



LOS ALAMOS

where discoveries are made

LOS ALAMOS COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
POLICIES

Established: 1981
Revised 1999, 2010, 2019

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Los Alamos County Library System (LACLS), hereinafter “the Library,” has provided continuous library service to the community since its informal beginnings in 1943, when seventy families each donated \$5.00 to start a subscription library housed in the Big House of the former Boys Ranch School. The Library became free and open to all in 1945, when financial responsibility for its operations were taken over by Post Special Services. In 1951, when the Zia Company relinquished control, the Library became a bona fide public library and was officially named the Mesa Public Library, functioning as an independent corporation under contract to the Atomic Energy Commission to supply library services to the community. In 1953, the Library moved into the former commissary/cafeteria in the heart of the town site, where it remained until 1994 when it moved into the award winning facility designed by Antoine Predock. In 1985, the White Rock Branch Library was established, and the two libraries together became the Los Alamos County Library System. A new White Rock Branch Library was built in 2015.

These policies apply to both the Mesa Public Library and White Rock Branch Library facilities.

1.1 Mission

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Library offers opportunities for our diverse regional community to learn, know, gather and grow by providing open and equal access to a variety of ideas and information through evolving technology and services.

The Library recognizes that its services must be valued by members of the community and must be of such relevance that support for the Library remains a valid use of community resources.

Recognizing that the community is constantly changing, the Library will continually assess its services in the context of professional library standards and community needs. The intent is to identify and provide, to the broadest range of individuals and entities possible, those public library services determined to be both appropriate and reasonable.

The Library will strive to maintain reasonable levels of service in a consistent and dependable manner.

1.2 Purpose

The Library provides educational, cultural, leisure, reference, technology, and information services, resources, and programs for all ages. The library is guided in the nature and type of services offered by available financial resources, community needs, and professional standards and has historically emphasized direct public service rather than archival activities.

1.3 Goals

Goals, objectives and related activities are established as part of a dynamic response to community needs as identified by various assessment methods. Goals will reflect selected public library services responses.

The extent and mix of services will vary according to the needs of the community and the availability of resources. Delivery methods will change as technology develops.

2.0 ESTABLISHMENT, FUNDING, AND AUTHORITY

2.1 Local

The Los Alamos County Council is charged with appointing a Library Board to recommend for the County the public policies of the library and those other policies unique to library services. (*Los Alamos County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 8, Article V*). The Los Alamos County Code of Ordinances as cited above establishes the purpose, membership, duties and responsibilities of the Library Board.

As a part of the Los Alamos County government, the Library is supported primarily from revenue derived from taxation of Los Alamos County residents and entities doing business in Los Alamos County and is subject to all applicable county government code, regulations, policies and procedures. The Library may establish fees when deemed necessary.

2.1.1 Gifts to the Library

The Library has long been favored by public-spirited community members who wish to donate money and property. In order to administer these items given as a gift, trust, bequest or endowment, the Library Gift Fund has been established. (*Los Alamos County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 20, Article III, Sec. 20-367, Library Gift Fund*).

2.2 State

The Library is recognized by the New Mexico State Library as a public library and receives State Aid and General Obligation Bond funding as such, and so remains subject to state regulations relating specifically to libraries. (*State Grants-in-Aid to Public Libraries, 4.5.2 NMAC (7/1/2009)* and *Distribution of General Obligation State of New Mexico Bond Funds for Public Libraries, 4.5.8 NMAC – N, (2/14/2008)*).

3.0 OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The Library Manager, with assistance from the library staff, is responsible for the adherence to library policies, and will develop procedures or guidelines to ensure the implementation of these policies, which will be placed in a Library Procedures Manual. Library procedures or guidelines adopted under these policies are developed and applied in the context of the following professional and organizational principles.

3.1 Professional Principles

3.1.1 Librarianship

The Library recognizes that libraries contribute significantly to a democratic society, and that professional librarians must attain a level of education and skill appropriate to the discipline of librarianship, and must exhibit a particular sense of dedication to professional ideals.

