Access

The Place to See and Be Seen

Books, computers, CDs…a coffee shop, this library is the place to see and be seen. Partnerships have made a world-class art gallery possible, along with classes and discussions on topics from A-Z. You can feel the energy. It's truly a center for the mind and for everyone. Heads up   here comes the next big idea!

Public libraries provide access to a wide variety of materials, technology, and services in person and online. In Oklahoma, quality computer access is especially important. For example in *Cyberstates 2002,* the American Electronics Association reported that home computer ownership in Oklahoma has reached 50%, but that is still 44th nationwide. Home Internet access totaled 44%, which again put Oklahoma 44th among all states. A 2002 University of Washington study of public access computing—such as is available at public libraries—showed that over half of those surveyed thought the most important aspect of library computer access was the "number of computers," followed by "separate computers for children," and "I get enough computer time." As shown below, though, access still also refers to buildings and meeting spaces.

A Community Place

Guideline 1: In-Person and Family Hours

This component offers guidance on the total number of hours public library buildings should be open. Of these hours, a percentage should be "family" or evening and weekend hours.

	< 2,500*		2,501–4,999		5,000–9,999		10,000–24,999		25,000–99,999		100,000–750,000	
	Weekly	Family	Weekly	Family	Weekly	Family	Weekly	Family	Weekly	Family	Weekly	Family
Gateway	20	15%	30	20%	40	20%	54	25%	60	25% with Sunday hours in at least 1 location	60	30% with year-round Sunday hours in multiple locations
Pacesetter	30	15%	35	20%	45	20%	56	25% including Sunday	60	25% with Sunday hours in at least 1 location	65	30% with year-round Sunday hours in multiple locations
Innovator	35	15%	40	20%	50	25% including Sunday	60	25% including Sunday	68	25% with Sunday hours in multiple locations	70	35% with year-round Sunday hours in multiple locations

* This number represents the population size of communities. ** This percentage pertains to Available Hours.

Since public libraries often serve many functions in a community, sufficient facilities and flexibility are vital to support multiple uses. Guideline 2 addresses the amount of building and community meeting or program space appropriate to each level. For many communities with existing facilities, these guidelines will come into play only when new buildings or major renovations are undertaken. For communities with 10,000 or more in population, "square foot per resident" is used to provide for greater flexibility.

Guideline 2: Building and Community Meeting Space

The square footage guideline for the largest cities and systems is less than for smaller ones because the greater the population, the bigger the number by which the square footage is multiplied by. Thus a smaller square footage requirement yields bigger buildings in large cities.

	< 2,500		2,501–4,999		5,000–9,999		10,000–24,999		25,000–99,999		100,000–750,000	
	Building	**Meeting**	**Building**	**Meeting**	**Building**	**Meeting**	**Building**	**Meeting**	**Building**	**Meeting**	**Building**	**Meeting**
Gateway	3,500*	500**	5,000	600	6,600	800	0.7***	2 separate public meeting spaces	0.6	Space for at least one large and two small events at the same time—Kitchen facilities	0.6	Capacity to host multiple meetings of various sizes—Kitchen facilities
Pacesetter	4,500*	500**	6,000	700	7,500	900	0.7***	Kitchen facilities	0.65	Program space for special groups, such as children	0.65	Conferencing technology for groups of any size Catering facilities Retail spaces Café space Gallery space
Innovator	5,500*	700**	6,600	700	10,000	900	0.7***	Program space for special groups, such as children	0.7	Conferencing technology for medium-sized groups	0.7	Auditorium or performing arts space

*Total square footage

**For any library currently without meeting space, such space would be added as part of any new building or major renovation project.

***Square foot per resident

In recent years, public libraries have been viewed increasingly as "civic spaces." For example, Habitat for Humanity meets in a northeastern Oklahoma library. A Farmers Market operates on the lawn of another library. Events ranging from wedding anniversary celebrations to drivers education classes to instruction required by DUI citations have received permission to use library meeting spaces. Some libraries have even agreed to allow new congregations to meet there temporarily with mutually beneficial results. For example, a new Native American congregation became comfortable at one rural library and members began using the library much more than on Sunday. Public meetings of city commissions or business groups are just a few other users of library space. As public libraries are built or renovated, these different ideas about space are more important to consider than ever before. For the Pacesetter and Innovator libraries in small communities, it is suggested that, as changes in facilities permit, all of the community meeting space be available during "closed" hours. This is probably best accomplished with a separate entrance that does not permit meeting users to enter the library itself.

