

Massachusetts Library System Interlibrary Loan Policy

Interlibrary Loan Vision

MLS members participate in ILL on a reciprocal basis for all permitted library materials, including online content.

MLS provides ILL services in an efficient manner balancing the workload and costs among MLS, borrowers, and lenders appropriately.

Introduction

Interlibrary loan (ILL) is essential to libraries of all types and sizes as a means of expanding the amount of materials that can be made available to patrons. Each library has the responsibility to develop and maintain a collection designed to meet the needs of its patrons. ILL borrowing supplements such local collection development. Interlibrary Loan relies on cooperation among libraries. Therefore, ILL lending should be as generous as possible. Massachusetts libraries have a long successful history of resource sharing. MLS strongly encourages reciprocity for ILL participants. Member libraries are required to loan out materials at no charge to other members.

Definitions

An interlibrary loan is a transaction in which library material or a copy of the material is made available by one library to another library upon request. This policy is meant to address mediated interlibrary loan transactions handled by the MLS Regional Interlibrary Loan center on behalf of the members. It does not include local transfers between libraries in the same automated library system. Such local transactions are out of the scope of this policy. It also does not include such separate resource sharing systems as Point to Point, MassCat or the Virtual Catalog. These organizations issue their own policy statements.

Interlibrary loan consists of two simultaneous operations, borrowing and lending. In the borrowing operation, materials are borrowed for members of the MLS from libraries anywhere in the country and abroad. In the lending operation, materials from member libraries are loaned out to libraries in the United States and Canada.

Agreement

The MLS Interlibrary Loan policy is meant to conform to such existing policies as the National Interlibrary Loan Code and the U.S. Code Title 17 concerning copyright law.

Interlibrary Loan Borrowing Policy

Mediated Interlibrary Loan service is available to the users of the MLS's member libraries. This service has no age restrictions. Borrowers must, however, be in good standing at the member library.

Libraries may request any type of material via interlibrary loan. However, it is difficult to borrow entire issues of periodicals, rare materials, materials classified as reference materials and items in high demand at the lending library including newly acquired material and bestsellers.

The CONTU guidelines to the copyright law of the United States specifies that each library may borrow no more than five photocopies of articles from the most recent five years run of each periodical within a calendar year without paying a fee to the copyright holder. It is the borrowing library's responsibility to keep track of their requests so that these limits are not exceeded. There are additional limitations as to the proportional amount of an item that may be copied. There are exemptions to these limitations for periodicals subscribed to by the library, but discarded by date. Copies of photocopy requests must be retained for three full calendar years beyond the year in which the request was made. It is each library's responsibility to be knowledgeable in copyright issues.

Requesting libraries must provide as complete a bibliographic citation as possible on the appropriate request form. They must also provide library contact information for any necessary follow up.

The Interlibrary Loan Centers will process member library's interlibrary loan requests in a timely fashion and will keep the members informed as to the progress of their requests. If items cannot be borrowed, locations for potential local use will be provided, if available.

In so far as possible, materials will be borrowed for use outside of the library. When requesting, borrowers are asked if they will accept material for library use only. If the lending library imposes a restriction of "in library use only", the ILL center will pass on the restriction to the member library and expect them to abide by it.

Due dates for interlibrary loan materials are set by the lending library. Member libraries must ensure that borrowed materials are on their way back to the lending library by their due date. This is vital. Tardy returns jeopardize the borrowing privileges of the entire MLS membership. Renewals may be requested on most materials and should be done so before the due date.

Requesting libraries will respond in a timely fashion to queries about overdue materials or materials that have been recalled by the lending library.

Materials will be obtained from free lenders, if possible. Libraries are asked when making a request whether the patron or library is willing to pay a fee. If the item is only available from a charging lender, the cost will be passed on to the patron or the requesting library. Otherwise, the request will be cancelled.

Materials being returned by a requesting library will be packaged and shipped by the requesting library in such a way as to minimize the potential of damage in transit. If materials are lost or damaged between the lending library and the requesting library, the Interlibrary Loan center will pay any fees. If materials are lost or damaged while in the hands of the requesting library or its patron, the requesting library or its patron will pay any fees. Prompt payment of such fees is necessary so as to not jeopardize MLS's or the ILL centers' status as a borrower.

ILL services may be suspended or limited for member libraries who abuse the privilege by repeatedly keeping materials beyond their due date, damaging or defacing materials, not paying for materials lost or damaged by their patrons or failing to answer queries from the ILL center.

The Interlibrary Loan centers will maintain such statistics as are required by the Massachusetts Library System.

Interlibrary Loan Lending Policy

Member libraries are strongly encouraged to loan out materials as freely as they request them.

The MLS Interlibrary Loan center serves as a conduit for interlibrary lending services to libraries within United States or abroad as long as their requests are sent in a recognizable format via such mechanisms as OCLC, fax, email or mail. The center passes on such lending requests to member libraries, answers the request appropriately and ships the item to the borrower and back to the lender, tracking it throughout the process.

Any item that would be loaned to another library within the local automated system may be requested for Interlibrary Loan lending. Non-circulating materials such as reference materials or microfilm will be requested only in exceptional circumstances. The owning library may refuse any request. It is encouraged that they state the reason for such a refusal.

Member libraries must answer the MLS ILL centers queries as to whether or not they are willing to lend a particular item in the specified time period.

Items will be loaned for 28 days and may be renewed if there is not a request outstanding in the local automated network.

Occasionally, materials that belong to member libraries will be lost or damaged while they are out on loan through the MLS Interlibrary Loan center. In such cases, the ILL center will ask for a bill from the member library. Any such fees will be passed on to the borrowing library. The ILL center will mediate successful payment or replacement.

The MLS Interlibrary Loan center will impose a fee on those borrowing libraries that charge for lending. The fee will be equal to the lending fee such a library charges. The money gained in these transactions will be retained by the Interlibrary Loan center and will be used to benefit ILL services to member libraries.

Adopted by the MLS Executive Board
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