The Library encourages an understanding and articulation of public interest as the primary motivation for staff decisions and actions.

3.1.2 The Library Bill of Rights

Within the framework of local, state, and federal law, the Library recognizes and generally supports the principles outlined in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, and also relies on guidance from the various interpretations of that Bill of Rights that are periodically issued by ALA.

3.1.3 Intellectual Freedom

An individual's right to information in this country is addressed in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, which states that Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press. The Library recognizes and generally supports the principles of the Freedom to Read Statement, adopted by the American Library Association (ALA) Council.

In particular, the policies of the Library reflect the intellectual freedom principle that access to information in the Library should be open to all.

3.1.4 Interagency Cooperation

The Library will cooperate within reasonable limits with local, state, regional, and national agencies involved in library and information services, so long as its service population is not unduly deprived of library resources for a prolonged period.

Interagency cooperation in this context generally includes interlibrary loan, interlibrary reference, reciprocal borrowing, sharing of personnel in development projects, and participation in library materials delivery services. Interlibrary loan in particular receives targeted support because of the particular value that has consistently been placed on this service by Los Alamos residents.

Informal interagency cooperation does not preclude consideration of more formal relationships such as joint powers' agreements, memoranda of understanding, library service districts, etc.

3.2 Organizational Principles

3.2.1 Open Government

The Library is guided in information access by Los Alamos County government policy and practice, which follows the New Mexico Inspection of Public Records Act (*Chapter 14, Article 2 et. seq. NMSA 1978*).

In addition to general applicable state law concerning open government, the library is specifically regulated by the New Mexico Library Privacy Act (*Chapter 18, Article 9 NMSA 1978*).

3.2.2 Confidentiality of Library Records

Under the New Mexico Library Privacy Act, privacy for the users of public libraries of the state with respect to the library materials they wish to use preserves intellectual freedom guaranteed under the New Mexico State Constitution. Therefore, patron records are confidential within the parameters of state and federal law.

According to the statute, a "patron record" is "any document, record or other method of storing information retained by a library that identifies, or when combined with other available information, identifies a person as a patron of the library or that indicates use or request of materials from the library." Consequently, confidentiality is considered to extend not only to materials consulted, borrowed, or acquired but also to information sought or received, database search records, reference interviews, interlibrary loan records, Internet use records, or other personally identifiable uses of library materials, facilities or services. Consequently, this information shall not be made available except as noted in these policies or as required by law.

3.2.3 Code of Conduct

Individuals on library property or individuals whose actions affect library property or those on library property shall behave in ways that show respect for themselves, for other library users, for the staff, and for the property of the Library.

Individuals shall not engage in behavior that is illegal or that may constitute a danger to themselves or others, or which threatens or damages library property.

The Library will seek such assistance as is necessary and reasonable from authorized personnel in assuring that appropriate behavior is maintained. This may include assistance from law enforcement officers.

To make clear the behavior expected by those on library property and the consequences of their behavior, the Library will maintain guidelines that state the policy and contain current procedures relating to personal conduct.

3.3 Public Involvement Principles

3.3.1 Library Support Groups and Volunteers

The community may establish support groups to promote the interests of the Library. All activities of such groups must be in concert with the library's mission and goals.

The Library will encourage the work of support groups, which perform functions and provide services relating to the Library for which there is not normally a governmental appropriation or other form of support. While these groups may supplement normal library activities, the Library must not become dependent upon these groups to provide support that should be financed by government appropriations.

The Library encourages the services of individual volunteers if such services support the purposes of the Library. The conditions of service for volunteers shall be determined and regulated by the Library Manager in keeping with the Los Alamos County Volunteer Policy.

Neither individual volunteers nor groups may speak or act on behalf of the Library or the County.

3.3.2 Public relations

The Library recognizes that it is a public service and will exert all reasonable effort to make library services and facilities accessible and to keep citizens continuously and accurately informed about its activities and plans. The library may utilize a variety of methods to gather feedback and input from the public and to evaluate the effectiveness of its services. Library patrons who wish to

compliment, comment or complain about library policies, procedures, guidelines, services, collection or facilities are welcome to discuss their concerns with the Library Manager and are encouraged to submit a Customer Comment card to the Library Manager, directly or via the library staff. Comments are read, responded to, and shared with the Library Board, or other appropriate County personnel, on a regular basis.

