

VERMONTVILLE
TOWNSHIP LIBRARY
POLICIES

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Vermontville Township Library is to provide modern library resources and services necessary to meet the evolving educational, recreational, and informational needs of the public, in a friendly and courteous manner thus enhancing individual and community life.

Revised 1-9-2023

Vermontville Township Library

By-Laws

Article I--Name

- 1.1 The name of this organization shall be known as the Vermontville Township Library. This library was formed under section 10 of City, Village and Township Libraries Public Act 164 of 1877.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Board of Directors shall be to operate and maintain a library which will provide services to all citizens of the community of Vermontville.

Article II—Election of Trustees

- 2.1 **Elections:** The Board shall consist of six (6) Trustees voted into position by the electorate of Vermontville Township every 4 years.
- 2.2 **Vacancies:** In the event a vacancy occurs during the term of any Board Member, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment followed by election.
- 2.3 **Compensation:** Members of the board serve without compensation in accordance with the law and may not be a paid employee of the library.

Article III—Duties of Trustees

- 3.1 **Library System:** Legal responsibility for the operation of the Vermontville Township Library is vested in the Board of Trustees. The Board has the power and duty to determine rules and regulations governing library operations and services.
- 3.2 **Library Policy:** To establish policies by which the Vermontville Township Library shall be operated. Board policies shall be general statements, narrow enough to give clear guidance, but broad enough to leave room for administrative discretion. The Board shall periodically review and appraise existing policies.
- 3.3 **Library Services:** To provide for, establish, carry on and review such library services as it shall deem necessary or desirable for the maintenance and improvement of the public service offered by the library.
- 3.4 **Library Director:** To employ as director a suitable person, who shall have the authority to administer the Vermontville Township Library in conformity with policies established by the board and shall direct all phases of Library operations.

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- 3.5 Financial Oversight:** To oversee the finances of the Vermontville Township Library by:
- 3.5.1** Providing for the deposit of the funds of the library in such depositories as may be determined to be in the best interest of the library.
 - 3.5.2** To determine the manner in which checks drawn against funds shall be signed.
 - 3.5.3** Adopting an annual budget for the operation and maintenance of the Vermontville Township Library. Expenditures shall be in accordance with the budget finally adopted except as amended by action of the board.
- 3.6 Library Staff:** To authorize and oversee employment by the Director librarians and staff as are necessary for the management of the Vermontville Township Library and its property and to review and approve the Directors prescription of their duties, and to determine the salaries and benefits for all Vermontville Township Library personnel.

Article IV—Board of Trustee Organization

4.1 Election of officers; Nominations

4.1.1 The election of officers of the Board of Trustees shall be held during the regular meeting in April of each year. The term of office shall be one year.

4.2 Officers: The offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. All officers of the Board shall be elected Trustees.

4.3 Method of Election: The offices of the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be filled by nomination and voting by members of the Board of Trustees. Not less than four (4) votes shall be necessary for the election of an individual to an office.

4.4 Duties of the President:

The President shall:

- a. Preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees
- b. Call special or emergency meetings of the Board
- c. As a member of the Board, the President may speak, deliberate, vote, or abstain from voting on any matter that comes before the Board unless there is a conflict of interest. Notwithstanding parliamentary rules, the President may move or second the motion of any issue that comes before the Board.

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4.5 Duties of the Vice President:

The Vice President shall have the power to perform the duties of the President in case of the absence of that officer and shall have such other duties as the Board may direct

4.6 Duties of the Secretary:

The duties of the Secretary shall be as follows:

- a. To keep or cause to be kept a record of the proceedings of all regular and special meetings of the Board of Trustees.
- b. To keep or cause to be kept in custody all records of the Board, except such as are assigned to others.
- c. To cause to be printed the approved minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Board of Trustees; to cause such minutes to be open and available for public inspection as required by law.
- d. To post or cause to be posted public notice of all regular and special meetings of the Board of Trustees; to send out or cause to be sent out proper notice of all regular or special meetings to members of the Board.
- e. To conduct or cause to be conducted the official correspondence for the Board of Trustees unless otherwise ordered.
- f. To designate the keeper of all official records of the Board of Trustees.
- g. To perform such other duties as prescribed by law or by action of the Board of Trustees.
- h. To be assisted in these duties by one or more members of the library staff designated by the Director.

4.7 Duties of the Treasurer:

The duties of the Treasurer shall be:

- a. To keep or cause to be kept funds of the library
- b. To keep or cause to be kept proper accounts of all funds
- c. To submit to the Board of Trustees all financial reports of the library and to approve and sign all financial reports after submission and acceptance by the board.
- d. To perform such other duties as are prescribed by law or by action of the Board of Trustees
- e. To be assisted in these duties by members of the library staff as designated by the board.

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Article V—Procedure of the Board of Trustees

5.1 Meetings

- a. The regular meetings of the Board of Trustees to consider library matters shall be held on the second Monday of each month at the Vermontville Township Library beginning at 5 PM or at such other time the President in consultation with the full board deems appropriate. Public notice of regular meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be given as required by law.
- b. Special meeting may be called by the President or at the written request of any two (2) or more members. Public notice of special meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be given as required by law.
- c. In the case of emergency, as provided by law, board action may be taken by at least a quorum of the Board upon at least eighteen (18) hours (or longer if practicable) notice to the public.
- d. Participation in meetings shall be consistent with the Michigan Open Meetings Act and other applicable laws and/or regulations.

5.2 Meeting Attendance: Members shall be expected to attend all meetings except as they are prevented by a valid reason.

5.3 Quorum: A majority of the Board (4) shall constitute quorum for the transaction of business, but a lesser number may continue the meeting pending a quorum being attained, or adjourn to a future date.

5.4 Rules of Parliamentary Practices: “Robert’s Rules of Order, Revised” shall govern the Board of Trustees procedures in all cases not otherwise herein provided.

5.5 Public Invited: All meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be open to the public as to all matters save those which must or may under applicable law be considered in closed session. Persons in attendance shall be permitted to address the Board in accordance with the following rules:

- a. The President shall enforce the following rules at each meeting:
 1. There will be equal opportunity for any in attendance who wish to address the Board to be heard;
 2. Any persons requesting to address the board shall state their name and address;
 3. Any persons requesting to address the board shall limit their comments to three minutes;
 4. Members of the public shall conform their conduct to the norms of public behavior, and, without regard to the content of a speaker’s

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communications, all persons shall be required to maintain civil and orderly discourse.

5. Employees are invited to attend all regular or special meetings of the Board, consistent with the performance of assigned duties.

Article VI—Library Director

6.1 Appointment: The Board of Trustees shall appoint Library Director

6.2 Attendance at Board Meetings: The Director shall attend all regular and special meetings of the Board of Trustees unless excused by the President. When in attendance at these meetings, he/she shall have the right to speak upon matters under discussion by the Board but shall not have the right to vote.

6.5 Duties of the Director

a. As chief administrator, the Director is responsible for the development of library services, policies and procedures. The Director is responsible for the facilities, properties, materials collection development, public relations, financial management and personnel of the library; reporting to and advising the Library Board as to all subjects within its duties; and administering policies established by the Board as governing body.

b. The Library Director shall also be responsible for keeping the Trustees informed of matters related to the library or themselves as Trustees; for preparing a preliminary draft of budget and annual report for Board approval; for providing appropriate advice and background information to facilitate the functioning of the Board and its committees; and, for assisting the Board in its decisions on policies, budget and other pertinent matters.

c. The Library Director is authorized to make expenditures for the general operation of the library in a reasonable and customary manner. The Director shall not be authorized to transfer title or assets without the approval of the Library Board. Expenditures exceeding \$250 dollars shall be expressly brought to the attention of the Board.

d. The Director is authorized to hire, assign, promote, discipline, and terminate all staff of the library, consistent with applicable law, and Board policy. The Director shall regularly report to the Board regarding performance of these duties. The Director shall seek the approval of the Board for the permanent addition, deletion, or reorganization of Library staff positions.

