**Library Policies for Today’s Communities**

<https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/library-policies-for-todays-communities.html>

Library policies have the power to facilitate inclusive, safe, and supportive experiences for all. Join this webinar to learn the importance of crafting clear policies for your library, to help establish and set standards that ensure equity and safety for both staff and patrons. Follow North Liberty Library’s journey as they reviewed and renewed policies and procedures with a lens of inclusivity, for all areas of library operations. In this applicable approach for all library types and sizes, learn effective methods for building staff awareness and understanding of policies, and gain a fresh perspective on how policies can create flexibility, empathy, and allyship with those we serve.

Presented by: **Jennie Garner**, Library Director, North Liberty Library (IA) and 2023 President, Association for Rural & Small Libraries

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| **What are your goals for viewing this webinar?** | |
| **Personal Goals** |  |
| **Team Goals** |  |
| **Why have policies?** | |
| Your policies should serve a purpose for both internal staff-facing needs as well as outward public-facing needs. Begin by discussing or reflecting on the need and intentions around policies, and consider, **do your existing policies function to improve or address** the following. Check the box if so, or circle if you’d like to improve this facet in policy updates:   * Empower staff to do their jobs effectively and encourage decision-making power * Offers the public a set of expectations for library spaces and services, and ensures that they are treated equitably * Provide [extreme customer service](https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/Extreme_Customer_Service_Every_Time.html) (see WebJunction webinar and course) * Provide access to public education * Cover legal and ethical issues * Lend credibility to the library * Includes State Library policy implications or standards * Provides a mechanism for administration and staff to translate library priorities into action * Provides support for staff and board in the event of legal action | |

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| **Policy Audit** |
| One great way to begin to audit your library’s policy collection is to **identify other libraries** you think are doing impactful work or doing things well to meet community needs and interests. Go to the library’s policies and perhaps reach out to connect with them to **understand how their policies play a part in their success**. Review those policies that align with those you would like to update for your library. List the facets that you’d like to integrate into your policies, noting why they might improve your policies. |
| **Policy Weeding** |
| Part of your policy audit should include identifying those policies that would better serve patron and library needs as clarified procedures. Look for procedures that should be pulled out of your policies and put into a training plan/manual. Identify your current library policies that should be reviewed and integrated into your library’s procedures instead: |
| **Updates for Inclusion** |
| Select a few of the policies prioritized in your audit above, and using what you’ve learned about updating for inclusion, review the policies for updates and consider:   * Does it help support or protect staff? * Does it help support or protect patrons? * Is it more proactive or designed more with focus on how to react to a situation? * Does it use positive vs. negative language? Does it shift the emphasis to “yes”? * Does it clarify in places where previously there has been confusion or misunderstanding? * Is it understandable and relatable? * Is the language used heavily gender-coded? Use a [Gender Decoder](http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/) to identify gender bias in the language used (often used to review job postings or advertising). |

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| **Action Plan: (include next steps, when, who, etc.)** |

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