

**STANDARDS FOR
LOUISIANA PUBLIC LIBRARIES
1995**

**LOUISIANA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
PUBLIC LIBRARY SECTION**

The 1994-95 Standards Update Committee
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In memory of Dr. Julia Avant, the original committee chair.

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* pagination differs from Standards that were published in brochure format. Content is identical.

INTRODUCTION

Standards for public libraries in Louisiana were established in 1964 (*Standards Statement for Louisiana Public Libraries*, Public Library Section, Louisiana Library Association). The Section revised the standards in 1975 (*Goals, Guidelines and Gauges for Public Library Service in Louisiana*) and in 1987 (*Standards for Public Libraries in Louisiana*).

The current standards revision committee continues in the approach of its predecessors that input standards remain the valid means of measurement of minimal levels of achievement for libraries in their pursuit of excellence. Although methods such as output standards and the planning process are important tools for libraries, they are outside the charge of this committee and are well documented in library literature.

The committee recommends the *Handbook for Louisiana Public Library Directors* (PL Section, LLA, 1992) for more in-depth guidance in such areas as governance, budgeting, buildings, and staffing that are addressed in these standards.

GOVERNANCE/ADMINISTRATION

Library Board of Control

Louisiana Revised Statute 25:214 provides for public library governance through a library board of control.

The board of control shall be familiar with and govern the public library in compliance with the provisions of LA R.S. 25:211 et seq. and other local, state, and federal laws pertinent to library services and operations.

The board shall operate under bylaws which are reviewed and updated regularly.

Bylaws shall include provisions for board meetings, staggered terms, periodic retirement of members, rotation of officers, and replacement of inactive or uninterested members.

The library board shall delegate the daily operations of the library to a library director.

Library Policies

Each public library shall have in place the following board adopted plans/policies:

1. A long range plan outlining the goals, objectives, and action plan for the library's operation and development over a three to five year period, including a plan to evaluate annually the library's success in meeting goals and objectives.
2. Written policies, reviewed and updated regularly, to guide public services, delineate acceptable practices and actions, instruct staff, determine administrative decisions, and provide information for public interaction, including policies on library organization, operation, public service and use, facilities, materials, and personnel. (SEE *Handbook for Louisiana Public Library Directors*).

Library Administration

Each public library shall have as an administrator a graduate of a program of library and information studies accredited by the American Library Association.

Each library shall designate staff to be responsible for planning, organizing, coordinating, and administering services.

Multiple outlet systems shall designate a headquarters as the main or central services facility.

The library administrator shall obtain state certification as required by LA R.S. 25:222.

FUNDING

All public libraries shall obtain sufficient funds to meet the needs of the communities served. Library boards shall ensure that these funds are available.

The minimum standards for local income per capita and total income per capita shall be the national per capita averages, as reported annually by the State Library of Louisiana in *Public Libraries in Louisiana: Statistical Report*.^{*}

Public libraries should take advantage of all revenue sources: municipal, parish, state, federal, and private funds. However, libraries shall rely primarily on a local tax that is dedicated exclusively for library purposes and that will generate stable revenues. A property millage is such a tax.

The Louisiana Legislature should recognize its responsibility in the provision of essential library services. The standard for state aid for public libraries (SEE Glossary) shall be a minimum of \$1.00 per capita per year.

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1993 local income per capita = \$16.11

1993 total income per capita = \$20.65

Source: *Public Libraries in the United States: 1993*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Federal-State Cooperative System for Public Library Data (FSCS), 1994.

FACILITIES

Public library facilities shall be designed to meet specific community or constituency needs as determined by the library's stated roles. Buildings shall be visible in and accessible to the community and shall be inviting, efficient, comfortable, and safe spaces in which patrons may use the collections and services of the library. Facilities should be planned to accommodate materials in a variety of formats and full access to information through interlibrary loan and electronic databases.

Site Considerations

Since accessibility, visibility, and security are essential factors in the successful library, facility planners should consider the full implications of these factors in site selection.

The library shall be a focal point within the designated region and shall be located within reasonable proximity to residential areas and shopping centers. The site shall provide adequate acreage for the facility, for staff and patron parking, and for expansion of both the building and parking.

Terrain factors such as flood zones, elevations, and drainage shall be considered in the site selection process.

The spacing of branches within a system has a significant impact on the overall viability of the system. Facility spacing shall relate directly to the demographic data available on the service area, and outlets shall be planned that address the socioeconomic status of users within the targeted region. Careful matching of the site and facility to the community served will result in more effective use of the library's collections and services.

