

A New Era of Ontario Public Library Guidelines & Accreditation

Elise C. Cole, Chair

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History of Public Library Guidelines

1985 - The OLA Public Library Standards Action Committee made recommendations for draft public library standards

1989 - The Ontario Public Library Strategic Plan's Performance Measures Issue Team made recommendations on performance measures, standards, statistics and accreditation

1990 - The Ontario Public Library Strategic Plan called for performance standards for public libraries & an accreditation system for Ontario public libraries

History of Public Library Guidelines

1993 - The Hometown Libraries conference strongly supported standards for libraries and resolutions were approved at the OLA AGM endorsing this concept

1993 - Strategic Directions Council (SDC) establishes the Guidelines Working Group

1994/1995 - The Guidelines Working Group presents a draft of the guidelines recommended. The target group is small, medium, and county public libraries, “but the approach presented here could be adapted by any interested library.”

1997 - The 1st edition of the *Ontario Public Library Guidelines* is published

History of the OPLG Council

Original guidelines published as created by the Guidelines Working Group of the SDC

With the publication of the 2nd Edition of the Guidelines, the Guidelines Working Group is now known as the Ontario Public Library Guidelines Monitoring and Accreditation Council

With the dissolution of SDC, administrative responsibility for the Guidelines transferred to Ontario Library Services- North

The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries was created and became the governing body of the OPLG Council as of 2009

History of the OPLG Council

A separate First Nation Edition of the Guidelines was released based on the 4th Edition and a special Working Group made up of First Nation Librarians and members of Council

In 2014 the Council, an independent body, left the administrative assistance of FOPL following transitions in the organization, to OLS-N where we now reside

In 2015-2017 the Council began work on the newest edition and made major organizational changes to the Guidelines. This is evident in the 7th Edition

Council Members 2017-2018

- Elise C. Cole - Chair (OLA)
- Sabrina Redwing Saunders - Vice Chair (First Nation)
- Carole Marion (Francophone)
- Caroline Goulding (Small Library - Northern)
- Cathy Fairbairn (Small Library - Southern)
- Kelly Bernstein (ARUPLO)
- Deborah Duce (AMPLO)
- Alicia Subnaik Kilgour (CELUPL)
- Rod Sawyer (MTCS)
- Peggy Malcolm (SOLS)
- Steven Kraus (OLS-North)
- Leanne Clendening (Ex-Officio)

Background

The purpose of the Council is threefold:

- ★ To monitor the continuing effectiveness of the Guidelines and make revisions as required;
- ★ To arrange for peer audits of those public libraries who submit requests for accreditation/reaccreditation
- ★ To bestow the special designation of "Accredited Ontario Public Library" upon those public libraries that successfully complete the Guidelines accreditation process.

The *Guidelines* have four principal goals:

1. To build upon and improve the current Ontario-wide public library system and its governance through updated guidelines and policy frameworks.
2. To maintain and enhance strong public library operations including services, information technology, and spaces supported by updated standards that all size libraries can meet or exceed.

The *Guidelines* have four principal goals:

3. To make available to public libraries a comprehensive development tool based on standards and guidelines, in order to raise the level of public library service province-wide.

4. To recognize, through an accreditation process, the achievement of those public libraries which meet and exceed the *Guidelines* requirements.

OPLG Study

Three Phase Study

1. Document Analysis
2. Survey
3. Interviews of Accredited CEOs



Report provided to Council and Executive Summary to MTCS and will inform the accreditation process in Ontario

Organization of the 7th Edition

System versus Observable

Organization of the 7th Edition

Five sections covering “the system”

Governance & Administration

Planning Documents & Process

Policy

Personnel & Human Resources

General

Organization of the 7th Edition

Two sections covering “on site observations”

Collections

Services

Physical and Facilities

Ontario
Public Library
Guidelines
Monitoring and
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de l'Ontario

System vs Observable

SYSTEM

8.1 Content and Size of the Physical Collection

8.7 Collection Plan

12.1 Safety, Security and Emergency Policy

OBSERVABLE

24.3 Collection Arrangement

30.1 Emergency Procedures

30.2 Emergency Equipment & Facilities



Benefits of Using the *Guidelines*

Evaluation of local library service and direction for development

The *Guidelines* facilitate an organized, objective approach to the evaluation of local library service. The *Guidelines* ensure that a local evaluation process is fair and comprehensive, concentrating unduly neither on strengths nor weaknesses, but giving direction to and assistance with a review of the whole spectrum of services and operations.

