

## Chapter 8 (System Member Responsibilities and Resource Sharing)

Illinois has a rich history and a national reputation as a leader in library resource sharing, thanks in large part to the ongoing partnership between the Illinois State Library, Illinois library systems, and individual system members from libraries of all types (public, academic, school, and special) throughout the state.

A watershed moment in this history was the creation of library systems through the 1965 *Library System Act* [75 ILCS 10/]. The visionaries who established library systems knew that resource sharing would make all libraries stronger and able to provide better services to their users. Other statewide alliances that came after the creation of systems went several steps further in achieving these goals, including the Illinois Library and Information Network (ILLINET), representing the more than 3,000 Illinois library system members, and the Libraries Very Interested in Resource Sharing (LVIS) initiative, which represents the first global OCLC no charge Resource Sharing Group agreement began out of a shared goal of the Illinois State Library and the Missouri Library Network Corporation (MLNC) for the Midwest region. During the first year, LVIS members included more than 200 multi-type libraries in Illinois and Missouri. There are now more than 2,700 members, worldwide.

Illinois library systems work with their member libraries to provide services that no one library would be able to offer on its own. As a system member, a public library must agree to participate in resource sharing to the fullest extent possible through interlibrary loan, reciprocal borrowing, reciprocal access, and other cooperative activities.

Systems help libraries meet these responsibilities by administering and providing ongoing support for shared online catalogs, providing delivery service to transport materials between libraries across the state and beyond, spearheading cooperative e-book initiatives, offering continuing education designed to help libraries learn more about resource sharing philosophies and processes, and by consulting and sharing expertise between member libraries and strongly encouraging them to share their expertise and other resources with each other.

Resource sharing is fundamental to maintaining the top-notch library service the state of Illinois is known for and every library benefits from sharing resources to the fullest extent possible. The director of one of the largest libraries in Illinois who was nationally known for his innovations in library automation and cooperation, Hugh Atkinson (b.1933- d. 1986), then director of libraries at the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign, wrote, “My point is that one should not try to reach some kind of theoretical balance or fairness, but to build a network that will provide, by its services and arrangement, the library activities that will satisfy each of the participants, although not necessarily in the same way.” (Atkinson, H. (1987). Atkinson on networks. *American Libraries*, 18, 433.)

By continuing to work together in partnership, the Illinois library community can further these ideals and most importantly, better meet the diverse information needs of all those who live in the state.

Support for Illinois Library Systems is provided through the Secretary of State’s office with funds appropriated by the Illinois General Assembly. Library systems are governed by representatives from their member libraries as detailed in *Illinois Compiled Statutes* [75 ILCS 10/5] and system bylaws.

## System Member Responsibilities and Resource Sharing Standards

1. Public library staff and library board members are aware of the services offered by the regional library systems and the Illinois State Library. Public libraries are charged with the responsibility to promote statewide cooperative services in addition to their own local services.
2. All Illinois public libraries agree to make their resources, information, and expertise available via interlibrary loan, reciprocal borrowing, and other formal cooperative agreements; and participate in system delivery.
3. All Illinois public libraries abide by the ILLINET *Interlibrary Loan Code* as well as other formal regional/consortial agreements.
4. Public library directors, library staff, and library board members actively participate as members of boards, committees, task forces, advisory councils, etc., at various levels, including the regional library system, the Illinois State Library, and the Illinois Library Association. Participants should bring a regional and statewide perspective that envisions all types of libraries, not just their local library and library type issues.
5. All public libraries, in cooperation with regional library systems and the Illinois State Library, share the responsibility for promoting statewide tax-supported public library service for every Illinois resident.
6. Every public library has a responsibility to offer its residents quality library services; therefore, any legally established public library that currently does not meet the eligibility requirements for Illinois State Library/Illinois Office of the Secretary of State grants should work in cooperation with its regional library system regarding grant eligibility and compliance.

## System Member Responsibilities and Resource Sharing Checklist

- Library staff and library board members are aware of the services offered by the regional library systems and the Illinois State Library. The library promotes statewide cooperative services in addition to their own local services.
- Library resources, information, and expertise are available via interlibrary loan, reciprocal borrowing, and other formal cooperative agreements; and the library participates in system delivery.
- The library abides by the ILLINET *Interlibrary Loan Code* as well as other formal regional/consortial agreements.
- The library administrator, library staff, and library board members actively participate as members of boards, committees, task forces, advisory councils, etc., at various levels, including the regional library system, the Illinois State Library, and the Illinois Library Association, and bring a regional and statewide perspective that envisions all types of libraries, not just their local library and library type issues.
- The library, in cooperation with regional library systems and the Illinois State Library, promotes statewide tax-supported public library service for every Illinois resident.
- If a legally established public library currently does not meet the eligibility requirements for Illinois State Library/Illinois Office of the Secretary of State grants, the library should work in cooperation with its regional library system regarding grant eligibility and compliance.