



Idaho
Commission
for Libraries

Best Practices Section 2: Facilities

Toolkit

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In this toolkit you will find value-added information that includes definitions, examples, and links to useful resources to help you respond to the questions in the corresponding Best Practices Checklist.

Core Level

2.1. My library complies with current fire and safety codes¹.

2.1.1. If yours is a city library, your city's fire department and public works departments can help you with compliance issues.

2.1.2. If yours is a district library, your local fire department can help with fire and safety code compliance.

2.2. My library board maintains an adequately funded facility-related reserve fund to address maintenance, repairs, and remodeling if the library owns the building.

2.2.1 A district library may own or lease the building it occupies and will need to include in its annual budget funds for building maintenance, repairs, and remodeling, including the capital assets replacement and repair fund [I.C. § [33-2724\(4\)](#)], funds from any plant-facilities reserve fund and levy [I.C. § [33-2729](#)], and/or funds from any building bond issued by the library [I.C. § [33-2728](#)].

2.2.2. Idaho Code section 33-2729 authorizes a library district's board of trustees to create a plan facilities reserve fund. For more information, see <https://legislature.idaho.gov/statutesrules/idstat/Title33/T33CH27/SECT33-2729/>.

2.2.3. A city library building is owned by the city, which is responsible for the building's maintenance, upkeep, and repair.

2.2.4. See the Utah Public Library Facility Inspection Checklist from the Utah State Library: <https://library.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Building-Maintenance-Checklist-2018.pdf>.

2.3. My library provides adequate electrical outlets for patron use and uses Cat 5e cable² for data transmission. A public library needs adequate electrical and data outlets to support its computer technology, telecommunications requirements, maker equipment, and patron's personal devices. While a standard for the number of outlets for a public library appears to

¹ Fire safety is the set of practices intended to reduce the destruction caused by fire. Fire safety measures include those that are intended to prevent ignition of an uncontrolled fire, and those that are used to limit the development and effects of fire after it starts. Fire safety measures include those that are planned during the construction of a building or implemented in structures that are already standing, and those that are taught to occupants of the building. Fire safety code is a model code adopted by the state or local jurisdiction and enforced by fire prevention officers within municipal fire departments. It is a set of rules prescribing minimum requirements to prevent fire and explosion hazards arising from storage, handling, or use of dangerous materials, or from other specific hazardous conditions. Fire code complements building code, the set of rules that specify standards for constructed objects such as buildings and nonbuilding structures.

² Category 5 cable (Cat 5) is a twisted pair cable for computer networks. Since 2001, the variant commonly in use is the Category 5e specification (Cat 5e). This cable provides performance of up to 100 MHz and is suitable for most varieties of Ethernet over twisted pair up to 1000BASE-T (Gigabit Ethernet). Cat 5 is also used to carry other signals such as telephony and video.

be lacking, careful consideration and planning for electrical outlets during expansions and for new facilities will pay off as the price to add electrical outlets after construction will be more costly.

2.4. My library's interior is arranged to provide a well-lighted environment with a good line of sight for staff and patrons.

2.4.1. Adequate lighting includes both natural light and well-designed lighting:

https://web.stanford.edu/dept/SUL/library/institute21/programs/workshop/facilities/scherer_tech.pdf

2.4.2. Barrier-free access includes

2.4.2.1. well lighted patron areas, restrooms, and staff work areas;

2.4.2.2. adequately spaced lighting that clearly illuminates library materials; and

2.4.2.3. lighting adequate to ensure the safety of those operating maker equipment.

2.5. My library facility follows the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act; the library provides reasonable structural modifications to existing facilities and provides alternative access to services and programs as needed.

2.5.1. For more information on complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act, visit

<https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/ada>.

2.6. My library's hours of operation are posted at the main public entrance to the library.

2.6.1. The times during a day, week, and year when a library is open to its patrons are customarily posted near the front entrance and made available by telephone and via the library's web presence and include any days the library is closed, including holidays.

2.6.2. A library's hours are determined by the needs of its users as well as by budgetary constraints. It is important to consider the many characteristics of the community that supports the library and the service mix for that community. The hours are generally set to coincide with local work and play habits and ideally incorporate a mix of daytime, evening, and weekend hours.

2.7. My library maintains appropriate climate control measures year-round.

2.7.1. Proper climate control is provided for the comfort of the public and the staff as well as for the preservation of library materials and electronics. Special collections may contain older, more brittle material that need the climate control afforded by a special room for those items.

2.7.2. See the *Whole Building Design Guide*³ for information on providing comfortable environments: <https://www.wbdg.org/design-objectives/productive/provide-comfortable-environments>.

