

Brooklyn Public Library 2023 Library Card Access Survey

Welcome! Thank you for participating in this important survey! Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) is leading a research project to collect and understand policies and procedures around cardholder signup and access in public libraries across the United States. Brooklyn Public Library will share the results of this research with the library community in early 2024.

This survey is intended for people who live in the United States and who currently work or have recently worked (within the past 12 months) in a public library in the United States.

The survey should take about 25 minutes to complete. If you would like to see the questions before taking this online survey, you can view the survey questions in full here. **Please return to this online survey to submit your responses.**

In appreciation of your participation, you will have an opportunity to enter a drawing for a chance to **win a \$25 gift card. The drawing will include 100 winners of a \$25 gift card.** Avenue M Group will fulfill the gift cards using the service Giftogram, which gives winners a choice of gift card from hundreds of retailers.

Brooklyn Public Library wishes to thank the Mellon Foundation for generously funding this project.

Privacy Information:

This survey is being conducted by Avenue M Group, an independent market research firm working with BPL to produce this study. Your personal data (e.g., name, email address) will remain confidential and will not be transferred or sold to other parties not associated with the production of this study. Brooklyn Public Library staff may reach out to the library entity in order to clarify information you submit in this survey.

The name and location of the library are very important for data analysis purposes and may be included in reports created by Brooklyn Public Library and Avenue M Group based on this survey data. Your personal data will remain confidential. Please note, Brooklyn Public Library may share the raw data (excluding personal data) from this survey with other organizations by request, including but not limited to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), Public Library Association (PLA), Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL), and Urban Libraries Council (ULC). Brooklyn Public Library and Avenue M Group are not responsible for any reports created or published by other organizations using the raw data from this survey.

Should you have questions on the survey, please contact Trevor Schlusemann at Avenue M Group by emailing schlusemann@avenuemgroup.com. If you have questions on the research project, you can also contact Brooklyn Public Library by emailing Amy Mikel, Director of Customer Experience, at amikel@bklynlibrary.org.

Thank you.

1. Do you live in the United States (including territories)? (Select one) [** Required*]
 Yes
 No [*Disqualified*]

Library and Respondent Information

NOTE: If you work in multiple libraries, please only select the name of one library and answer all survey questions based on that library only.

Important: Location and Name of Library

2. Please select the state/territory where the library is located. [*Required*] [*Dropdown*]
3. Please select the name of the public library, library system, or branch/location. [*Required*] [*Dropdown*]
4. The dropdown list of libraries is from the Institute of Museum and Library Services Public Libraries Survey (PLS) 2021 data. If the public library, library system, or branch/location name is not included in the list (for example, the PLS data does not include the libraries in Puerto Rico), please select “Other” in the dropdown list and enter the name and address in the text box below. If the name or address of the library has changed since 2021, please select the former name/address in the list above and then enter the full correct name and address below. [*Optional*] [*Text box*]
5. Are you responding on behalf of a public library, library system, or branch/location where you currently work or where you have worked within the past 12 months? (Select one) [*Required*]
 Currently work
 Previously worked within the past 12 months
 Neither [*Disqualified*]

[Show if respondent answered “Currently work” in the previous question]

6. Are you submitting answers as a representative of this library? (Select one) [*Soft Require*]
 No, I am only submitting based on my professional observations and experiences
 Yes, I am submitting on behalf of my public library or library system

Throughout the survey, “the library” refers to the public library, library system, or library branch/location for which you are sharing information.

[Show if “Previously worked” in Q5] **If you no longer work at the library, please answer the following three questions based on your most recent role.**

7. How many years have you worked at the library? (Select one)
 Less than 1 year
 1 to 5 years
 6 to 10 years
 11 to 15 years
 16 to 20 years

- 21 to 25 years
- 26 to 30 years
- 31 to 40 years
- More than 40 years
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

8. Which of the following best describes your role at the library? (Select one)

- Library Director
- System Director
- Department head
- Branch manager
- Librarian
- Library trainee/assistant/aide
- Library technician/clerk
- Library administrator – other, please specify: *[text box]*
- Other, please specify: *[text box]*
- Prefer not to answer

9. Do you personally assist patrons with library card signup at the library? (Select one)

- No, rarely or never
- Sometimes or for some types of patrons (e.g., children, teens)
- Yes, regularly
- Other, please specify: *[text box]*
- Prefer not to answer

The following questions are about cardholder signup rules for **adults (age 18 or older)**. Later questions will ask about signup rules for youth younger than 18.

