Colorado Resource Sharing Best Practices

I.   Definition

Resource sharing, also known as interlibrary loan (ILL) service, is the practice of requesting materials from, and supplying materials to, other libraries according to principles established in the [Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States With Explanatory Text (2023).](#)

II.   Purpose

Resource sharing services are essential to the vitality of libraries of all types and sizes. Resource sharing cooperation provides all libraries with the opportunity to reach beyond their own collections to meet the information needs of their communities. Providing timely and responsible information access through resource sharing requires a dynamic and multi-faceted approach.

III.   Methods

Libraries use a variety of methods to request materials through resource sharing in Colorado:

- **Prospector** is a statewide system that is available to all types and sizes of Colorado libraries, as well as the University of Wyoming. Prospector is administered by the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries.
    - Most small and very small Colorado libraries participate in Prospector through the SWIFT program, which is funded and supported by the Colorado State Library.
- **OCLC** is a global system used by many libraries; requests can be placed within Colorado, out-of-state as well internationally. OCLC offers [WorldCat.org](#), a resource for searching materials from thousands of libraries worldwide.
- **AspenCat**, the **Colorado Department of Corrections Libraries**, and the **Marmot Library Network** are multi-library, shared Integrated Library Systems (ILS) and catalogs that manage resource sharing requests within each consortium.

- **Colorado Library Consortium** (CLiC) provides the delivery of physical materials between libraries through a statewide courier service.
    - Other delivery methods include USPS, FedEx, and UPS.
    - Non-returnable materials, such as articles, book chapters, and digitized resources, are generally delivered electronically.

IV. Library Responsibilities

- Libraries should adhere to the Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States (2023), the Colorado Resource Sharing Best Practices outlined below, and governing principles of any shared system (such as OCLC and Prospector) to which they belong.
- Resource sharing services are essential to libraries to expand the range of materials available to users. However, resource sharing should serve as an adjunct to, not a substitute for, collection development at the local level.
- Holdings in local or shared catalogs should be updated regularly. Outdated or inaccurate bibliographic records negatively affect the efficiency of resource sharing.
- Assign sufficient staff time for resource sharing to handle normal borrowing and lending activity. If libraries experience staff shortages, pause interlibrary loan operations until coverage is available.
- Libraries should ensure contact information and shipping information are kept up to date.
- Libraries should maintain records of transactions to comply with:
    - CONTU Guidelines, and
    - any institution or jurisdiction mandated record retention schedule.
- Libraries are encouraged to negotiate digital resource licenses that permit resource sharing.

V. Borrowing Library Responsibilities

- Libraries should exhaust their own local resources before initiating a resource sharing request.
- Materials in high demand should be considered for purchase before requesting through resource sharing.
- Borrowing libraries should periodically review resource sharing requests and add frequently requested material to their collections.
- The borrowing library should limit requests outside of their local catalog for the following items:
    - Materials which are in use (checked out) at the borrowing library.
    - Materials on bestseller lists or high demand titles in all formats.
    - Materials which are on order at the borrowing library.

- Titles that have not yet been published but have pre-publication information.
- When requesting special formats, the borrowing library should verify the citation and/or identify an appropriate record in a shared catalog that clearly reflects the specified format.
- The borrowing library is responsible for honoring the due date and enforcing any use restrictions specified by the lending library. The due date is defined as the date the material is due to be returned to the borrowing library for return to the lending library.
- If renewals are permitted, the borrowing library should request the renewal before the due date. If the lending library does not respond, the borrowing library may assume that a renewal has been granted, extending the due date by a specific length of time as defined in the lending library's policy.
- The borrowing library is responsible for materials from the time materials leave the lending library until they are returned to the lending library. If applicable, the borrowing library bears financial responsibility for replacement or compensation for materials.
- The borrowing library is responsible for communicating information about lost and damaged materials to the lending library and adhering to relevant procedures for replacement or compensation, which may vary depending on the system where the request was initiated (i.e. Prospector vs. OCLC).
- The borrowing library must comply with the U.S. copyright law and its accompanying guidelines.
- Borrowing libraries that permit users to initiate unmediated resource sharing requests that are sent directly to potential lending libraries assume full responsibility for these user-initiated transactions.
- It is the responsibility of the borrowing library to evaluate available options and maximize access to content, such as full-text, or web content, before using interlibrary loan to meet the needs of their users.

VI. Lending Library Responsibilities

- The lending library should consider filling all requests for material, regardless of format, and is encouraged to lend materials that readily circulate at their location.
- The lending library should complete or respond to requests within a timely manner.
- The lending library should verify that the correct item is being sent by carefully checking the bibliographic information on the request against the item in hand.

- The lending library has the responsibility to honor maximum cost limits as stated by the borrowing library.
- The lending library should respond promptly to requests for renewals.
- The lending library will comply with current copyright law (17 U.S.C.) governing both print and digital resources.
- The lending library will comply with digital license agreements if lending e-resources.
- The lending library should notify the borrowing library when unable to fill a request and, if possible, state the reason for not filling the request.
- The lending library should establish and maintain an interlibrary loan lending policy, making it available publicly.
- The lending library has the right to decide on a case-by-case basis whether a particular item, in original format or copy, can be provided.
- The lending library should make every effort to locate items within their collections if a borrowing library has reported the item returned. Tracing and locating errant items are the responsibility of both parties, but the borrowing library is ultimately responsible for compensating for lost items, if applicable.

VII. Responsibility to Library Users

- Libraries should maintain confidentiality and user privacy.
- Libraries should establish and maintain clear interlibrary policies and procedures and ensure they are easily accessible to all staff and users.
- Libraries should inform users of interlibrary loan services.
- Library users should be able to submit interlibrary loan requests at access points that are convenient for them.
- Library users should expect that library staff will make a reasonable effort to fulfill interlibrary loan requests.

VIII. Additional Resources

- The Colorado State Library maintains a [Book Club Resource](#) collection to assist with the support of local book club activity. Check the [catalog](#) or [list of available sets](#) and consider taking advantage of this resource before submitting multiple requests for group use.
- **Colorado Libraries Collaborate** (CLC) is a statewide reciprocal borrowing program that provides free access to library resources for library users of all CLC member libraries. Currently most public, school districts, academics, and several special libraries are members. Program Guidelines, Member Lists, and more are available at: https://www.coloradovirtuallibrary.org/resource-sharing/clc/

- The **Colorado Resource Sharing Conference** is an annual non-profit event with a 50+ year history that offers affordable resource sharing-centric professional development opportunities. More information is available at: https://ill.cvlsites.org/
- Colorado State Library's Network & Resource Sharing unit hosts numerous mailing lists for the Colorado library community, including Libnet and the SWIFT Users Mailing List.
- The **Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries** hosts the Prospector Resource Sharing Listserv.
- The **Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection** (CHNC) is a growing collection of millions of digitized pages, representing more than 900 individual newspaper titles published in Colorado from 1859 to present day. New titles and issues are added on a regular basis and CHNC can be browsed and searched for free at: https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/
- The **American Library Association** provides an interlibrary loan guide for best practices.