WVLS V-Cat Library Card Application and Patron Record Guidelines (updated 4-4-2024)

Required Library Card Application Fields

V-Cat Member Libraries are encouraged to use one of the provided standard library card applications, with their own library's information inserted. If a library chooses to design their own application, it must include the following required fields.

Legal Name: Surname(s)

Legal Name: First Name

Legal Name: Full Middle Name(s)

Former Name: Surname(s)

Birthdate (Month/day/year)

Current/Local Address

Voting/Permanent Address

County of Local Address

City/Town/Village of Local Address

Phone Number

Email

Contact Preference

Minor Application - fines/charges agreement
If signing a library card application for a child/ward, I accept responsibility for return of library materials and any fines or charges incurred. I acknowledge that fines and charges accrued by my child/ward may be due and payable by me on behalf of my child/ward at the option of the library. Initial _____

Minor Application - internet agreement (select one of two options)
I understand that there are no filters on the library's internet stations. With that knowledge, my child/ward has permission to use the library's internet stations. Initial _____
OR
I understand that an additional form is necessary to grant my child/ward permission to use the library's internet stations. Initial _____

Statute acknowledgement:
I hereby apply for borrowing privileges at Library Name and all WVLS V-Cat Libraries. Data on this card is confidential to the extent provided at WI statute 43.30.

Contact acknowledgement
WVLS and all V-Cat Libraries may contact me by text, phone, email or mail about my library activity; the library is not responsible for the confidentiality of these contact points; charges may apply.

Policies/suspension/penalties acknowledgement
By signing this agreement, I agree to comply with the policies of each member library with which I do business. I understand that failure to act responsibly may result in suspension of my library borrowing and use privileges, and that failure to pay library fines or return library materials may result in local and state criminal penalties.

Loss/theft acknowledgement
If my library card is lost or stolen, I understand that I am responsible for charges on my account until the date the library is notified of its loss or theft.

Signature

Signature date

Printed Name

Minor Application - Parent/Guardian Signature

Minor Application - Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Minor Application - Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Minor Application - Parent/Guardian Birthdate

When creating and renewing patron records, library staff are expected to adhere to the following best practices.

Require proof of address and identity for new library card applications
Acceptable forms of Identification
Acceptable forms of ID should include a photograph, name, and birth date.

1. Unexpired driver's license or identification from

    a. US federal, or
    b. US state, or
    c. US possession, or
    d. local, or
    e. school, or

f. tribal government, or

g. military (including Coast Guard and Merchant Mariner)

2. Unexpired US Passport

3. Unexpired foreign passport

4. Unexpired Permanent Resident Card or Alien Registration Receipt Card with photograph or passport with I-551 stamp (INS FORM I-551)

5. Unexpired Temporary Resident Card or Employment Authorization Documents with photograph (INS form I-688, I-688a, or I-688b) or INS form I-94 indicating employment authorization

6. Unexpired Wisconsin State Hunting or Fishing License on a case-by-case basis

If none of the above forms of identification are available,

7. Other unexpired identification including a name, and birth date at the discretion of the library director.

8. Persons unable to meet these requirements will be considered for a library card on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the library director.

Acceptable proof of address

If current address is not on provided identification, a utility bill (or other bill) bank documents (statement, check, passbook), or housing lease/mortgage document the applicant's name may be used.

If none of the above are available, a recently postmarked piece of mail is acceptable. Government land records or property tax documents can also be used to determine an individual's permanent mailing address.

Libraries may also send the library card or post card to the applicant's address—to be returned to the library.

For temporary residents, a dated letter on letterhead stating dates of residency/employment.

Verify the person applying does not already have a patron record.

1. Search for the patron by name and review all records with similar names. Look for a birthdate match to be certain there is not already an existing record for this person.
2. Go to Check Out (Circulation Desk) function
3. Type the letter "n" (to designate the name index) and search by the patron's last name, first initial.
4. After typing the person's last name, first initial, press the <Enter> key or select the Search button

5. Review the browse screen of a list of patron records, for a previously created patron record. If there is a match, or near match, click on the selected patron name on the left hand side of the search results to open the record.
6. If the patron application indicates former or preferred names, search for the patron by name using the above method, to be certain the person did not have a record under another name.

If a matching patron record is found, follow the steps in "Updating Patron Information" to update the patron record. If you determine there isn't already a record for the patron, create a new patron record.

