Borrowing Policy

A valid library card must be presented in order to check out materials from the Library.

Applying for a Card:

To obtain a library card Massachusetts residents must present photo identification showing both name and current address. If the photo ID lacks the current address, an additional document with name and current address (such as a utilities bill, automobile registration, or mail addressed to the applicant at their current address) is required.

Applicants for a library card must be at least 5 years old. In the case of children and teens under 18 years of age, proof of address of a parent or legal guardian is acceptable. Applicants who are 11 years old or under must have the permission of their parent or legal guardian. Parents registering minor children for a library card must also show their own ID. Out of State residents or residents without a fixed address will be granted a card at the Director's discretion.

The first library card is issued free of charge. Replacement cards cost $2.00.

Library cards are usable at other public C/W MARS member libraries in Central and Western Massachusetts. If patrons already have a library card from another public C/W MARS member library, they may use it here.

Borrowing privileges at C/W MARS member libraries are determined by the patron's residential address, not by the library where the card was obtained. Residents of communities with closed or decertified libraries cannot borrow or request materials from Levi Heywood Memorial Library.

Library cards are issued immediately upon completion of an application form and presentation of acceptable identification. Patrons may also register online for an e-card; address verification will be confirmed through the online portal. E-cards are only for online access, they may not be used to check out physical materials. An e-card may be upgraded to a full access library card by completing the process aforementioned.

Library card expiration dates: Library cards are renewed every two years, and renewal can be done in person or online. At the time of renewal, borrower information is verified, and the card's expiration date is extended.

Borrowing Library Materials:

Circulating items will automatically renew twice if there are renewals remaining unless the patron record is blocked. If materials are not returned an overdue notice will be e-mailed 2 weeks after the due date. Items borrowed from other libraries are subject to the owning library's loan, renewal, and fines policies but may be paid at the LHML.

Patron borrowing privileges are suspended when the patron registration expires, the patron owes $10.00 or more, has more than 50 items out, and/or has one lost item.

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Patrons are responsible for fines and costs of replacing lost or damaged items checked out on their card. The Library does not accept replacement copies of lost or damaged books in lieu of replacement costs. It is important not to lend your card to anyone, or check out materials for use by another.

Checkout Limits and Loan periods:

A total of 50 items per card are allowed, in combination of various materials with specific loan periods:

- Books: 50 items, 21 days, 2 renewals

- Magazines: 10 items, 21 days, 2 renewals

- DVDs: 10 items, 7 days, 2 renewals

- Music CDs: 10 items, 21 days, 2 renewals

- Books on CD: 10 items, 21 days, 2 renewals

- Art prints: 2 items, 21 days, 2 renewals

- Museum passes: 1 item (Friends Member only), 1 day (no renewals)

Placing holds: If a desired item is not available on our library's shelves, patrons can request it as a "hold" from another library. Once the item becomes available, it will be delivered to Gardner for the patron to check out. However, patrons should note that the maximum number of holds allowed on their library record at any given time is 20.

Renewals are limited to two additional circulations. With the exception of Museum passes and special collections, all materials may be renewed online, in person, or by telephone with patron barcode.

Levi Heywood Memorial Library is a fine-free library, except for special collections. For example, Museum Passes accrue a fine of $10.00 when returned late.

When an item is 4 weeks overdue, the item will be marked as “Lost” and the patron will receive a bill in the postal mail. At this time, the patron's borrowing privileges will be suspended until the materials are returned or the replacement costs are paid.

Returning Library Materials:

A book return is located to the left of the main entrance (clock tower side of Library). Materials returned in the book return after-hours will be checked in the next day the Library is open. Gardner items may be returned to other C/W MARS libraries.

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