Patrons who feel their concerns have not been addressed may contact the Director of Community Services or the County Manager.

4.0 PUBLIC SERVICES

The nature and extent of public library services are dependent upon the availability of resources. All services listed may vary in scope from time to time; however, the Library subscribes to the basic tenet that services offered will be provided equitably to everyone, and will include all age groups.

4.1 Service Population

4.1.1 Primary service area

Los Alamos County residents are the Library's primary service population. Historically and in keeping with the belief that education and information are essential to the health of the community, region, and state, the Library has also rendered full services to those who work within the county but who reside elsewhere. The Library welcomes visitors, subject to its obligations to its primary service area.

4.1.2 Interlibrary cooperation

The Library supports the principle of participation in reciprocal services to all residents of New Mexico, and directly supports interlibrary lending.

4.1.3 Youth population

Although the Library does not distinguish among individuals in the provision of library services, it recognizes the special requirements of service to children and young adults and supports this service as an essential public library function. Parents or guardians are responsible for their children or wards and only they may restrict their reading, viewing, and/or listening habits. The Library cannot enforce parental restrictions.

The Library complements services of school libraries but does not normally replace or replicate them. The Library collaborates and cooperates with the schools on special projects.

4.1.4 Special populations

The Library will assist those with special needs, in compliance with federal and state law.

4.2 Facilities

As a public library, the Library strives to locate, design, and maintain library facilities and organize its operations so that they are convenient and accessible, easy to use, safe, and attractive.

4.2.1 Number and location

The Library will maintain facilities from which public library services can be provided. Although the size and number of facilities, including outreach facilities, may vary, there will be an emphasis on supporting at least one facility in each of the major population areas of Los Alamos and White Rock.

4.2.2 Hours of operation

The Library will maintain a reasonable mix of day and evening, weekday and weekend hours at each facility to provide direct or indirect access to library facilities, materials, and services. In no case will the number of hours fall below the standards for public libraries recognized by New Mexico State Library, except as may be directed by the Los Alamos County Council.

Community needs and resources available will determine the actual hours of operation.

4.2.3 Use of Library Equipment

Only equipment designated for public use may be used by members of the public.

4.2.4 Photographing or videotaping in the Library

Attendance at programs and events sponsored by the library may be recorded through photographs and/or video. The library may use these photos or video to publicize and promote library services and to advance the mission of the library. These images/videos may be posted on the County's website, in the Library's newsletter, or social media outlets in accordance with County guidelines. No names will be utilized in conjunction with photos without express written consent.

Library patrons and visitors to the library may not take photographs or videos of other patrons or staff without the permission of the person(s) being photographed.

Requests by filmmakers, commercial or amateur photographers to photograph or videotape in the Library must receive prior approval from the Library Manager, and may be denied if it will be disruptive or would violate the Code of Conduct.

4.3 Library Materials

The Library will develop and maintain a collection of materials that, to the fullest extent practical, meets the varying informational and recreational needs of the Library's service population, in particular, residents of Los Alamos County.

No library can meet all the needs of all of its users all of the time. The Library will, however, apply all reasonable diligence in developing and maintaining the best collection possible given available resources.

The Library will maintain a definite and recognizable process for the development of the collection. While the details of the process may change as needs require, the procedures will be defined clearly and be easily available and certain basic elements, as noted below, will be included.

4.3.1 Selection responsibility

The Library Manager is responsible for collection development, and is assisted by members of staff, with suggestions from library patrons. Those making selection or withdrawal decisions are guided by professional review and evaluation sources, practical experience, personal knowledge, expert advice, and community needs as reflected in collection usage statistics and individuals' comments.