Creating a New Patron Record

Record templates can be customized to prefill fields and prompt for fields. Fixed length fields are prompted first, followed by variable length fields.

Required Patron Record Fields

Every patron record must have the **REQUIRED** fields listed below, and each library's new record template must prompt for them:

1. **Expiration Date – REQUIRED –**
   a. To enter the expiration date, type either the date or c in the box. Typing c displays a calendar to select a date.
   b. Library cards should expire each year on the patron's birth date. If a patron applies for a library card shortly before their birth date, it is acceptable to use the next year's birth date as the expiration date.
2. **Birth Date – REQUIRED –**
   a. Format MM-DD-YYYY
3. **Birth Year – REQUIRED –**
   a. Format YY (last two digits of the year)
4. **Patron Type – REQUIRED –**
   a. When creating a new record, this should match the library where the patron fills out the library card application.
   b. Adult patron types may only be used for patrons that are 18 years or older.
5. **Home Library – REQUIRED –**
   a. When creating a new record, this should match the Patron Type and the library where the patron fills out the library card application.
6. **Patron Agency – REQUIRED –**
   a. When creating a new record, this should match the Patron Type and Home Library, and the library where the patron fills out the library card application.
7. **Patron Code 4 – REQUIRED –**

> Note: Other patron record search indexes include
>
> - "b" for barcode,
> - "h" for phone
> - "w" for email
> - "r" for address
> - "." for patron record number
>
> If you don't know the code for the search index you want, leave the search box empty and click on the search button.
>
> A new window will open with a drop-down menu to choose the index.

> **The following patron record fields should match the location where patron applies for a library card:**
>
> - Patron Type
> - Home Library
> - Patron Agency

a. **This field is very important for statistical and financial purposes. Make every effort to ensure that it is accurate. Once circulation statistics are generated, they cannot be corrected.**

b. Use https://myvotewi.gov/ or similar government resource to assist with selecting the correct municipality.

c. There is no clear legal definition of residency for libraries. It is reasonable and defensible to use either the address where a patron would register to vote, or the address where a patron dwells.

d. WVLS recommends that Library staff should consider where the patron was dwelling when they borrowed the materials/used the library card as when determining residency/patron code 4 designation. If a patron has more than one address, either address can be used to determine Patron Code 4 considering which address is most likely in use when the individual is using the local library regardless of the address being in a different county or state.

How can "residency" be determined for patrons that have 2 WI addresses and one of the residences is in a WVLS county?
Residence at either address can be selected, considering which address is most likely in use when the individual is using the local library.

How can "residency" be determined for patrons that have 2 WI addresses and neither residence is within a WVLS county?
Residence at either address can be selected, considering which address is most likely in use when the individual is using the local library.

How can "residency" be determined for patrons that have a WI address and an address in another state?
Residence at either address can be selected, considering which address is most likely in use when the individual is using the local library.

How can "residency" be determined for patrons with the above scenarios if any one of the two residences is in a county that borders a WVLS county?
Residence at either address can be selected, considering which address is most likely in use when the individual is using the local library.

How should libraries handle patron code 4 for Safe at Home addresses?
Enrollment in Safe at Home allows participants to use and receive mail at an assigned address in lieu of their actual address. Safe at Home then forwards mail from the assigned address to participants' actual address. The patron's actual address becomes confidential and the Safe at Home assigned address listed on the authorization card is used for all purposes. Assign the patron code 4 that matches the address on the Safe at Home authorization card. It is recommended that a message be added to the patron record indicating "This patron has a safe at home address."

8. **Notice Preference – REQUIRED –**

a. "-" default DO NOT USE.
b. "z" Email (all notices sent by email)
    i. Patron record must have a valid email field
c. "p" Phone (all notices sent by Shoutbomb Voice)
    i. Patron record must have a valid Telephone field
    ii. Do NOT include other information in the phone fields such as notes about the phone number.
d. "a" Print (all notices sent by mail, but libraries may choose to call some patrons personally for hold pick up notices)

> **Text Message Notices** – Patrons must self-register by texting SIGNUP to 844-201-0052 and follow prompts. Patrons can receive Email notices in addition to Text messages.
>
> If the Sierra notice preference is set to phone, the patron will only receive text message notices.

9. **Name – REQUIRED –**
    a. Enter Last Name, First Name and Full Middle Name(s)
    b. The full middle name(s) are necessary to help identify patrons with similar names
    c. A Suffix (such as Sr., Jr, III, etc.) must be placed after the patron's middle name. For example: Smith, John James Jr.