Guideline 3: Community Meeting Space Available When the Library is Closed

	< 2,500	2,501–4,999	5,000–9,999	10,000–24,999	25,000–99,999	100,000–750,000
Gateway	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Pacesetter	100%	100%	See below	See below	See below	See below
Innovator	100%	100%	See below	See below	See below	See below

For Pacesetter and Innovator libraries in communities with over 5,000 residents, the answers to the following questions should should show current use or future plans:

- Is space available now for community meetings or programs at hours when the library is not open?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No
- Is there a plan to include such space in the next building project?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

Public Access to the Internet

Internet access has created new demands on, and opportunities for, public libraries. From the library point of view, building size affects how many computers can be accommodated, as does the availability of quality telecommunications and technical support. Because of the prominent part speed, reliability, and "newness" play in customers' outlooks, these are used to define the various levels. But these cannot account for tomorrow's technologies. As quickly as possible, all libraries should adopt new technologies that enhance services and access—on-site and off—for all residents.

Guideline 4: Internet Access

	< 2,500	2,501–4,999	5,000–9,999	10,000–24,999	25,000–99,999	100,000–750,000
Gateway	Dedicated T-1, DSL, ISDN, or cable	Dedicated T-1, DSL, ISDN, or cable	Dedicated T-1, DSL, ISDN, or cable	Dedicated T-1, DSL, ISDN, or cable	Dedicated T-1, DSL, ISDN, or cable	Dedicated T-1, DSL, ISDN, or cable
Pacesetter	Best, cost effective "next generation" tech available	Best, cost effective "next generation" tech available	Best, cost effective "next generation" tech available	Best, cost effective "next generation" tech available	Best, cost effective "next generation" tech available	Best, cost effective "next generation" tech available
Innovator	25% of public computers less than 3 years old with current software	33% of public computers less than 3 years old with current software	40% of public computers less than 3 years old with current software	45% of public computers less than 3 years old with current software	50% of public computers less than 3 years old with current software	60% of public computers less than 3 years old with current software

Web Sites and Services

Library services via the web, including such activities as renewing books, placing holds, registering for programs, checking availability, or browsing the catalog, can increase the convenience of the library for many residents, while perhaps saving staff time for other tasks. But, much more is possible beyond these valuable, yet static, services. Libraries now use their web sites for online reference, book discussion groups, homework help, and as gateways to partner organizations and special interest sites. The place to start is an interactive web site with valuable links and frequent updates, but what more is actually done depends on the creativity of library leaders and staff members, and the desires of the community.

Guideline 5: Web Services

	< 2,500	2,501–4,999	5,000–9,999	10,000–24,999	25,000–99,999	100,000–750,000
Gateway	Library web site	Library web site	Library web site	Interactive web site	Interactive web site	Interactive web site
Pacesetter	Interactive web site	Interactive web site	2 or more web services	3 or more web services	4 or more web services	5 or more web services
Innovator	1 or more web services	2 or more web services	3 or more web services	4 or more web services	5 or more web services	6 or more web services

A Place Where Everyone is Heard

If the letters to the editor are any indication, tonight's public meeting will be a hot one. Residents are unhappy with their elected leaders and each other over a proposed development. Neighborhoods would be changed (some say destroyed) if the plan becomes reality. The standing-room-only crowd talked with leaders for several hours. Fortunately, leaders identified an acceptable compromise from the debate. On the way out, a neighborhood activist stopped to tell the library manager that the library was the best place for these kinds of discussions. She said, "It's open to everyone and doesn't favor any group over another. Everyone gets heard."

Choices for a Dynamic Future

People

A Reason for Investments

It's budget time again in this community of 5,000, and revenue growth has been stagnant for several years. This town, though, is known as a place that is willing to invest — even in tough times — if given enough reason to. The library director starts the budget preparations with a look at the *Models of Public Library Service for Oklahoma* since the community is working to achieve all of the "Gateway" guidelines this year. It has taken some time, but the ideas and the help in how to apply them to the town's situation have made it possible to motivate city leaders to allocate more resources to the library and hire more staff. A post-election victory party celebrated voters' recent approval of a mil increase to fund further services. Finding qualified staff members has become tougher, but a combination of statewide programs and scholarships are increasing the pool of library professionals. More people with greater qualifications and new funds will make a world of difference.