4.3.2 Selection parameters

The principles of intellectual freedom do not require that any public library own or not own any particular item. The Library acquires materials to support a broad range of citizen interests, attempting to maintain a balance in an effort to achieve its service goals. The Library must, however, carefully consider the use of public funds to respond to individual requests.

In selecting materials of any format, the Library Manager and staff should neither avoid nor encourage political, social, artistic, or religious controversy. The Library takes no advocacy position on materials. Believing however, that the free and healthy intellect thrives on diverse opinions, the Library encourages an environment of intellectual stimulation.

In fulfilling its purposes, the Library strives to assure a measure of educational, cultural, recreational, research and informational materials, regardless of format. Certain materials may have educational, cultural, recreational, research and informational value even though parts of the materials contain salacious appeal. Selection of such materials is discretionary with the Library Manager, all other policies considered.

Patrons concerned about material in the collection are welcome to discuss those concerns with the Library Manager. Patrons who wish to ask the Library to

reconsider material in the collection will be given the Request for Reconsideration forms and informed of the reconsideration process.

4.3.3 Collection characteristics

The Library's collection serves the needs of the community, and may change over time. Among the most commonly discussed collection characteristics are format, audience, and availability.

4.3.3.1 Format

The Library does not restrict the format of materials to be considered for the collection. All formats are potentially appropriate and shall be given due consideration. Examples of formats include, but are not limited to, print, audio, video, electronic, graphic, etc. New formats are evaluated for inclusion as patron interest warrants and resources permit.

4.3.3.2 Audience

Although the Library does not categorize nor limit access to materials designated as 'adult' or 'youth'; certain materials will be of particular interest to or appropriate for different age groups by virtue of the subject matter, level of complexity, etc., and will be designated as such. These designations are intended to provide a convenient mechanism for the arrangement of materials of particular interest to adults, children, young adults, teens, and adults working with children and are not intended to restrict use to a particular age group or signify appropriateness of content.

4.3.3.3 Availability

As a public library, the Library emphasizes the circulation of library materials and for that reason, the bulk of the collection is available on loan to eligible users.

In order to support certain services such as reference and information activities, or to safeguard rare or costly items, the Library generally limits the use of some specialized materials and some equipment to library facilities.

4.3.3.4 Donations

Donations are accepted for the collection when they assist the Library in accomplishing its goals and objectives and also meet physical and subject standards required of similar items in the collection. Guidelines for the disposition of those items that the Library cannot accept will be maintained. Materials donated to the Library cannot be accepted on a conditional basis and items not added to the collection cannot be returned to the donor. The Library retains unconditional ownership of all donations and makes the final decision on acceptance, use, or disposition. The donor is responsible for disposing of items not accepted by the Library.

4.4 Circulation Services

The Library is committed to circulation services as a basic public library activity, including at a minimum the functions of lending and retrieving library materials, registering users, maintaining access to materials, handling records relating to circulation services and providing direct customer service.

The Library will develop and maintain reasonable parameters to identify those who are eligible to receive services and to require that everyone abide by procedures developed to assist in providing equitable access to all. These parameters and procedures may change, as circumstances require.

4.5 Reference and Information Services

Reference and information service is central to the Library's mission and commitment to serving the needs of its community, and is available to all within the limits of material and human resources. This service includes at a minimum the provision of information or assistance in locating information or materials, training in the use of materials and equipment, interlibrary loan assistance, and referral services, each of which shall be tailored to the particular needs of adults or youth.

The Library does not guarantee the accuracy of information contained in any materials owned or obtained by the Library; neither is the Library liable for any consequences or damages the user of materials owned or obtained by the Library may suffer based on actions taken or decisions made using information from the Library. Further, the Library does not guarantee that the source of any information to which a library employee may direct a user seeking reference or informational assistance is the best possible available source of that information either in materials which the Library owns or is able to obtain from other sources.

Reference and information services include those rendered by every library program providing service to the public, in addition to Adult Services at the Mesa Public Library, which is the primary provider of in-depth reference service.

