



LiRN

Legal Information and Resource Network

LiRN Network Policies and Guidance for Law Associations and Courthouse Libraries

Core Services and Management Responsibilities Policy

Additional Services and Responsibilities Policy

Network Library Staff Employment Guidelines

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Core Library Services and Library Management Responsibilities Policy

Background and Purpose

1. The Law Society of Ontario's [By-Law 13](#) charges LiRN with establishing guidelines and standards for the organization and operation of the Ontario county and district law library system ("Libraries").
2. LiRN provides financial support to the Libraries by the transfer of grants to county and district law associations ("Law Associations"). Conditional upon receiving a grant from LiRN, each Law Association shall operate the Library in accordance with the guidelines and standards established by LiRN.
3. By-Law 13 further requires that Libraries shall give access to its law library services and programs to every lawyer licensed to practice law in Ontario, regardless of whether the person is also a member of an Association, judges of Ontario courts, Ontario justices of the peace, and members of boards, commissions, or other tribunals in Ontario.
4. LiRN seeks to provide equity of access to core materials and library services to all individuals entitled to access under By-Law 13.
5. The purpose of this Policy is to provide clarity on:
 - a. The Core Library Services that shall be available in each Library; and
 - b. The Core Library Management Responsibilities that must be executed to properly run a library.

Core Library Services

6. Libraries shall make available the following Core Library Services:
 - a. Timely and accurate research and reference services
 - b. Instruction and support in using library resources, including the print collection, electronic resources, and library equipment
 - c. Borrowing privileges
 - d. Access to the collection (both print and electronic)
 - e. Access to additional materials through inter-library loans within the network

7. All Core Library Services shall be readily available all individuals entitled to access under By-Law 13, except for:
 - a. Borrowing privileges, which may be made available to Association members only in the Association's discretion; and
 - b. After-hours access to the collection, which may be made available to Association members only in the Association's discretion.

Core Library Management Responsibilities

8. To ensure the proper provision of services and adequate reporting, Libraries shall execute the following Core Library Management Responsibilities:
 - a. Collection Management
 - b. Collection Maintenance
 - c. Cataloguing
 - d. Financial Administration
 - e. Managing employees and executing HR responsibilities (where there is more than one library employee)
 - f. Library Administrative Tasks
 - g. Library Promotion

Inability to Provide Services or Execute Responsibilities

9. LiRN acknowledges that many factors contribute to a Law Association's ability to provide the Core Library Services or execute the Core Library Management Responsibilities.
10. Where a Law Association is unable to provide the Core Library Services or execute the Core Library Management Responsibilities, either on a temporary or permanent basis, LiRN shall work with the Law Association to resolve the issue.
11. A Law Association's inability to make the Core Library Services available or to execute the Core Library Management Responsibilities shall be taken into consideration when LiRN sets the Law Association's funding.

Transitional Period

12. Upon adoption of this policy by the Board of Directors, there will be a two-year transitional period for associations to come into compliance. At the end of this two-year period, the Board will review this policy.

Additional Services and Responsibilities Policy

Background and Purpose

1. The Law Society of Ontario (LSO)'s [By-Law 13](#) charges LiRN with establishing guidelines and standards for the organization and operation of the Ontario county and district law library system ("Libraries").
2. LiRN provides financial support to the Libraries by the transfer of grants to county and district law associations ("Law Associations"). Conditional upon receiving a grant from LiRN, each Law Association shall operate the Library in accordance with the guidelines and standards established by LiRN.
3. The [Grant Administration Policy](#), adopted by LiRN's Board of Directors on September 3, 2021, requires Law Associations to identify and separate association operations from library operations, and LiRN grants are to be accounted for as restricted for library purposes.
4. The Unanimous Shareholder Agreement (USA) states that LiRN may conduct an audit of expenditures related to the Association's grant at the direction of the LSO.
5. The *Core Library Services and Library Management Responsibilities Policy*, adopted by LiRN's Board of Directors on August 31, 2022, sets out the services and library management responsibilities that must be provided by funded libraries.
6. LiRN acknowledges that many Law Associations offer services and have need for staff to execute responsibilities in addition to those required by that policy.
7. The purpose of this policy is to:
 - a. Define library-related and association-related activities;
 - b. Acknowledge that that some activities defy rigid classification as "library-related" and "association-related" and provide guidelines for determining where an activity falls on that spectrum; and
 - c. Confirm that the LiRN grant is intended to cover staff salaries only to the extent that the assigned activities are library-related, while ensuring the flexibility for Law Associations and Libraries to function as intended.

Library-Related Activities

8. Library-Related Activities include:
 - a. The services and responsibilities listed in the *Core Library Services and Library Management Responsibilities Policy*.

- b. Additional Library Services are services available to library users that require the specialized skills in information retrieval and dissemination generally possessed by librarians and library workers, including:
 - i. Current awareness
 - ii. Website development and maintenance
 - iii. Social media management
 - iv. Library Training
- 9. For clarity, while Additional Library Services may be made available to members or non-members in the Law Association's discretion, they are still considered to be library-related activities.

Association-Related Activities

- 10. Association Activities are tasks related to running the Association that do not require the specialized skills in information retrieval and dissemination generally possessed by librarians and library workers, including:
 - a. Organizing and facilitating Association events and meetings not related to library services;
 - b. Building and maintaining relationships with local organizations related to family and criminal courts for purposes other than promotion of library services; and
 - c. Developing and implementing policies and procedures for Association other than library policies and procedures.

