Hello and Welcome!
Cardholder Access Research: What is it?

Brooklyn Public Library is spearheading an effort to research how public libraries in the U.S. structure their cardholder signup policies. The project will result in the first known national dataset of this area of practice.

- What is the established practice across the field?
- How often is this practice revisited, updated, and/or interrogated? (Why do we do things a certain way?)
- Where could we benefit from better clarity, standardization, and guidance?
Cardholder Access Research: What is it?

The results of the research are freely available at www.bklynlib.org/library-study

- Published analysis
- Interactive dashboard
- Raw dataset (available by request)
Cardholder Access Research:
Today’s Agenda

Inspiration  
Research Methodology  
Takeaways  
Next Steps
BPL Cardholder Policies
Balancing access and stewardship

Books Unbanned
Youth Voices: limited library access
https://www.bklynlibrary.org/books-unbanned

Library Stakeholders
Best practices and guidance
Research Components

The survey included 1,895 libraries, and the qualitative research included approximately 115 libraries. A few libraries participated in multiple research methods.

**Interviews**
75 in-person interviews at ALA Conference, June 24-26, 2023

**Survey**
Online survey fielded Sept 18 - Dec 7, 2023

**In-Person Focus Groups**
1. ARSL Conference, September 2023
2. ULC Forum, October 2023

**Online Focus Group**
Online, asynchronous focus group, November 2023
Example Survey Questions

[Show to all respondents]

14. Does the library require adults to show government-issued photo identification (ID) in order to receive a full-access library card? (Select one)
   ( ) No
   ( ) Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: [text box]
   ( ) Yes, but there are exceptions – feel free to explain: [text box]
   ( ) Yes, always
   ( ) Unsure
   ( ) Prefer not to answer

[Show if respondent selected either “Yes” response, “Unsure,” or “Prefer not to answer” in Q14]

15. Does the library give any considerations to patrons whose name does not match their legal ID? (Select one)
   ( ) No
   ( ) Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: [text box]
   ( ) Yes – feel free to explain: [text box]
   ( ) Unsure
   ( ) Prefer not to answer
Research Process

- Collaborated on Developing Research Instruments
- Collected Data Through Multiple Methods
- Cleaned, Organized, & Analyzed Data
- Now Sharing with the Library Community
Almost half (46%) of surveyed libraries serve a legal service area with a population of less than 10,000.

Using library location, survey responses were broken down into four regions and nine divisions, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau.
More than nine in ten (93%) require a **primary mailing address** in all cases.

66% of libraries require **phone number** in all cases. Nearly one in ten (9%) require phone number in some cases. 24% optionally collect phone number.

65% of libraries optionally collect **preferred name**, with nearly one in five (19%) not collecting preferred name. 16% require this information in all or some cases.

61% of libraries optionally collect **email address**. 27% require email address in all cases, and 10% require email address in some cases.
67% of libraries do not collect **gender information**. 21% optionally collect gender. More than one in ten libraries require collecting gender in all (11%) or some (2%) cases.

59% of libraries do not collect an **identification number** (e.g., Driver's license number). More than one-third require an identification number in all (27%) or some (9%) cases.

85% of libraries do not collect information on **employer or place of employment**. One in ten require this information in all (2%) or some (8%) cases.

91% of libraries do not collect **community references**. Five percent require community references in all (3%) or some (2%) cases.
Types of Adult Cards

Nearly seven in ten libraries offer library cards to non-residents: about one-third (35%) offer non-resident cards for a fee, and about one-third (34%) offer non-resident cards for no charge.

53% of libraries offer temporary cards or guest passes to anyone who cannot obtain a library card. 45% do not offer this option, while 2% are developing this.

82% of libraries do not require patrons to have a library card to access computer and/or printing services.

52% of libraries do not offer electronic library cards, or eCards. Among libraries with eCards, more than half (56%) introduced eCards between 1 and 3 years ago.
53% of libraries have no minimum age requirement for a library card. 14% have a minimum age requirement of 5 years old. 9% have a minimum age requirement between 10 and 18 years old to get a library card.

68% of libraries issue youth a library card with no limitations on access. 16% issue library cards to youth with limitations on access based on age.