10. What information does the library **collect** when creating patron records for new adult cardholders? If collected, please indicate if the information is required or optional. (Select one column per row)

If this varies based on the type of card, please answer based on the most common type of card the library issues for adults.

| <i>[Rows displayed in current order]</i> | Required in all cases | Required in some cases | Optional | Not collected | Unsure |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|----------|---------------|--------|
| First name | | | | | |
| Last name | | | | | |
| Preferred name | | | | | |
| Mailing address (primary) | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Mailing address (secondary – e.g., if primary is out of service area) | | | | | |
| Email address | | | | | |
| Phone number | | | | | |
| Gender | | | | | |
| Date of birth | | | | | |
| Race and/or ethnicity | | | | | |
| Identification number (e.g., Driver’s license number) | | | | | |
| Employer/Place of employment | | | | | |
| Community references | | | | | |

If the library collects any additional information on patrons, please list this below, specifying if the information is required or optional. Feel free to also use this text box to elaborate on any of your selections above. *[Open-ended question]*

For the following questions on adult patrons, if the answer varies based on the type of card, please answer based on the most common type of card the library issues for adults.

11. Does the library require adults to show proof of residency/eligibility in order to receive a full-access library card? (Select one)

- No, and we do not ask about residency/eligibility
- No, but we ask about residency/eligibility
- Yes, but there are exceptions – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes, always
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show if respondent said either “Yes” response in Q11]

12. How many forms/documents proving residency/eligibility are required? *[Dropdown, with options for 0, 1, 2, 3 or more, Unsure, Prefer not to answer]*

[Show if respondent said either “Yes” response in Q11]

13. Please select the types of proof of residency/eligibility that the library accepts. (Select all that apply) *[Randomize, anchoring “All of the above,” “Other, please specify,” “Unsure,” and “Prefer not to answer” at the bottom]*

- State-issued ID (with current address)
- Driver’s License (with current address)
- School-issued ID
- Utility bill
- Bank statement
- Lease
- Mortgage document

- Car registration
- Proof of employment
- Other, please specify: *[text box]*
- All of the above
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

14. Does the library require adults to show government-issued photo identification (ID) in order to receive a full-access library card? (Select one)

- No
- Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes, but there are exceptions – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes, always
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show if respondent selected either “Yes” response, “Unsure,” or “Prefer not to answer” in the previous question]

15. Does the library give any considerations to patrons whose name does not match their legal ID? (Select one)

- No
- Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

16. Please feel free to enter additional details about residency/eligibility and/or ID guidelines at the library in the text box below. *[Open-ended question]*

For the following questions on adult patrons, if the answer varies based on the type of card, please answer based on the most common type of card the library issues for adults.

17. Is there a probation period for new library cards (e.g., limitation on the number of items that can be checked out)? (Select one)

- No
- In some cases – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes, in all cases
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show if respondent selected “Yes” or “In some cases” in previous question]

18. How long is the probation period? (Select one)

- Fewer than 7 days / Less than 1 week
- 7 days / 1 week

- 8 to 14 days / Between 1 – 2 weeks
- 15 to 30 days / Between 3 – 4 weeks
- 31 to 60 days / Between 1 – 2 months
- More than 60 days / More than 2 months
- It depends – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

19. Do adult library cards expire? (Select one)

- No, cards never expire
- Yes
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show if respondent selected “Yes” in the previous question]

20. In what situations do library cards expire? (Select all that apply)

- Cards expire after a set number of years (even if actively used)
- Cards expire after a period of inactivity – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Other situations, please specify: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show if respondent selected “Cards expire after a set number of years” in the previous question]

