

Minimum Standards and Regulations for Rhode Island Public Libraries

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1.00 PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY:

1.01 Authority

- 1.011 Pursuant to section 29-6-3(3) of the Rhode Island General Laws, a city or town must submit or cause to be submitted to the office of library and information services evidence that free public libraries in the city or town meet standards of service as set forth in regulations to be developed under the supervision of the Chief of Library Services and adopted by the Library Board of Rhode Island pursuant to the provisions of chapter 3.1 of this title.
- 1.012 Pursuant to section 29-3.1-7(8)(ii) of the Rhode Island General Laws, the Chief of Library Services is authorized to develop standards and regulations for public library development and other purposes.
- 1.013 Pursuant to section 29-3.1-4.1(b)(3) and 29-3.1-4(b)(7)(ii) of the Rhode Island General Laws, the Library Board of Rhode Island is authorized to approve, adopt and require enforcement of standards and regulations for public library development and other purposes.

1.02 Purpose

- 1.021 Based on the above authority the Library Board of Rhode Island last adopted Minimum Standards in 2000.
- 1.022 The Library Board of Rhode Island and the Chief of Library Services now propose to develop a new set of Minimum Standards and Regulations that are consistent with current practices.

2.00 DEFINITIONS:

For the purpose of these rules the following definitions shall apply:

- 2.01 ‘Assistive technology’ is equipment or software that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.
- 2.02 ‘City/town’ refers to any one of the 39 designated municipalities in Rhode Island.
- 2.03 ‘Combined libraries’ are two or more libraries designated by a city/town (cities/towns) to collectively provide public library services. (See also Library.)
- 2.04 ‘Digital literacy’ is the ability to use electronic information and communication technologies to find, understand, evaluate, create, and communicate.
- 2.05 An ‘FTE’ is a full time equivalent equal to 35 hours per week and may be composed of more than one person’s time.
- 2.06 ‘Industry compatible’ software is interoperable with similar software generally in use or available commercially. For example, documents created in Microsoft Excel can be opened in Apple Numbers, Open Office Calc, or Google Sheets.

- 2.07 ‘Library’ is a ‘public library’ as defined in Rhode Island General Law 29-3.1-1.1; to wit, “a library in a city or town that has been designated by the city or town council or town financial meeting as a library to provide library services to all individuals residing in the city or town,” personified in the Board of Trustees who may act through the library director.
- 2.08 The ‘most recent census’ is the population enumerated in the current Office of Library and Information Services Annual Report for Public Libraries.
- 2.09 ‘Office productivity software’ includes, but is not limited to, word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation programs. Examples of office productivity software include commercial products like Microsoft Word and Apple Pages, freeware such as Open Office Writer, or cloud-based tools such as Google Docs.
- 2.10 A ‘professional librarian’ holds a master’s degree in library and information science from a graduate school accredited by the American Library Association.

3.00 **MINIMUM STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS**

In order to be eligible to receive state aid pursuant to section 29-6-3(3) of the Rhode Island General Law, a library must meet the following Minimum Standards and Regulations for Rhode Island Public Libraries:

- 3.01 The library operates according to relevant federal, state, and local laws. The library must be in compliance with all federal, state, and local building, fire, safety, and handicapped access codes for public buildings, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as relevant portions of RIGL Title 29 entitled Libraries, RIGL section 38-2-3 entitled Access to Public Records, and RIGL section 42-46 entitled Open Meetings.
- 3.02 The library operates according to relevant American Library Association (ALA) ethical and philosophical statements for public libraries. Relevant statements will be enumerated on the OLIS websites.
- 3.03 The library adopts and periodically reviews written policies governing its services.
- 3.04 The library is open a minimum number of hours each week based on community needs and the population of the city/town (or combined cities/towns) according to the most recent census. Unique hours are the total hours all public library facilities in a city/town (cities/towns) are open with concurrent hours being counted only once.

Hours refer to the winter schedule in cases where winter and summer hours differ.

Population	Unique Hours	Each Combined Library
Under 10,000	35 hours	25 hours
10,000-19,999	50 hours	25 hours
20,000 - 49,999	60 hours	25 hours
50,000 and over	64 hours	25 hours

In the case of combined libraries, each individual library must meet the Combined Library minimum, and the aggregate of all library hours in the city/town (cities/towns) must meet the Unique Hours minimum.