Building Program

A written building program for all library construction shall be developed by the librarian or a library consultant. The program shall be approved by the library board and given to the architect for the development of preliminary plans. The librarian and the board shall work closely with the architect through the design process to ascertain that the building program is correctly interpreted as to function and design characteristics.

Building Size and Construction Requirements

Building size shall be determined by a formula based on a 20-year population growth projection and on the nature of the collections and services planned for the library. The minimum standard for facility size is six-tenths (.6) square foot per capita. However, to provide sufficient reader space when electronic equipment is necessary to access information, one (1) square foot per capita is required. The 20-year population projection shall be utilized to calculate shelving and seating requirements.

The librarian shall provide the architect with information on standard library building requirements for floor loads, lighting, air conditioning and heating, acoustics, floor coverings, security systems, and other factors that provide for flexibility and structural soundness.

Access for People with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires accessibility to library facilities, collections, and programs. Architects and librarians must work together to design and/or renovate facilities that provide access for all patrons. Guidelines are available that provide specific recommendations for buildings and parking accommodations as well as for information delivery to individuals with disabilities.*

* SEE *Americans with Disabilities Act Handbook*. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and U.S. Department of Justice.

MATERIALS

Library Resources

A public library's main function is to provide materials in all formats which meet the community's needs, interests, and priorities. A library shall cooperate with other libraries through interlibrary loan to provide additional materials.

A public library shall have a collection development policy and shall allocate funds to develop the collection based on that policy. The collection development policy shall reflect the community's needs, interests, and priorities and shall include statements on selection, maintenance, weeding of the collection, intellectual freedom, and service to people with disabilities. This policy should be reviewed annually and revised as needed.

Individual libraries may choose to use some qualitative methods to evaluate their collections. While increased resources do not automatically result in improved services, quantitative figures are useful for general applications. The following standards are quantitative and provide minimum levels.

Books Per Capita

A public library shall provide a book collection based on the following measures for a branch and/or system. An individual outlet shall have a minimum collection of 15,000 books.

Adequate

2.5 books per capita

Superior

3.5 books per capita

Periodical Subscriptions per 1,000 Population

Periodicals shall be selected according to community needs and interests. Duplicate titles are included when evaluating the branch and/or system.

Adequate

6 titles per 1,000

Superior

10 titles per 1,000

Non-print Materials

Non-print materials shall be acquired, organized, and made available as an integral part of the collection. The format and size of the collection shall be appropriate to the community's needs, interests, and priorities.

Evaluation of Materials Budget

20% of the total annual operating budget shall be expended on materials.

30% of the annual materials budget shall be expended on youth services.

A minimum of 10% of the annual materials budget shall be expended on nonprint materials and electronic services.

Addition of Items

7% or more of the collection shall be added annually.

Withdrawal of Items

A minimum of 5% of the collection shall be withdrawn annually.

Currency of Collection

25% of the nonfiction collection shall be published/purchased within the last five (5) years.

50% of the nonfiction collection shall be published/purchased within the last ten (10) years.

The currency of the fiction collection shall be reflected by the collection development policy of the individual library.

PERSONNEL

The library's personnel are the critical link between the community and the informational, educational, and cultural resources provided by the library. Skilled intermediaries are especially important in the modern environment, which stresses access to information as well as collection development and preservation. It is essential, therefore, that the public be served by an effective and dedicated staff and that managerial standards support the selection, development, and retention of outstanding library employees.

Service Philosophy

All library personnel should have an understanding of the informational, educational, and cultural mission of the library. All staff shall adhere to the American Library Association *Code of Ethics*.

Library Director

The library director shall be certified by the Louisiana State Board of Library Examiners, except for individuals who have been library director for fewer than 24-months OR directors who are working toward certification by pursuing a Master's degree in library and information studies from a program accredited by the American Library Association.

Classification

Using the American Library Association *Library Education and Personnel Utilization (LEPU) Statement*, each library will develop and adhere to a classification system that clearly defines and differentiates positions in terms of qualifications and responsibilities. Relevant portions of the statement are excerpted:

Librarian

Requirement: Degree from an American Library Association-accredited graduate program of library and information science.