10. **Address – REQUIRED –**
    a. The patron's mailing address for billing purposes.
    b. For all address fields, use line 1 for Street address or P. O. Box and line 2 for City, State, Zip.

    How should libraries handle Safe at Home addresses?
    Enrollment in Safe at Home allows participants to use and receive mail at an assigned address in lieu of their actual address. Safe at Home then forwards mail from the assigned address to participants' actual address. The patron's actual address becomes confidential and the Safe at Home assigned address listed on the authorization card is used for all purposes. Remove the patron's actual address from the patron record, if applicable. Also assign the patron code 4 that matches the address on the Safe at Home authorization card. It is recommended that a message be added to the patron record indicating "This patron has a safe at home address."

11. **Address 2 – REQUIRED IF –**
    a. If patron has a P. O. box and residential address,
        i. P.O. Box address goes in Address
        ii. Residential address goes in Address 2
    b. If patron has a temporary local address and a different voting address or permanent address,
        i. Local or temporary address goes in Address
        ii. Voting or permanent address goes in Address 2

12. **Telephone – REQUIRED –**
    a. Use for the patron's primary telephone number
    b. This number is associated with voice telephone notices delivered by Shoutbomb

13. **Barcode – REQUIRED –**
    a. Scan barcode

b. Each patron record should only have one barcode field

c. Each barcode should be unique to one patron record

d. Patron barcodes must start with 23414 or 23468

14. **Email – recommended –**

a. All patrons who have an email address in the email field will receive Courtesy Notice emails approximately 3 days before items are due.

b. If a patron does not want to receive email notices, add the email address in a note field as additional contact information, noting that the patron does not want to receive courtesy pre-overdue emails. Note that in this case bills from the library will be printed and not be sent by email.

15. **PIN – REQUIRED –**

a. Enter the last four digits of the telephone number as the PIN number.

b. Once you have added the PIN and hit OK, it will appear as an encrypted code. To edit the PIN in the future, you will need to highlight the encrypted text and replace it with the last four digits of the phone number again.

c. It is not recommended that staff note the individual's PIN number on the application form

d. Patrons will be able to change their own PIN number online.

16. **Parent / Guardian – REQUIRED IF -**

a. If the patron record is for a minor (under 18 years old) insert the following:

b. Parent's full name

c. Parent's birthdate

d. Please format as Lastname, Firstname Middle Name(s) MM-DD-YYYY

e. Libraries may also add parent's birthdates as a note field in the minor / ward's patron record with the words "Parent/guardian date of birth:"

17. **Patron Alias – REQUIRED IF –**

a. If your library has a publicly accessible hold shelf insert the following:

   i. First 4 characters of the patron's last name, comma, first 2 characters of the patron's first name.

   ii. For example, Luna Zimmer would be Zimm, Lu

Optional Patron Record Fields

The following fields can be used as needed.

1. **Address 3 – optional –**

b. Use IF patron has a P.O. Box, a local address, and a third voting or permanent address.

c. If the P. O. Box is associated with the local residential address

   i. P. O. Box goes in Address

   ii. Local address goes in Address 2

   iii. Voting or permanent address goes in Address 3

d. If the P. O. Box is associated with the permanent address

   i. Local address goes in Address

   ii. P. O. Box goes in Address 2

   iii. Voting or permanent address goes in Address 3

2. **Address 4 – optional NOT recommended –**
3. **Telephone 2 – optional –**
   e. Use for the patron's secondary telephone number
   f. This number is NOT associated with voice telephone notices from Shoutbomb
4. **Telephone 3 – optional NOT recommended –**
5. **Message – optional –**
   g. Use for pop-up alerts for library staff such as:
      i. Preferred name information.
      ii. Lost card information.
      iii. Behavior and banning information.
   h. Always include staff initials + location + date with each message.
6. **Note – optional –**
   i. Use for historical information needed in patron record.
   j. Always include staff initials + location + date with each message.

