
BEYOND BARRIERS: RETHINKING POLICIES FOR INCLUSIVE LIBRARY SERVICES

CARNEGIE-STOUT PUBLIC LIBRARY



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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- ❖ Beth Wahler, Social Work in the Libraries
- ❖ Susan Woody, Director, Des Moines Public Library
- ❖ Ashlan Lippert, Community Resource Specialist, Des Moines Public Library
- ❖ Jason Paulios, Adult Services Coordinator, Iowa City Public Library
- ❖ Kara Logsdan, Assistant Professor, Library and Information Science, University of Iowa

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the 2023-2024 academic year, students from the University of Iowa's Masters of Public Affairs program partnered with the Carnegie-Stout Public Library staff to undertake the creation of best policies and procedures to enhance social service support for individuals in need while also reducing disruptions in the library.

This project is intended to help promote an inclusive and safe environment for all library visitors and address the increasing needs of vulnerable and traditionally underserved individuals visiting the library. This project is driven by several guiding principles including accessibility, support for vulnerable populations, efficiency of staff capacity, continuing development of positive atmosphere in public places, improvement of internal policies and procedures, and the promotion of staff well-being.

Based on briefing from the staff at the Carnegie-Stout Public Library, the library has seen an increase in visits by individuals living with, or recovering from brain health challenges, substance abuse issues, domestic violence, and/or those who have limited or no access to basic human needs such as housing, and food. The staff also mentioned that some socially vulnerable individuals have presented the library staff and volunteers with unique challenges, including the disruption of other library patrons and requesting social services not traditionally provided by the library.

Often these individuals visit the library in search of shelter from the elements or because they are referred by external service agencies. Staff have reported that past occurrences at the library have resulted in police involvement, physical altercations, and/or emotional outbursts. The library staff and volunteers feel that they are unprepared and unequipped to deal with situations such as these. Additionally, these interactions compel library staff to engage in interventions for which they may not have sufficient training.

The Project Partner is seeking policies and practices for their personnel to adequately respond to these events, while still enabling them to provide core library services to other community members.



INTRODUCTION

The roots of homelessness in public libraries can be traced back to the deinstitutionalization of psychiatric facilities in the 1960's, without adequate community-based mental health care alternatives. Along with the deinstitutionalization of public mental health care in the 1960's, individuals were faced with economic downturns, and changes in housing policy resulting in an increase in the homeless population across the United States.

Public libraries have traditionally served as inclusive spaces for all members of the community—although the rise in homelessness has transformed these spaces into a refuge for homeless individuals where they are seeking access to resources, shelter from the outdoors, as well as serving as an opportunity for social interaction.

A 2022 Dubuque policy may be relevant to consideration of library policies. Dubuque police have more authority to move people who are camping in public spaces. The changes in the ordinance will allow police to issue citations to individuals camping in undesignated areas that refuse to move. The city identified 36 campsites in 2022, double the number they had found in 2021. Although unhoused individuals and families are being moved from public locations, the city is attempting to connect them to housing resources. The city has stated that they are working on a caseworker model who will help individuals connect with resources to get them to a healthier place to live. The city plans to discuss this with local nonprofits such as the Homeless Advisory Coalition and the Dubuque Rescue Mission who aim to improve affordable housing options.

While libraries are seeking to maintain their position as one of the last free spaces for all to receive basic services, they must also address safety concerns, hygiene issues, as well as disruptions from other library services. Librarians are having to play multiple roles, as providers of public information, as well as social workers—many who do not have adequate training and resources to handle complex social issues.

This project highlights the importance of considering who policy changes are intended to serve-- and any unintended consequences that may come with it. Although creating a better environment for the library staff at Carnegie-Stout Library will be considered in every recommendation, a focal point is how new policies will impact patrons, both high needs and not, along with the community and the city government.

