

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



**Standard Operating Procedures**

**Policy Name:** Library Services Administration and Operation

**Policy Number:** 501.01

**Effective Date:** 01/05/2022

**Page Number:** 1 of 19

**Authority:**  
Commissioner

**Originating Division:**  
Inmate Services Division  
(Education)

**Access Listing:**  
Level II: Required Offender  
Access

**I. Introduction and Summary:**

This policy supports departmental goals by establishing requirements to ensure the provision of a full spectrum of needs-based library services to Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) offenders.

**II. Authority:**

- A. Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 125-4-2-.08;
- B. GDC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): 227.06 Offender Receipt of Mail and 227.03 Access to Courts; and
- C. ACA Standards: 2CO-5F-01, 5-ACI-4A-23 (ref. 4-4269), 5-ACI-7E-01 (ref. 4-4505), 5-ACI-7E-02 (ref. 4-4506), 5-ACI-7E-03 (ref. 4-4507), 5-ACI-7E-04 (ref. 4-4508), 5-ACI-7E-05 (ref. 4-4509), 5-ACI-7E-06 (ref. 4-4510), 5-ACI-7E-07 (ref. 4-4511), 4-ALDF-2A-62, and 4-ALDF-5C-05.

**III. Definitions: None.**

**IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:**

- A. Purpose:
  - 1. Library Services shall provide for a comprehensive library program to support, broaden, and strengthen the Department's activities and programs that prepare offenders for release.
  - 2. Library Services shall provide materials and services to assist in meeting the recreational needs of the offender population.

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3. Library Services shall systematically determine the library-related needs of the offender population at least biennially and plan services and acquisitions to address those identified needs.

**B. Supervision:**

1. Statewide Library Services shall be directed by the Statewide Librarian under the supervision of the Statewide Director of Education, or by his or her designee.
2. The Statewide Librarian shall train staff for Library Services. The Statewide Librarian shall develop Library Services standards, policies, and procedures, and provide problem solving and technical support.
3. The Statewide Librarian shall conduct regular evaluations of library services at each facility and to ensure compliance with Library Services standards.
4. The Statewide Librarian shall be responsible for the coordination, monitoring, management, and projection of funding for the Library Services cost center.
5. Library Services shall be a separate cost center for developing and maintaining a library program that meets Library Services standards.
6. The Statewide Librarian shall be responsible for the review and approval of all Library Services budget requests, including the reallocation of resources.
7. The Statewide Librarian shall coordinate a system for collecting and reporting library use data.
8. The Statewide Librarian shall serve as GDC's liaison with the Georgia Public Library Service.

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C. Staffing:

1. Appropriate staffing should be provided to ensure that offenders have meaningful access to Library Services.
2. The Warden or designee at each state prison, with the assistance of the Statewide Librarian shall designate a qualified staff member to serve as the prison's librarian.
  - a. Library staff members shall report directly to the Warden or the Warden's designee and shall be invited to meetings relevant to library programing at the institution.
  - b. The job description for the prison librarian shall include the specific duties involved in managing the prison's library program.
  - c. The Statewide Librarian shall participate in all selection processes for the filling of full-time and part-time library positions.
  - d. Library staff members shall meet the current qualifications for the position as set forth in the official GDC job description.
3. Prison security measures should be adequate to ensure the protection of library staff, users, materials, and equipment.
4. Offenders should be carefully selected and trained to assist in providing library services at each state prison.
  - a. The Statewide Librarian shall establish minimum qualifications for offender library clerks. The prison librarian or Warden's designee shall assist and advise the Classification Committee in selecting qualified offenders as library clerks.

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- b. The prison librarian or Warden's designee shall directly supervise offender library clerks.
- c. The prison librarian shall adhere to the following guidelines in the selection and training of offender library clerks:
  - i. The offender must be familiar with the rules and regulations of the prison and GDC;
  - ii. The offender should be able to comprehend information, aid other offenders in research, and assist in operating the library;
  - iii. The offender must be a highly motivated, productive, and reliable person;
  - iv. The offender should work well with other offenders and supervisors;
  - v. The offender should have a high school diploma or a GED certificate; and
  - vi. Offenders fluent in more than one language shall be preferred.

