to keep these policies positive - avoid a list of Don'ts. If your library offers opportunities to the public - meeting rooms, programs, exhibit areas, public bulletin boards - then you should have a policy to address those issues. Finally, all libraries should have policies that address computer use, including the internet and wireless. Use of cell phones is another hot topic.

5.1 Customer Service Expectations Include the hours of service. Also include a provision for patron complaints

5.2 User Expectations This is the "new" library rules! Unattended child policies are considered important.

5.3 Library Programs (Free Direct Access Implications!)

5.4 Meeting Rooms, Exhibit Spaces, Bulletin Boards The limited public forum and its impact on what can and can't be done.

5.5 Computer Use Library computers, the internet and wireless connections

5.6 Public Safety include an Incident Report Form

6. Borrowing Library Materials - Circulation

The importance of the confidentiality of Library records is state law and must be included in all circulation policies. Other than that, library circulation policies are fairly straightforward, but make sure you deal with Free Direct Access issues, and that your policies conform to JA policies, which are official policies of your library (That's why your board signs off on the JA agreement each year).

6.1 Library Cards address resident & nonresident re: Free Direct Access

6.2 Confidentiality of Library Records It's the law!

6.3 Loan Periods, Limits, Renewals & Reserves

6.4 Fines & Fees, Lost Materials and Claims