Responsibility: Professional responsibilities, including management, which require independent judgment, interpretation of rules and procedures, analysis of library problems, and formulation of original and creative solutions for them. *Librarians will exhibit in the execution of professional responsibilities a knowledge of traditions, theories, and conceptual bases of the American public library, as well as an understanding of national trends and issues that might effect library information services.*

Library Associate

Requirement: Bachelor's degree

Responsibility: Supportive responsibilities at a high level, normally working within established procedures and techniques, and with some supervision by a professional, but requiring judgment, subject knowledge, and communications skills as is represented by a full four-year college education culminating in the bachelor's degree. *In the execution of their assigned responsibilities, library associates will exhibit a knowledge of the policies, procedures, resources, and ethics of the local library, as well as an understanding of the local community.*

Support Staff

The variety of support staff positions utilized in the public library is not adequately addressed by the *LEPU Statement*. Requirements and responsibilities will be developed on the local level. This designation generally applies to positions that do not require post- secondary education and involve limited independent judgment and supervisory responsibilities.

Staffing Levels

Each library system, regardless of size, will employ at least one (1) full time librarian and adhere to the following staffing levels (full time equivalent staff on a per capita basis) as follows:

	Adequate	Superior
Total Library Staff	1 per 2,000	1 per 1,500
Librarian (MLS,MLIS)	1 per 12,000	1 per 8,000

Further, all libraries serving a population of greater than 50,000 shall have at least one (1) librarian assigned to each of the following services:

Youth Services
Reference Services
Technical Services

Compensation

Salary levels shall be sufficient to recruit and retain qualified personnel at all levels. Compensation systems shall provide for merit raises for superior performance as well as regular cost of living increases.

Librarian

Adequate: National average for starting public librarian positions (as reported annually in *Public Libraries in Louisiana: Statistical Report*)
OR
starting salary for teachers with Master's degree in the local public school system, whichever is greater.*

Superior: National average for starting public librarian positions (as reported annually in *Public Libraries in Louisiana: Statistical Report*) plus 10%
OR
starting salary for teachers with Master's degree in the local public school system, prorated for a 12-month contract, whichever is greater.*

In either case, librarians shall receive benefits comparable to those of other public employees in the local area.

* The average starting salary for medium-sized public libraries was \$24,592 according to the *ALA Survey of Librarian Salaries, 1994*.

Library Associate

- Adequate:** Starting salary for certified teachers with Bachelor's degree in the local public school system, including benefits comparable to those of other public employees in the local area.
- Superior:** Starting salary for certified teachers with Bachelor's degree in the local public school system, prorated for a 12-month contract, including benefits comparable to those of other public employees in the local area.

Other Support Staff

- Adequate:** Starting salary for comparable positions in local businesses and government, including comparable benefits,
OR
current federal minimum wage, whichever is greater.
- Superior:** Starting salary for comparable positions in local businesses and government plus 10%, including comparable benefits,
OR
current federal minimum wage plus 10%, whichever is greater.

Personnel Policies

Libraries shall establish written personnel policies and procedures and revise them annually. Such policies shall be in compliance with all federal, state, and local labor laws. Personnel policies and procedures shall be made available to all staff members.

Continuing Education and Staff Development In-Service Training

Library staff at all levels shall be provided with appropriate in-service training opportunities. Libraries shall design and implement programs to develop personnel resources and enhance service provisions.

External Continuing Professional Education

Staff at all levels shall be encouraged to attend workshops and other professional continuing education activities.

Adequate: Official time off shall be provided to each librarian and library associate for at least one (1) external professional continuing education activity per year.

Superior: Full financial support for all expenses related to one (1) external professional continuing education activity per year shall be provided to each librarian and library associate.

Funding

Adequate: One percent (1%) of the personnel budget shall be designated to support staff development.

Superior: Funding shall support "superior" levels of staff development and continuing education as defined above.

SERVICES

Access

Every Louisiana resident shall have free, equal, and easy access to public library service.

Public libraries shall offer services without discrimination to adults, young adults, children, and special populations including ethnic minorities, older citizens, people with disabilities, and people who are residents in institutions or are confined to their homes.

Each public library shall provide service free to all persons residing within the library's legal, tax-supported service area.

Libraries should work toward providing Louisiana residents with statewide reciprocal borrowing privileges.

Service Levels

Each library shall offer services based on the composition, needs, and interests of the people within its community.

The library shall maintain policies, reviewed and updated regularly, regarding the services it provides.

Policies shall state the availability and levels of services offered at each service outlet.

