

VALNet Circulation Policy Guidelines

Our ultimate goal is to provide for our patrons' needs. To help each other accomplish that, all VALNet consortium libraries, by becoming members, agree to follow these guidelines. All circulation desk staff are responsible for being knowledgeable of these policies and following them. Each library is assigned a mentor who can answer questions and offer guidance. Circulation training pages, also referred to as staff pages, provide detailed information on circulation procedures specific to VALNet.

Any patron should be able to do the following at any VALNet library:

- **Check out, renew or request items from any VALNet library** (assuming the item can be renewed).
- **Request or renew items from the VALNet catalog** (provided his/her record is clear).
- **Return items to any VALNet library** (at which time the items would be checked in and routed appropriately).
- **Renew over the phone.**
- **Pay fines and have them posted immediately at any VALNet library.** All VALNet libraries should be able to accept exact change or a check payable to the owed agency for the exact amount. The collecting library would immediately post the payment to the patron record then forward payment to the owed library according to your agency's procedure.
- **Get a library card at any VALNet library.** Patrons may either be eligible for a free card, or pay a fee, depending on where they reside. Conditions for obtaining a card include providing photo ID and proof of residence. Once they obtain a VALNet card, they may use it to obtain full service at any VALNet library.

Each VALNet member library agrees to follow these guidelines:

- **Defer to owning library** regarding renewals, forgiving fines/fees, modifying due dates, circulation periods, etc., for that library's materials. Do not place holds for delinquent patrons.
- **VALNet cards**--As a rule, if a patron hands us a VALNet card, we check his/her materials out on it. Each individual library at their discretion should determine any specific identity concerns. **However, the cardholder is responsible for all items checked out on his/her card, and should be made aware of that fact.**
- **Damaged and/or Lost items** — If another agency's item is returned damaged to your library, it should be checked in and sent to the owning agency *in a routing envelope, along with a note describing the damage*. This alerts the owning library's staff to the damage when they receive the returned item, allowing them to proceed according to their own policy and practice.
- **Delinquencies** — Delinquent patrons will be denied checkout from any VALNet library until their record is cleared, and they are not able to use the OPAC to place holds or renew materials. The patron record may be cleared at any VALNet library by the return or renewal of the materials (in hand), and payment of fines in excess of \$5 (if there are fines).

Exception: An individual agency may check out its own items to a patron who has fines or overdue materials as long as the fines or overdue materials belong to that agency. However, if the fines or overdue materials are from another agency, then the patron should not be allowed to check out.
- **Requests:** If you are unable to fulfill a request and no other copies are available in VALNet, put a note on the patron's record indicating the hold has been cancelled, and follow your individual agency's policy in changing the status of missing material.