INTRODUCTION

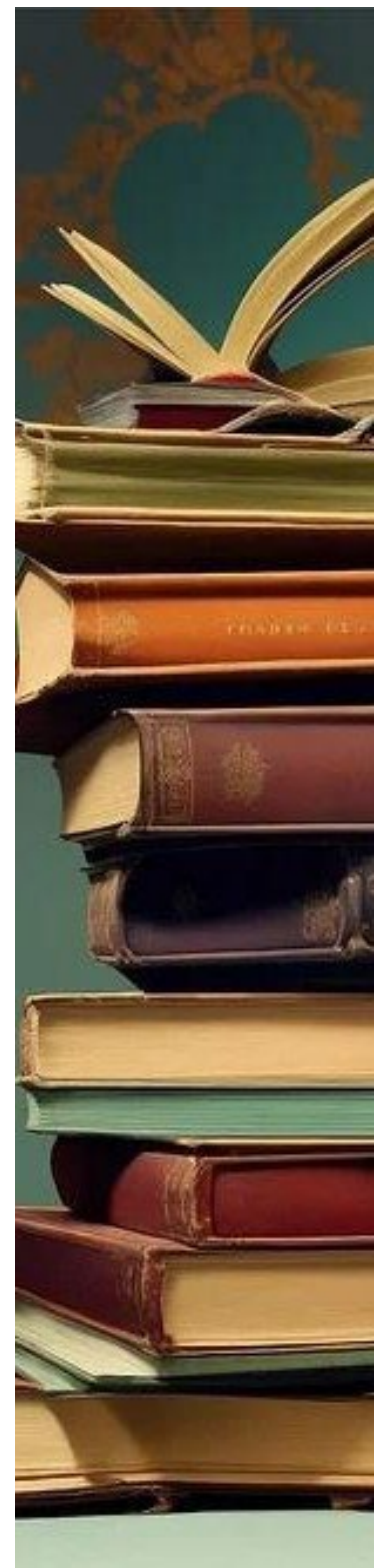
Creating and maintaining relationships with community organizations is at the forefront of actionable steps needed to assist high-needs patrons.

Several social service agencies within the Dubuque area provide important services to individuals and families in need. Most notably, the Dubuque Rescue Mission, Almost Home, and the Teresa Shelter all aid individuals who are experiencing homelessness.

Dubuque also has many community-based organizations that provide emergency food assistance, counseling, and advocacy services to those facing domestic violence or economic hardship. The Dubuque Department of Health and Human Services also aids in helping individuals apply for financial assistance services such as Medicaid, rent reimbursement, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Child Support Services, and more.

A stakeholder analysis was conducted and considered throughout the project. Because of the sensitive nature of this project, individuals who encountered patron disruptions were strategically chosen when gathering survey data and designing potential policy solutions. Throughout this report, internal attitudes and behaviors of library staff were examined along with their ability to address the differing needs of patrons, primarily homelessness.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility as well as economy and effectiveness are at the core of this subject, and were the criterion used to evaluate the recommendations. As many high needs patrons tend to also be a member of a marginalized group (i.e. homeless, in poverty or low-income, minority, etc) a primary concern was creating solutions that allow inclusive and equitable treatment to a diverse population of patrons that allows access to the library and related services while also permitting library staff to tend to regular librarian tasks.



