

ITEM NUMBER: 7.63 a-f  
CHAPTER 7: Administrative  
Management  
CODE: Policy  
COMPUTER ID: AMBLEAD-63

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Title:	Branch Library Establishment and Dissolution Policy
Effective Date:	7-2018
Authorized By:	Library Board of Trustees/Library Director
Date of Last Revision:	7-2018

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### **Purpose**

In order to meet the ever-changing needs of Marathon County residents, the Marathon County Public Library (MCPL) frequently evaluates both the physical locations from which it serve its customers, the manner in which each branch operates, and the specific services that are provided. As needs change, the MCPL must change to meet them. The MCPL must also be good stewards of its financial resources, ensuring that MCPL is able to continue to provide high quality services to its customers.

This policy outlines the requirements that shall be evaluated when considering whether a new branch library is established or adopted as a branch of the Marathon County Public Library. Establishment of a new branch library requires the approval of the library's board and the full County Board, and is subject to the County Board's assessment of the financial conditions of the library.

This policy also serves as a guide when considering dissolution of a branch library, providing guidelines aimed at identifying areas that can no longer support having a traditional bricks and mortar library facility.

### **Procedure for Branch Establishment and Implementation**

A municipality that seeks to establish a branch library or have a library adopted into the region shall follow the process outlined below for requesting the establishment of such a facility.

1. The municipality seeking to establish a branch library or have a library adopted into the region shall request the establishment of such a branch. A municipality seeking to establish a branch library or have a library adopted into the region shall pass a resolution endorsing a branch library and agreeing to the costs listed in Responsibilities of the Municipality for Branch Operation. The MCPL Board will consider this resolution to be a formal application and request for a branch library.

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2. The municipality seeking to establish a branch library or have a library adopted into the region shall provide the MCPL Board with information regarding the location and funding for the proposed branch library building and grounds. The information shall include a plan for funding, purchase, or construction of the proposed branch library building and site.
3. The municipality seeking to establish a branch library or have a library adopted into the region shall agree to the criteria, service requirements, and policies outlined in this establishment policy and to the MCPL policies for operation of branch libraries.
4. The municipality seeking to establish a branch library or have a library adopted into the region will have its request evaluated by the MCPL board. MCPL will estimate the operating costs and headquarters costs of the branch library and notify the municipality of its tentative decision on the proposal, outlining any deficiencies or problems with the proposal. A date and time will be set for a joint meeting between the municipality and the Library Director and Library Board President to discuss any outstanding issues surrounding the proposal including, but not restricted to:

Level of service

Local levies

Policies

Planning and development

Collection development

The items for discussion will be established by an agenda prior to the meeting.

5. At its next regular meeting following this discussion, the MCPL Board will discuss and deliver its final decision on the proposal to the County Executive Board Subcommittee, the County Administrator, and the full County Board of Supervisors as soon as is practicable.
6. MCPL and the municipality of the prospective branch will sign an agreement before a new branch library is opened for service.

### **Criteria for Branch Establishment**

The following criteria will be considered to determine if it is appropriate to establish a new branch in any particular community.

1. A new branch library will be established or adopted only if it is possible to do so without unduly reducing current levels of library services, by adding the necessary funds for the operating and capital budgets.
2. Local community support for the branch library must be indicated through a formal statement of commitment from the municipality (city, village, or town) that is applying for a branch library, recognizing its financial responsibilities.
3. The population served must be at least 2,000 with a demonstrated growth potential. Population statistics from the Wisconsin Department of Administration Demographic Services Center will be used to estimate population, and the population of the community and adjacent townships will be considered.
4. As a general rule, a library should not be within a 20-minute drive from another library within the region or an adjacent region. Established traffic patterns in the service area will be considered.
5. The municipality seeking to establish a branch library or have a library adopted into the region shall agree that the MCPL shall be responsible for decisions regarding the nature of library services, circulation policies, and operational guidelines of the branch library established.

