

Public Records Policy
Outagamie Waupaca Library System

Policy Statement

The Outagamie Waupaca Library System (OWLS) is committed to the principles of Wisconsin's Public Records Law (*Wisconsin Statutes 19*), which provides that almost all records of state and local government, including those of public libraries and public library systems, must be available for inspection and/or copying by the public.

OWLS is also committed to observing the statutory exception to the Public Records Law that prohibits the release of records that identify an individual who uses a publicly-funded library. Such information can be released only with the consent of the individual or under specific circumstances defined by statute (*Wisconsin Statute 43.30*).

Access

1. The records of the Outagamie Waupaca Library System (OWLS) are housed at its office in the lower level of the Appleton Public Library, 225 N. Oneida Street, Appleton, Wisconsin, 54911.
2. Individuals may request access to or a copy of public records from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except for OWLS holidays.
3. The request does not need to be in writing, and the person requesting access does not need to be a resident of the state.
4. Access to records must be allowed as promptly as practicable.
5. OWLS shall charge a fee for the actual cost of reproduction or transcription of the record.

Guidelines

1. The OWLS Board designates the OWLS Director as legal custodian of all its records. As legal custodian the Director is vested with full legal authority to make the decisions and carry out the duties governing public records and property.
2. The legal custodian must designate one or more deputy custodians to act in his or her absence.
3. OWLS staff should refer all requests for access to OWLS records to the legal custodian or one of the deputy custodians.

4. Any record produced for an individual that contains patron information in addition to public information must first be edited to remove any personally identifiable information, such as a patron's name, address, or telephone number.
5. The Public Records law does not apply to personal property having no relation to the owner's public office; or material to which access is limited by copyright, patent, or bequest.
6. In making decisions, the legal custodian is required to balance the public interest in disclosure of a record against the interests that may weigh against disclosure.
7. If OWLS receives any request for access to personnel records, requests for information about applicants for a system position, or any other request that involves personal privacy interests, the legal custodian should ordinarily consult with an attorney before releasing the information. OWLS will notify the subject of a request that a request has been made.
8. OWLS staff members have access to their own personnel records according to the policy and procedures set forth in the Employee Handbook.

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