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Patron Bill of Rights

As a patron of the Vermontville Township Library please:

- Expect courteous treatment
- Ask a librarian for help
- Call or come in for Reference and Information Services
- Check-out circulating books and other materials
- Use the Interlibrary Loan Services
- Suggest new materials and Services
- Expect the library to buy current bestsellers and popular materials
- Expect complaints/problems to be resolved within 48 hours, whenever possible
- Expect phone calls not to be transferred or left on “hold” unnecessarily
- Expect the staff to make the library system work for you
- Understand that library patrons who are children have the same rights and responsibilities as adult library patrons
- Expect a clean safe and reasonably quiet building

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Privacy Policy

Your Right to Privacy

The Vermontville Township Library recognizes the need to protect your right to privacy regarding the questions you ask and the materials you borrow.

Confidentiality of Library Records

Michigan's Library Privacy Act (The Privacy Act), Public Act 455 of 1982, section 2 mandates confidentiality of your registration and borrowing records. These records include any information that a library requires a library user to provide in order to become eligible to borrow books and other materials, and any information which identifies the library user borrowing particular books and other material. All library records relating to an individual library user's use of the library and its resources are confidential. These records may be consulted and used by library staff in the course of carrying out library operations, but will not be disclosed to others except upon the request or consent of the library user, or pursuant to subpoena, court order, or otherwise required by law.

As a public institution the library is legally obligated to comply with the information request requirements of the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act, commonly known as the USA Patriot Act, enacted on October 26, 2001.

Our Commitment to Privacy

Protecting your privacy is important to us. This notice explains our information practices, what information the library collects, and how the library uses that information.

The Information We collect

This information applies to all information collected or submitted to the Vermontville Township Library in person or on the website. The types of information we collect are:

- Name
- Address
- email address
- Phone number
- Library Card number
- Date/year of birth (card registration only)
- Materials currently checked out
- Last Patron to check out an item
- Overdue materials (until returned)
- Fines paid or waived

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How We Use Your Information

We do not share information collected with outside parties. We use return email addresses to answer the email we receive, to send notification of overdue materials or hold requests, and to inform patrons of library events. Mailing addresses are used for overdue notices.

Internet Privacy

In accordance with the Library Confidentiality Policy, we will not sell, lease, or otherwise distribute or disclose your email address, phone number, borrower records, or other personal information for non-library purposes to outside parties unless required by law.

The library's website uses "cookies" to allow you access to certain functions (such as the on-line catalog and electronic resources, etc.) within our site. These cookie files do not capture any personal user information (such as email address or user passwords). Temporary cookie files are automatically deleted when you close your browser.

Some of the library websites/pages contain links to external sites not maintained by the library. The library cannot be responsible for your privacy when you disclose information to outside websites. It is your responsibility to protect your personal information.

Our Commitment to Children's Privacy

Protecting the privacy of children is especially important to us. Due to the ease with which children can divulge personal information on the Internet as well as the possibility of inadvertently bringing up inappropriate sites, we urge parents to supervise their children's use of the internet.

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Confidentiality and the USA Patriot Act

The Vermontville Township Library Confidentiality Policy

The purpose of the Confidentiality Policy is to ensure the confidentiality of borrower records at the Vermontville Township Library. Staff members and volunteers may not convey information about borrower records, including loan transactions, requests for information or materials and online sites accessed, to individuals or to any private or public agency without an order from a court of competent jurisdiction, or as otherwise required by law.

The USA PATRIOT Act

The Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act (USA PATRIOT Act) became law on Oct. 26, 2001. Under provisions of the act, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and law enforcement officials may seek court orders for Library records for investigations relevant to national security or terrorism. Libraries or librarians served with these search warrants may not disclose, under penalty of law, the existence of the warrants or the fact that records were produced as a result of the warrants. Patrons cannot be told their records were given to law enforcement agencies or that they were the subjects of FBI investigations.

Minimum records kept

The Vermontville Township Library keeps the minimum number of records necessary for maintaining operations. When a customer logs off a library computer, information about that user session is automatically deleted.

Patron history of materials borrowed is stored in our Atrium Book systems circulation database.

For more information:

More information on the USA PATRIOT Act is available from the American Library Association website.

Vermontville Township Library

THE FREEDOM TO READ

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label “controversial” views, to distribute lists of “objectionable” books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be “protected” against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

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The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

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5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information. It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support. We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

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Adopted June 25, 1953; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, July 12, 2000, June 30, 2004, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.

A Joint Statement by: American Library Association
Association of American Publishers

Subsequently endorsed by:

American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression

The Association of American University Presses, Inc.

The Children's Book Council

Freedom to Read Foundation

National Association of College Stores

National Coalition Against Censorship

National Council of Teachers of English

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

Vermontville Township Library

Collection Development and Maintenance Policy

Objectives

Vermontville Township Library strives to achieve the following goals with its materials collections:

1. Provide materials that are of interest and relevance to the members of its community
2. Balance collections to incorporate both popular materials and those of lasting value
3. Offer materials in a variety of formats to meet the needs of the community
4. Represent a broad spectrum of interests to appeal to individuals of all ages and backgrounds
5. Give all relevant perspectives on topics of interest to its community and support intellectual freedom
6. Consider the value of each item, the needs of the community, the existing collection, future trends, and VTL's budget when adding materials to the collection
7. To provide diverse recreational experience for individuals and groups

Scope of the collection

Vermontville Township Library (VTL) provides materials and services that reflect the diverse educational, information, and recreational needs of its users, though VTL may be unable to meet every need with on-site materials due to space and affordability constraints. VTL provides collections to support a wide audience, including the needs of specific populations. VTL recognizes that content and medium should be suitably matched, and that VTL patrons have different learning styles and preferences for how they receive information. Therefore, VTL provides materials in a variety of formats, including, when appropriate:

- **Print** – such as hardcover books, paperbacks, magazines, and newspapers
- **Audiovisual** – such as Blu-Rays, DVDs, books on CD, and other audio and visual formats
- **Digital Resources** – such as online databases, digital books, recordings, images, and software programs
- **Equipment** – such as toys, robots, games, reading kits, tablets, laptops, etc.

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Selection Guidelines

Selection of all materials shall be the responsibility of the Library Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Directors. Under the Director's guidance, a staff of librarians with professional education and training selects materials in accordance with state law and the principles and practices of collection development and maintenance. Materials are selected to meet patron needs and reflect a variety of viewpoints and opinions. Criteria for consideration include popular demand, literary merit, enduring value, accuracy, authoritativeness, local interest, cultural significance, importance of subject matter to the collection, timeliness, cost, scarcity of information on the subject, availability elsewhere, and the quality and suitability of the format. Selection is not made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval by patrons or Library users, but solely on the merits of a work, without regard to the race, nationality, political or religious view of the writer. Library Materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of contents, and no catalogued book or other item will be sequestered, except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft. The use of rare and scholarly items of great value may be controlled to the extent required to preserve them from harm, but no further.