PURPOSE STATEMENT



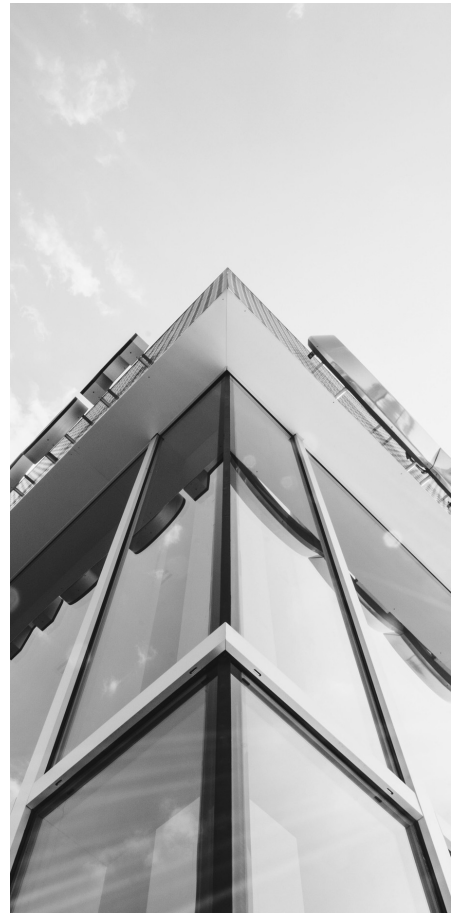
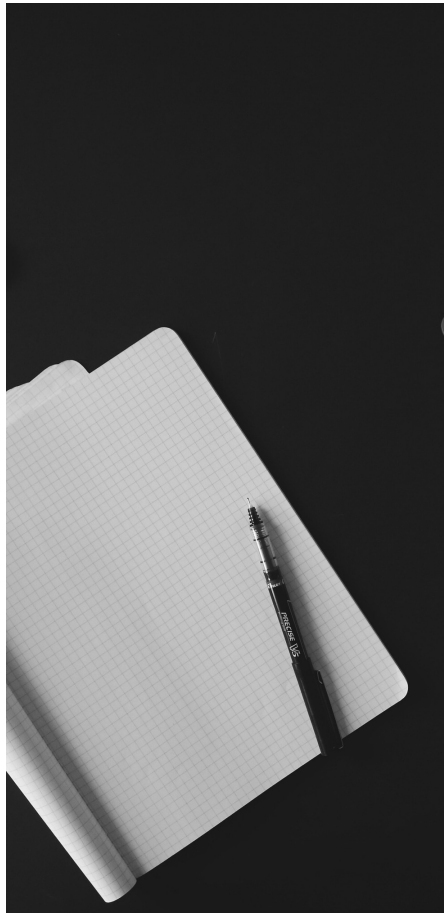
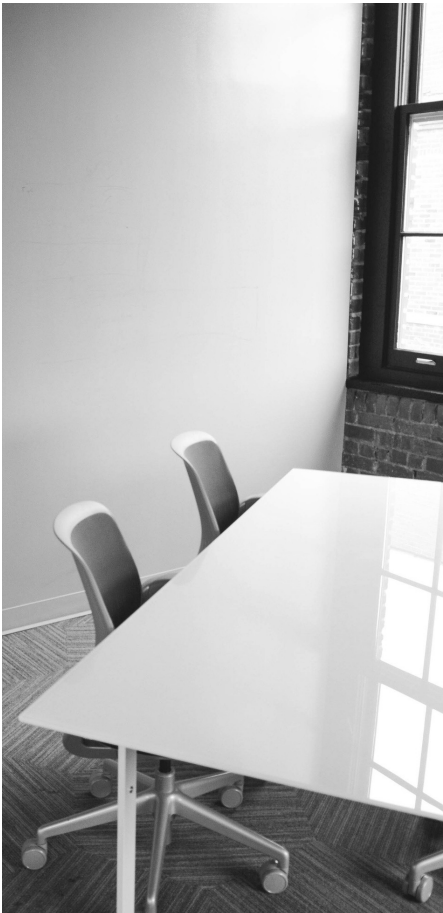
The Carnegie-Stout Public Library project aims to promote an **inclusive and safe environment for all library patrons, and address the increasing needs of vulnerable and traditionally underserved individuals** visiting the library.

This project is driven by several areas of focus including accessibility, support for vulnerable populations, the education and advancement of staff capacity, continuing development of positive atmosphere in public places, improvement of internal policies and procedures, and the promotion of staff well-being.

