

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Federal Bureau of Prisons**



**PROGRAM STATEMENT
Inmate Library Services**

Approved by	 William K. Marshall III Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons
DPI	RSD
Number	1542.07
Date	June 22, 2026

Summary of Changes

Program Statement Rescinded:

- 1542.06 Library Services, Inmate (2/18/1997)

Changes:

- Changes the title of this program statement from “Library Services, Inmate” to “Inmate Library Services.”
- Clarifies weekend library hours and describes examples of alternative methods of access.
- Removes specific reference to the Central Office librarian.
- Removes volunteers and contract personnel from eligibility to coordinate and supervise library services.
- Establishes the utilization of the Education Services Branch page of the Bureau’s intranet site as the main resource for updated guidance on inmate library services.
- Defines department roles in providing library services in restrictive housing units.

1. § 544.100 Purpose and scope.

The Bureau of Prisons provides inmates within each of its institutions with library services necessary for educational, cultural, and leisure activity. The Warden shall ensure that the inmate library has a wide variety of reading materials. Library services shall ordinarily be available to all inmates daily, including evenings and weekends, except in detention facilities where service shall be scheduled as frequently as possible to ensure reasonable access.

Each institution will provide access to a full range of materials for education and leisure purposes. Provisions for establishing and maintaining an institution's legal library are provided in the Program Statement **Inmate Legal Activities**.

a. **Program Objectives.**

- A full range of library services will be provided in accordance with inmate needs, budgetary considerations, and security concerns.
- Each institution will provide access to a full range of materials (e.g., books, magazines, pamphlets, maps, audiovisual materials) for education and leisure purposes as appropriate for institution operations.

b. **Institution Supplement.** None.

2. **§ 544.101 Procedures.**

(a) The Warden shall assign a staff member (ordinarily the Supervisor of Education) responsibility for the inmate library.

The Supervisor of Education (SOE) may delegate the responsibility to coordinate and supervise library services to an Education staff member.

If the person is not a trained librarian, they will receive training in library services in accordance with guidance provided on the Education Services Branch (ESB) page of the Bureau's intranet site.

Staff responsible for the inmate library ensure the library offers:

- an accessible location in a suitable environment (e.g., well-lighted space, good acoustics)
- a logical organization of material
- a simple and effective circulation system
- reference materials designed to locate information as needed
- audiovisual material for education and leisure purposes (as appropriate for institution operations)
- daily hours in proportion to inmate needs, aligned with institution operations, with both evening and weekend hours

The main library will be open to the general population for at least three hours daily and a minimum of six hours over the weekend. Weekend access can occur on Saturday and/or Sunday. An alternative method of access to leisure materials will be made available to inmates when the main library is closed. Alternative methods could include a request and delivery system, mobile circulation carts, or satellite libraries in areas accessible by the population during the main library closure. ESB encourages institutions to allow main library access as frequently as resources allow.

(b) The inmate library shall offer an inmate a variety of reading materials, including, but not limited to, periodicals, newspapers, fiction, non-fiction, and reference books.

The SOE will develop written guidelines to define principles, purposes, and criteria used for selection and maintenance of library materials. The SOE or designee will routinely monitor the circulation material content in accordance with the guidance provided on the ESB page of the Bureau's intranet site. The Program Statement **Incoming Publications** will be followed by the SOE when deciding which publications to accept or reject; the Warden has the final approval authority.

Funds for library services are to be provided from the institution's Education department budget.

The library will have a cost-effective program for the continuous acquisition of new material including both general and specialized reference materials to meet the needs of inmates.

In a cost-effective manner, each library must participate in and promote the use of an interlibrary loan program with local, state, or college libraries and available bookmobile services.

Interlibrary loan program guidance is provided on the ESB page of the Bureau's intranet site.

The library may accept and use free soft-back books and other publications, as well as technical assistance and circulating library collections services, in accordance with Program Statement **Acceptance of Donations**, and guidance provided on the ESB page of the Bureau's intranet site.

[\(c\) Where the population of an institution includes inmates of foreign origin, staff shall attempt to provide reading materials in the inmates' language.](#)

Institutions are encouraged to provide reading materials in various languages to reflect inmates' diverse reading needs. When resources allow and interest exists, reading materials must be provided in languages other than English.

[\(d\) Inmate library services shall be made available to inmates in special housing units.](#)

Inmate library services will be made available to inmates in special housing units and all other types of restrictive housing units, in accordance with the Program Statement **Special Housing Units**, and any other program statement relevant to those units. The SOE should collaborate with the Captain and develop procedures for an orderly delivery and collection system of library services in restrictive housing units. Education will be responsible for purchasing and providing leisure and academic books for use in restrictive housing units. Except for instances authorized by the Warden, Correctional Services staff will be responsible for delivering and collecting library materials to inmates in restrictive housing.

[\(e\) The Warden or designee may authorize the use of inmates as library assistants.](#)

If inmate library assistants are used, the SOE will develop written guidelines addressing at a minimum their selection, training, supervision, and duties.

REFERENCES

Program Statements

Acceptance of Donations

Incoming Publications

Inmate Legal Activities

Special Housing Units

Federal Regulations

28 CFR 544.100-101.

ACA Standards

Performance-Based Standards and Expected Practices for Adult Correctional Institutions (5th Edition): 5-ACI-3D-03, 5-ACI-7C-01, 5-ACI-7E-01, 5-ACI-7E-02, 5-ACI-7E-03, 5-ACI-7E-04, 5-ACI-7E-05, 5-ACI-7E-06, 5-ACI-7E-07

Performance-Based Standards and Expected Practices for Adult Local Detention Facilities (5th Edition): 5-ALDF-5C-01, 5-ALDF-5C-05, 5-ALDF-6A-03

Standards for the Administration of Correctional Agencies, 2nd Edition: 2-CO-3C-01, 2-CO-5C-01, 2-CO-5F-01

Records Retention Requirements

Requirements and retention guidance for records and information applicable to this program are available in the Records and Information Disposition Schedule (RIDS) on the Bureau's intranet site.