

Definition of a Public Library in Colorado

According to CRS 24-90-103(13)9a), the definition of a Public Library in Colorado is the following:

“Public library” means an administrative entity that is:

- (I) Operated and maintained for the free use of the public residing within its legal service area;
- (II) Operated and maintained in whole or in part with money derived from local taxation; and
- (III) Open to the public a minimum number of hours per week in accordance with rules established by the state library.

In addition, language in CRS 24-90-105(2)(a.3) “to develop and promulgate service standards for school, public, and institutional libraries to guide the development and improvement of such libraries” speaks to the responsibility of establishing standards to help libraries develop and improve.

To assure libraries achieve a basic level of service equity and provide consistent, equitable access to information and materials to all residents, the Colorado State Library considers the following criteria essential to basic library service:

Legal Responsibilities

1. Be legally established under Colorado Library Law (CRS 24-90-101 et seq.)
2. Comply with Colorado Library Law (CRS 24-90-101 et seq.), rules and regulations, and any other local, Colorado or federal laws that affect library operations.
3. Have dedicated space that meets the criteria of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applicable to libraries.
4. The Library Governing Authority is required by Library Law to submit the Public Library Annual Report to Library Research Service (LRS) in a timely manner.

Library Administration and Management

5. Provide free access to basic services as defined by written policies regarding lending, borrowing and circulation services as approved by the library's Governing Authority
6. Have paid staff present during all hours of service. Pay of staff must be based on cost of living standards within the community.
7. Prepare and utilize a long-range strategic plan for continuing improvement.

Access and Services

8. Have an on-going collections budget from local tax funds and a collection management plan for purchase of materials and electronic access.
9. Have a telephone with a dedicated library line and the telephone number listed in the local telephone book.
10. Provide at least one computer with public access to the Internet, a printer, an email address, a website, an online information catalog, and databases.
11. Be open a minimum of 20 hours each week. These hours should include morning, afternoon, evening, and/or weekend hours based on users' and potential users' disposable time. All service outlets of libraries providing multiple access points must be open to the public for no fewer than 20 hours a week.

Resource Sharing

12. Be a member and fully participate in the Colorado Library Card (CLC) program, extending privileges and services to state residents according to the CLC agreement.
13. Comply with the [Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States](#) and adopt the [Colorado Interlibrary Loan Best Practices](#), lending and borrowing materials through the statewide interlibrary loan network according to that code.
14. Be a member of the Colorado Library Consortium (CLiC) and use its services as appropriate.