**D. Staff Development:**

- 1. All prison librarians shall participate in appropriate training activities to maintain and enhance their relevant skills and abilities.
- 2. All library staff should attend the first available Library Training Program (LTP) following employment. This training will be conducted by the Statewide Librarian and/or the Georgia Public Library System. The Library staff enrolled in the LTP will:

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- a. Know what documents are available to assist him/her;
  - b. Know basic guidelines for giving criminal history information to others;
  - c. Be familiar with the role of the Classification Committee;
  - d. Be familiar with the purpose, goals, policies, and procedures of the prison and GDC;
  - e. Be familiar with the rules and regulations of the prison and GDC;
  - f. Know the major causes of stress for offenders;
  - g. Be aware of how program areas interact as a team;
  - h. Be familiar with an overview of the criminal justice system;
  - i. Know and discuss how program staff, security staff, administrators, and others function as a team;
  - j. Be familiar with the objectives of Library Services;
  - l. Be familiar with the forms used in Library Services;
  - m. Be able to provide training to offender library clerks annually and otherwise as needed.
3. Each library staff member shall complete an on-the-job training plan during the first six months of employment.
  4. Each library staff member shall develop with his/her supervisor an individual training plan based on the staff member's skill and knowledge needs.

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E. Physical Area: The physical area designated for library services at each state prison should be designed and maintained to provide for ease of use and protection of materials and equipment in accordance with Library Services standards.

1. The facility library should be a secure, separate, lockable area.
  - a. The library should not be designed so that it is necessary to pass through it or into it to reach other program or operational areas during non-library hours.
  - b. Appropriate personnel may unlock the library only for legitimate security reasons. Access to the library during non-library hours shall not be allowed for staff or offenders unless approved by the Warden or their designee.
2. Facility libraries should meet space requirements of GDC Library Services standards.
  - a. In addition to shelving space, libraries should provide adequate space for reading, studying, or A-V material use by the offender population that has access to the library.
  - b. Adequate space as defined by GDC Library Services standards should be provided for the librarian's office.
3. The library should be near the school and recreational areas and accessible directly from residential areas, if possible.

F. Accountability:

1. The prison librarian shall establish procedures and forms to document library use and activities and provide this information to appropriate personnel as required.

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- a. The prison librarian shall provide for the maintenance of a daily circulation log indicating number of users, number of items circulated by material categories, and monthly totals.
  - b. The prison librarian shall provide for the maintenance of a daily reference request log to include the number of requests and monthly totals.
  - c. The prison librarian shall provide to his/her Warden, or the Warden's designee, a monthly summary of the use of the library and activities. This report shall include, at a minimum: total users, total items circulated, total reference requests, a narrative summary of problems and issues, and any other information requested by prison management. These reports shall be made available to the Statewide Librarian upon request.
  - d. Data on library use should be included in all institutional reports that combine other program data.
  - e. Each prison librarian shall complete the form provided for submittal of the prison's annual report on programs.
  - f. All prison librarians shall maintain records to document the current collection and acquisitions.
2. Each item in the library collection shall have a shelf list card with at least the following information: author, title, publisher, date of publication, number of pages, date of purchase, funding source, and, if possible, the purchase price. This card should be in standardized format.
  3. Prison librarians and facility business managers shall maintain purchase records on all library acquisitions in accordance with GDC procedures.