2.8. My library's facility-related policies and procedures, such as meeting room use, public bulletin boards/community information, patron behavior, are in place and made readily available to the public.

2.8.1. To learn more about ALA's stance on user-initiated exhibits, displays, and bulletin boards, visit

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/exhibitsdisplaybulletinboards>.

2.8.2. A library's policies must be approved by its board of trustees in a regular or special board meeting held according to the provisions of Idaho's Open Meetings Law [[chapter 2, title 74, Idaho Code](#)]. You can learn more about Idaho's Open Meetings Law in the Idaho Open Meeting Law Manual, published by the Office of the Attorney General:

<https://www.ag.idaho.gov/content/uploads/2018/04/OpenMeeting.pdf>.

2.9. My library includes areas for children, young adults, and adults as well as a separate dedicated work area for staff.

2.9.1. Many libraries have rooms or sections devoted specifically to materials, services, and programs suitable to a particular age group, managed by a librarian or other staff member who specializes in providing services for that age group. The concept of adjacent space is important when considering the allocation and placement of areas based on age or activity.

2.9.2. The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association, offers materials and programs to library staff members interested in improving the quality of services for children:

<http://www.ala.org/alsc/>.

2.9.3. The Center for Early Literacy Learning offers a self-guided learning module on literacy-rich environments:

http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/ta_pdf/SelfGuided_Module_LRE.pdf.

2.9.4. Young adult services are intended specifically for adolescent patrons, approximately 9th through 12th graders, including collection development, programming, and reader advisory, and managed by a librarian who specializes in providing young

³ The WBDG is the only web-based portal providing government and industry practitioners with one-stop access to up-to-date information on a wide range of building-related guidance, criteria and technology from a 'whole buildings' perspective. Currently organized into three major categories—Design Guidance, Project Management and Operations & Maintenance—at the heart of the WBDG are Resource Pages, reductive summaries on particular topics.

adult services. The Young Adult Library Services Association ([YALSA](#)), a division of the American Library Association, consists of librarians and library staff who are responsible for evaluating and selecting books and materials for young adults and for promoting and strengthening library services for young adult readers. YALSA publishes the journal *Young Adult Library Services*.

2.9.5. Top 5 Library Design Trends from Demco:

<https://www.demcointeriors.com/blog/top-5-library-design-trends/>.

2.10. My library has a well-lighted exterior and maintains an unobstructed view of and access to all entrances and exits.

2.10.1. A well-lighted building is less likely to be targeted by would-be trespassers or vandals⁴.

2.10.2. An exit route is a continuous and unobstructed path of exit travel from any point within a workplace to a place of safety. To learn more about emergency exit routes, visit https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_General_Facts/emergency-exit-routes-factsheet.pdf.

2.11. My library has an emergency preparedness plan that includes provisions for the safety of patrons and staff and has shared that plan with first responders.

2.11.1 The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has prepared series of publications for emergency preparedness (<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/89544>), including a template for business continuity during a crisis: https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1388778800620-c5bc0e6f051a700b75a691de704d8ae5/Business_SamplePlan_2014.pdf.

2.11.2 *Librarian's Disaster Planning and Community Resiliency Guidebook and Workbook* from the New Jersey State Library: https://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/resources/disaster_planning/.

2.11.3 The Online Learning Consortia/OLC offers a collection of resources related to emergency planning <https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/about/continuity-planning-emergency-preparedness-resources/>

⁴ Risk management is the identification, evaluation, and prioritization of risks followed by coordinated and economical application of resources to minimize, monitor, and control the probability or impact of unfortunate events or to maximize the realization of opportunities. Your library's risk management provider can help with this.

- 2.12. My library offers a family-friendly environment that includes baby changing stations in all public restrooms.
- 2.13. My library provides at least one wheelchair-accessible public access computer station or access to a laptop and appropriate workspace for patrons using wheelchairs.
- 2.14. My library provides accessible parking⁵ spaces in accordance with ADA guidelines and based on the building's square footage.
- 2.14.1 For more information, visit <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-ada-standards/guide-to-the-ada-standards/chapter-5-parking>.
- 2.14.2 For a handy factsheet on ADA parking, see <https://adata.org/factsheet/parking>.

