

Minimum Conditions for Oregon Public Libraries

In 2019, the Oregon legislature passed [House Bill 2243](#)¹, which updates the legal definition of a public library and establishes minimum conditions for a legally established public library in the state of Oregon.

The legal definition is as follows:

“Public library” means a public agency that provides to all residents of a local government unit free and equal access to library and information services that are suitable for persons of all ages.

As required by the bill, the State Library Board approved the minimum conditions, which were developed by a rulemaking advisory committee. The minimum conditions were broadly based on the "minimum requirements" developed previously by the OLA PLD. The minimum conditions became effective on January 1, 2020 as [Oregon Administrative Rule \(OAR\) 543-010-0036](#)². To be considered a public library, the library must meet the following minimum conditions:

- Include financial support from public funds and regularly scheduled open hours; and
- Provide reasonable exemptions to libraries with service populations of 2,000 or fewer residents of the local government unit.

For background on the development of the minimum conditions, see the [Minimum Conditions for Public Libraries in Oregon](#)³ page on the State Library website.

The minimum conditions became effective on January 1, 2020 as [OAR 543-010-0036](#) and are as follows:

(1) The State Library Board will officially recognize those public libraries that become legally established under one of the methods described in ORS 357.216-286 or 357.400-621 and have met all minimum conditions.

(2) Libraries, that have a service population of over 2000, shall meet the following minimum conditions:

¹ Oregon House Bill 2243,

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2019R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB2243/Enrolled>

² OAR 543-010-0036 Official Recognition of Public Libraries,

<https://secure.sos.state.or.us/oard/viewSingleRule.action?ruleVrsnRsn=262857>

³ State Library of Oregon, Minimum Conditions for Public Libraries in Oregon,

<https://libguides.osl.state.or.us/minconpublibs>

- (a) Have at least half (50%) of its operational financial support from public funds.
- (b) Be open to the public a minimum of 20 hours per week.
- (c) Provide a collection comprising books, media, or electronic resources.
- (d) Offer free public access computers with Internet access.
- (e) Offer free public wireless Internet access (wi-fi).
- (f) Provide a website that enables local library users to access State Library of Oregon resources and services available to all Oregon residents.
- (g) Dedicate at least 0.50 full-time equivalent (FTE) paid staff time exclusively to library functions.
- (h) Have basic policies in place and accessible online for collection management, circulation, and patron confidentiality that incorporate relevant American Library Association (ALA) professional ethical codes, rules, and guidelines.
- (i) Provide basic services for reference and youth services.
- (j) Complete the annual statistical report as required under ORS 357.520 and OAR 543-010-0035.

(3) Libraries, that have a service population of 2000 or less, shall meet the following minimum conditions:

- (a) Have at least one fourth (25%) of its operational financial support from public funds.
- (b) Be open to the public a minimum of 10 hours per week.
- (c) Provide a collection comprising books, media, or electronic resources.
- (d) Offer at least one free public access computer with internet access.
- (e) Offer free public wireless internet access (wi-fi).
- (f) Provide a website that enables local library users to access State Library of Oregon resources and services available to all Oregon residents.
- (g) Dedicate at least 0.25 full-time equivalent (FTE) paid staff time exclusively to library functions.

(h) Have basic policies in place and accessible online for collection management, circulation, and patron confidentiality that incorporate relevant American Library Association (ALA) professional ethical codes, rules, and guidelines.

(i) Provide basic services for reference and youth services.

(j) Complete the annual statistical report as required under ORS 357.520 and OAR 543-010-0035.