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4. Each prison librarian shall conduct an inventory of library resources at the end of each fiscal year. This inventory shall enumerate total collection, acquisitions, losses, and net gain or loss of materials. All losses shall be explained.
5. The prison librarian shall assess user needs and assist in evaluating the current program compared to program goals and objectives.
  - a. The prison librarian shall conduct an annual assessment of offender library needs at the end of each calendar year. All requests for materials, equipment, etc., shall directly reference identified needs.
  - b. Each prison librarian, in conjunction with the Statewide Librarian, shall assess library staff needs at the end of each calendar year. All requests for materials, equipment, etc., submitted to the Statewide Librarian shall be directly related to identified needs.
  - c. The Statewide Librarian shall coordinate an annual evaluation of each prison's library program against stated goals and objectives as delineated in the plan for library services.

**G. Material Protection:**

1. All library material, equipment, and supplies are state property, and prison librarians shall institute procedures to control circulation, recover circulated materials, and replace or repair lost, stolen, or damaged materials.
2. All materials added to a GDC prison library shall be clearly marked as the property of the respective prison.
  - a. All GDC staff members share responsibility for protecting GDC library materials from loss, damage, and abuse.



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- b. If any library materials marked as the property of a prison library are found in another facility, they may be returned to the original prison or they may be transferred to the current facility's library inventory via the Surpass system.
  - c. The prison librarian shall be responsible for working with security personnel to establish procedures for recovering library materials from other areas of the facility and from offenders who are transferred from the facility.
3. Facility librarians shall utilize Surpass Statewide systematic circulation system that allows for maximum user access to materials and provides a record of use and return.
- a. No more than two (2) items may be signed out by an offender at any given time.
  - b. All books in the library shall be checked out through the Surpass circulation system utilizing the ISBN number or an affixed bar code.
  - c. The check-out periods for categories of materials shall be established and clearly posted for users.
  - d. No offender or staff member may remove material from the library without following established check-out procedures. Possession of any library materials that have not been properly signed out could result in disciplinary action, criminal prosecution, or both.
  - e. All GDC libraries shall provide secure, clearly marked return areas to be used for the return of checked-out materials.

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4. The offender who checks out library material shall be responsible for that material until it is properly returned to the library.
  - a. All offenders who check out library materials shall sign their names as they appear on their state issued I.D. card on the appropriate sign in/sign out log. No offender may sign out library material for another offender.
5. The Librarian shall establish procedures for recovering overdue or missing materials and document the steps taken in their recovery.
  - a. Overdue notices shall be sent on all overdue materials as soon as possible.
  - b. If an offender fails to return overdue material or to adequately explain or arrange for restitution within one week of receiving an overdue notice, then the material shall be considered lost and appropriate disciplinary sanctions applied, including the seizure of funds from the offender's account for the repair or replacement of lost, damaged, or destroyed materials. There will be no penalty or disciplinary action for materials that are lost, damaged, or destroyed through no fault of the offender.

H. Offender Services:

1. The prison librarian shall utilize Surpass for a circulation system which will allow offenders, to the extent possible, to check materials out of the library.
  - a. The prison librarian or a trained offender library clerk shall provide at least a minimum level of reference service to include the following:
    - i. Assistance in locating specific materials by author or title.
    - ii. Assistance in locating materials by subject.

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iii. Referral to appropriate reference tools for finding information.

b. The prison librarian or trained offender library clerk shall aid in using library tools such as the card catalog, encyclopedias, and indexes.

c. The prison librarian shall advise users of the availability of materials related to their specific interests and at the appropriate reading level.

2. The prison librarian shall pursue opportunities for expanding library services.

a. The prison librarian shall, with management approval, provide services and programs that stimulate interest in use of the library. Some examples of such services and programs are poetry clubs, trivia contests, book discussion groups, film groups, etc.

b. The prison librarian, in coordination with other program managers, seek opportunities to address offender needs that are not addressed by other program areas. For example, if no other program area provides games for quiet use of leisure time, then the library may provide a selection of board games for quiet in-library use.

3. In Level II and Level III mental health institutions, the prison librarian should provide bibliotherapy services in coordination with mental health team leaders.