4.6 Public Access Computing, including Internet Use

In response to advances in technology and the changing needs of the community, the Library makes available the use of computers for a variety of functions, including free public access to the Internet. The Internet may be accessed via a wired connection on library-provided computers or via wireless access points with personal laptops or other wireless devices. Wireless connections may not be available in all areas of the Library. The Library does not guarantee that a wireless connection will be made.

Internet communications at the Library are not secure. Information sent or received using library wired or wireless connections may potentially be intercepted by someone else.

Neither the Library, nor Los Alamos County will be liable for any damage to a user's personal computer, wireless device, or peripherals, or for any loss of personal information, data, damage, or any negative consequences that may occur as a result of the use of the Library's computer equipment, online services, or Internet connections.

The Library does not monitor, nor control, the information accessed through the Internet and is not responsible for either the nature of or the accuracy or currency of any information accessed on the Internet.

The Library does not filter information received on wired or wireless connections. The Library is not responsible for inadvertent exposure of minors or adults to potentially offensive material by Internet users on library connections, and the Library is not responsible for what a minor or adult may access on the Internet. As with other library materials, restriction of a minor's access to the Internet is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian. Any restriction or monitoring of a minor's access to the Internet via the Library's connections is the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian.

Use of the Internet shall be consistent with the Library's mission, goals, policies, and procedures, and with applicable local, state, federal and international laws including those pertaining to obscenity and copyright. Users shall not engage in illegal activity, or in any activity that would threaten library or County systems, databases, or network functionality or security. Internet access shall be used in accordance with the Library's Code of Conduct in a manner that does not disturb, distract or impede the use of library facilities or materials by others. Computer users shall exhibit respect for one another's privacy and diverse sensibilities. Penalties for abuse of this resource in the Library may result in loss of library privileges.

Library staff can provide general handouts for connecting personal devices to the wireless connection. Staff are prohibited from troubleshooting problems related to wireless devices or assisting in making changes to settings and/or hardware configuration. The Library does not guarantee that personal devices will work with the library's connection.

Specific guidelines and procedures for the use of the Internet will be maintained and updated, as circumstances require.

4.7 Displays, Exhibits and Art Galleries

The Library utilizes many display cases, bulletin boards, tables and other areas to provide information on library-sponsored materials and events. Additionally, as a public service and in its role as an information center for the community, the Library provides certain space for the general public to exhibit and display materials, within time, place and manner restrictions. The individual or organization submitting the literature or material is solely responsible for its contents. The Library does not advocate or endorse the viewpoints of the individual or organization displaying the material. The Library reserves the right to determine how long the materials will be made available on display, and whether they are of an appropriate size and number.

All display cases and bulletin boards are reserved for library use only except as specified by the Library. The number and location of display cases and bulletin boards available for public use may change from time to time based on library needs and availability. The Library, in conjunction with its own displays or library-sponsored displays, may solicit contributions of items from outside the library to augment library displays.

4.7.1 Art Galleries

a. The upstairs art gallery in the Mesa Public Library is available for art displays by regional artists or educational, cultural, or travelling exhibitions, according to schedules as developed by library staff and/or County contractor. The use of the space is non-exclusive, and it may also be used for receptions only in conjunction with the display as well as for library activities and general study space. The Library may impose reasonable rules for the protection of the artwork and the safety of the patrons.

b. The youth art gallery in the Mesa Public Library is available for displays of artwork by regional area students. The use of the space is non-exclusive, and it may also be used for library displays and for general study space. The Library may impose reasonable rules for the protection of the artwork, the safety of the patrons, and due to its proximity to study and collection areas, non-interference with library use.

4.8 Meeting Space

The Library is one of a number of Los Alamos County government facilities with formal meeting space available for public use. Because of the Library's commitment to the concept of free public library service, it supports the provision of library meeting space during library hours at no cost to eligible users.

4.8.1 Mesa Public Library Meeting Rooms

Beyond use by the Library itself, or use by the County government, the Library offers the use of its meeting rooms to the public. Groups may be denied use of meeting rooms or asked to reschedule a previous room reservation if a conflict arises with a Library sponsored function. Permission to use the rooms may be denied to any group whose purpose for the meeting is illegal, or where adequate adult supervision is not provided for minors under the age of eighteen.