Specific Principals for Selection

The following principles, individually or collectively, will prevail in the selection of all Library Materials. The total collection will attempt to represent opposing points of view:

- Contemporary significance or permanent value
- Accuracy
- Lack of bias, factual
- Diversity of viewpoint
- Portrays issues sensitively
- Authority of author
- Relation of work to existing collection
- Price, format and ease of use
- Scarcity of information in subject area
- Available shelf or storage space
- Availability of material through inter-library loan
- Popular demand: The Library will make an effort to have materials available which are in high demand by the public; however, selections by popular demand will still be guided by consideration of merit, use and the specific principles for selection.
- Duplication of materials already in the collection; i.e. purchase of additional copies of materials, shall be governed by intrinsic or historical value, or immediate need
- Collection objectives
- Community relevance
- Audience for material

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The collection of the VTL will include:

- **Reference Materials** – Items are purchased if they are authoritative works of general interest
- **Popular Materials** – VTL is a popular materials library and therefore collects current, timely materials to satisfy popular demand; these items include fiction and non-fiction materials
- **Periodicals** – Items are added to the collection on the basis of relevance and community interest
- **Audiovisual materials** – VTL recognizes its responsibility to provide access to information, cultural enrichment, and recreation through as wide a variety of media as possible. As new technologies are developed, BPL will investigate the appropriateness of new media formats and will select popularly adopted formats for the collection
- **Gifts** – VTL accepts gift donations of materials which meet the same criteria as purchased materials. VTL accepts memorial requests, places a bookplate in each item and integrates the item into the appropriate collection. See gift policy for further guidelines.
- **Toys** - Toys are evaluated based on developmental appropriateness for the intended user, current popular interests, literacy-based connections, and the level of active play involved. High priority is given to toys with educational value. Materials in this collection are non-toxic, designed to withstand heavy use, and have strong appeal to the intended audience
- **Databases** – VTL makes available through Mel.org a variety of online resources purchased to supplement and enhance VTL's collection. These resources are evaluated on the basis of timeliness, ease of use, accuracy, and ability to meet patrons' information needs
- **Electronic Resources** – VTL will monitor advances in technology, future trends, and the emergence of new formats and will adjust the emphasis within collections to reflect the changing times

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Collection Maintenance

In order to provide the best service to our community, the collection is regularly evaluated. VTL has limited space and therefore a limited collection size. To keep the collection updated, relevant, in good condition, and contained to its present space, VTL maintains a schedule of evaluation. Items are withdrawn from the collection if:

- The item is worn, stained, or damaged beyond repair
- The item is out of date, contains inaccurate data or is not historically significant
- A new, more current, or more comprehensive resource is available
- A more desirable format of the content is available
- Duplicates of the item exist in the collection
- The item has low circulation

Items removed from the collection are marked “withdrawn” and added to the “free book” shelf or disposed of properly. Items withdrawn by reason of condition, loss, or damage will be considered for replacement. Items that cannot be easily replaced, yet can be repaired, may be repaired.

Patron Suggestions

VTL welcomes and considers all requests from VTL Cardholders. Librarians use the same selection criteria for requests as VTL uses for the collection. If an item is unavailable for purchase, VTL will make every attempt to obtain the item via interlibrary loan for VTL cardholders.

It should be noted that inclusion of an item or resource in VTL’s collections is not an endorsement of a particular point of view or philosophy and that VTL holds censorship to be a purely individual matter. While anyone is free to personally reject books and other materials of which they do not approve, they may not exercise censorship to restrict the freedom of others. Responsibility for materials selected/read/or viewed by children and adolescent’s rests with their parent(s) or legal guardian(s). The VTL does not stand in loco parentis. Selection decisions are not influenced by the possibility that materials may be accessible to minors.

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Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Because strong feelings and emotions can develop over items in VTL's collection, patrons are welcome to make a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials. No material shall be removed from the VTL's collection until all steps in the following process have been completed:

1. Patrons who object to particular Library Materials will be sent to the Director.
2. The Director will discuss the Library Materials in question with the patron, attempting to resolve the concern to both the patron's and Library's satisfaction.
3. If the patron wishes to carry the request further, the Director will provide the patron with a copy of the Materials Selection Policy, including the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials ("Request for Reconsideration").
4. Once a completed, signed copy of the Request for Reconsideration is received, the Library Director shall make a decision regarding the Request for Reconsideration, taking into consideration the Library's Materials Selection Policy, the Library Bill of Rights, and the American Library Association guidelines on intellectual freedom. any other relevant information to reach a decision. The Director may consult with any other staff or consultants when making this decision.
5. The Library Director shall send the decision in writing to the complainant within 75 days of the receipt of the completed Request for Reconsideration form. If the decision is that the questioned material should be removed from the collection, the complainant will be notified in writing by the Library Director and all copies of the item will be withdrawn. If the decision is that the questioned material is to be retained, the complainant will be notified in writing by the Library Director that the material will be retained.
6. A written appeal of the Library Director's decision may be made by the requester to the Chair of the Library Board within ten (10) business days after the written decision is made by the Library Director. The Library Board will review any documentation it deems necessary to make a decision and render their decision within 60 days of receipt of the appeal.
7. The Library Board serves as the final authority in cases involving retention or withdrawal of Library Materials.
8. Revision of This Policy:

This policy shall be reviewed and revised to be consistent with the objectives of VTL's collection development policy.

Vermontville Township Library

Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

120 E First Street Vermontville, MI 49096 | 517-726-1362 | vermontvillelibrary@yahoo.com

The Vermontville Township Library enriches Vermontville and the communities it serves by providing opportunities and resources for individuals of all ages and backgrounds to learn, connect, and discover.

Your name: _____ Date: _____

Library Barcode: _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip code _____ Phone _____

Are you a VTL cardholder or do you live, work, own property, or attend school in our service area?
 Yes No

TITLE _____

AUTHOR _____ TYPE OF MATERIAL _____

(Artist, Composer, etc.)

Have you read, viewed, or heard the entire work? (Requestors must read, hear, or view the entire work to have their challenge considered.) Yes No

For what age group is this work intended? _____

What do you believe is the theme and/or major intent of this work? _____

Have you read any professional reviews of this work? Yes No

If yes, please list the publications here: _____

What is your objection to this work? Please be specific. _____

In its place, what work of equal literary quality would you recommend the library purchase that would cover the same subject or content? _____

Thank you. Your request will be referred to the Library Director.

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Gifts Policy

Purpose

The Vermontville Township Public Library believes that private initiative has an important role in extending and enriching the services of the library. The Library Board establishes this policy to set guidelines for accepting gifts.

Policy

Conditions under which gifts will be accepted:

- a. Gifts for the library should be of such nature that usage of them falls within the Mission Statement of the Library.
- b. Gifts should be viewed as an addition or supplement to, not a reduction of, the operating budget of the library.
- c. Staff will routinely determine if gifts are acceptable under this policy. Gifts resulting in ongoing costs to the institution such as staffing or special maintenance will require special Board approval for acceptance.
- d. Gifts should be complete and may be refused if the expenditure of library funds is necessary to make the gift item usable.
- e. Gifts of cash, real property, stocks, trusts, etc. will be accepted. Such resources may be used to purchase materials in keeping with the library's collection development plan, or to provide services in keeping with the library's mission. The purchase of specifically identified titles with such funds cannot be guaranteed, nor does the donor have the right of approval of titles before purchase. However, donors are encouraged to recommend subject areas.
- f. Gifts of art objects, personal property, etc. will be accepted if such items have a use in the library. If an item cannot be used, the library reserves the right to sell the item and use the proceeds of the sale for purposes in keeping with the Library's Mission Statement. Books or other library materials will also be accepted with the understanding that the material may or may not be added to the collection.

Recognition of gifts:

- a. Library bookplates will be placed in any library materials purchased with gift funds, format permitting.
- b. Programs and services made possible by gift funds will include recognition of such benefactors in their supporting literature.

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c. The library reserves the right at all times to dispose of any gift without notification to the donor, if in the judgment of the staff, such item no longer serves the purposes of the library.

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Patron Conduct Policy

Mutual respect makes it possible for everyone to enjoy library materials and services.

The Library Board of Trustees is responsible for determining the rules for public behavior in the library that are necessary to:

- Protect the safety of individuals and preserve their right to use Library property, materials, and services;
- Protect the safety of Library employees and volunteers and preserve their right to conduct Library business without interference;
- Preserve Library materials and facilities from harm.