Special Cases

- 11. Certain activities have both library-related and association-related characteristics. In these cases, Law Associations shall use their best judgement in determining whether the activity is library-related or association-related.
- 12. Factors that shall be taken into consideration in making the determination that an activity is library-related include whether the activity:
 - a. Relies on the specialized skills in information retrieval and dissemination generally possessed by librarians and library workers;
 - b. Falls within LiRN's mandate as set out in LSO By-Law 13, its Unanimous Shareholder Agreement and its Strategic Plan.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- 13. Many Law Associations provide CPD programming. The classification of such programs as library-related or association-related will vary.

14. Law Associations shall use their best judgement in determining whether CPD programming is library-related or association-related.
15. Factors that shall be taken into consideration in determining that an activity is library-related include:
 - a. Whether the activity relies on the specialized skills in information retrieval and dissemination generally possessed by librarians, such as a replay of content created by another organization;
 - b. Whether the program is intended to be not-for-profit;
 - c. Any other pertinent factors.
16. Factors that shall be taken into consideration in determining that an activity is association-related include:
 - a. Whether the program is original, therefore relying on content creation and event management skills that commonly fall outside the skills generally possessed by librarians;
 - b. Whether the program is intended to be for-profit; and
 - c. Any other pertinent factors.

Board Management

17. Law Associations are run by volunteer boards.
18. Proper library management necessitates working with and reporting to the Law Association's board and/or Library Committee.
19. In some cases, the board rely on library staff to manage the board and/or act as secretary to the Board.
20. Law Associations shall use their best judgement in determining whether a library staff member's board duties are library-related or association-related.
21. Factors that shall be taken into consideration in determining that an activity is library-related include:
 - a. Whether the majority of the board management work is related to reporting on and setting policies for the library; and
 - b. Any other pertinent factors.
22. Factors that shall be taken into consideration in determining that an activity is association-related include:
 - a. Whether the majority of the board management work is related to the functioning of the Board or the non-library aspects of the association; and
 - b. Any other pertinent factors.

Use of LiRN Grant for Library Staff Salaries

23. As the employer, Law Associations may assign additional tasks and duties to library staff, including association-related activities.
24. The LiRN grant is intended to cover salaries for staff carrying out library-related activities. Where association-related activities are assigned, the Association shall:
 - a. Ensure the proper completion all tasks required to offer the services and execute the responsibilities listed in the *Core Library Services and Library Management Responsibilities Policy* as a first priority.
 - b. Ensure the proper completion of all tasks required for additional library-related activities as a second priority.
 - c. Contribute a proportional percentage of the library staff member's salary if the association-related activities take up more than 15% of the Library staff member's working hours.
 - d. Maintain any revenue generated from these additional services in an account separate from the LiRN grant money.

Audit

25. If concerns about a Law Association's use of the LiRN grant arise and cannot be resolved, LiRN may conduct an audit at the LSO's direction pursuant to the Unanimous Shareholder Agreement.

Transitional Period

26. Upon adoption of this policy by the Board of Directors, there will be a two-year transitional period for associations to come into compliance. At the end of this two-year period, the Board will review this policy.

Network Library Staff Employment Guidelines

Background and Purpose

1. The Law Society of Ontario's [By-Law 13](#) charges LiRN with establishing guidelines and standards for the organization and operation of the Ontario county and district law library system ("Libraries").
2. LiRN provides financial support to the Libraries by the transfer of grants to county and district law associations ("Law Associations"). Conditional upon receiving a grant from LiRN, each Law Association shall operate the Library in accordance with the guidelines and standards established by LiRN.
3. The Law Associations are the employers of Library staff.
4. To assist funded Law Associations in providing access to long term disability benefits, LiRN has contracted for a group policy. For further clarity, this does not change the fact that the Law Associations are the employers of library staff; LiRN is not the employer of Library Staff.
5. The purpose of these guidelines is to outline LiRN's expectations for good employment practices and provide sample documentation that may be used by Law Associations in managing their employees.

Good Employment Practices

6. Employer Law Associations are required to determine the appropriate staff roles, staffing levels, and opening hours required to:
 - a. Ensure the proper completion all tasks required to offer the services and execute the responsibilities listed in the *Core Library Services and Library Management Responsibilities Policy* as a first priority.
 - b. Ensure the proper completion of all tasks required for additional library-related activities as a second priority.
 - c. Ensure the proper completion of any additional tasks assigned.
7. Employer Law Associations are encouraged to:
 - a. Ensure library staff have job descriptions that reflect the totality of their duties, including those associated with additional library-related and association-related activities.
 - b. Provide performance evaluations to library staff on a regular basis (at least annually).
 - c. Review library staff salaries annually, considering available salary benchmarks or surveys, the market of the Association, the Association's not-for-profit status, and the totality of their duties including those

associated with additional library-related and association-related activities. From time to time, LiRN may provide salary benchmarking that can be used as a resource. Associations are not restricted from using additional resources in their review.

- d. Have in place the following employment policies:
 - i. Workplace Harassment and Violence Policy
 - ii. Leaves of Absence Policy
 - iii. Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- e. Ensure that all library staff report to a supervisor or manager. Where someone is in the highest role of the library staff hierarchy, the Law Association is encouraged to designate an individual or a committee from the Association or the Association's Board who will act as supervisor / manager for that person.