

Introduction

The Colorado Public Library Standards Revision Committee has kept in mind the following principles as we worked on the Colorado Public Library Standards (CPLS):

- Consider the public library's role in sustaining a civilized society
- Value the public library's role as a community resource
- Understand the public library's role as a reflection of our cultural heritage
- Recognize the diversity and uniqueness of libraries across the state
- Understand the needs of our communities
- Value intellectual freedom and access to information
- Acknowledge the skills, talents, and contributions of library staff

Goals

The goal of the standards is

- (1) to promote quality library service to all Coloradans.
- (2) to inform community users about what they can expect from their library.
- (3) to assist libraries in connecting with the communities they serve.
- (4) to provide an authoritative document to which library administrators and supporters may refer when justifying requests for funds.
- (5) to assist in planning and training.

How to Use the Document

The Standards have been constructed as a series of whole units. Each Standard has a short introductory section followed by a checklist and a list of resources. When pertinent, tables have been included in the introduction to provide libraries with information that has been compiled from the Colorado Public Library Annual Report, and when available, the National Public Library Report. As an aid in planning, the checklist provides a means by which library stakeholders can discuss and determine how their library has addressed the Standard. In some cases, libraries will surpass the recommendation; in others, libraries may find other ways to address that recommendation; in others, the libraries may decide that recommendation is not relevant or meaningful in their community. Lastly, the recommended resources that follow the checklist provide the means by which libraries can move forward with addressing the items on the checklist.

It is recommended that Library Directors review each one of the Standards by bringing them one by one to their board meetings throughout the year. Staff and community members should be encouraged to attend the discussion about the Standards. This document is intended for use by librarians, boards, staff, governing officials, members of funding agencies, and community support groups involved in planning at the local level and within the context of regional and state library service.

The document provides information to help libraries plan and evaluate their services and meet the needs of their users in the most effective way their resources will allow. It is a dynamic document, one which will spark debate and discussion, evaluation, and revision. The Standards should serve as an important tool in measuring a library's success in fulfilling its stated mission or role.

What this document is NOT

The Standards represent a snapshot in time. Library planning and operations are inherently fluid, responding to what is sometimes a rapidly changing social, fiscal, and technological environment. As a consequence, some Standards represented here will soon be outdated. Some emerging Standards may not be represented at all.

This document, then, is intended to inform but does not replace a library's strategic plan. While the standards attempt to identify key issues, services, and best practices in Colorado public librarianship at this moment in history, they cannot provide a detailed road map to each library's future.

To allow for revisions and updating of resources, all the standards are available on the Colorado State Library website under the Public Library link:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/LibraryDevelopment/PublicLibraries/index.htm>