Do not use patron record fields

The following patron record fields should not be used.
1. **Gender – DO NOT USE –**
   a. Do not collect. In 2023, legal counsel advised V-Cat not to collect gender information.
2. **Mobile Phone Number – DO NOT USE –**
   a. Used with old text message notification system – no longer active.
3. **Unique ID – DO NOT USE –**
   a. V-Cat does not collect Unique ID numbers in the patron record
4. **PAC Access – DO NOT USE –**
5. **Employer – DO NOT USE –**
6. **School – DO NOT USE –**
7. **Horizon patron number – DO NOT USE –**
   a. Historical information from previous ILS
8. **Horizon registration date – DO NOT USE –**
   a. Historical information from previous ILS
9. **Horizon last update – DO NOT USE –**
   a. Historical information from previous ILS
10. **ILL User Name – DO NOT USE –**
11. **Patron Image – DO NOT USE –**
12. **WebPAC Note – DO NOT USE –**

Scheduled Review of Applications and Patron Records

A staff member should review the application and patron record for accuracy. Patron code 4 information should be verified using the address search at https://myvote.wi.gov/ or another similar resource. Then the application may be shredded or retained in a secure locked location depending on the library's records retention policy.

Libraries are responsible for the secure storage of library card applications.

Renewing a Library Card

When renewing a patron's library card/record review all patron record fields for accuracy. Review each field, asking the patron to provide the information, rather than asking if anything has changed or reading it back to the patron. Use the patron's next birth date as the patron record expiration date.

If the patron has recently turned 16, 17 or 18 see additional information below.

Special concerns for 16 and 17 year old patrons

Libraries shall not disclose records indicating the identity of any individual who borrows or uses the library's documents or other materials, resources, or services. Such records may not be disclosed to custodial parents or guardians of 16 and 17 year olds. See Wisconsin state statute 43.30 (Public library records).

Library card expiration dates should be the patron's birth date each year, so that cards expire on a patron's 16th birthday. Library accounts should be unlinked at the patron's 16th birthday, and this should be noted in the patron account.

Upon card renewal, ensure that 16 and 17 year olds are given the opportunity to change their notice preferences and contact information, clearly explaining what kind of information is being shared. For example,

> "The library may contact you about items that are checked out, on hold, overdue, and billed. How would you like the library to contact you about your library activity?"

If the parent/guardian may have used text message notifications, and the 16 or 17 year old would like to receive text message notices instead, text SWITCHPHONE to 844-201-0052 and follow the prompts to enter library card number and pin number. A parent / guardian can also use the DROPCARD keyword to drop the 16-17 year old's card from their text notifications. Changing the patron barcode would also stop Shoutbomb notices from being sent to a parent / guardian.

Also require that 16 and 17-year-olds sign the library card application along with their parents, if applying for a new library card.

Upon card renewal, ensure that 16 and 17 year olds are given the opportunity to evaluate the current linked accounts. A new linking form should be completed to grant linking permissions, or the accounts should be unlinked, at the preference of the 16 or 17 year-old.

Can 16-17 year old patrons apply for a library card without their parent's permission?

Individuals do not have the full rights of an adult until they are 18. They likewise do not have the capacity to contract- we need the parent co-signature and agreement to be responsible for the minor's obligations.

If libraries plan on being able to collect fines and fees, it is a best practice for individuals who are 16 or 17 years old to have their parent's permission to apply for a library card unless the individual has proof of emancipation.

Parents can not revoke a 16 or 17 year old individual's permission to have a library card if the parent refuses to co-sign the application, 16 and 17 year old patrons can possibly be held responsible for lost/damaged library materials if prosecuted in municipal or civil court. This is most likely as a municipal court damage to property claim, however that does not mean a library will necessarily get the money. The court would have to order restitution.

It is possible to offer a library card to a 16 or 17 year old without a parent signature, but it may not be an enforceable contract to collect fines for late materials or fees for material replacement. However, this is not recommended given the opportunity for parent/guardian objections to access, and larger political and legal consequences.

Can title details about items on hold / fines owed be disclosed to parent / guardians of individuals that are 16-17 years old? What about titles placed on hold/ready for pick up at the library?

Wisconsin state statute 43.30 (Public library records) suggests that the default is no sharing of their information. Avoid disclosing the title information. In some circumstances the contact information for library notices is shared with parents / guardians. While the library cannot control what contact points are shared, staff should do their best to ensure that 16 and 17 year olds know the information that is shared in library notices and are provided the opportunity to change their contact information. Do not directly share title information with parents' guardians of 16 and 17 year olds. If the 16-17 year old has a signed linking form to share information with a parent /guardian, it is acceptable to disclose title information. Ensure that 16 and 17-year-olds are given the opportunity to change their notice preferences and contact information, clearly explaining what kind of information is being shared.