Library employees are authorized to bring to an individual's attention any act or omission which violates these rules

It is the policy of the Vermontville Township Library that:

- Patrons shall not consume food (including candy, suckers, and gum) or beverages in the library. Food items brought into the library shall remain sealed while inside the building.
- Patrons shall not use tobacco, tobacco products, or e-cigarettes inside the library.
- Patrons shall not interfere with the use of the library by other patrons, or interfere with the library employee's performance of their duties.
- Patrons shall not enter the building without a shirt or shoes.
- Patrons shall not use roller blades or roller skates inside the building.
- Patrons shall not bring pets or animals, other than service animals, into the library.
- The library reserves the right to request that book bags and backpacks be left with the librarian while patrons use the library.
- Patrons shall not be unreasonably noisy including: loud talking, singing, cell phone and audio/visual equipment usage
- Patrons shall not use profane, obscene or abusive language; racial, sexual orientation or ethnic epithets.
- Patrons shall not harass patrons or staff. Deliberate repeated behavior that is intimidating, hostile, or offensive, or adversely impacts others. Including staring; noisy, boisterous activities; accosting; molesting; or otherwise annoy by touching, word of mouth, by sign or motion any person
- Patrons shall not damage, destroy or steal any property belonging to the library, another patron or staff.
- Patrons shall not use the Internet for unlawful purposes as defined by federal, state and local laws.
- Patrons shall not fight, challenge someone to a fight or physical abuse or assault any patron or staff member.

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- Patrons shall not engage in or solicit a sexual act
- Patrons shall not photograph or videotape library property, staff, volunteers and patrons without with consent of Library Director and/or individuals.
- Patrons shall not be under the influence, possess alcohol or drugs, sell drugs or alcoholic beverages
- Patrons shall not bring into the library or on library premises any weapons, unless otherwise permitted by law.

Safety and Well Being of Children

The library has concern for the safety and well-being of children, as well as the general welfare of all persons using the library. Even if not present in the library, parents are responsible and liable for their children's behavior in the library, and for damage to materials, equipment, furnishings and for injury to themselves and others.

Appropriate Behavior

- Reading is encouraged. Adults may read aloud to children.
- Quiet play with toys is allowed. Out of consideration for others, children should be encouraged to put away toys before leaving the area.
- Children must walk while in the library. No running.
- Children under the age of 5 must not be left unattended in the library.
- Children 5 and under must have parent supervision while using library computers.
- Children are allowed to study quietly in groups.
- Climbing on tables, shelves, chairs and other furniture is not allowed.

Disruptive Behavior

If a patron becomes unruly, library staff will make every attempt to restore appropriate library behavior. If this proves impossible, the disruptive individual will be asked to leave the property. *According to Michigan statutes, the Library Board may exclude from the use of the library any and all persons who shall willfully violate such reasonable rules and regulations that the Library Board may adopt. (MCL397.206)*

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Photography and Filming Policy

The staff of the Vermontville Township Library regularly takes photographs or videos of patrons and staff at library programs, workshops, classes and in other library spaces. Many of these photos/videos will be used in print and electronic marketing materials. Others will be posted on the library's website, and on the library's various social media accounts. Attendance at Library programs, events or Library spaces constitutes consent to be photographed or filmed for use in print and/or electronic publicity of the library. Photos, images and videos submitted by users for galleries or contests may also be used by the library for promotional purposes. To ensure the privacy of individuals and children, images will not be identified using full name without written approval from the guardian. If a patron does not want the library to use a photo or video of them or of their child, they must inform the library staff member who is coordinating the event. This policy extends to photographing and filming by library staff at any of the library's outreach efforts in the community, including at public events.

Casual amateur photography, filming and videotaping is permitted in the library facilities for patrons and visitors, provided that the photography does not interfere in any way with library operations or capture any identifiable likenesses of individuals without their permission. Any such photographers are responsible for arranging all necessary releases and permissions from persons who are filmed or photographed. In no circumstances may anyone take a photo or film a Library patron without the consent of the patron, or their parent/guardian, if a minor.

No commercial or media photography or filming may occur in Library facilities without the prior permission and approval of the Library Director, or his/her designee. Such approval shall contain the conditions under which the commercial/media photography or filming will take place, and address the rights to ownership of the photos/films.

If you have concerns or questions about a photograph or video posted on the library's website or social media accounts or any other question relating to this policy, please contact the library director by phone: (517) 726-1362 or email: vermontvillelibrary@yahoo.com

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Electronic Information Access Policy

The Board of Trustees of the Vermontville Township Library recognizes that within the library service area are groups and individuals with diverse interests, backgrounds and needs. The Board further recognizes and emphasizes that the library was established to serve all of the people within its service area.

It is the policy of the Vermontville Township Library to make electronic and Internet resources, together with its collection of library materials, available to its customers as a means of providing information in support of its mission.

The Vermontville Township Library is part of the national information infrastructure providing people with access to global electronic resources and the opportunity to participate in the electronic arena. Access is not the same as selection. Connection with electronic information, services and networks provides access and information transfer rather than selecting and acquiring materials in the traditional sense.

Staff will make available information to help parents and guardians in efforts to exercise their rights and responsibilities regarding their own children's use of electronic resources. As with other library materials, the library affirms the right and responsibility of parents or guardians to guide, determine, and monitor their children's use of the Internet.

Congress passed the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) in December 2000. In June 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court declared it to be constitutional. The Vermontville Township Library Board of Trustees has determined that Vermontville Township Library shall comply with the provisions of this Act as interpreted by the Supreme Court.

The use of all library resources, including electronic resources, is voluntary. Because of the Internet's unstructured, unregulated and international nature, there is no assurance that any software will block access to all materials that fall within the selected blocked categories. It is also possible that the filter will block information that it should not.

Access to, use of, or dissemination of constitutionally unprotected (illegal) materials is unacceptable in the library. Use of Vermontville Township Library computers for other unlawful purposes is also prohibited. Compliance with this policy is the responsibility of the user, or in the case of minors, it is a joint responsibility of the user and the parent or guardian.

The Rules of Conduct also apply to the use of electronic equipment and resources. Failure to follow the Rules of Conduct may be cause for a temporary or permanent prohibition from use of library equipment or facilities. In cases of threatening behavior or illegal activities, law enforcement will be notified.

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Special information concerning Wireless Internet Access

The library provides free wireless unfiltered access points at the library for public internet access. These access points will allow users to connect to the internet from their laptop computers, tablets and phones when sitting within range of the access points.

Wireless users agree to abide by the Library's Internet Safety Policy and the Electronic Information Access Policy while using the library's wireless network. Wireless users are subject to applicable portions of this policy, including the sections concerning inappropriate or illegal usage, copyright issues, and use by children.

Users are responsible for configuring their own equipment. The library does not provide technical support for establishing or maintaining a connection nor equipment configurations. The library is not responsible for any changes made to an individual computer's settings and does not guarantee that a user's hardware will work with the library's wireless connection.

The library is not responsible for any personal information (e.g., credit card) that is compromised, or for any damage caused to hardware or software due to electric surges, security issues or consequences caused by viruses or hacking. All wireless access users are individually responsible for maintaining up-to-date virus protection on personal laptop computers or wireless devices.

Internet and Computer Use Rules

Age requirements

Children under 18 years of age must have a parent or legal guardian signature on their Internet Use Agreement Form. This permission slip must be presented in person by the custodial parent or guardian that signed it.

Checkout Times

Computer users will be asked to wash their hands before using the equipment. Computer users will be advised that the computers will be shut down one half hour before closing time. The library cannot guarantee that users will have enough time to complete online tasks.

Behavior and Conduct

When using a computer station, please be courteous to other users and those waiting for an open station. We ask that users respect the privacy of others both in the library and online. Failure to comply with these guidelines will result in a loss of Internet privileges.

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General usage

The library is not responsible for interruptions to Internet service beyond our control, including but not limited to problems with network lines and web servers, hardware failures, power outages, or any other problems with the Internet outside of our facilities. Problems with hardware and software in the library will be dealt with as staff and time permit.

In the event that deliberate misuse results in damage to Library computer equipment, the library will hold the user(s) liable for any necessary repair/replacement costs.

Installed Software and Hardware

All desktop public workstations and laptops run the current version of Windows using Firefox as the available web browser. Anti-virus software is used on all machines. Microsoft Office is also available.