- 3.05 The library extends full access and borrowing privileges without charge to all Rhode Island residents.
- 3.06 The library makes its entire range of materials and services available to everyone regardless of ability, providing assistive technology, software, materials, alternative access to library resources, and staff assistance in using them as needed.
- 3.07 The library provides trained staff to help patrons use library resources, including electronic and digital resources, during all operating hours.
- 3.08 The library provides its community with resources and assistance to support digital literacy.
- 3.09 The library provides a website with access to online library resources, promotion of AskRI.org, and current information about library services, including hours of operation, schedules of library events, contact information, and other information necessary to inform the community about library operations.
- 3.10 The library has a director who is a professional librarian.
- 3.11 The library/combined libraries of a city/town (cities/towns) have a minimum of 1 FTE staff excluding custodians, security staff, and pages for each 3,000 population (rounded to the nearest 3,000) based on the most recent census.

3.12 Library staff are trained in and assigned to provide the following services at the minimum level specified in the chart below. More than one requirement may be met by a single qualified staff member; conversely, more than one qualified staff member may be designated to meet the requirement. In the case of combined libraries, each library must meet the requirements for the Under 10,000 category and the combined libraries together must meet the requirements for their population category.

Core Competency	Population Under 10,000	Population 10,000 - 19,999	Population 20,000 - 49,999	Population Over 50,000
Management (Director)	1/2 FTE	1 FTE	1 FTE	1 FTE
Youth Services (professional librarian)	½ the time the library is open	1 FTE	Children: 1 FTE Young Adult: ½ FTE	Children: 1 FTE Young Adult: 1 FTE
Reference (professional librarian)	½ the time the library is open	½ FTE	1 FTE and additional professional librarian(s) whenever the library is open	1 FTE and additional professional librarian(s) whenever the library is open
Public Access Computing Technology (trained staff)	whenever the library is open	whenever the library is open	1 FTE and additional trained staff whenever the library is open	1 FTE and additional trained staff whenever the library is open
Digital Literacy (trained staff)	whenever the library is open	whenever the library is open	whenever the library is open	whenever the library is open
Additional Professional Librarian(s)				1 FTE professional librarian per 10,000 population (rounded to the nearest 10,000) in addition to the above requirements

3.13 For safety reasons, at least two workers, who may include custodians, security staff, or pages, are in the building during all open hours.

3.14 The library conducts a community needs assessment at least every five years.

3.15 The library adopts a five-year long range plan of service, based in part on the community needs assessment, and reviews it annually.

- 3.16 The library adopts personnel policies and procedures that apply to all staff and volunteers and makes them available to staff and volunteers.
- 3.17 In a city/town (cities/towns) that has designated more than one library to provide library services, a library council composed of the chair of the board of trustees and the director of each library, and a representative of the city/town (cities/towns) meets annually to coordinate services and make a joint application for state grant-in-aid.
- 3.18 The library is a certified member of the Library of Rhode Island.
- 3.19 The library is a member in good standing of Ocean State Libraries, Inc.
- 3.20 The library provides adequate space to implement a full range of library services, including community meeting space (s), as determined by its long-range plan.
- 3.21 The library provides free access to computers for public use.
- 3.22 The library offers free access to the Internet, industry-compatible office productivity software, and the ability to use personal storage devices on public computers.
- 3.23 The library ensures that all public hardware and software are updated regularly and in proper working order.
- 4.00 SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL REPORT.
- 4.01 Each library or group of combined libraries must submit a report annually to the Chief of Library Services to verify compliance with the minimum standards and regulations.
- 4.02 Annual reports are due no later than September 15 unless otherwise indicated by the Chief of Library Services.
- 5.00 REQUEST FOR WAIVER
- 5.01 In the event that a library (or combined libraries) fails to comply with any of the minimum standards and regulations, that library (or combined libraries) may submit to the Chief of Library Services a request for a waiver. Upon receipt of a waiver request, the Chief of Library Services will investigate and render a written decision within six weeks.
- 6.00 ENFORCEMENT
- 6.01 In the event that it is determined that a library (or combined libraries) fails to comply with any of the minimum standards and regulations, the Chief of Library Services will investigate and render and mail a written decision within six weeks of that determination.
- 6.02 If the request for waiver is denied, the library (or combined libraries) may appeal the decision to the Library Board of Rhode Island by sending a letter of appeal to the Chair of the Library Board of Rhode Island with a copy to the Chief Library Officer. The letter must be sent within twenty calendar days of the decision.
- 6.03 The appeal will be heard by the Library Board of Rhode Island at its regular meeting or within six weeks of the appeal whichever comes first.
- 6.04 Written response to the appeal will be sent to the library (or combined libraries) within ten days of the appeal hearing.

7.00 EFFECTIVE DATE

- 7.01 These rules take effect twenty (20) days after they are filed with the Office of the Secretary of State.
- 7.02 Once the rules take effect, they supersede any other rules in effect that prescribe Minimum Standards for Rhode Island Public Libraries

Approved and Adopted by the Library Board of Rhode Island on June 17, 2013.

Signed by: _____

Thomas Viall
Chair, Library Board of Rhode Island