Meeting rooms, as distinct from study rooms or other library meeting spaces, may be reserved, and use will follow the stated guidelines. Rooms are scheduled on a first come, first-served basis. When used by the public (as distinguished from library or County use), the meeting rooms are a limited public forum, and time, place and manner restrictions apply. The group or organization using a meeting room is solely responsible for the content of the meeting. The library does not advocate or endorse the viewpoints of the individual or organization using a meeting room. The Library requires public meetings and programs held in its meeting rooms be free and open to the public with no admission fee being required of participants. The group or organization using a meeting room may not charge a fee, collect donations, or conduct sales in the library except as otherwise allowed in policies 4.7 or 4.8.

4.8.2 Mesa Public Library Study Rooms

Study rooms are closed or non-public forums, and are intended for individual or small-group study. Rooms are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and users must sign up for use of the rooms, at the time of use at the service desk. The individual or group using a study room may not charge a fee, collect donations, or conduct sales in the library except as otherwise allowed in policies 4.7 or 4.8.

4.8.3 Other Mesa Public Library Spaces

Note that the Mesa Public Library downstairs rotunda, Youth Services Program Room, upstairs rotunda, and Gallery/Reading Room are also closed or non-public forums. These spaces are not public meeting spaces and are intended to be used for library-related or library-sponsored or County-sponsored programs, displays and events, which may include the sale of event-related items. They may not be reserved by the public nor used for meetings.

4.8.4 White Rock Branch Library Meeting Room

This room functions as a public meeting room. Groups, meetings & events must follow the same guidelines as delineated above for the Mesa Public Library Meeting Rooms.

4.8.5 White Rock Branch Library Study Rooms

Study rooms are closed or non-public forums, and are intended for individual or small-group study. Rooms are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and

users must sign up for use of the rooms, at the time of use at the service desk. The individual or group using a study room may not charge a fee, collect donations, or conduct sales in the library except as otherwise allowed in policies 4.7 or 4.8.

Study Room Number One is a dual purpose space. It may be reserved as a public meeting room. If the room is not in use for a meeting, it may be used as a study room on a first-come, first-served basis. If in use as a meeting room, groups, meetings & events must follow the same guidelines as delineated above for the Mesa Public Library.

4.9 Collaboration

In addition to creating its own programs, displays and exhibits, and providing space to those of others, the Library, as a vital and integral part of community life, will sometimes find it beneficial to collaborate with a range of organizations whose programs, events, exhibits or publications support and enhance the Library's fundamental mission by reaching members of the community. The Library reserves the right to choose whether or not to collaborate with a particular organization, and may revoke that collaboration at any time. The collaborating organization must abide by library and County policies.

4.10 Solicitation in the library

Except as otherwise allowed in policies 4.7 or 4.8, the Library permits no solicitation or sales within the library, including the lobby, except by author, performers and artists in conjunction with library or County sponsored events. No non-County or non-library surveys, solicitations or petitions will be kept or distributed at the library service desks, or posted on any library walls or bulletin boards, with the exception of the bulletin boards so designated. Petitioners may not solicit signatures within the library, including the lobby. As a public service, petitions may be posted on designated bulletin boards, but library patrons may not be approached by petitioners once they have entered the lobby.

4.11 Reconsideration of meetings, programs, displays, and exhibits

The Library expects that activities or events on library property will not disturb, distract, nor discourage any person in any way in his or her use of the Library. Programs, displays, and exhibits which seriously interrupt or whose presentation appears to threaten the provision of primary public library services or to endanger facilities, staff or library users will be reconsidered, even if originally authorized. These may be discontinued or provided an alternative time or location in the interests of overall public library service and/or safety. Time, place and manner restrictions may apply.

Patrons concerned about materials in a program, display or exhibit are welcome to discuss those concerns with the Library Manager. Patrons who wish to ask the library to reconsider materials in a program, display or exhibit will be given the Request for Reconsideration forms and informed of the reconsideration process.