Browsing Limits and Filters

The library owned devices are filtered using Net Nanny Protection software. Patrons are expected to know what is and is not appropriate for viewing in a library setting. It is not possible for the library to monitor and control information on the Internet; therefore, the library cannot be held responsible for information obtained through the Internet, or any consequences arising from such use. In addition, illegal use of Library computers may also be subject to prosecution by local, state or federal authorities, and will be reported by the library to the appropriate authorities. The library cooperates fully with legal investigations regarding computer use.

Email

The library does not provide e-mail service to patrons. If patrons have Web-based email accounts (i.e. accounts with Yahoo or Hotmail) they may access them from the public Internet stations. Patrons may also sign up for these free services while at the library. Email services which require the use of a separate program such as Microsoft Outlook are not accessible. The use of public computers for sending unsolicited email ("spam") is expressly prohibited; any users found to be engaging in this or any other illegal activity will have their Internet privileges permanently revoked.

Printing

The library uses a networked printer system. Patrons are able to print documents from any computer, then pick up their printouts at the circulation desk. Printouts cost \$.25/page for black & white printouts (default) and \$1.00/page for color printouts (regardless of page content). Patrons are responsible for all pages printed.

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Internet Safety Policy

The mission of the Vermontville Township Library is to promote and support literacy and learning, to provide free and open access to informational, educational, recreational, and cultural resources for library users of all ages, including access to the internet.

Vermontville Township Library's Internet Safety Policy is designed to promote access to the internet while protecting children from exposure to inappropriate material, as well as the public from unlawful access to and use or disclosure of personal information, and unauthorized access to legally restricted areas.

The Internet Safety Policy's purposes to prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via the internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; to prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; to prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) [Pub.L.No.106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].

Filtering

In compliance with CIPA, the library filters all its devices, to protect against access to obscene visual depictions, child pornography, and/or material harmful to minors, as required by law.

The filter may unintentionally block sites that have legitimate research value and fail to block objectionable content. Users should be aware that internet filtering software installed for CIPA compliance should not substitute for individual judgment and/or parental involvement or oversight.

As the law requires, the library will disable filtered internet access to persons 17 or older who request it for bona fide research or any other lawful purposes.

Inappropriate Network Usage

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the Vermontville Township Library's online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking', and other unlawful activities; (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors; and (c) dissemination and viewing of obscene visual depictions, child pornography, and/or other materials harmful to minors.

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Education, Supervision, and Monitoring

The library affirms and acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of parents and caregivers to monitor and determine their children's access to library materials and resources, including those available through the internet.

Parents or caregivers are responsible for the internet information selected and/or accessed by their children. Children, defined as individuals under 18 years of age by Michigan State Statute, who use the Internet unsupervised may be exposed to inappropriate or disturbing information and images. Parents are encouraged to discuss the use of the internet in relation to family values and boundaries with their children and teens and to monitor their children/teen's use of the internet.

Public Access

Users are cautioned that, because security in an electronic environment such as the internet cannot be guaranteed, all transactions, files, and communications are vulnerable to unauthorized access and use and therefore, should be considered public.

Vermontville Township Library's computers are located in public areas, which are shared with library users and staff of all ages, backgrounds and sensibilities. Users are expected to consider this diversity and respect the sensibilities of others when accessing potentially offensive information or images. Public access computers are subject to supervision. Staff is available to assist patrons who need help finding information on the Internet. The library reserves the right to engage in monitoring activities, both electronic and non-electronic, at its sole discretion and without further notice unless otherwise restricted by law. Such practices may include, but are not limited to, those for the purpose of monitoring the nature and quality of our services, and the security and the conduct of people on our premises.

Violators of the Library's policies, including the Internet Safety Policy and Internet and Computer Use Policy, may lose library privileges.

Disclaimer: The Vermontville Township library does not endorse the viewpoints nor can it vouch for the timeliness, accuracy or usefulness for particular purpose of information accessed via the Internet.

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Circulation Policy

A library's purpose is to provide materials for public use. In order to provide wide access to library materials, the Vermontville Township Library Board will set policies for: length of loan period, renewals, reserves, fines, fees, and limits.

Library Cards

- The Vermontville Township Library will issue a library card to any resident of Vermontville or Kalamo Township, showing a valid Michigan Driver's License, or a Michigan Identification card, or other proof of residency. All Maple Valley students or homeschool families may also have a Vermontville Township Library Card.
- Beginning January 1, 2023, Patrons will be required to fill out a library card application. This application may include the entire household. Minors who wish to obtain their own library card should be included on the application, and it must be signed by the parent/guardian. The Vermontville Township Library does not censor as to content, nor does it limit access to materials in the library collection. By signing the application, the parent/guardian agrees they are aware of this policy. It is recommended that children under the age of 3 have their books checked out by a parent. A parent/guardian agrees that they are financially responsible for any and all materials borrowed by the minors on their library application. This includes lost or damaged materials, and any late fees that may be charged. A copy of the application including a copy of the parent or guardian's driver's license will be kept on file.
- Upon issuance of this card, patrons will be allowed to check out a total of three items at a time until a period of six months has passed. The library reserves the right to lift this restriction at any time for patrons who continually return items on time, and who do not let items reach overdue status during the six-month restriction period.

Loan Periods

- Books, periodicals and Audio books are checked out for a period of 1 month.
- New release DVD's are checked out for 3 days at no charge. Other DVD's are checked out for 1 week at no charge. Late fees will accrue at the rate of \$1.00/day for items not returned by their due date.
- When School assignments create a heavy demand for limited materials, the library reserves the right to put such materials on reserve, and/or limit the loan period or the number of items borrowed, as appropriate.
- The library may permit overnight circulation of some reference materials when other means of satisfying user need are not possible through photocopies, regular

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circulating materials etc. The loan period is limited to the hours during which the library is closed.

Renewals

- Materials may be renewed by phone, online through the Atrium Book System Circulation Program, or in person, providing that the item is not on reserve for another patron.
- Items may only be renewed once by phone, or online. Second renewals, if needed, must be done in person, with the materials present at the library.

Reserves

- Requests for items to be put on reserve may be done by phone, online through the Atrium Book Systems Circulation Program, or in person.

Overdue Items

- On the 31st day of checkout, a book, periodical or audio book is considered overdue.
- On the 4th day of check out a new release DVD is considered overdue, fines will begin to accumulate.
- On the 8th day of check out any other DVD is considered overdue, and fines will begin to accumulate.
- Anyone who has overdue materials will not be allowed to check out any other materials until the materials are replaced, returned or paid for. Lost or Damaged materials will be charged a \$10.00 processing fee.
- Patrons with an email account on file will receive automatic notices in their inbox. Patrons with a mobile number on file will receive a text message. These are system generated, and will continue until the matter is resolved. This notification does not exempt you from the following procedures:
- There will be two attempts made by the library for return of the overdue item.
- Phone Call
- Bill for the replacement cost of the item plus a \$10.00 processing fee per item
- After an item is 30 days overdue, a final notice will be sent. If after ten days there is no attempt to resolve the account, the materials will be considered stolen property, and the issue will be turned over to the Eaton County Economic Crimes Unit for recovery.
- The library reserves the right to accept an exact duplicate of the item in lieu of the original materials, plus the \$10.00 processing fee.
- Chronic abuse of the loan period will result in restriction of the number of items allowed to that patron. Restriction will be at the discretion of the librarians.

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Fines

- The Vermontville Township Library does not charge fines on overdue books.
- Fines are charged on overdue DVD's. All DVD fines will accumulate at the rate of \$1.00 per day.
- If a patron has any overdue videos or late fees on record, the patron will be restricted. The patron will not be allowed to check out additional materials until the overdue materials are returned, and all overdue fines are paid.