PROJECT GOALS

Several project goals will be evaluated through lenses of effectiveness, economy, diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility. The areas of focus encompassing reduction in the frequency of disruptions within the library are as follows:

- ❖ Create best internal policies and practices for the staff at the Carnegie-Stout Public Library to provide guidance when they are faced with patron referrals as well as potentially threatening situations
- ❖ Provide an array of policy solutions aimed at reducing disruptive patron behavior
- ❖ Write a policy memorandum for the City Council of Dubuque in favor of hiring a social worker for the public library
- ❖ Assess the library atmosphere for potential de-escalation strategies



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The four areas of focus outlined above will provide a roadmap of tangible outcomes which will benefit the Carnegie-Stout Public Library and individuals visiting the library with increasing need. Providing internal policies and practices for library staff will be integrated into the daily operations of the library. Library staff can use an incremental response to policy violations to refer patrons to the service which best serves their needs, rather than being without resources in a potentially threatening situation.

The scope of the report will uncover the frequency of instances that require intervention by library staff and their impact on staff and other patrons. Additionally, it will identify best policies and practices for library procedures when assisting high risk individuals, develop effective policies and integration strategies for utilizing local community resources to aid patrons, and propose actionable policies for Dubuque Public Library staff to integrate community resources into library operations. Finally, it will examine the feasibility (political, financial etc.) of and challenges in implementing suggested policy solutions. The research process was driven by the following research questions:

- 1 What is the frequency of disruptions from patrons who are experiencing crisis, and what are the impacts to staff and other patrons?
- 2 To what degree do library staff feel equipped to serve patrons experiencing crisis?
- 3 What are examples of best policies and practices for library staff to employ when presented with the challenge of assisting high risk patrons?
- 4 How does the Dubuque Library effectively integrate existing local community resources to assist patrons, and what policies support this integration?
- 5 What policies should the Carnegie-Stout Library staff implement which help staff guide patrons who need assistance?
- 6 How does the political profile of Dubuque allow for suggested policy solutions to be implemented?

METHODS



To answer the research questions, the project team used multiple methods including case studies, literature reviews, a staff survey, expert interviews, and a resource inventory.

Case studies help us to understand the complexities of the increasing number of patrons in need within public libraries across the United States and provide insight into factors that influence behavior and decision making. They outline similar projects to fund a social worker in library areas within Des Moines and Davenport Iowa.

Literature reviews draw from previous studies about situations in which libraries are experiencing an increase in high needs patrons, and the outcomes of these instances. The literature review was used to determine how well-equipped other library staff are to handle patrons in need, and to provide a historical background revealing potential reasons for the increase in high-needs patrons. It also aided in informing decisions about research design, methodology, and data collection techniques.

The **staff survey** was sent to all public facing staff members- 31 total volunteer, part-time, and full-time employees to determine the frequency and impact of high needs patrons, and ability of library staff to accommodate individual's needs. The survey addressed the degree to which library staff feel equipped to serve patrons in need.

Expert interviews were conducted with library social workers, library directors, and library needs experts to evaluate best policies and practices for libraries to enact when presented with the challenge of assisting high needs patrons.

A **resource inventory** was used to determine what resources the Dubuque Public Library currently uses to address situations where high needs patrons are seeking assistance.



COMMUNITY PROFILE



- ❖ The city of Dubuque is well-known as the oldest city in Iowa. It is on the eastern border, with only the Mississippi River separating Dubuque from Wisconsin and Illinois and the city
- ❖ Dubuque is the 11th largest city in Iowa with a **population of 59,667** in 2020.
- ❖ The **average household income is \$63,520** and there are **27,174 housing units** of which **64.8% are owner occupied and 35.2% are rented.**
- ❖ The **average rent is \$915 a month**, and **average monthly housing cost for owners with a mortgage is \$1,301.**
- ❖ In Dubuque, **12.9% of citizens have some nature of disability,**
- ❖ **7.1% are veterans**
- ❖ **13% live below the poverty line.**
- ❖ **93.3% of citizens 25 and older have a high school education or more.** Individuals holding a bachelor's degree or higher between 2018-2022 is 33.1%.
- ❖ **51.2% of the population is female and 48.8% male.**
- ❖ The **unemployment rate in Dubuque County is 4.4%.**
- ❖ **13.9% of residents earn less than half the area median income and are reported to be paying more than 30% of their income on housing while 8.4% spend more than 50% of their income on housing.**