A Strong Library Workforce for Quality Library Services

Quality services depend on sufficient numbers of library staff members with the necessary skills. For these models, the number of staff is pegged at 1 full-time equivalent (FTE) per 2,000 residents. But, a number is only the beginning. Because leadership counts for so much, qualifications are specified for Pacesetters and Innovators.

Guideline 6: Library Staff Qualifications

	< 2,500	2,501–4,999	5,000–9,999	10,000–24,999	25,000–99,999	100,000–750,000
Gateway	1 FTE* per 2,000 residents	1 FTE* per 2,000 residents	1 FTE* per 2,000 residents	1 FTE* per 2,000 residents	1 FTE* per 2,000 residents	1 FTE* per 2,000 residents
Pacesetter	Level II Certificate** for Director/Administrator	Level III Certificate for Director/Administrator	Level IV Certificate for Director/Administrator	Level IV Certificate for Director/Administrator One other person at Level III	Level V Certificate for Director/Administrator One other person at Level III for every 20,000 population	Level VI for Director/Administrator One other person at Level III for every 20,000 population
Innovator	50% Staff participation in ODL Advanced Classes	50% Staff participation in ODL Advanced Classes	50% Staff participation in ODL Advanced Classes	33% Staff participation in ODL Advanced Classes	25% Staff participation in formal library-sponsored training program s or those certified by the Western Council of State Libraries	20% Staff participation in formal library-sponsored training programs or those certified by the Western Council of State Libraries

*FTE means "full time equivalent" or a position or positions that are equivalent to a full time job.

**The Oklahoma Department of Libraries sponsors an in-depth library certification program for those without a Master of Library Science (MLS) degree.
   In communities with over 20,000 residents, state guidelines require a library director to have an MLS.

More than 5,000 Oklahomans work in public libraries now, and their public sector employers have a lot in common with private companies. In both cases, people are their most important asset and what make them great. Unfortunately, though, comparatively low pay shortchanges the state's current library employees, and a shortage of qualified workers looms because of competition and an aging workforce. Nationally, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, librarians rank 95th out of 427 occupations on annual pay, but are at the bottom of their Professional category. Tables 1–3 describe Oklahoma librarians' wage status. In a recent national survey, 80% of respondents agreed that librarians are "techno-savvy and at the forefront of the Information Age."[1] Librarians often have specialized training in addition to bachelors and masters degrees. These true knowledge workers are part of the highly skilled workforce Oklahoma wants and needs and should be paid as such.

Without quality workers who can look forward to careers with compensation commensurate with their education and value, public libraries will not be able to fulfill their promise for communities and the state. Compensation of library workers is a critical issue for a dynamic future.

Table 1: **Librarians Earn 30% Less Than Similarly Educated Computer Programmers**

Occupation	Average Hourly Wage	Annual Average
Librarians	$16.22	$33,730
Computer Programmers	$23.88	$49,670
Library Technicians	$8.39	$17,440
Computer Support Specialists	$12.51	$26,010

Source: 2000 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Oklahoma's negative salary situation comes into sharper focus with a look at average earnings for beginning librarians. Nationally in 2001, beginning librarians made $32,891 on average, according to the American Library Association. In that same year, Oklahoma's beginning librarians earned an average of $26,815, as calculated from the Public Library Data Service's 2002 *Statistical Report*. With less than $7,000 separating the averages for beginning librarians and all librarians, the outlook for career earnings in this information profession is dim.

A Career of Value

Librarians haven't always enjoyed such stature in this community. But today they are every bit as prominent, and well paid, as the software designers at the state's high-tech firms. The change started when the library community began explaining the real work these information experts do. The success of that led to a long-term commitment to recruitment and retention and, of course, more money. Now librarians and communities truly value each other.

Table 2: **Communities Across the U.S. Provide Guidance on Library Pay**

Community Size	Director Average	Director Upper Tier*	Beginning Librarian Average	Beginning Librarian Upper Tier*
500,000–999,999	$109,403	$120,459	$32,600	$34,223
250,000–499,999	$90,553	$106,500	$31,805	$35,395
100,000–249,000	$78,422	$90,000	$31,779	$35,101
50,000–99,999	$73,094	$84,849	$32,206	$35,434
25,000–49,999	$61,173	$75,000	$30,475	$34,199
10,000–24,999	$49,043	$60,000	$29,799	$34,590
5,000–9,999	$35,345	$44,000	$24,744	$30,082
< 5,000	$24,357	$29,266	$25,048	$31,000

*The *Statistical Report* provides information for highs and lows, averages, and quartiles. Quartiles reflect ratings in relation to all responses. "Upper Tier" is the same as the Upper Quartile, which is 75%. Source: Public Library Data Service, *Statistical Report*, 2002.