4. The prison librarian shall provide for services that help prepare offenders for use of libraries in the community. Arrangement of materials, access tools, finding aids, etc., should follow standard library procedures.

I. Offender Access to Services:

1. All facilities should maintain a library program that meets GDC Library Services standards and the objectives of the GDC Library Services plan.

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2. GDC offenders in Transitional Centers should be encouraged to secure library user cards from the local public library. Information on the policies and procedures, hours of operation, etc. of the local library should be made available to all center residents.
3. The Statewide Librarian shall request funding adequate to meet GDC Library Services standards for the purchase of needed materials and provision of services to ensure meaningful library access to offenders.
4. General and institutional offender orientation shall include information on available library services.
  - a. The Statewide Librarian shall prepare general information on the Department's library program for the GDC Offender Handbook, including information on access, user responsibility and services.
  - b. Each prison librarian shall prepare library orientation material detailing the specific policies and procedures of the respective institution's library.
    - i. These policies and procedures shall be stated in positive terms such as "an offender may," or "library user has the responsibility" rather than categorizing what a user may not do.
    - ii. This library orientation material shall be included in an offender's orientation to the institution.
  - c. Prison librarians shall be encouraged to develop or purchase informational programs for the offenders at their institutions to supplement the information provided during the offender's general facility orientation. These programs may consist of booklets, multimedia kits, or scheduled presentations by library managers. In addition, prison librarians shall be available to answer offenders' questions regarding the library program.

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5. Specific procedures shall be established and maintained to provide for offender access to library services.
6. Accurate library hours shall be posted in the library and offender activity areas so that all offenders can know when the library is open for their use.
  - a. Libraries shall be open and available for offender use for a minimum of 20 hours per week via book cart or facility library, exclusive of meals, counts, etc.
  - b. Facility management shall be kept apprised of library hours.
  - c. Weekend access to library services and books should be through book cart or request services.
  - d. The prison librarian shall establish library hours that allow at least weekly access to all offenders who are not confined to living areas.
  - e. Offenders on work details or facility assignments during daytime weekday hours shall have library access during evening or weekend hours.
  - f. The prison librarian shall provide at least weekly access to library services, through book cart or request services, for offenders who are confined to living areas.
    - i. The prison librarian or an approved library clerk shall visit the administrative segregation area at least once per week.
    - ii. Offenders will fill out a request form during the visit on a designated day. Requests will be filled and returned to the segregation area on the next visit.

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- iii. Offenders in segregation may keep the materials up to seven (7) days.
- iv. All overdue materials must be returned before an offender may check out additional library materials.
- g. Offenders may be denied access to library services for disciplinary or security reasons. Such denial should be documented in the offender's file.
- h. Offenders who abuse library privileges by destroying or failing to return library materials may be denied access to library services.

**J. Offender Collection:**

1. Prison librarians shall annually assess the informational and library-related recreational needs of their respective facility's offenders.
  - a. Prison librarians shall solicit information from at least 10% of the average daily offender population.
  - b. Prison librarians shall interview all program supervisors, the Deputy Warden of Care and Treatment, and any other staff who have insight into the needs and interests of the population.
2. Funding adequate to meet collection standards as outlined in the GDC Library Services standards should be requested for each prison's library program.
3. Each prison librarian shall provide a procedure for offenders to request specific titles for purchase for the library collection or to obtain such titles via interlibrary loan.
  - a. When interlibrary loan services are necessary, prison librarians will communicate with local public libraries to obtain and collect books.