Interlibrary Loan

- Materials that are not available at our library may be borrowed from other sources. This can be done by a librarian at the library facility, or initiated by the patron using their home computer with access to the MeLCat system.
 - Patron must have a current library card and be in good standing to access the MeLCat system.
- Patron is bound by the lending policies of the loaning library.
- If a book is lost or damaged, patron is responsible for the replacement cost plus the processing fee. This is at the discretion of the lending library.
- All interlibrary loan requests will conform to the accepted Interlibrary Loan protocols as stated in the Michigan Interlibrary Loan Code: Protocols and Guidelines, and the MeLCat standards as put forth by the Library of Michigan.

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Use of Library Facilities

The library does not rent or loan it's building to the general public, service groups or other organizations.

Use of Library Equipment

- **Copy Machine:** The library staff will make copies for the public. Each copy will be made at the cost of \$.25 per page. Color copies are available for the price of \$.50 per page. Photo quality paper is available for an additional .30 for photo printing.
- **Printing:** Public computers are linked to the library printer. Pages may be printed at the cost of \$.25 per page for black and white, and \$.50 for color pages. All copyright rules must be followed. Staff will be handling the pictures that are printed behind the desk. Printing of any picture that shows lascivious exhibition of the genitals or pubic area are not allowed and will not be distributed.
- **Fax Machine:** the library owns a fax machine, which is available to the public, with the assistance of the librarians, to send and receive faxes. Each fax will cost \$1.00 for each page. The same costs apply to all incoming faxes. International numbers will be charged at \$5.00 for the first page, and \$1.00 for each additional page.
- **Microfiche Reader:** The library owns a microfiche reader that is available to the public, with the assistance of the librarians, for the purpose of viewing the libraries copies of the Maple Valley News and the Vermontville Echo, which are stored on microfilm. There is no charge for this service.
- **Computers and other devices:** the library own's 5 computers which are available for public use. Each of these computers has a variety of software available for public use, and are internet accessible. Patrons must abide by the Vermontville Township Library Internet and Computer Use Policy when using library equipment. The library also owns a variety of tablet and laptop devices available for checkout and use inside the library.
- **Wireless Internet:** There is a wireless internet system inside the library building that is assessable to library patrons wishing to use their own computer. Patrons are subject to applicable sections of the Vermontville Township Library Internet and Computer Use Policy while using their personal equipment inside the library building.
- **Phone:** The telephone at the Vermontville Township Library is for staff use only. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the library staff.

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Vermontville Township Library FOIA Procedures and Guidelines

It is the policy of the Vermontville Township Library that all persons, except those incarcerated, consistent with the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), are entitled to full and complete information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts of those who represent them as public officials and employees. The people shall be informed so that they fully participate in the democratic process.

The Vermontville Township Library's policy with respect to FOIA requests is to comply with State law in all respects and to respond to FOIA requests in a consistent, fair, and even-handed manner regardless of who makes such a request.

The Vermontville Township Library acknowledges that it has a legal obligation to disclose all nonexempt public records in its possession pursuant to a FOIA request. The Vermontville Township acknowledges that sometimes it is necessary to invoke the exceptions identified under FOIA in order to ensure the effective operation of government and to protect the privacy of individuals.

The Vermontville Township Library will protect the public's interest in disclosure, while balancing the requirement to withhold or redact portions of certain records. The library's policy is to disclose public records consistent with and in compliance with State law.

The Vermontville Township Library's Board has established the following written procedures and guidelines to implement the FOIA and will create a written public summary of the specific procedures and guidelines relevant to the general public regarding how to submit written requests to the public body and explaining how to understand a public body's written responses, deposit requirements, fee calculations, and avenues for challenge and appeal. The written public summary will be written in a manner as to be easily understood by the general public.

Section 1: General Policies

The Vermontville Township Library Board, acting pursuant to the authority at MCL 15.236, designates the Library Director as the FOIA Coordinator. He or she is authorized to designate other Library staff to act on his or her behalf to accept and process written requests for the library's public records and approve denials.

If a request for a public record is received by fax or email, the request is deemed to have been received on the following business day. If a request is sent by email and delivered to a Library spam or junk-mail folder, the request is not deemed received until one day after the FOIA Coordinator first becomes aware of the request. The FOIA Coordination shall not in the FOIA log both the date the request was delivered to the spam or junk-mail folder and the date the

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FOIA Coordinator became aware of the request. The FOIA Coordinator shall review the library spam and junk-mail folders on a regular basis, which shall be no less than once a month.

The FOIA Coordinator may, in his or her discretion, implement administrative rules, consistent with State law and these Procedures and Guidelines to administer the acceptance and processing of FOIA requests.

The Vermontville Township Library is not obligated to create a new public record or make a compilation or summary of information which does not already exist. Neither the FOIA Coordinator nor the library staff are obligated to provide answers to questions contained in requests for public records or regarding the content of the records themselves.

The FOIA Coordinator shall keep a copy of all written requests for public records received by the library on file for a period of at least one year.

The library will make this Procedures and Guidelines document and the Written Public Summary publicly available without charge. If it does not, the library cannot require deposits or charge fees otherwise permitted under the FOIA until it is in compliance.

A copy of this Procedures and Guidelines document and the Library's Written Public Summary must be publicly available by providing free copies both in the library's response to a written request and upon request by visitors to the library.

This Procedures and Guidelines document and the Township Written Public Summary will be maintained on the library's website at <http://vmtlib.michlibrary.org>, so a link to those documents will be provided in lieu of providing paper copies of these documents.

Section 2: Requesting a Public Record

No specific form to submit a request for a public record is required. However, the FOIA Coordinator may make available a FOIA Request Form for use by the public.

Request to inspect or obtain copies of public records prepared, owned, used, possessed or retained by the library may be submitted on the Library's FOIA Request Form, in any other form of writing (fax, email, letter, etc.) or by verbal request.

Verbal request for records may be documented by the Library on the Library's FOIA Request Form.

If a person makes a verbal, non-written request for information believed to be available on the library's website, where practicable and to the best ability of the employee receiving the request, shall be informed of the pertinent website address.

A request must sufficiently describe a public record so as to enable Library personnel to identify and find the requested record.

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Written requests for public records may be submitted in person or by mail to any Library office. Requests may also be submitted electronically by fax and email. Upon their receipt, requests for public records shall be promptly forwarded to the FOIA Coordinator for processing.

A person may request that public records be provided on non-paper physical media, emailed or otherwise provided to him or her in digital form in lieu of paper copies. The Library will comply with the request only if it possess the necessary technological capability to provide records in the requested non-paper physical media format.

A person may subscribe to future issues of public records that are created, issued or disseminated by the Vermontville Township Library on a regular basis. A subscription is valid for up to 6 months and may be renewed by the subscriber.

A person serving a sentence of imprisonment in a local, state or federal correctional facility is not entailed to submit a request for a public record. The FOIA Coordinator will deny all such requests.

Section 3: Processing a Request

Unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the person making the request, the Township will issue a response within 5 business days of receipt of a FOIA request. If a request is received by fax, email or other electronic transmission, the request is deemed to have been received on the following business day.

The library will respond to a request in one of the following ways:

- Grant the request.
- Issue a written notice denying the request.
- Grant the request in part and issue a written notice denying in part the request.
- Issue a notice indicating that due to the nature of the request the library needs an additional 10 business days to respond for a total of no more than 15 business days. Only one such extension is permitted.
- Issue a written notice indicating that the public record requested is available at no charge on the library's website.

When a request is granted:

If the request is granted, or granted in part, the FOIA Coordinator will require that payment be made in full for the allowable fees associated with responding to the request before the public record is made available.

The FOIA Coordinator shall provide a detailed itemization of the allowable costs incurred to process the request to the person making the request.

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A copy of these Procedures and Guidelines and the Written Public Summary will be provided to the requestor free of charge with response to a written request for public records, provided however, that because these Procedures and Guidelines and the Written Public Summary are maintained on the library's website at: <http://vmtlib.michlibrary.org>, a link to the Procedures and Guidelines and the Written Public Summary will be provided in lieu of providing paper copies of those documents.

