

SYSTEM AND MEMBER LIBRARY RELATIONSHIP POLICY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

OWWL Library System (the System) is one of the twenty-three Public Library Systems in New York State. These institutions are chartered by the Board of Regents, function under State Education Law, and are governed locally by a Board of Trustees.

The purpose of Public Library Systems is to expand the resources of local libraries, enabling them to purchase services and share resources cooperatively. The primary source of funding for most Public Library Systems in New York, including OWWL Library System, is State Aid to Libraries. Systems qualify for aid based on an approved five-year Plan of Service and Annual Report.

Public Library Systems facilitate sharing of library resources and programs so all residents have access to information and services that enhance their lives as community members and lifelong learners. System staff provides professional expertise that helps local libraries achieve their full potential.

In the most general definition, Public Library Systems serve Member Libraries and Member Libraries serve the public directly.

OWWL LIBRARY SYSTEM'S PURPOSE

The OWWL Library System exists to support the expansion and improvement of public library services in Ontario, Wayne, Wyoming, and Livingston Counties. The System provides to its members consultation services, technology support, advocacy, and guidance on library-related topics. The System also acts as a forum for discussion, coordination of services, and distribution of State and Federal aid across the four counties.

SYSTEM RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEMBER LIBRARIES

The System proudly offers support to its 42 Member Libraries in the form of continuing education, policy development, technology consultations, and administrative consultations.

All guidance, advice, and opinions offered by the System and its staff are advisory in nature and should never be used in lieu of appropriate legal counsel or opinions from area-specific professionals.

The System holds no administrative control over any of its Member Libraries. Member Libraries have their own elected or appointed Boards of Trustees that individually govern them.

The System holds no employer/employee relationship with any of its Member Libraries. Each library employs its own Director and staff and oversees the organizational structure as it sees fit.

The System holds no responsibility or liability in governance or management decisions made locally by any of its Member Libraries.

The System holds no fiscal responsibility to any of its Member Libraries except as outlined in approved contracts or New York State Education Law in relation to the disbursement of State Aid.

The System offers continuing education to member library staff and Trustees on a variety of topics. It is the responsibility of the individual staff member, Trustee, or local library to document continuing education to comply with any institutional or State requirements.

The System holds no responsibility for any of its Member Libraries' technologies, computers, or software except as outlined in approved agreements between the individual libraries and the System. System technology support is available for technology in compliance with the System's Computer Support Policy.

THE SYSTEM EXISTS TO SUPPORT LIBRARY SERVICES AND DOES NOT SUPPORT, ENDORSE, OR ADVOCATE FOR ANY ONE INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS OUTSIDE THE CONTEXT OF BENEFITING OUR MEMBER LIBRARIES. CONSULTATIONS ON SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Any System consultation regarding potentially sensitive topics such as governance, funding, management, personnel, or other administrative control shall be limited to communications between the System's Executive Director and Member Library administration (Directors and/or Trustees).

All communications regarding sensitive information will remain confidential between the System's Executive Director, appropriate System staff, and the Member Library representative(s) unless information could result in legal consequences or potential damages to the Member Library.

System staff have the right to share any concerning information, even if considered confidential, with the System's Executive Director.

FORMAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN MEMBER LIBRARIES AND THE SYSTEM

All agreements between the System and Member Libraries shall be evaluated and renewed on a regular basis. Such agreements include, but are not limited to, the System's Plan of Service, Free Direct Access Plan, OWWL Cost Shares, OWWL2Go Funding Commitments, and the Systems Access and Confidentiality of Library Records Policy.

SYSTEM-WIDE DECISION MAKING

When appropriate, System-wide policies, activities, or agreements affecting Member Libraries will be presented to the OWWL Library System Directors' Advisory Council (PLSDAC), or corresponding sub-committee, for discussion, input, and advice prior to implementation. The System Board holds the ultimate authority on the System's activities and agreements.

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