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- b. Prison librarians will pick up and return borrowed materials to public libraries. The staff at the Georgia Public Library Service will work with each prison librarian to obtain the appropriate library cards to facilitate this service.
  - c. Appropriate library cards should be issued in the name of the prison.
  - d. The request form must be approved by the Warden or the Warden's designee.
4. The policy for the selection of materials of each prison library shall be in writing and shall define the principles of selection for library materials including any specific exclusions, the person responsible for the final purchase decision, and selection priorities and criteria.
- a. Donated materials shall be added to the library collection only if they meet the needs of offenders at the prison receiving the materials and satisfy the requirements of that prison's selection policy. Prison librarians shall not assign monetary value to any donated materials.
  - b. All donated materials shall be subject to normal institutional screening.
  - c. The prison librarian shall decide how donated materials are processed, displayed, and used in the library.
  - d. Although materials shall be selected regardless of the race, creed, religion, sex, and national origin of the authors and/or characters, prison librarians shall be sensitive to the specific needs and interests of subgroups of the prison population and select materials that address the needs and interests of those sub-populations when reasonably possible.

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- e. The GDC Library Services plan shall define the emphases and general composition of each institution's collection in conformity with the goals and objectives of GDC Library Services standards.
- f. All institutional libraries shall maintain current magazine subscriptions in ratios of titles per offender as set forth in GDC acquisitions standards.
- g. Institutional collections shall not contain any materials which could clearly and reasonably be expected to present a threat to institutional security and discipline.
- h. Institutional library collections shall not contain any materials which pictorially or in writing describe or portray any sexual conduct or nudity as prohibited by the laws of this State and by the laws of the United States. (Reference SOP 227.06 Offender Receipt of Mail).
- i. The prison librarian shall develop procedures to maintain the prison's library collection at a level that meets the needs and interests of the institution's offenders.
- j. Duplicate materials shall be maintained in the collection only so long as there is a clear demonstrated need by the circulation or use of multiple copies of such materials.
- k. Unused or obsolete materials should be removed from the collection per the following guidelines and disposed of according to GDC disposal procedures, unless these guidelines conflict with current court orders;
  - i. Nonfiction books should be removed if they have not been checked out, as documented by their due date slips, for at least three (3) years.



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- ii. Fiction materials should be removed if they have not been checked out, as documented by their due date slips, for at least two (2) years.
  - iii. Reference materials should be removed when the prison librarian determines that they are not used frequently enough or are not timely or accurate enough to justify their continued maintenance, or when subsequent editions of the same reference work render them redundant or obsolete.
  - l. Unneeded library materials, of no value, may be disposed of or destroyed at the local facility. If the materials have value they will need to be disposed of through the normal surplus program.
  - m. Because offenders have limited access to many print resources, prison librarians should try to set aside unneeded materials for offenders to tear and clip to use in arts and crafts projects in conjunction with the recreation program and on their own if doing so would not present a safety or security issue for the prison.
  - n. When library materials are discarded, property markings shall be uniformly obliterated, or the materials stamped "DISCARD".
5. Prison librarians, with the assistance of the Statewide Librarian and the Georgia Public Library Service shall seek to establish and maintain cooperative agreements with state and regional public libraries to supplement the collection and services offered at prison libraries.
6. Prison librarians shall employ standard library tools and procedures to make their collections accessible to users.

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- a. Each prison library shall maintain a current and accessible author/title/subject catalog of the hardback and paperback library collection per GDC Library Services standards.
  - b. All nonfiction items in the collection shall be classified by the Dewey Classification scheme to at least the Third Summary.
  - c. All fiction items, at minimum, shall be arranged on the shelves by author.
  - d. All items in the library collection shall be labeled with the complete shelf number.
7. The minimum number of materials shall be designated as for in-library use only. In general, this non-circulating designation shall be applied only to the following:
- a. Encyclopedias or other reference materials that function as a set;
  - b. Dictionaries, atlases, directories, current almanacs, etc., which are traditionally consulted for specific items of information or data;
  - c. Legal volumes;
  - d. Indexes and other locating tools;
  - e. Rare or irreplaceable material;
  - f. Current issues of magazines and newspapers; and
  - g. Audio-visual materials.

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8. The newness or attractiveness of an item is not sufficient reason for designating it for in-library use only.

V. **Attachments:** None.

VI. **Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:** None.