COMMUNITY PROFILE

According to the Institute for Community Alliances (2022) County Level Data Book, in Dubuque County between 2019 and 2021, there were **1,478 individuals who experienced homelessness** which was estimated to equal 967 households.

- ❖ **20% of the 1,478 unhoused individuals are or were involved in domestic violence**
- ❖ **More than half have been diagnosed with a disability**
- ❖ **5% were veterans in the US military.**
- ❖ **Forty-four percent (652) of the 1,478 were earning income**
- ❖ **Almost 8% (116) were considered chronically homeless meaning they have been unhoused for one year or longer.**

Political Profile

In the city of Dubuque, 40% of the population are registered as Democrat (20,671) while 27% (14,078) are registered as Republican. Another 32% (16,405) have no party affiliation. 1% (442) identify as Libertarian.

Dubuque County is represented by Ashley Hinson, a republican, in the U.S. House of Representatives since 2021. Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst are the senators that represent the state of Iowa at the federal level. Regarding state politics, Dubuque has elected one Democrat and 3 Republicans for Iowa Senate, and 2 Democrats and 3 Republicans for Iowa House of Representatives.

Although both major parties have adopted platforms addressing housing policies in the past, there are some major differences between the two. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, Republicans promote responsible homeownership and the reduction of federal government policies on housing. Democrats are proponents of implementing policies combating systemic discrimination and advocating for investments in rental assistance and production of affordable housing stock as well as other social support services.

CSPL PROFILE

Carnegie-Stout Library is on the edge of the downtown district in Dubuque, Iowa. Carnegie-Stout is the only public library in Dubuque, but Dubuque residents are also served by a county library in Dubuque along with several university libraries.

The library is named after generous donations made by Andrew Carnegie, the Stout Family and the Young Men’s Library Association. The library is 54,000 square feet with marble throughout and as an older building thus not designed for current day challenges.

