

Best Practices for Libraries that Bill for Cross-County Use

These Best Practices were drafted by the Wisconsin Library Association's Library Development and Legislation Committee (LD&L) and submitted to the System and Resource Library Administrators Association of Wisconsin (SRLAAW) in response to concerns raised by counties and legislators. Uniform practices for library record-keeping and billing are intended to help address these concerns.

Address verification

Library staff verify that the cardholder's or applicant's record contains a code or other information that defines the cardholder's legal place of residence. This information must indicate the city/village/township and county of residence. Government-based search sites, such as county GIS sites and property owner and tax databases, are used for verification for the location of addresses.

Card expiration and renewal

Library cards are set to expire at least every 18 months, so that records remain current. Or, as an alternative, cardholder registration files are matched against a reputable address change database at least every 18 months, and the accounts of cardholders who are identified as having moved are updated or are blocked to disallow checkout until a new address can be confirmed.

Audit of cardholder records

A random sample consisting of a statistically significant number of cardholder records is reviewed once each five or fewer years by the library consortium. The addresses are checked against the residence codes to ensure that database quality is being maintained.

Common billing information

When billing, libraries provide at a minimum, the following information:

- The number of materials loaned attributable to each non-library community.
- The library's total expenditures (minus federal funds and capital expenditures) for the year in which the service was provided.
- The total number of the library's loans of materials for the year in which the service was provided, as reported on the library's annual report to the state.
- If requested by the county, a copy of those pages of the annual report referencing checkouts and expenditures.

Library Staff Training

Library staff are made aware of the importance of accurate records and are trained in address verification.