

#1: Why do we have Public Library Standards?

IC 4-23-7.1 gives statutory authority (obligation) to the Indiana Library and Historical Board (ILHB) to “establish operating standards and rules for libraries eligible to receive funds, either federal or state, under the provisions of any program for which the Indiana state library is the administrator.”

Once the ILHB has set the rules, “the Indiana state library shall monitor libraries eligible to receive funds or receiving funds to ascertain whether or not the standards and rules are being met.”

The ILHB recognizes that the “Standards for public libraries are established to encourage libraries to maintain a minimum level of service.” Even as every community in Indiana is unique, and will have unique requirements of its local library, a minimum level of service should be available to every Hoosier tax payer who supports libraries.

Therefore the following broad categories have been established to provide benchmarking in the core areas of library service.

- ADA compliance
- Adult services
- Board/Director duties
- Building Health and Safety Codes
- Certification
- Children’s services
- Continuing Education Support
- Enhanced / Exceptional Rating
- Hours of service
- Indiana Code
- Library automation & OPAC
- Library Director
- Library programming
- Library Services
- Long Range Plans
- Public computers
- Reciprocal Borrowing
- Talking Books
- Technology Plans
- Trustees
- Website
- Wireless connections
- Written bylaws
- Written policies
- Young Adult services

Some common threads in other state's standards:

1. Libraries are organized under the law
2. Libraries operate according to the law
3. Libraries provide basic services (definitions vary, and include)
 - a. Programming
 - b. Organized materials
 - c. Circulating materials
 - d. Reference services
 - e. Staff development
4. Libraries are located in facilities that are accessible to the public
 - a. Libraries will be open a minimum number of hours
 - b. Libraries will post their hours
 - c. Libraries will be open during the evenings/weekends
 - d. Libraries have websites
5. Libraries employ paid staff (I would say "certified, paid staff" for IN)
6. Libraries are supported by (local) public funds
7. Libraries have written policies approved by a board (number and types vary)
8. Libraries provide free access to the Internet

Also mentioned, but not as often:

1. Libraries have written plans (usually 5-year, long range plans)
2. Libraries provide resource sharing
3. Libraries have a minimum level of bandwidth
4. Libraries provide support for state and national organization membership
5. Libraries spend a minimum of some % (greater than 7.5%) of their operating budget on materials
6. Libraries complete annual public library survey

And these were intriguing ideas (though these don't seem to fit IN):

1. Libraries should have a minimum of 25% of the served population as active library cardholders
2. Libraries should have "appropriate" signage (internal and external)
3. Libraries should have dedicated staff person to PR
4. Libraries should adopt ALA policies
5. Libraries should provide locations within a certain driving distance for rural or urban populations