

**Category:** Public Service  
**Policy Number:** 6-1  
**Policy Name:** Membership

**Purpose:**

A Waterloo Public Library card provides borrowing privileges for the thousands of items in the Library's print and electronic collections and access to other programs and services that satisfy the multiple literacy, information, cultural, learning and leisure needs of the community.

The Library ensures fair conditions for library membership and borrowing privileges while protecting resources in a responsible manner and in accordance with the *Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c P44*.

**Policy:**

Membership at the Library is free of charge to persons residing or owning property within the boundaries of the City of Waterloo and to persons residing in communities with whom Waterloo Public Library has reciprocal borrowing agreements (Region of Waterloo, County of Brant Public Library and Hamilton Public Library). People residing outside these areas who wish to obtain a library card are required to pay a membership fee on an annual or semi-annual basis.

Identification and proof of current address are required from all applicants at the time of registration. Proof of address may be required any time that a customer moves to a new address. Personal information is collected, in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, for internal Library purposes and is confidential. (*Refer to WPL Legal Policy 5-1, Privacy and Access to Information.*)

Membership information may be shared with Kitchener Public Library due to a shared computer Integrated Library System.

Children twelve years of age and under must have their library card signed by a parent or legal guardian who accepts responsibility for materials borrowed and for fines and fees that may accumulate on the child's card. Responsibility for monitoring the choice of library materials by minors and their use of the Internet rests with parents or legal guardians.

All library cards remain the property of Waterloo Public Library. A library card may be revoked if a customer's account is not maintained in a responsible manner. A fee may be charged for replacement of a lost or damaged Waterloo Public Library card.

**Renewal:**

Library cards expire periodically (usually once per year, depending on membership type), at which time the Library will ask customers to confirm their contact details.

**Borrowing:**

A valid library card is required in order to borrow materials.

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Customers accept responsibility for their library card, all materials borrowed and any fines and fees that accumulate on their card. Although it is possible for a person to hold more than one library card, only one membership account may be maintained (that is, one account with two barcodes).

A person in possession of a Waterloo Public Library card is assumed to be the owner or to have the owner's permission to use the card. This includes the cards of children or spouses. Customers must notify the Library immediately upon loss of their library card.

**Corporate Membership:**

An organization, institution or business may hold a Library membership for use by employees borrowing material for work-related purposes. The Library requires a letter of application on the organization's official letterhead signed by a Designated Officer who has the authority on behalf of the organization to accept responsibility for all materials borrowed on the Corporate Card and any fines or fees that may accrue.

**Unconfirmed Membership:**

Visitors and others unable to provide proof of local address residing for a minimum of 2 weeks in the City of Waterloo and in municipalities with whom the Library has reciprocal borrowing may hold an Unconfirmed Membership. Because of the short-term nature of this membership, borrowing privileges for this type of customer are limited.

**Special Membership:**

A Special Membership is designed to accommodate individuals who make their home in a group home or special residence for a period of approximately six months or longer. Because of the short-term nature of a person's stay at these residences, the lack of permanent address information (usually due to confidentiality issues), and the difficulty of tracing them to settle overdue accounts, borrowing privileges for this type of customer are limited.

**In Library User Membership:**

In Library User Membership is designed to accommodate individuals who do not have a fixed residence, are unable to provide address information and do not qualify for Special Membership. These customers will be served at a Library service point where their card will be kept on file, and where material that is signed out to them will be kept secure for them to use in the Library. Regular borrowing and loan privileges apply, with the following exception: the number of items that can be borrowed at one time and the number of holds that can be placed is limited to 5.

**Visiting Library Service:**

For this type of membership, volunteers are given the right of access to borrowing information and the right to use the member's card in the provision of Visiting Library Service. A Visiting Library Service membership may be taken out by an individual or by an institution. (*Refer to WPL Public service Policy 6-10, Visiting Library Service.*)

**Suspension of Borrowing Privileges:**

A customer's borrowing privileges are suspended when outstanding charges reach or exceed \$10.00. Borrowing privileges resume when fines owing are reduced to under \$10.00.

Willful disregard of the Library's *Rules of Conduct* may result in the suspension of borrowing privileges.

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**Document Record:**

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