Benefits of Using the *Guidelines*

Improved accountability

As a result of implementing the *Guidelines* process, the library is assisted in demonstrating the quality and value of library service currently being offered to the public and so improves accountability to the taxpayer. By adhering to a province-wide set of service expectations, the individual library is in a better position to benefit from cooperation and sharing arrangements with other libraries in a province-wide library system, thereby demonstrating a commitment to maximizing the local tax dollar.

Benefits of Using the *Guidelines*

Assistance in the planning process

By using the *Guidelines*, the library gains an understanding of those matters which require attention and upgrading and those which are considered appropriately developed or superior in their function. From this assessment of the adequacy of current service delivery, the board and administration are able to consider appropriate directions for development of the library and formalize these into an organized plan.

Benefits of Using the *Guidelines*

Consistency of service across Ontario

Regardless of geographic location or size, a public library which meets the requirements of the *Guidelines* is assured that it is equipped to contribute to the Ontario-wide public library infrastructure, to the greater benefit of its users and community.

Benefits of Using the *Guidelines*

Enhancement of the library's position in the community and with funding bodies

The *Guidelines*, and the plans developed as a result of their application, assists boards in providing justification for securing municipal and other funding to implement the plans. Libraries achieving accreditation through the *Guidelines* program reap the benefits of an enhanced profile and reputation in their communities and demonstrate to their funding bodies that tax dollars invested in the public library are dollars well-spent.

“My Library Won’t Qualify”

8.1 Accessibility plan -The library system has assessed its physical accessibility, has developed an accessibility plan, by itself or with partners, and has a process in place for keeping the plan up-to-date. The plan addresses the requirements of applicable legislation.

29.7 Assistive technology – The library ensures access to its services and resources for users with disabilities by providing assistive technology (e.g. magnification devices or software, keyboards with raised letters, large screen monitors).

28.3 Interior signage - Areas of the library, specific services and parts of the collection are clearly identified by appropriate signage, in language(s) used by major linguistic groups in the community.

“My Large/Urban Library Is Beyond the Guidelines”

“The *Guidelines* and the Council provide all of our libraries a standard. Whether you are small or urban there are questions that will improve your service and policies which you are either missing or could be improved.”

- OPLG 2017 Survey Respondent

My Large/Urban Library Is Beyond the Guidelines...

17.6 Staff Training in Technology Use - Library staff receives training in how to use library equipment and software applications to carry out their responsibilities efficiently. They are trained to assist the public in how to use equipment, applications, complete troubleshooting, and assessing and reporting technology problems. Additionally, staff receives training in implementing technology policies and related procedures (e.g. privacy & access to information; business continuity).

My Large/Urban Library Is Beyond the Guidelines...

18.3 Working Alone - The library has procedures which reflect site specific legislative compliant details, to help ensure staff/volunteers' security and safety pertaining to staff/volunteers who work alone in the library or other designated sites.

Embracing The New Era

Likelihood of accreditation:

Excellent

Key Areas for Improvement
Planning Documents & Process



Physical & Facilities



● Existing Items ○ Missing items

Guidelines

	Number that Exist	In Need of Review	
		minor	major
Governance & Administration	24 of 24		
Planning Documents & Process	25 of 27		
Policy	23 of 23		
Personnel & Human Resources	23 of 23		
General	25 of 25		
Collections & Services	33 of 33		
Physical & Facilities	28 of 30		

Choose a section from the dropdown menu to see details on missing items/policies and their

Planning Documents & Process

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Thank you

*For more information on the
OPLG Monitoring & Accreditation Council
or the Accreditation Process*

<http://www.ontariopubliclibraryguidelines.ca/>

Or contact

Council Secretary Steven Kraus, OLS-N skraus@olsn.ca

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