21. When do library cards expire (even if actively used)? *[Dropdown with “Less than 1 year,” one-year increments from 1 year to 10 years, “More than 10 years,” “Unsure,” and “Prefer not to answer”]*

[Show if respondent selected “Yes” in Q19]

22. What documentation do patrons need in order to renew their library card? (Select all that apply)

[Randomize, anchoring “Other, please specify,” “No documentation is required,” “Unsure,” and “Prefer not to answer” at the bottom]

- Government-issued photo ID
- Proof of residency/eligibility
- Other, please specify: *[text box]*
- No documentation is required
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

23. Does the library offer specific types of library cards for educators? (Select one)

- No
- Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

24. Does the library offer any other considerations or exceptions to the overall cardholder signup policies for adults? *[Open-ended question]*

The next series of questions will ask about general policies related to non-residents, temporary cards/guest passes, access to computer/printing services, eCards, the application process, patrons who are unable to visit the library in person, and introductory materials.

25. Does the library offer library cards to non-residents? (Select one)

- No
- Yes, for a fee
- Yes, for no charge
- It depends – please explain: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show if respondent answered “Yes, for a fee” in previous question]

26. Is the cost of a library card for non-residents a flat fee or variable? (Select one)

- Flat fee
- Variable
- It depends – please explain: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

27. Does the library offer temporary cards or guest passes to anyone who cannot obtain a library card? (Select one)

- No
- Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

28. Does the library require that patrons have a library card to access computer and/or printing services? (Select one)

- No
- Not currently, but this is in development– feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

29. Does the library offer electronic library cards (eCards)? (For the purpose of this question, an eCard is a digitally issued barcode that allows users access to primarily electronic materials and/or resources.) (Select one)

- No
- Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*

- Yes – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show if respondent answers “Yes” in the previous question]

30. When did the library introduce eCards? (Select one)

- Within the past year
- 1-3 years ago
- 4-6 years ago
- More than 6 years ago
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

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31. Can patrons apply for a full access library card online? (Select one)

- No, they must apply in person
- Yes, but they must complete registration in person before receiving a card
- Yes, they can fully complete the application online
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

32. Does the library offer cardholder signup to patrons who are homebound or otherwise unable to visit the library in person? (Select one)

- No
- Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

33. Does general library card signup usually take less than 15 minutes before the patron receives a physical card? This is based on the scenario of an adult patron entering the physical library location with no line/waiting period, starting the application process on site, and having all required materials (e.g., ID) on hand. (Select one)

- No, it usually takes more than 15 minutes
- Yes, it usually takes 15 minutes or less
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show to respondents who selected “No, it usually takes more than 15 minutes” in previous question]

34. Please select the range that best fits how long it generally takes for a patron to receive a new physical library card. (Select one)

- Less than 1 day – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Between 1 and 3 business days – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Between 4 business days and 1 week – feel free to explain: *[text box]*

- More than 1 week – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

35. Is the library’s cardholder application available in any language(s) besides English? (Select one)

- No, only English
- Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes – please specify language(s): *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

36. Does the library provide any of the following introductory information/materials to cardholders about lending policies and library services? (Select all that apply) *[Randomize, anchoring “Other, please specify,” “None of the above,” “Unsure,” and “Prefer not to answer” at the bottom]*

- Information on the library website
- Printed guide/pamphlet
- Emailed information
- In-person tour
- Spoken information
- Cardholder orientation/session
- Other, please specify: *[text box]*
- None of the above
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show if respondent selected any option in the previous question except “None of the above” or “Unsure”]

37. Does the library offer introductory information for cardholders in any language(s) besides English?

(Select one)

- No, only English
- Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes – please specify language(s): *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

The following survey questions are about cardholder signup rules for **youth (i.e., children and teenagers) under the age of 18.**

38. What is the minimum age that a person can get a library card? *[Dropdown list with the following answer options]*

- Not applicable/No official minimum age requirement
- Younger than 1 year old
- 1 year old
- 2 years old