If the cost of processing a FOIA request is \$50 or less, the requestor will be notified of the amount due and where the documents can be obtained.

If the cost of processing a FOIA request is expected to exceed \$50 based on a good-faith calculation, or if the requestor has not paid in full for a previously granted request, the library will require a good-faith deposit pursuant to Section 4 of this policy before processing the request.

In making the request for a good-faith deposit the FOIA Coordinator shall provide the requestor with a detailed itemization of the allowable costs estimated to be incurred by the library to process the request and also provide a best effort estimate of a time frame it will take the library to provide the records to the requestor. The best effort estimate shall be nonbinding on the library, but will be made in good faith and will strive to be reasonably accurate, giving the nature of the request in the particular instance, so as to provide the requested records in a manner based on the public policy expressed by Section 1 of the FOIA.

When the request is denied or denied in part:

If the request is denied or denied in part, the FOIA Coordinator will issue a Notice of Denial which shall provide in the applicable circumstance:

- An explanation as to why a requested public record is exempt from disclosure; or
- A certificate that the requested record does not exist under the name or description provided by the requestor, or another name reasonably known by the Township; nor
- An explanation or description of the public record or information within a public record that is separated or deleted from the public record; and
- An explanation of the person's right to submit an appeal of the denial to either the office of the Library Director or seek judicial review in the Eaton County Circuit Court;
- An explanation of the right to receive attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements as well actual or compensatory damages, and punitive damages of \$1000, should they prevail in Circuit Court.
- The Notice of Denial shall be signed by the FOIA Coordinator

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If the request does not sufficiently describe a public record, the FOIA Coordinator may, in lieu of issuing a Notice of Denial indicating that the request is deficient, seek clarification or amendment of the request by the person making the request. Any clarification or amendment will be considered a new request subject to the timelines described in this Section.

Request to inspect public records:

The library shall provide reasonable facilities and opportunities for persons to examine and inspect public records during normal business hours. The FOIA Coordinator is authorized to promulgate rules regulating the manner in which records may be viewed so as to protect Library records from loss, alteration, mutilation, or destruction and to prevent excessive interference with normal Library operations.

Request for certified copies:

The FOIA Coordinator shall, upon written request, furnish a certified copy of a public record at no additional cost to the person requesting the public record.

Section 4: Fee Deposits

If the fee estimate is expected to exceed \$50.00 based on a good-faith calculation, the requestor will be asked to provide a deposit not exceeding one-half of the total estimated fee.

If the request for public records is from a person who has not paid the Library in full for copies of public records made in fulfillment of a previously granted written request, the FOIA Coordinator will require a deposit of 100% of the estimated processing fee before beginning to search for a public record for any subsequent written request by that person when all of the following conditions exist:

- The final fee for the prior written request is not more than 1-5% of the estimated cost.
- The Public records made available contained the information sought in the prior written request and remain in the library's possession.
- The public records were made available to the individual, subject to payment, within the time frame estimated by the Library to provide the records; .Ninety (90) days have passed since the FOIA Coordinator notified the individual in writing that the public records were available for pickup or mailing;
- The individual is unable to show proof of prior payment to the Library; and
- The FOIA Coordinator has calculated a detailed itemization that is the basis for the current written request's increased estimated fee deposit.

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The FOIA Coordinator will not require an increased estimated fee deposit if any of the following apply:

- The person making the request is able to show proof of prior payment in full to the library;
- The library is subsequently paid in full for the applicable prior written request; or
- Three hundred sixty-five (365) days have passed since the person made the request for which full payment was not remitted to the Library

Section 5: Calculation of Fees

A fee may be charged for the labor cost of copying/duplication.

A fee will not be charged for the labor costs of search, examination, review and the deletion and separation of exempt from nonexempt information unless failure to charge a fee would result in unreasonably high costs to the library because of the nature of the request in the particular instance, and the library specifically identifies the nature of the unreasonably high costs.

Costs for the search, examination review, and deletion and separation of exempt from non-exempt information are ‘unreasonably high’ when they are excessive and beyond the normal or usual amount for those services (Attorney General Opinion 7083 of 2001) compared to the costs of the library’s usual FOIA requests, not compared to the library’s operating budget. (Bloch v. Davision Community Schools, Michigan Court of Appeals, Unpublished, April 26, 2011)

The following factors shall be used to determine an unreasonably high cost to the library:

- Volume of the public record requested
- Amount of time spent to search for, examine, review and separate exempt for non-exempt information in the record requested.
- Whether the public records are from more than one Library department or whether various Library offices are necessary to respond to the request.
- The available staffing to respond to the request.
- Any other similar factors identified by the FOIA Coordinator in responding to the particular request.

The Michigan FOIA statute permits the library to charge for the following costs associated with processing a request:

- Labor costs associated with copying or duplication, which includes making paper copies, making digital copies, or transferring digital public records to non-paper physical media or through the internet.
- Labor costs associated with searching for, locating and examining a requested public record, when failure to charge a fee will result in unreasonably high costs to the library.

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- Labor costs associated with a review of a record to separate and delete information exempt from disclosure, when failure to charge a fee will result in unreasonably high costs to the library
- The cost of copying or duplication, not including labor, a paper copies of public records. This may include the cost of copies of records already on the library's website if you ask for the library to make copies.
- The cost of computer discs, computer tapes or other digital or similar media when the requester asks for records in non-paper physical media. This may include the cost of copies of records already on the library's website if you ask for the Library to make copies.
- The cost to mail or send a public record to a requestor
- Labor costs will be calculated based on the following requirements:
- All labor costs will be estimated and charged in 15-minute increments, with all partial time increments rounded down. If the time involved is less than 15-minutes, there will be no charge.
- Labor costs will be charged at the hourly wage of the lowest-paid Library employee capable of doing the work in the specific fee category, regardless of who actually performs the work.
- Labor costs will also include a charge to cover or partially cover the cost of fringe benefits.
- The library may add up to 50% to the applicable labor charge amount to cover or partially cover the cost of fringe benefits, but in no case may it exceed the actual cost of fringe benefits.
- Overtime wages will not be included in labor costs unless agreed to by the requestor; overtime costs will not be used to calculate the fringe benefit cost.
- The cost to provide records on non-paper physical media when so requested will be based on the following requirements:
- Computer disks, computer tapes or other digital or similar media will be at the actual and most reasonably economical cost for the non-paper media
- This cost will only be assessed if the library has the technological capability necessary to provide the public record in the requested non-physical media format.
- The library will procure any non-paper media and will not accept media from the requestor in order to ensure integrity of the library's technology infrastructure.
- The cost to provide paper copies of records will be based on the following requirements:
- Paper copies of public records made on standard letter (8 ½ x 11) or legal (8 ½ x 14) sized paper will not exceed \$.10 per sheet of paper. Copies for non-standard sized sheets of paper will reflect the actual cost of reproduction.
- The library will provide records using double-sided printing, if it is cost-saving and available.
- The cost to mail records to a requestor will be based on the following requirements:

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- The actual cost to mail public records using a reasonably economical and justified means
- The library may charge for the least expensive form of postal delivery confirmation
- No cost will be made for expedited shipping or insurance unless specified by the requestor.
- If the FOIA Coordinator does not respond to a written request in a timely manner, the library must:
 - Reduce the labor costs by 5% for each day the library exceeds the time permitted under FOIA up to a 50% maximum reduction, if any of the following applies:
 - The library's late response was willful and intentional
 - The written request conveyed a request for information within the first 250 words of the body of a letter facsimile, email or email attachment, or
 - The written request included the words, characters, or abbreviations for "freedom of information", "information" "FOIA" "copy" or a recognizable misspelling of such, or legal code reference to MCL 15.231, et seq. or 1976 Public Act 442 on the front of an envelope or in the subject line of an email, letter or facsimile cover page.
 - Fully Note the charge reduction in the Detailed Itemization of Costs Form.

