



Idaho
Commission
for Libraries

Best Practices Section 2: Facilities

Checklist

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Public libraries are anchor institutions in cities across Idaho because they are deeply rooted in their communities. The exterior is familiar and enduring, a community landmark. The interior reflects the evolution of the public library from warehouse to third space—a trusted place for community engagement and education. As a public facility, the library should be accessible to all community members, and it should offer public areas and resources that reflect the needs and interests of the community. A thoughtful interior incorporates public spaces that are welcoming, appealing, and well-maintained; private areas for staff that are designed for comfort and efficiency; and spaces in which staff can interact easily with library visitors. Library board and staff have a responsibility to ensure that the library is located in a facility that can keep pace with the growth and needs of the community.

Best Practices for Public Libraries in Idaho is a tool developed by the Idaho Commission for Libraries for the public library community to use in planning, staff and trustee development, orientation, and advocacy.

Together with an advisory group of practicing librarians, ICfL has developed a set of suggested Best Practices which are presented in seven content areas:

1. Collection Development and Maintenance
- 2. Facilities**
3. Governance and Board Service
4. Human Resources
5. Marketing and Advocacy
6. Services and Programming
7. Technology

Each of the seven checklists is supported by a toolkit which further defines or supports the Best Practices statements.

Checklist statements are divided into categories designed to assist the participant:

- Core – Statements in this category are fundamental to public library service in Idaho.
- Enhanced – Statements in this category add value to core library services.
- Stretch – Includes nationally trending library practices.

A good way to approach these tools is to work through each checklist, ticking off the boxes for those Best Practices currently maintained by the library. The remaining unchecked Best Practices present opportunities for local development, planning, and education.

The Idaho Commission for Libraries does not require attainment of levels for eligibility in any ICfL programs or services. The Best Practices are intended to be a tool for continuous improvement, not a library certification program. ICfL encourages public libraries to use the Best Practices in conjunction with ICfL's *Best Practices Improvement Plan*.

The Idaho Commission for Libraries is introducing a companion program for *Best Practices for Public Libraries in Idaho*. *The Best Practices Improvement Plan* will provide financial support, through a grant process, to assist libraries in improving identified areas of Best Practice.

Core Level

- Yes No 2.1. My library complies with current fire and safety codes.
- Yes No 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.
- Yes No 2.3. My library provides adequate electrical outlets for patron use and uses Cat 5e cable for data transmission.
- Yes No 2.4. My library's interior is arranged to provide a well-lighted environment with a good line of sight for staff and patrons.
- Yes No 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.
- Yes No 2.6. My library's hours of operation are posted at the main public entrance to the library.
- Yes No 2.7. My library maintains appropriate climate control measures year-round.
- Yes No 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.
- Yes No 2.9. My library includes areas for children, young adults, and adults as well as a separate dedicated work area for staff.
- Yes No 2.10. My library has a well-lighted exterior and maintains an unobstructed view of and access to all entrances and exits.
- Yes No 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.
- Yes No 2.12. My library offers a family-friendly environment that includes baby changing stations in all public restrooms.
- Yes No 2.13. My library provides at least one wheelchair-accessible public access computer station or access to a laptop and appropriate workspace for those patrons using wheelchairs.
- Yes No 2.14. My library provides accessible parking spaces in accordance with ADA guidelines and based on the building's square footage.

Enhanced Level

- Yes No 2.15. My library provides age-appropriate furniture, shelving, and equipment for children, young adult, and adult patrons.
- Yes No 2.16. My library provides a weather-proof exterior book drop or a fireproof interior book drop.
- Yes No 2.17. My library's location is indicated by signage posted on major streets in the community.
- Yes No 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.
- Yes No 2.19. My library provides recycling containers for staff and public use.
- Yes No 2.20. My library provides adequate reader's seating based on the building's square footage.

Stretch Level

- Yes No 2.21. My library has a long-range facilities plan to address community growth, changes in usage, and future expansion or remodel.
- Yes No 2.22. My library's interior lighting complies with industry standards for libraries.
- Yes No 2.23. My library considers partnerships or alternatives to traditional library facilities when contemplating a new facility or expansion.
- Yes No 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 built with sustainability in mind.
- Yes No 2.25. My library considers principles of regenerative design when planning for a new facility or an expansion of an existing facility.
- Yes No 2.26. My library offers mobile services, the better to serve rural, suburban, and/or tribal areas.