



GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING AN INTERLOCAL SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR LIBRARY SERVICES

Although current state law does permit a library to enter into an interlocal services agreement with a neighboring town for library services, the New Jersey Library Association endorses membership in a county library or the establishment of a joint library as more viable alternatives. A joint library provides both communities with a guaranteed, stable, source of funding and also gives both communities an opportunity to have a voice in the governance of the library through the appointment of library trustees.

If a library does enter into an interlocal services agreement for municipal public library service, the New Jersey Library Association recommends the library board seek the advice of legal counsel with experience in library and contract law. A process for developing and maintaining an interlocal services agreement should include:

- An open public process to determine what if any interlocal services agreement best meets the community's need for library services;
- An agreed upon regular interval for reviewing the effectiveness of any interlocal service agreements currently in place;
- A defined public transition period if a community seeks to change the provider of its library services or seeks to provide its own library services

The New Jersey Library Association further recommends that special attention be paid to the following guidelines:

- The fee should be based on library services to the entire community and not based on a reimbursement of the number of library card holders.
- Fees from the interlocal services agreement must be paid directly to the library and used only for library purposes. The municipal library budget should not be reduced to offset the fees received from the interlocal services agreement.
- The interlocal services agreement should extend for a minimum of three years so there is continuity of service for the residents of the community
- The fee established by the contracting municipal library should equal or exceed the per capita support paid by the contractee for the year prior to the interlocal agreement.
- The interlocal services agreement is specific to the individual library and cannot provide access to other libraries within a consortium.

Interlocal services agreements are now part of the Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act as codified at NJSA 40A:65-1. The mandatory provisions of shared service agreements are now at NJSA 40A:65-7.

Approved by the NJLA Executive Board, March 17, 2009; Updated September 2016.