

Inclusive Services Statement

The Division of Libraries and Technology interprets Statute 43.24(2)(k) *Promotion and facilitation of library service to users with special needs* as **inclusive services**. Inclusive library services are holistic, spanning library policies, collections, space, and services. Inclusive services reflect equity and accessibility for *all* members of the community, including services to individuals or groups for whom using the public library is difficult, limited, or minimized.

The library director and board of trustees are responsible for providing awareness and leadership concerning this law to library staff and stakeholders. Regional library systems must both support member libraries in matters of compliance with this law, and communicate such efforts through annual system plans and reports. The state library agency will provide consulting and collaborate with libraries and systems regarding inclusive services. Wisconsin public libraries serve everyone, and it is the duty of everyone in the service of Wisconsin public libraries to foster inclusivity.

On a theoretical level, the practice of providing inclusive services requires continuous reflection and ongoing dialog with and between library administration, staff, and members of the community. The development of inclusive services should emphasize the needs of community members and groups who are underserved, underrepresented, and underrecognized within the community and public library. Additionally, efforts should show responsiveness to the assets and needs of non-library users as well as current library users. Attention to actual, versus perceived, assets and needs is paramount.

On a concrete level, inclusive services should be visibly incorporated into all library services. The concept that libraries are for everyone should be evident through every point of access or interaction with the library. A person's age, citizenship, literacy level, dis/ability, family structure, net worth, health status, gender identity, sexual preference, style of dress, and/or familiarity with public libraries (among numerous other characteristics) should neither negatively influence nor interfere with access to library services.

An individual or group should feel safe, welcome, and respected in experiences such as (but not limited to):

- Arrival at the building (transportation, physical accessibility, signage, hours of service, greetings by library staff)
- Intersections with library policies (getting a library card, using a computer, paying a fine, use of bathrooms)
- Perusal, use, and request of library materials (navigating the aisles, accessing WiFi, privacy, diversity of collection)
- Participation in library-sponsored or library-located events (marketing of events, time and location, transportation, registration, room set-up, novice-friendly vs. designed for frequent users)
- Interactions with library staff (body language, tone, diversity of library staff, proactive/reactive engagement)
- Interpretations of library signage, displays, and marketing (readability, tone, diversity, accommodations).

A holistic approach to inclusive services benefits everyone. First and foremost, inclusive library services should be developed locally with and for all community members. Wisconsin public library system and state library staff should facilitate coordinated regional and statewide inclusive services training and consulting. Our common goal is to improve life and learning opportunities for all Wisconsin residents.