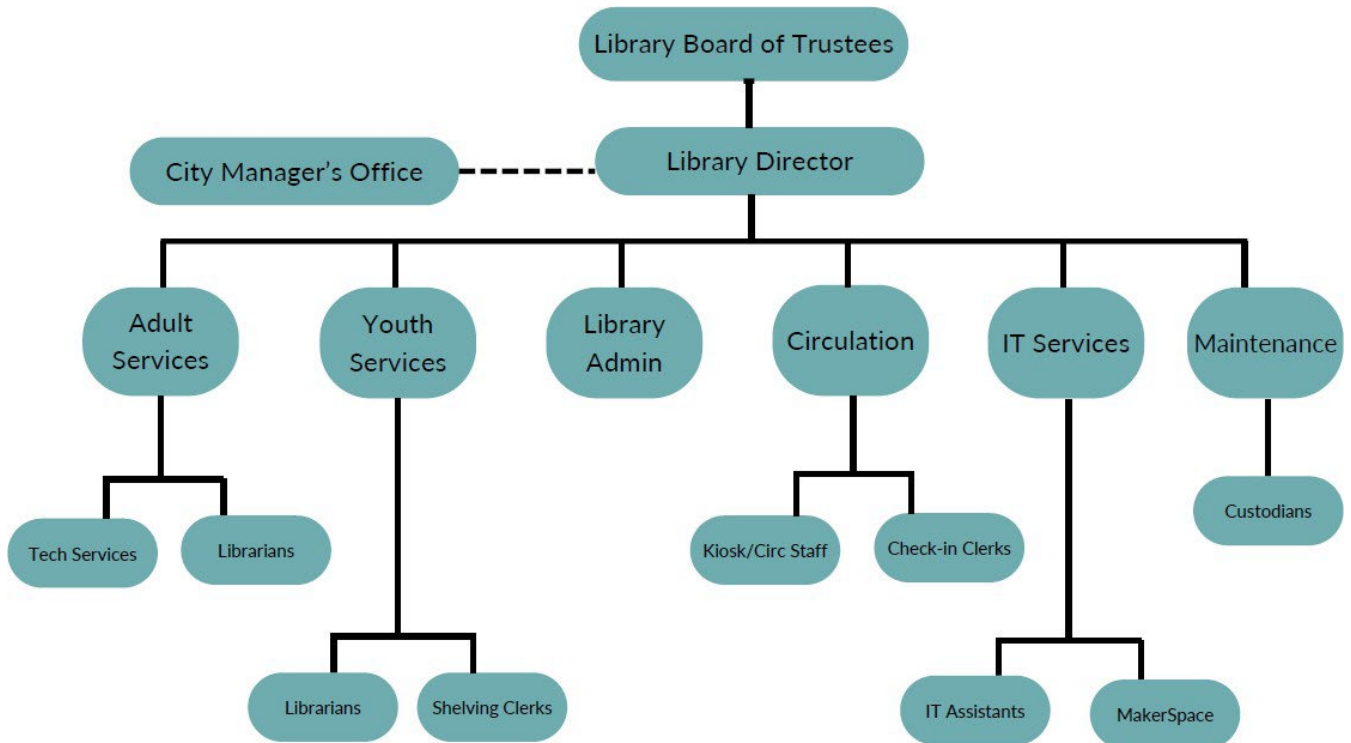
The library is open each day of the week, totaling 61 hours. There are 50 total staff—31 of which regularly interact with disruptive patrons—and a little over 162,000 visits a year.

Currently, Carnegie-Stout lightly outlines patron behavior policies though do not document offenses made by disruptive patrons or the corresponding consequences of their actions. Also, they currently have no internal policies and procedures for staff if an incident occurs, either violating the patron behavior guidelines, or more threatening situations.

Carnegie-Stout is looking to enhance their patron behavior guidelines and obtain a system for a more structured response to disturbances within the library to alleviate stress on staff and create a positive library atmosphere.



CSPL ORG CHART



<https://carnegiestout.org/>

<https://carnegiestout.org/librarypolicies/>

Muchmore, A. "Org Chart ." Received by (Amelia DeRynck), February 10, 2024.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review was conducted to determine the scope of the growing issue of homelessness and other psychosocial challenges in public libraries across the United States. The literature review was also used to determine best policies and practices to assist high needs patrons. **Garner (2023)**, provides understanding for homelessness in public libraries.

The research shows that there has been an increased prevalence of homelessness within public libraries. As there is an increased prevalence of homelessness in the library, staff must be better equipped to meet the needs of these individuals. Often, staff are not trained as social workers, so formal policies are needed to guide staff interactions.

Detailing the collaboration between libraries and homelessness, **(Geisler, 2019)**, provides findings which recognize the value of communication between the two entities. Oftentimes, homeless shelters have “closed hours”, a daytime exclusion policy, in which members of the shelter must find other places to go.

As stated by the **American Library Association (ALA)’s Policy 61**, public libraries in the United States have been expected to play a role in increased accessibility for people experiencing poverty. As librarians are often the first contact for homeless individuals looking for access to public information, benefits from forming partnerships between the library and homeless shelters not only accrue to homeless individuals seeking out public information, but also to the library for fulfilling their duty of carrying out ALA Policy 61.