If a parent/guardian is paying a fine/fee on a 16 or 17 year old's account and wants to know the title, are library staff required to disclose title information?

No. The billing notices and fine notices should be directed to the 16 or 17 year old. If the 16 or 17 year old has a signed linking form to share information with a parent /guardian, it is acceptable to disclose title information.

Patrons turning 18 – Converting juvenile patrons to adult patrons

Library card expiration dates should be the patron's birth date each year, so that cards expire at a patron's 18th birthday.

Individuals must sign a new library card application when they turn 18.

New adults must provide proof of ID when renewing a library card/filling out a new library card application when they turn 18. If an individual does not have another acceptable form of ID, Student IDs could be allowed for identification purposes.

It is recommended that libraries check the address information is correct, but do not need to verify address if the card is being renewed and juvenile card is being converted to an adult card. If libraries still prefer to verify address, they may mail a postcard and ask the patron to return with the postcard to prove an accurate address is in the patron record.

[Waiving fines on patron records when a juvenile becomes an adult.](#)

It is recommended that overdue fines be transferred to the responsible parent/guardian's patron record or be forgiven for juveniles.

It is recommended that waiving fees for lost/damaged materials be done at the discretion of the patron's library, and that libraries only waive fees for lost/damaged materials on items their library owns. It would be acceptable to reach out to the owning library to request a courtesy waive in some circumstances.

[Transferring fines from juvenile patron records to responsible parent/guardian's patron record when a juvenile becomes an adult.](#)

Can fines or fees accrued on a minor's library card for lost/damaged library materials be transferred to the parent / guardian's patron account?

Yes. It must be acknowledged on the library card application.

It is recommended that both the child and adult have cards.

It is recommended that the child and the adult patron records are linked in Sierra. Fines should be transferred to the adult parent/guardian's account at 16 years old to prevent disclosure of information after the age of 16. Any fines transferred to the adult account after the age of 16 should not include title information.

Linked records should be unlinked when the child turns 16, unless the 16 year old signs a linking form.

Information about transferring fines is included on the application form.

Updating Patron Information

Because we have a fluid society and because notifying another library that a patron has moved in or out of your municipal area is time consuming, the council members approved the following:

> 1. If an existing patron in Sierra has moved into your municipality, and they provide evidence of their new, current address (e.g. a utility bill), it is acceptable to change the home library, patron type, patron agency, and patron code 4 without notifying the previous home library. It is recommended that patrons fill out a new library card application or address change form at this time.

> 2. If an existing patron in Sierra has moved out of a member library's municipality, member libraries can add a message and have the new home library of the patron update the patron record. The new home library will be responsible for updating the patron information.

Online applications

If a patron fills out an online application is it necessary to have the individual visit the library and sign a paper application as well?

Intent of signature needs to be communicated. If the online application contains a statement such as "by electronically signing this form it takes the place of my physical signature", then there is no additional physical signature required. However, if libraries want to keep up the practice of requiring an additional signature it is acceptable.

Storing / Retaining Applications

What are the legal implications for paper copies of applications with a signature? If individual libraries keep paper records with state ID numbers on them, who is responsible if there is a data breach of paper records? Is the V-Cat Consortium or WVLS liable in any way?

It is best if applications are stored in a locked cabinet or secured location. The library is liable for disclosure. It is possible that WVLS could be joined in a suit if records are disclosed, but would not be responsible. Member libraries are solely responsible for obtaining and maintaining library card applications. Member libraries shall save and hold harmless V-Cat Consortium and WVLS for any illegal or accidental disclosure of named records.

If libraries would like to scan paper library card applications to retain them, instead of saving paper copies, is a disclosure required?

No, scans of applications are considered a reasonable facsimile of the original. Applications should be stored in a secure manner.

Linking forms are an extension of the library card application and can be stored/retained on the same schedule as library card applications.

Deletion of Patron Records

Patron records must be purged every three years if libraries report registered users in the Annual Report to the Department of Public Instruction.

If a general schedule or schedule is on file with WI Historical Society, and the deletion of patron records follows that schedule, it is not necessary to notify prior to deleting records.

Linking Cards

What information is legally necessary for linking cards / patrons in Sierra?

Libraries that choose to link patrons must use the recommended V-Cat record linking form. To ensure privacy and informed consent, it is important for all linked parties, including minors/wards, to know who has access to their information. Minors/wards should be invited to sign the linking form along with parent / guardian.

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