Section 6: Waiver of Fees

The cost of the search for and copying if a public record may be waived or reduced if in the sole judgement of the FOIA Coordinator a waiver or reduced fee is in the public interest because it can be considered as primarily benefitting the general public. The township board may identify specific records or types of records it deems should be made available for no charge or at a reduced cost.

Section 7: Discounted Fees

Indigence

The FOIA Coordinator will discount the first \$20.00 of the processing fee for a request if the person requesting a public record submits an affidavit stating that they are:

- Indigent and receiving specific public assistance, or
- If not receiving public assistance, stating facts demonstrating an inability to pay because of indigence.
- An individual is not eligible to receive the waiver if:
 - The requester has previously received discounted copies of public records from the Township twice during the calendar year; or
 - The requestor requests information in connection with other persons who are offering or providing payment to make the request.

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An Affidavit is sworn statement. The FOIA Coordinator may make a Fee Waiver Affidavit Form available for use by the public.

Nonprofit organization advocating for developmentally or mentally ill individuals

The FOIA Coordinator will discount the first \$20.00 of the processing fee for a request from:

- A nonprofit organization formally designated by the state to carry out activities under subtitle C of the federal developmental disabilities assistance and bill of rights act of 2000, Public Law 106-402, and the protection and advocacy for individuals with mental illness act, Public Law 99-319, or their successors, of the request meets all of the following requirements:
- Is made directly on behalf of the organization or its clients.
- Is made for a reason wholly consistent with the mission and provisions of those laws under section 931 of the metal health code, 1974 PA 258, MCL 330.1931.
- Is accompanied by documentation of its designation by the state, if requested by the public body.

Section 8: Appeal of a Denial of a Public Record

When a requestor believes that all or a portion of a public record has not been disclosed or has been improperly exempted from disclosure, he or she may appeal to the Library Board by filing an appeal of the denial with the FOIA Coordinator.

The appeal must be in writing, specifically state the word “appeal” and identify the reasons the requestor is seeking a reversal of the denial. The Library FOIA Appeal For (To Appeal a Denial of Records), may be used.

The Library Board is not considered to have received a written appeal until the first regularly scheduled Library Board meeting following submission of the written appeal.

Within 10 business days of receiving the appeal the Library Board will respond in writing by:

- Reversing the disclosure denial;
- Upholding the disclosure denial;
- Reverse the disclosure denial on part and uphold the disclosure denial in part; or
- Under unusual circumstances, issue a notice extending for not more than 10 business days the period during which the Library Board shall respond to the written appeal. The Library Board shall not issue more than 1 notice of extension for a particular written appeal.

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If the Library Board fails to respond to a written appeal, or if the Library Board upholds all or a portion of the disclosure denial that is the subject of the written appeal, the requesting person may seek judicial review of the nondisclosure by commencing a civil action in Circuit Court.

Whether or not a requestor submitted an appeal of a denial to the Library Board, he or she may file a civil action in Eaton County Circuit Court within 180 days after the library's final determination to deny the request.

If a court that determines a public record is not exempt from disclosure, it shall order the library to cease withholding or to produce all or a portion of a public record wrongfully withheld, regardless of the location of the public record. Failure to comply with an order of the court may be punished as contempt of court.

If a person asserting the right to inspect, copy, or receive a copy of all or a portion of a public record prevails in such an action, the court shall award reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements. If the person or Library prevails in part, the court may, in its discretion, award all or an appropriate portion of reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements.

If the court determines that the library has arbitrarily or capriciously violated this act by refusal or delay in disclosing or providing copies of a public record, the court shall order the library to pay a civil fine of \$1000.00, which shall be deposited into the general fund of the state treasury. The court shall award, in addition to any actual or compensatory damages, punitive damages in the amount of \$1000.00 to the person seeking the right to inspect or receive a copy of a public record. The damages shall not be assessed against an individual, but shall be assessed against the next succeeding public body that is not an individual and that kept or maintained the public record as part of its public function.

Section 9: Appeal of an excessive FOIA Processing Fee

"Fee" means the total fee or any component of the total fee calculated under section 4 of the FOIA, including any deposit.

If a requestor believes that the fee charged by the library to processed FOIA request exceeds the amount permitted by state law or under this policy, he or she must first appeal to the Library Board by submitting a written appeal for a fee reduction to the office of the FOIA Coordinator.

The appeal must be in writing, specifically state the word "appeal" and identify how the required fee exceeds the amount permitted. The Library FOIA Appeal Form (To Appeal an Excess Fee) may be used.

The Library Board is not considered to have received a written appeal until the first regularly scheduled Library Board meeting following submission of the written appeal.

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Within 10 business days after receiving the appeal, the Library Board will respond in writing by:

- Waiving the fee;
- Reducing the fee and issuing a written determination indicating the specific basis that supports the remaining fee;
- Upholding the fee and issuing a written determination indicating the specific basis that supports the required fee; or
- Issuing a notice detailing the reason or reasons for extending for not more than 10 business days the period during which the Library Board will respond to the written appeal. The Library Board shall not issue more than 1 notice of extension for a particular written appeal.

Where the Library Board reduces or upholds the fee, the determination must include a certification from the Library Board that the statements in the determination are accurate and that the reduced fee amount complies with its publicly available procedures and guidelines and Section 4 of the FOIA.

Within 45 days after receiving notice of the Library Board's determination of an appeal, the requesting person may commence a civil action in Eaton County Circuit Court for a fee reduction.

If a civil action is commenced against the Library Board for an excess fee, the Library Board is not obligated to complete the processing of a written request for the public record at issue until the court resolves the fee dispute.

An action shall not be filed in circuit court unless one of the following applies:

- The Township does not provide for appeals of fees,
- The Township Board failed to respond to a written appeal as required, or
- The Township Board issued a determination to a written appeal.

If a court determines that the Library Board required a fee that exceeds the amount permitted under its publicly available procedures and guidelines or Section 4 of the FOIA, the court shall reduce the fee to a permissible amount. Failure to comply with an order of the court may be punished as contempt of court.

If the requesting person prevails in court by receiving a reduction of 50% or more of the total fee, the court may in its discretion, award all or an appropriate portion of reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements. The award shall be assessed against the public body liable for damages.

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If the court determines that the Library Board has arbitrarily and capriciously violated the FIUA by charging an excessive fee, the court shall order the Library Board to pay a civil fine of \$500.00, which shall be deposited in the general fund of the state treasury. The court may also award, in addition to any actual or compensatory damages, punitive damages in the amount of \$500.00 to the person seeking the fee reduction. The fine and any damages shall not be assessed against an individual, but shall be assessed against the next succeeding public body that is not an individual and that kept or maintained the public record as part of its public function.

Section 10: Conflict with Prior FOIA Policies and Procedures; Effective Date

To the extent that these Procedures and Guidelines conflict with previous FOIA policies promulgated by Library Board are controlling. To the extent that any administrative rule promulgated by the FOIA Coordinator subsequent to the adoption of this resolution is found to be in conflict with any previous policy promulgated by the FOIA Coordinator is controlling.

To the extent that any provision of these Procedures and Guidelines or any administrative rule promulgated by the FOIA Coordinator pertaining to the release of public records is found to be in conflict with any State statute, the applicable statute shall control. The FOIA Coordinator is authorized to modify this policy and all previous policies adopted by the Library Board, and to adopt such administrative rules as he or she may deem necessary, to facilitate the legal review and processing of requests for public records made pursuant to Michigan's FOIA statute, provided that such modifications and rules are consistent with State law. The FOIA Coordinator shall inform the Library Board of any change to these Policies and Guidelines.

These FOIA Policies and Guidelines became effective July 1, 2015.

Freedom of Information Act Forms

- Request for Public Records Form
- Notice to Extend Response Time Form
- Notice of Denial Form
- Detailed Cost Itemization Form
- Appeal of Denial of Records Form
- Appeal of Excess Fee Form