An assessment was conducted), to determine the psychological needs of patrons and how library services could be enhanced to better address these needs **(Wahler et. al, 2022)**. The top three unmet needs from patrons included: financial needs, food needs, and housing needs. Such needs tend to demand an excessive amount of time and effort from library staff which they do not necessarily have the capacity to meet. It is expressed that needs can be best met by collaborating with a social worker—an individual who has expertise in the areas in which library staff are lacking to provide public services to high needs individuals.

Silver, Judi. “Libraries and The Homeless: Caregivers or Enforcers .” Graduate School of Library and Information Science. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, vol. 2, winter 1996, pp. 2–5.

Wahler, Elizabeth A, et al. “Library patrons’ psychosocial needs: Perceptions of need and reasons for accessing Social Work Services.” *Social Work*, vol. 66, no. 4, 1 Oct. 2021, pp. 297–305, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swab032>.

Wahler, Elizabeth A., Colleen Rortvedt, et al. “Public Library patrons’ views of their psychosocial needs and how the library can help.” *The Library Quarterly*, vol. 92, no. 2, 1 Apr. 2022, pp. 172–187, <https://doi.org/10.1086/718601>.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Another article by (**Wahler et al, 2019**), further defines how social workers can work in collaboration with libraries to best address patron's unmet needs. To frame the issue of increasing homelessness in public libraries, a historical perspective is given beginning in the 1960's with the deinstitutionalization of mental illness increasing the presence of patrons with mental illness at the libraries. Deinstitutionalization combined with the Great Recession during the first decade of the 21st century brought new challenges for patrons experiencing poverty, food deserts, and lack of health care into libraries.

From the library staff survey, many thought that it was their responsibility to try and address these needs such as offering community referrals, assisting patrons with applying for benefits or providing workshops for individuals with unmet mental health needs. To address the growing presence of patrons in need along with library staff being unequipped to meet these needs, public libraries in 19 states (as of 2019) have employed a social worker within a public library.

From **Silver (1996)**, historical perspectives are reinforced as forces influencing the growth of homelessness in libraries. During the 1980's and the aftermath of deinstitutionalization, urban renewal, and de-industrialization, many people uprooted from these factors were forced to find shelter in public spaces such as libraries. Public libraries provide shelter for individuals in need and access to public information, providing an atmosphere of tolerance.

As stated by the ALA's Policy 61, public libraries in the United States have been expected to play a role in increased accessibility for people experiencing poverty.



CASE STUDIES

Iowa City Public Library: Patron Guidelines

The Iowa City Public Library has enacted library use policies which aid library staff in tracking disturbances and maintaining a safe space for all. Policies listed below are only for internal use of intervention for library staff. Most notably, these policies outline who is responsible for responding to disturbances, and immediate action that needs to be taken. From low-level disturbances like what is outlined in the CSPL patron behavior policy such as disturbing odor to major illegal activity such as physical assault, short term and long-term solutions are given to library staff to be able to adequately respond to such behaviors. Infraction examples are also given so staff are adequately prepared before they witness said behaviors.

The Iowa City Public Library is currently not equipped with a social worker, but staff attend frequent trainings in de-escalation. The below guidelines help address research question #3 – “What are examples of best policies and practices for staff to employ when assisting high-needs patrons?”

“Library staff deal with situations every day; you’re not always going to do it right but that’s how you learn.”

- Jason Paulios, ICPL

CASE STUDIES

Des Moines Public Library - Customer Behavior Guidelines

The Des Moines Public Library has employed policies and procedures listed below like that of the ICPL. The policies and procedures below are for internal staff use.

The Des Moines Public Library currently has a social worker on staff, but library staff are still responsible for seeing too disruptive patrons. One notable feature of the internal patron behavior policies from DMPL is that behaviors are tiered in accordance with severity. These clear guidelines for internal customer behavior facilitate effective communication among library staff. They encourage open dialogue, constructive feedback, and conflict resolution strategies, enhancing teamwork and collaboration.

The below guidelines help address research question #3 – “What are examples of best policies and practices for staff to employ when assisting high-needs patrons?”