- 3 years old
- 4 years old
- 5 years old
- 6 years old
- 7 years old
- 8 years old
- 9 years old
- 10 years old
- 11 years old
- 12 years old
- 13 years old
- 14 years old
- 15 years old
- 16 years old
- 17 years old
- 18 years old
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

39. Does the library have a collaborative agreement with a school or school district to issue library cards to students? (For the purpose of this question, a collaborative agreement indicates a formal contract/memorandum of understanding (MOU) which governs data sharing and interoperability.) (Select one)

- No
- Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show Q41-42 to respondents who answered “Yes” in Q40]

40. Please describe the nature of the collaborative agreement. *[Open-ended question]*

41. Do these student library cards have limitations (i.e., more restrictive than regular library cards for children/teens)? (Select one)

- No
- Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- In some cases – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show the following text and Q43 to all respondents]

The following questions are about children/teens under the age of 18 not issued a library card through their school and who are requesting one from the library.

42. Do children/teens receive a library card with limitations on access based on their age? (i.e., more restrictive than the regular library cards for adults)? (Select one)

- No
- Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- In some cases – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show if respondent answered “Yes” or “In some cases” in previous question]

43. What are the limitations on these cards? (Select all that apply) *[Randomize, anchoring “Other limitation, please specify,” “Unsure,” and “Prefer not to answer” at the bottom]*

- Number of items – please explain: *[text box]*
- Types of items – please explain: *[text box]*
- Shorter loan period – please explain: *[text box]*
- Other limitation, please specify: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show to all respondents]

44. Do children/teens need stated permission from an adult to receive a library card? (Select one)

[Soft require]

- No, they never need permission from an adult to receive a library card
- Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes, up to a certain age
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show if respondent selected “Yes” in the previous question]

45. At what age do children/teens no longer need permission from an adult to receive a library card? (Select one)

- Younger than 1 year old
- 1 year old
- 2 years old
- 3 years old
- 4 years old
- 5 years old
- 6 years old
- 7 years old
- 8 years old
- 9 years old
- 10 years old
- 11 years old

- 12 years old
- 13 years old
- 14 years old
- 15 years old
- 16 years old
- 17 years old
- 18 years old
- It depends – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show to respondents who selected any age except 18 (i.e., ages Younger than 1 year old through 17) in previous question]

46. Why is adult permission no longer needed at this age? *[Open-ended question]*

[Show to respondents who selected any age except 18 (i.e., ages Younger than 1 year old through 17) or “It depends” in Q45]

47. Does the library require children/teens who can apply without adult permission to show proof of residency/eligibility in order to receive a library card? (Select one)

- No
- Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes, but there are exceptions – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes, always
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show to respondents who answered “Yes” in Q44]

48. Which of the following best describes how permission from an adult is determined? (Select one)
[Randomize, anchoring “Other, please specify,” “Unsure,” and “Prefer not to answer” at the bottom]

- Signature/acknowledgement on a form (i.e., the adult does not need to be physically present at the library)
- An adult (with or without the child/teen) must be physically present at the library
- An adult and the child/teen must be physically present together at the library
- Other, please specify: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show to respondents who answered “Yes” in Q44]

49. Can an adult (age 18 or older) **other than parents/legal guardians** provide permission? (Select one)

- No, **only parents/legal guardians** can provide permission
- Yes, but **only certain relationships** to the child/teen can provide permission (if selected, a follow-up question will be displayed below)

- Yes, **any adult** (age 18 or older) can provide permission
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show to respondents who answered “Yes, but only certain relationships” in previous question]

50. Besides parents/legal guardians, what relationships to the child/teen can provide permission for a library card? (Select all that apply) *[Randomize, anchoring “Other relative,” “Other relationship,” “Unsure,” and “Prefer not to answer”]*

- Grandparent
- Babysitter, nanny, au pair, or other non-relation caregiver
- Adult sibling of the child/teen
- Adult sibling of parent/legal guardian (e.g., aunt, uncle)
- Other relative, please specify: *[text box]*
- Other relationship (non-relative), please specify: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

[Show to respondents who answered “No, only parents/legal guardians...” in Q49]

