

Plainfield Public Library Public Records Policy

Approved by the Library Board: December 15, 2025

1. Purpose

Wisconsin law (Wis. Stat. §§ 19.31–19.39) requires public institutions to make their records available to the public, unless those records are specifically exempt by law.

This policy explains how members of the public may request records from the Plainfield Public Library and how the library will respond.

2. Statement of Public Policy

The Plainfield Public Library believes in transparent and open government.

As stated in Wisconsin's Open Records Law, providing access to public records is considered "an essential function of a representative government."

The library will provide the **greatest possible access** to public records while also protecting:

- The privacy of patrons (Wis. Stat. § 43.30)
 - Confidential personnel information
 - Records restricted by other state or federal laws
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3. Legal Custodian of Records

The **Library Director** is the legal custodian of all Plainfield Public Library records.

If the Director is unavailable, a designated staff member will act as custodian.

The custodian is responsible for:

- Receiving and processing public records requests
 - Ensuring timely and lawful responses
 - Maintaining records in accordance with retention schedules
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4. How to Request Public Records

A request may be made:

- **In writing**
- **By email**
- **By phone**
- **In person**

Requests should be directed to:

Library Director, Plainfield Public Library

126 S Main St, Plainfield, WI 54966

Phone: 715-335-4523

Email: director@plainfieldlibrary.org

Requests must **reasonably describe** the records being sought.

A written request is encouraged but not required.

Requests **do not** need to include a reason for seeking records.

5. Response Time

The library will respond to record requests **as soon as practicable and without delay**, per Wis. Stat. § 19.35(4)(a).

If the request cannot be fulfilled promptly, the Library Director will notify the requester with:

- An estimated timeline

- Any clarification needed
 - Any applicable fees
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6. Fees

The library may charge fees as allowed by law to cover the **actual, necessary, and direct cost** of locating, copying, and providing records.

Fees may include:

- **Copying/printing:** actual cost per page
- **Electronic files:** actual cost of media or file transfer
- **Location fee:** only if costs exceed \$50
- **Postage:** actual mailing cost

The library may require **prepayment** if fees exceed \$5.00.

7. Records Not Available for Release

Some library records are **confidential by law** and cannot be released, including but not limited to:

7.1 Patron Library Records (Wis. Stat. § 43.30)

Patron information is protected. This includes:

- Names and addresses linked to library use
- Borrowing records
- Digital resource use
- Reference questions or staff interactions

These records may only be released:

- To the patron
- To a parent/guardian (for records permitted by law)
- By court order
- As otherwise authorized by statute

7.2 Personnel Records

Personnel files, evaluations, and employee discipline records may be released only as allowed by Wis. Stat. § 19.36.

7.3 Other Protected Records

- Trade secrets
 - Attorney-client communications
 - Records containing personally identifiable information protected by law
 - Records restricted by state or federal statute
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8. Record Format

If a requested record exists in electronic form, the library will provide it electronically when possible.

The library is **not required** to create new records, summaries, or lists in response to a request.

9. Notice of Records Availability

A public notice describing how to request records will be posted:

- At the library

- On the library website
 - In the staff manual
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10. Records Retention

The library follows the **Wisconsin Public Libraries Records Retention Schedule (2022)** and any additional Village of Plainfield retention requirements. Records are retained and disposed of in accordance with legal timelines.

11. Appeals

If a request is denied (in whole or in part), the requester will receive a written explanation citing legal reasons for the denial (Wis. Stat. § 19.35(4)(b)).

A requester may challenge a denial by:

1. Asking the Library Director to reconsider
 2. Appealing to the Library Board
 3. Filing an action for mandamus in circuit court
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12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as needed to remain compliant with Wisconsin law.