### **Service Requirements**

1. MCPL will determine the staff hours adequate for the branch library operations to ensure that the branch library is open for the required number of open hours.
2. A new branch library will be open no fewer than 20 hours per week.
3. A municipality establishing an approved branch library of MCPL will agree to follow the policies in place that govern MCPL.
4. A municipality establishing an approved branch library of MCPL shall provide an identified location, funding source, or funding plan for the branch location.

### **Responsibilities of the Municipality for Branch Operation**

In addition to what is outlined in the MCPL agreement, the municipality shall agree to:

1. Provision of heat, air-conditioning, light, water and other utilities with the exception of telephone service.
2. Trash removal services on a weekly basis.
3. Maintenance and repair of the building and grounds, including raking, lawn mowing and snow removal.
4. Support of regional policies that guide the operations of the regional library and all its agencies.
5. Development and interpretation of policies relating to meeting room use (if applicable).
6. Support of special programming such as lectures, exhibits, children's programs and discussion groups.
7. Support for provision of adequate funding for regional library service program with local, state and federal authorities.

### **Responsibilities of MCPL**

In addition to what is outlined in the MCPL Master Agreement, MCPL will agree to:

1. Development and implementation of all library policies.
2. Determine weekly hours of service with input from local residents.
3. Purchase and annual maintenance of electronic equipment required by MCPL for participation in the integrated library system (ILS) and regional library system.
4. Selection of library materials. All materials must be ordered through headquarters regardless of the source of funds. All materials must be processed centrally for use of the agency. Local citizens are encouraged to make collection development suggestions for staff consideration.

5. Selection, training and employment of all branch personnel. The MCPL Board is responsible for maintaining a pay schedule and personnel policies for all MCPL personnel. All decisions relating to hiring, promotion, demotion or termination are the responsibility of MCPL.
6. Insurance of building contents other than municipal equipment, including materials as itemized on the annual insurance inventory.
7. Miscellaneous services such as telephone service, delivery service, purchase of essential operating supplies and all other responsibilities not directly associated with the provision and maintenance of physical facilities. Provision of the telecommunications and equipment infrastructure required to support the Integrated Library System (ILS) and the regional library system.

### **Facility Requirements**

Providing an adequate library facility is a requirement of the municipality, which wishes to establish a branch library of MCPL.

1. All facilities must meet the building requirements as outlined in the **Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**.
2. The library site should provide maximum convenient access to the greatest number of people in the community during the normal course of their daily activities:
  - Near the center of the highest density of daily activity
  - Near high use facilities such as a post office, bank, retail stores
  - Located on a primary street
  - Provide on and/or off street parking within a reasonable distance.
3. Multi-use facilities are acceptable only if each area is designated its own space and physically and securely separated from other areas of the building.
4. Delivery access: easy access for deliveries of library materials must be provided.

### **Collection Development Requirements**

1. New branches require an opening day collection. The collection of a pre-existing community library may be cataloged into the MCPL system by headquarters staff. Standard collection management and development policies will be applied in this process.
2. When a pre-existing collection does not exist, or is being developed from personal donations, MCPL will provide the municipality with an estimate of the additional dollars required by the region to purchase and prepare an opening day collection.
3. Donated items will be subject to the same criteria for selection as new books and will be cataloged or disposed of according to those criteria. MCPL staff will make all decisions.

### **Criteria for Branch Dissolution**

In the event of funding declines, community needs or demographic changes, or any other reasons that might necessitate a review of library services in a community that hosts a branch library, the following criteria will be deemed appropriate for review to determine whether a branch library continues to be viable in that community:

1. Circulation at a branch library is shown to have dropped in an unacceptable way, or to an unacceptable level as defined by the library's board;
2. Attendance has dropped measurably;
3. The community is no longer fulfilling the terms of the library service agreement;
4. Changing demographics no longer support the use of a physical library;
5. Public hearings in the community reveal a lack of support for a branch library;
6. County funding priorities necessitate a reduction in services.

If any of the aforementioned criteria necessitate a review of branch library services, the Library will act upon a board mandate to review that branch library's viability. The review will be conducted under the oversight of the library board, and will be reported to Marathon County's administration and the County Board Executive Committee along with the recommendations of the library board.