Quality staff attracts more good people, projects, and resources. Better compensation packages quickly benefit communities because higher pay increases the pool of applicants and encourages skilled workers to make long-term commitments to places.

Table 3: **Librarians in States Close to Oklahoma Fare Better on Salaries**

State	Annual Average*	Beginning Librarians**
Arkansas	$34,380	$26,723
Colorado	$40,940	$33,391
Kansas	$36,670	$29,778
Louisiana	$34,500	$26,512
Missouri	$34,800	$28,311
New Mexico	$33,960	$29,029
Oklahoma	$33,730	$26,815
Texas	$41,250	$29,762

* 2000 ** 2002 Source: *2000 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates*, Bureau of Labor Statistics and Public Library Data Service Statistical Report, 2002

Guideline 7: Compensation for Library Professionals

Whether at a Gateway, Pacesetter, or Innovator library, employees' pay should be:

- **Comparable** to similar positions in the municipality or jurisdiction
- **In line** with library compensation in the region
- **Competitive** with other "knowledge" and information-oriented occupations in the area

Regular Training for Better Library Services

Customers, options for services, and library operations change so quickly that every staff member needs regular training to stay up to date. It is the same situation for Board members or trustees. Building staff and Board members' knowledge will benefit the library and the community and play an important part in increasing compensation.

Guideline 8: Annual Training

	< 2,500	2,501–4,999	5,000–9,999	10,000–24,999	25,000–99,999	100,000–750,000
Gateway	Average of 4 hours per staff member annually	Average of 4 hours per staff member annually and a specific orientation for board members within the first year	Average of 6 hours per staff member annually and a specific orientation for board members within the first year	Average of 8 hours per staff member annually and a specific orientation for board members within the first year	Average of 8 hours per staff member annually and a specific orientation for board members within the first year	Average of 8 hours per staff member annually and a specific orientation for board members within the first year
Pacesetter	Average of 8 hours per staff member annually and a specific orientation for board members within the first year	Average of 8 hours per staff member and 2 hours per board member annually	Average of 8 hours per staff member with 2 hours per board member annually	Average of 16 hours per staff member and 2 hours per board member annually	Average of 16 hours per staff and 2 per board member annually	Average of 16 hours per staff and 2 per board member annually
Innovator	Average of 8 hours per staff member and 2 hours per board member annually	Average of 10 hours per staff member and 2 hours per board member annually	Tuition reimbursement policy or other incentives for further certification or degrees	Tuition reimbursement policy or other incentives for further certification or degrees	Tuition reimbursement policy or other incentives for further certification or degrees	Tuition reimbursement policy or other incentives for further certification or degrees

AN AUTHOR AND IDEAS ABOUT BOOKS

The award-winning author held everyone spellbound with his stories. He had been on scores of book tours, but the publicity engagements were never as fun and rewarding as these library gigs. He especially liked that people were so anxious to talk about books and ideas. He learned something new from the audience every time and came away thankful for the chance to connect with readers. In turn, his celebrity status brought people to the library who might not have thought it had anything to offer to them. Guess that's what "win-win" really means.

Community Partnerships and Projects

Libraries serve many purposes and are trusted places that welcome everyone. Library leaders have embraced partnerships for visibility in the community and many connections as fundamental to innovation and service.

Guideline 9: Library Visibility and Connections

Libraries need to be "top-of-mind" institutions in all communities because of the variety of resources and opportunities they offer. Visibility refers to being prominent in the community and to being a trusted advisor to and partner with other organizations in the area. The following items define visibility for the various types of libraries.