The main library shall offer comprehensive materials collections and a wide range of services.

Services at other outlets shall include, at a minimum:

1. The lending of circulating library materials.
2. Standard reference and information and referral services.
3. Interlibrary loan.

Circulation

The library shall provide a system for registering borrowers and for charging and discharging materials that satisfies both the patron's need for confidentiality, speed, convenience, and ease of use and the library's need for adequate patron information and internal controls.

The library shall have a circulation policy designating a registration period, loan period(s), information on fines and fees, a schedule for updating and purging files, and other pertinent practices.

Reference/Information and Referral/ Interlibrary Loan Services

Reference services shall promptly provide the patron with accurate and timely information.

The library shall provide reference services consisting of:

1. The provision of information.
2. Guidance in selection and use of library materials.
3. Instruction in library use.
4. Information and referral service to community agencies and organizations.
5. Participation in statewide backup reference support, interlibrary loan, and other resource sharing services.

The library shall maintain up-to-date reference sources.

The library shall contribute to the electronic database of Louisiana holdings and participate in the statewide electronic interlibrary loan network.

The library shall provide reference services to patrons of all ages and conditions, in person, by telephone, and by text telephone (TTY), during all hours the library is open.

Programming

Programming shall be provided for adults, young adults, children, and special constituencies.

Programming shall be designed to address the diversity within the community, to increase the awareness and use of library resources and services, and to attract new users.

The library shall accommodate participation in programs by people with disabilities. The availability of the accommodations shall be included in the program announcement.

Cooperation

The library shall cooperate with libraries of all types within the area to maximize services to residents.

The library shall cooperate with area schools by engaging in programs and services that foster public library use.

Public Relations

Each public library shall have a plan of activity to promote community awareness of the library, its materials, programs, and services.

Each library regardless of size shall have a staff member designated to be responsible for coordinating and implementing the library's community awareness program.

A portion of the budget shall be designated for public relations activities including staff training in public service.

Each public library shall utilize all possible means (such as a newsletter, information brochures, posters, flyers, bookmarks, newspaper articles and other media exposure, community presentations, exhibits, displays, and annual reports) to publicize the library and promote use.

Hours

Days and hours of service shall be selected for maximum potential use and determined on the basis of periodic user needs surveys.

The main library shall be open at least 40 hours a week including at least three (3) hours a week after 5:00 P.M., and some hours on weekends.

Each branch shall be open a minimum of 20 hours a week on a schedule that meets local neighborhood needs.

Service hours shall be clearly posted at the library, in other appropriate locations, and widely advertised within the library service community.

All library services shall be offered during open hours.

Suggested hours per outlet are:

Population	Hours
3000 & under	20 - 32
3001 - 5000	28 - 40
5001 - 10,000	40 - 52
Over 10,000	52 - 68

Delivery Systems

Alternate delivery systems for library services shall be devised for patrons who cannot readily reach a library.

Special attention shall be paid to delivery systems for people with disabilities, residents of institutions, people who are confined to their homes, and residents in geographically remote areas.

GLOSSARY

Alternative Delivery Systems Means of providing library services and materials to patrons outside library buildings, such as by mail, bookmobile, or other means.

Librarian A person holding a Master's degree in library and information studies from an ALA-accredited program.

Library Associate A library employee who holds a bachelor's degree and who is assigned supportive responsibilities at a high level, with some supervision by a librarian.

Library Clerk A library employee with general clerical and secretarial proficiencies who performs tasks in strict accordance with established rules and procedures.

Library Technical Assistant A library employee with specific technical skills who performs tasks in support of library associates or librarians, following established rules and procedures, including, at top level, supervision of such tasks.

Library Director The librarian who is the chief executive officer of a parish or public library.

Non-print Materials Materials in audio and visual formats which convey information primarily by sound and image rather than by text, e.g., films, videotapes, and others.

Operating Budget Total expenditures as listed in the annual budget that is included in the annual report submitted each year to the State Library.

Paraprofessional Variously applied to personnel classified as library associate, and less precisely, to all members of the support staff.

Permanent Structure A building, owned or leased, which is not moveable and which is expected to last for the foreseeable future.

State Aid State revenue appropriated to the State Library for the annual program of supplemental grants to public libraries for the purchase of books, library materials and other specifically designated expenditures.

Support Staff All nonprofessional personnel, including library clerks, library technical assistants, and library associates.

Total Library Staff All staff employed by the library, regardless of tasks performed.