51. How does the library determine parental relationship or legal guardianship? (Select one) *[Randomize “Self-reporting...” and “ID or legal document,” anchoring the other answer options at the bottom]*

- Self-reporting from adult and child/teen (no verification required)
- ID or legal document
- It depends – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

52. In what situations do youth library cards expire? (Select all that apply)

- Youth library cards expire after a set number of years (even if actively used)
- Youth library cards expire after a period of inactivity – please explain: *[text box]*
- Youth library cards expire when the cardholder turns 18
- Other situations, please specify: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Youth library cards never expire at the library
- Prefer not to answer

[Show if respondent answered any option in previous question except “Youth library cards never expire”]

53. Do children/teens need permission from an adult to renew a library card? (Select one)

- No, they never need permission from an adult to renew a library card
- Not currently, but this is in development – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
- Yes, up to a certain age
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

54. Does the library offer any other considerations or exceptions to the overall cardholder signup policies for children and teenagers? *[Open-ended question]*

The following questions focus on library policies and procedures. (For the purposes of this survey, “policies” are legally binding and are approved by the library’s governing authority. “Procedures” dictate operational guidance in how the library carries out policy.)

55. In the past 5 years, what types of changes (including small changes/tweaks) has the library made to its cardholder signup policies and procedures? (Select all that apply) *[Randomize, anchoring “Other changes, please specify,” “None,” “Unsure,” and “Prefer not to answer” at the bottom]*
- Made changes to ID requirement – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
 - Made changes to residency/eligibility requirement – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
 - Made changes to non-resident cardholder policies and/or procedures – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
 - Made changes to adult permission for youth – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
 - Made changes to application process – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
 - Made changes to types of cards – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
 - Other changes to the cardholder signup policies and/or procedures – feel free to explain: *[text box]*
 - None: We have not made any changes to our cardholder signup policies and/or procedures in the past 5 years
 - Unsure
 - Prefer not to answer

[Show to respondents who selected any answer except “None,” “Unsure,” or “Prefer not to answer” in the previous question]

56. Who or what has prompted recent changes (within the past 5 years) to cardholder signup policies and/or procedures at the library? (Select all that apply) *[Randomize, anchoring “Other, please specify,” “None of the above,” “Unsure,” and “Prefer not to answer” at the bottom]*
- Library staff
 - Patrons
 - Board of trustees
 - Statewide trends affecting libraries
 - National trends affecting libraries
 - Other, please specify: *[text box]*
 - None of the above
 - Unsure
 - Prefer not to answer

57. Who at the library approves changes to cardholder **policies**? (For the purposes of this survey, “policies” are legally binding and are approved by the library’s governing authority.) (Select all that apply) *[Randomize, anchoring “Other, please specify,” “None of the above,” “Unsure,” and “Prefer not to answer” at the bottom]*
- Library leadership team

- Library director(s)
- Board of trustees
- Other, please specify: *[text box]*
- None of the above
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

58. Who at the library approves changes to cardholder **procedures**?

(For the purposes of this survey, “procedures” dictate operational guidance in how the library carries out policy.) (Select all that apply) *[Randomize, anchoring “Other, please specify,” “None of the above,” “Unsure,” and “Prefer not to answer” at the bottom]*

- Library leadership team
- Library director(s)
- Board of trustees
- Other, please specify: *[text box]*
- None of the above
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

59. Does the library consult any external resources (i.e., outside the library) when making decisions around changes to cardholder sign-up? (Select one)

- No
- Yes – please specify: *[text box]*
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

60. Please feel free to use the text box below to share additional details on how cardholder policies and procedures are set and revised at the library. *[Open-ended question]*

61. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding cardholder signup or public libraries in general? *[Open-ended question]*

Closing

If you would like to be entered into the drawing for a \$25 gift card, please provide your name and email address below. One hundred (100) gift cards will be issued.

Your name and email address will not be used for any identification, classification, or reporting purposes. This section is designed solely for the purpose of entering you in the drawing for a gift card. Avenue M Group will fulfill the gift cards through the service Giftogram, which gives winners a choice of gift card from hundreds of retailers.

Name:

Email: