



INTERLIBRARY LOAN POLICY

A. **INTRODUCTION:** The Berkshire Athenaeum is a member of the Central/Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing, Inc. (C/WMARS), a library consortium of over 150 libraries of different types sharing an online computer catalog and circulation files, and offering reciprocal borrowing privileges to patrons of member libraries. The Berkshire Athenaeum is also a member of the Massachusetts Library System (MLS), which provides an interlibrary loan network and locates materials for the users of the System's member libraries.

B. **DEFINITIONS:** Interlibrary loan service is based on the premise that people have a need for all types of information located in all types of libraries, and that limitations in funding, physical space, and other factors preclude any library from being entirely self-sufficient.

B.1. **Hold or Reserve:** A transaction in which a hold is placed online in the C/W MARS database by a library staff member or a patron for an item in the collection of their own or another member library. A filled hold constitutes a transaction in which the patron is responsible to the lending library for the return of the borrowed item.

B.2. **Virtual Catalog:** The Virtual Catalog provides a single, searchable catalog of materials owned by participating academic and public libraries in Massachusetts. Library patrons in good standing may use the Virtual Catalog to request items that are unavailable through their own library network or institution.

B.3. **Virtual Holds:** Transaction in which holds are placed online in the Virtual Catalog database by a library staff member or a patron for an item in the collection of a member library. A filled Virtual Hold constitutes a transaction in which the pickup location library is responsible for the return of the borrowed item. Holds or reserves unable to be filled from the Virtual Catalog are routinely forwarded to the Reference Department for processing as an Interlibrary Loan transaction.

B.4. **Interlibrary Loan (ILL):** A transaction in which the Berkshire Athenaeum requests for the use of a patron an item not available for loan from a library within the C/W MARS network or Virtual Catalog. A filled ILL constitutes a transaction in which the Berkshire Athenaeum is responsible to the lending library for the return of the borrowed item.

C. **CONDITIONS OF SERVICE:**

C.1. ILL's generated by the Berkshire Athenaeum are processed through and overseen by the Reference Department.

C.2. MLS designates an interlibrary loan processing center to provide mediated interlibrary loan borrowing service to MLS member libraries.

C.3. ILL service operates within general guidelines established by C/W MARS, the American Library Association¹ (ALA), MLS, and the policies and procedures of lending libraries.

D. HIERARCHY OF RESOURCES: In accordance with the standard library precept of accessing local resources first, a patron seeking an item available within the C/W MARS network will have that request submitted as a hold or reserve request.. (See also “Holds Procedures: A Supplement to Borrowing Policy & Procedures”) If the item is not obtainable through CW MARS, and the item is available in the Virtual Catalog, the request will be submitted as a Virtual Hold. A patron seeking an item not available for loan and not fillable within the C/W MARS network or Virtual Catalog has the option of requesting the item through the ILL service. Requests submitted to the Virtual Catalog that are returned to the Athenaeum unfilled will be routinely forwarded to the ILL librarian for processing as a national search.

E. MATERIALS AVAILABLE:

E.1. Library materials may be requested on loan or in photocopy from another library. The lending library will decide in each case whether a particular item can be provided.

E.2. Items missing (not just in circulation) from the Berkshire Athenaeum collection may be requested.

E.3. While as a default library staff will request through ILL any item an owning library is willing to loan, the Athenaeum may choose to decline requests for:

- Bulky or fragile materials that are difficult or expensive to ship
- Rare or valuable materials
- Items identified as non-circulating
- Multiple copies of titles for reading groups
- Materials for recurring class assignments. While college students should rely upon the collections and interlibrary loan systems of their college libraries for materials needed for courses, textbooks needed by students in connection with course work activity at any level will be submitted.

E.4. While the Athenaeum will submit ILL requests for most items presented, there is no guarantee that a lending library will loan an item in their collection.

F. PATRON RESPONSIBILITIES:

F.1. Patrons placing or having placed for them ILL transactions are subject to the circulation policies of the lending library.

F.2. A patron may not have more than three (3) ILL transactions in process at any given time.

F.3. For ILL requests that are photocopies (i.e., from magazine articles or other reference materials), charges by the lending library are the patron’s responsibility and will be collected by the Athenaeum at the time the item is claimed.

F.4. ILL’s are to be picked up and returned to the Circulation Desk.

¹ The American Library Association “Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States” may be viewed at <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/interlibrary.cfm> and <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/interlibraryloancode.cfm>

F.5. Patrons are responsible for the timely return of borrowed items. All overdue items are subject to the Athenaeum's overdue fines as defined in Athenaeum's "Overdue and Damaged Materials Policy."

F.6. Patrons are responsible for all costs associated with lost or damaged items paid by the Athenaeum to the lending library.

G. ATHENAEUM'S RESPONSIBILITY AS BORROWING LIBRARY

G.1. The Athenaeum will not forward an ILL request for an item that cannot be minimally identified by title and author. Staff will use the C/W MARS database, the statewide virtual catalog, WorldCat, and other sources as appropriate to complete partial citations, but if this proves fruitless, the borrower will be asked to obtain the minimum information of author and title.

G.2. The Athenaeum will honor any limitation on use imposed by the lending library.

G.3. Patrons who through previous ILL experience have demonstrated irresponsible borrowing habits shall be denied interlibrary loan service by the Athenaeum.

G.4. The Athenaeum will make every effort to assure the prompt return in good condition of any ILL items.

G.5. The Athenaeum will meet all costs of replacement for lost/damaged items as assessed by the lending library, seeking reimbursement from the patron for these charges.

G.6. Requests to renew ILL materials are not accepted.

H. FAMILY HISTORY CENTER: The Local History Department of the Berkshire Athenaeum has an agreement with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (also known as the Mormons) to serve as a Family History Center. Requests for genealogical microfilm are handled in accordance with the Athenaeum's "Family History Center Policy and Procedures."