Gateway visibility means:

- Chamber of Commerce membership
- Leaders are active in community organizations with a broad cross section of members
- Other organizations and public agencies are aware of library meeting space and other services
- Sponsoring community information and referral efforts
- Publicizing adult and family literacy events and holding classes or events at the library
- Publicizing volunteer opportunities in literacy programs among library customers

Pacesetter visibility means:

- At least 50% of the library staff plays important roles in broad-based community activities and organizations
- Organization of, or participation on, collaborative teams to address a local issue or needed service
- Participation in community leadership programs
- Advocacy for literacy and reading among the public, businesses, and community leaders
- Participating in the governing body which oversees local literacy efforts
- Presentation of programs for all ages and for a wide range of interests

Innovator visibility means:

- Co-sponsorship of communitywide events and programs such as early literacy and family reading activities, book festivals, award programs or leadership training
- Sponsoring ongoing formal adult and family literacy programs
- Development of ways for community members to be involved in the library as donors, volunteers, and advisors and for library staff members to be involved elsewhere as donors, volunteers, and advisors
- Training of volunteers or other organizations' staff in literacy activities and issues
- Provision of "service learning" or other opportunities for youth

Guideline 10: The Basics of Community Connections

	< 2,500	2,501–4,999	5,000–9,999	10,000–24,999	25,000–99,999	100,000–750,000
Gateway	—Active Friends group —Volunteer opportunities	—Active Friends group —Memorial gift program —Staff member with training in public information and communications —Volunteer opportunities	—Active Friends group —Memorial gift program —Volunteer opportunities —Taking library services into the community at least monthly —Library links on complementary web sites —Regular online or print publication about the library and its activities —Staff member with training in public relations and communications	—Active Friends group —Memorial gift program —Ongoing, regular library services in multiple locations in the community —Volunteer opportunities —Part-time or contract public relations/marketing staff person —Library links on complementary web sites —Regular online or print publication about the library and its activities —Regular advertising about library activities in print and online	—Active Friends group —Memorial gift program —Volunteer program —Detailed marketing plan —Staff person for marketing, special projects, and funding for community partnerships —Part-time or contract staff person for volunteer development —Friends group has 501(c) 3 status for fundraising flexibility —Library links on complementary web sites —Regular online or print publication about the library and its activities —Regular advertising about library activities in print and online —Ongoing, regular library services in multiple locations in the community	—Active Friends group —Memorial gift program —Formal volunteer program —Designated public relations/marketing staff —Complementary marketing, media, and fundraising plans —Ongoing, regular library services in multiple locations in the community —Friends group has 501(c) 3 status for fundraising flexibility —Volunteer coordinator —Library links on complementary web sites —Regular online or print publication about the library and its activities —Regular advertising about library activities in print and online —Ongoing, regular library services in multiple locations in the community

Pacesetter	—Memorial gift program —Staff member with training in public information and communications	—Taking library services into the community at least quarterly —Library links on complementary web sites —Regular online or print publication about the library and its activities	—Agreement with other libraries for "sharing" a staff member with expertise in marketing public services —Regular advertising about library activities in print and online	—Formal volunteer development strategy —Participation in community needs assessments —Co-sponsorship of an ongoing program in the community —Friends group has 501(c) 3 status for fundraising flexibility	—Complementary marketing, media, and fundraising plans	—Annual signature event —Time for staff members to participate in community affairs to help identify opportunities for the library —Literacy and special projects coordinator —Regular newspaper commentaries
Innovator	—Partnerships with community organizations to take library services into the community at least quarterly —Staff member with training in marketing as it relates to public services —Regular online or print publication about the library and its activities	—Regular advertising about library activities in print and online —Friends group has 501(c) 3 status for fundraising flexibility —Agreement with other libraries for "sharing" a staff member with expertise in marketing public services	—Regular newspaper commentaries —Friends group has 501(c) 3 status for fundraising flexibility	—Detailed marketing plan —Part-time or contract staff person for marketing, special projects, and funding for community partnerships —Part-time, contract, or shared staff person for volunteer development —Regular newspaper commentaries	—Volunteer coordinator —Public information and marketing coordinator —Regular newspaper commentaries	—Program underwriting —Organizing local "teams" for special projects

An Unexpected Partnership Brings New Connections

The two institutions rely on each other as eyes and ears in the community. The person who brought them together says his volunteer hours do double duty   once for the health clinic and once for the library. He had practiced medicine for 40 years and looked forward to some quality reading time in the months between retiring from his practice and starting his new "job" at the local free clinic. Despite his love of books, he hadn't been in a public library for a long time. One day he ventured in looking for a book that the bookstore had been out of. Everything about the library, the activity, quality, and energy, amazed him. After settling into his volunteer practice, the physician contacted the children's librarian to see if something could be done at the clinic. The librarian jumped at the chance to get involved with the clinic and its families, especially since she had the help of an inside "champion." The partnership has brought customers, volunteers, and money to both institutions. Now, library leaders are actively seeking out more partners for more connections to the community.