Enhanced Level

- 2.15. My library provides age-appropriate furniture, shelving, and equipment for children, young adult, and adult patrons. A library's space needs are based on what a library must house and offer in order to serve its community adequately. Meeting room square footage is based on room purpose and local needs rather than a prescribed formula. Ideally, shelving is lower, not too tall for people, and on caster so that the space can be redeployed⁶ as needed for programs, projects, and meetings. Lower shelving on casters also means more light being distributed throughout the room, making the collections more visible and more appealing. Several guides to assist with space planning are available:
- 2.15.1. Anders Dahlgren's study on space usage can assist with planning for space based on function: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/pld/pdf/plspace.pdf>.
- 2.15.2. *The Whole Building Design Guide* provides a formula for determining space needs for meeting room space based on anticipated uses of the space: <http://www.wbdg.org/>
- 2.16. My library provides a weather-proof exterior book drop or a fireproof interior book drop.
- 2.17. My library's location is indicated by signage posted on major streets in the community.
- 2.18. My library's facility planning includes guidance from professional space planners and architects as well as input from staff and engagement with the community. Staff members understand the library's workflow and spatial needs and can provide invaluable input to architects.
- 2.19. My library provides recycling containers for staff and public use.

⁵ See also <https://legislature.idaho.gov/statutesrules/idstat/Title49/T49CH2/SECT49-213/>

⁶ Deploy: verb: to spread out, utilize, or arrange for a deliberate purpose.

- 2.20. My library provides adequate reader's seating based on the building's square footage. See *The Whole Building Design Guide*, published by the National Institute of Building Sciences: <http://www.wbdg.org/>.

Stretch Level

- 2.21. My library has a long-range facilities plan to address community growth, changes in usage, and future expansion or remodel. The intent of a long-range facilities plan is to provide a strategic framework and direction for the library's growth and expansion over a stated period of time. Stanford University and the California State Library have published this Introduction to Library Facility Planning: <https://web.stanford.edu/dept/SUL/library/institute21/programs/workshop/facilities/documents/LibFacilityPln.pdf>.
- 2.22. My library's interior lighting complies with industry standards for libraries.
- 2.22.1. *The Whole Building Design Guide* offers a unit on lighting design at <https://www.wbdg.org/design-disciplines/lighting-design>.
- 2.22.2. See also this presentation on library lighting from Stanford: https://web.stanford.edu/dept/SUL/library/institute21/programs/workshop/facilities/scherer_tech.pdf
- 2.23. My library considers partnerships or alternatives to traditional library facilities when contemplating a new facility or expansion. Examples include a shared facility housing city hall and the city library, a public library and a YMCA. See Meridian District Library's Tiny Library Toolkit for inspiration: <http://www.ala.org/tools/future/engage/tinylibrarytoolkit>
- 2.24. My library's facility planning utilizes the natural environment around the building site to incorporate the benefits of the natural world: passive heating and cooling, restorative views, and opportunities for outdoor programming including community gardens and outdoor learning classrooms. The library is designed with sustainability in mind.
- 2.24.1. See the following LibGuide on Green Buildings from ALA: <https://libguides.ala.org/SustainableLibraries/Green>.
- 2.24.2. See the *Whole Building Design Guide's* section on Sustainability: <http://www.wbdg.org/design-objectives/sustainable>.
- 2.24.3. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is the most widely used green building rating system in the world: <https://new.usgbc.org/leed>.

- 2.25. My library considers the principles of regenerative design when planning for a new facility or an expansion of an existing facility⁷. See <https://bit.ly/2YwTfJM>. If the Bitly link does not work on your network, you can use the long URL:
[https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1389&=&context=theses&=&sei-
redir=1&referer=https%253A%252F%252Fwww.bing.com%252Fsearch%253Fq%253Drege
nerative%252Bdesign%252B%2526qs%253Dn%2526sp%253D-
1%2526pq%253Dregenerative%252Bdesign%252B%2526sc%253D8-
20%2526sk%253D%2526cvid%253D7D731298239A4A7CAA217F1D42BFBDE%2526first%2
53D7%2526FORM%253DPERE#search=%22regenerative%20design%22](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1389&=&context=theses&=&sei-
redir=1&referer=https%253A%252F%252Fwww.bing.com%252Fsearch%253Fq%253Drege
nerative%252Bdesign%252B%2526qs%253Dn%2526sp%253D-
1%2526pq%253Dregenerative%252Bdesign%252B%2526sc%253D8-
20%2526sk%253D%2526cvid%253D7D731298239A4A7CAA217F1D42BFBDE%2526first%2
53D7%2526FORM%253DPERE#search=%22regenerative%20design%22)
- 2.26. My library offers mobile services, the better to serve rural, suburban, and/or tribal areas. For more information on using mobile services for outreach, check out the Association of Bookmobile & Outreach Services (ABOS): <https://abos-outreach.com/>.

⁷ Regenerative design is a process-oriented whole systems approach to design. The term “regenerative” describes processes that restore, renew, or revitalize their own sources of energy and materials. Regenerative design uses whole systems thinking to create resilient and equitable systems that integrate the needs of society with the integrity of nature.