Among the libraries with limitations on access based on age, the most common limitation is on the types of items (60%). 32% of these libraries put limitations on the number of items that can be checked out.

85% of libraries require youth up to a certain age to have stated permission from an adult to receive a library card. Of these libraries, 54% require permission until a patron is 18 years old.
98% of libraries reported that general library card signup usually takes 15 minutes or less. Among the remaining 2%, about three in four indicated it takes 1 business day or more.

70% of libraries do not have a probationary period for new library cards for adult patrons. 19% have a probationary period in all cases.

76% of libraries offer cardholder signup to patrons who are homebound or otherwise unable to visit the library in person. 17% reported not offering signup to those unable to visit in person.

The majority of libraries offer the library’s cardholder application (62%) and introductory information or materials (72%) only in English.
### Key Takeaways

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Policy Changes</th>
<th>Most libraries have made some type of change to their cardholder signup policies and/or procedures in the past five years; however, 30% of libraries have not.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Barriers to Access</td>
<td>Barriers can present themselves in the cardholder signup method (i.e. requiring in-person), proof of eligibility, the types of data collected, youth signup, and language access.</td>
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<td>Source Prompting Change</td>
<td>For the majority of libraries, changes to cardholder signup policies and procedures are prompted by staff. Training and communication are essential.</td>
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<td>Data for Decision-Making</td>
<td>Libraries expressed the value of having data available to support change (patrons not able to provide ID or address not shown to have a higher materials loss rate).</td>
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The Cardholder Access Working Group will meet through the spring and summer, with a goal to publish a framework of best practices in Fall 2024.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alameda County Library</td>
<td>Lambertville Free Public Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austin Public Library</td>
<td>Libraries of Eastern Oregon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boone County Public Library</td>
<td>Mandel Public Library</td>
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<td>Brigham Memorial Library</td>
<td>Metropolitan Library System</td>
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<td>C/W MARS (Central-Western Mass Automated Resource Sharing)</td>
<td>North Liberty Library (IA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carlsbad City Library</td>
<td>New York Public Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Casey County Public Library</td>
<td>Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charlotte Mecklenburg Library</td>
<td>Round Rock Public Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Public Library</td>
<td>Rusk County Community Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Wolfforth Library</td>
<td>Sacramento Public Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Davidson County Public Library</td>
<td>Salt Lake County Library</td>
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<td>DC Public Library</td>
<td>Springfield City Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deschutes Public Library</td>
<td>St. Louis Public Library</td>
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<td>Englewood Public Library</td>
<td>Suffolk Public Library</td>
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<td>Fort Vancouver Regional Library District</td>
<td>The Seattle Public Library</td>
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<td>Jefferson County Public Library (JCPL)</td>
<td>Toronto Public Library</td>
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<td>Lake Park Public Library</td>
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*Note: This list includes libraries from various regions and countries.*
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<tr>
<th>Assess Current Practice</th>
<th>List Opportunities for Change</th>
<th>Flag Existing Barriers</th>
<th>Prioritize Solutions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Consider your library’s practices and policies in the following areas. <strong>What do you currently do and why do you do it this way?</strong>&lt;br&gt;● Residency requirements&lt;br&gt;● Youth access&lt;br&gt;● Language access&lt;br&gt;● Digital access&lt;br&gt;● Data collection &amp; retention&lt;br&gt;● Patron information &amp; education&lt;br&gt;● Other miscellaneous (expiration &amp; renewals, guest passes/ computer use, outreach/ homebound, incarcerated patrons)</td>
<td>Identify where there might be opportunities to make “easy” changes.&lt;br&gt;Are there areas where you can get creative within the stated policy? Easily change or update internal procedures?&lt;br&gt;Or, are there areas in which the policy itself is “easy” to change?</td>
<td>Identify where you might run into <strong>barriers, pushback, or roadblocks</strong> to make changes.&lt;br&gt;Where might you need more data, information, or other support in order to make your case?</td>
<td>List your <strong>top three most urgently needed changes</strong>, and brainstorm possible <strong>solutions</strong> to move forward.</td>
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Resources

Library Card Access Study
www.bklynlib.org/library-study

“In Their Own Words: Youth Voices on Books Unbanned”
www.booksunbanned.com/youthvoices

Project Contact

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