“We cannot solve these issues. That is not our mission. But our mission is to be able to connect people to the resources that they need.”

-Sue Woody

CASE STUDIES

Brown County, Wisconsin – Community Resource Tuesdays

The Brown County Library in Wisconsin hosts several regular events throughout the week, notably including an event called Community Resource Tuesdays. This event happens every Tuesday from 2:00 – 4:00pm and a different community resource/social service agency participates each week. The Brown County Library updates this often to share what service will be on-site that week which have ranged from county health related services to food pantries and resource centers. The purpose of this event is to help patrons find and sign up for the services they need at a central location so anyone can access this necessary information. This is a great example of something public libraries could implement to ensure equitable access to locating needed services as libraries are free and open to the public.

Kansas City Public Library – North Resource Center

Kansas City Public Library opened a center referred to as North Resource Center located at their Central Library. Their webpage shares that their purpose is “providing individuals experiencing life challenges an inclusive place to access the connections, support, and services they need.” There are 5 staff as well as Social Work practicum students who assist patrons via phone, email, or in-person for four hour each weekday.

Some of the ways that they can help is by assisting patrons in filling out forms for housing, rent, and utilities, obtaining important documents like ID cards and birth certificates, and locating nonprofit agencies with low- cost or free social services such as food pantries, health care services, clothing, or a place to shower. This center serves as a vital community resource hub where workers are ready to help Kansas City’s most vulnerable populations find local resources that could help improve their situation.

CASE STUDIES

Des Moines Public Library – Social Worker

In September 2023, Des Moines Public Library hired social worker Ashlan Lippert as their in-house licensed social worker and community resource specialist. Because library staff advocated to the city council for several years, the social work position was created to alleviate stress from library staff and to adequately address the changing needs of patrons. Before hiring Ashlan, DMPL librarians conducted research on already existing social workers in libraries, as well as created consensus with library staff as to what the role of the social worker would entail.

Ashlan has been at the DMPL for six months and has met with over 350 new patrons seeking assistance with social services. She has assisted patrons with getting housed, applying for social security, medical insurance, food stamps, connecting people to jobs, and more. Lippert is based in the Des Moines Public Library but travels to other libraries within the district as needed.

The decision to hire a social worker in the Des Moines Public Library stemmed from the realization that traditional library resources alone were not fully meeting patrons' complex needs. The integration process consisted of collaboration with city officials, advocating for resources and support to mitigate issues of homelessness and substance abuse within the library.

Library staff worked alongside Beth Wahler who reiterated that the addition of a social worker would not fix all the library's problems, but better provide resources to patrons who are in need. The addition of a social worker within the library has proven instrumental in connecting patrons with resources and services such as bus passes, job applications, and housing, alleviating strain on the staff. Ashlan provides immediate intervention with disruptive patrons and engages in community outreach and collaboration with local nonprofit agencies. Her presence has reduced incidents, although the position has not alleviated disruptions. She has assumed responsibility for "The Outreach Project," connecting patrons in need with different social service providers twice a week. During these events, community advocates will provide information about community resources like meal sites and shelters. They may also offer support and referrals for matters like scheduling a medical or mental health appointment or applying for an ID.

Within the first six months, Ashlan helped in finding permanent housing for 28 individuals. Like Dubuque, Des Moines has a waiting list for individuals seeking permanent housing through HUD. As every day brings something different, she outlines the importance of taking every meeting with every social service organization in the area to best connect individuals to where they need to go.

CASE STUDIES

Davenport Public Library – Social Worker

Davenport Public Library was Iowa's first library to hire a social worker on staff to enhance the library's already provided services to patrons. Anyone seeking services can schedule appointments online to meet one on one with the social worker-- Quinn O'Brian. O'Brian was hired using federal pandemic relief grant money (ARPA), a position which is funded for three years which the library staff hope to convince city council of its need as a permanent position. It is an opportunity to meet people where they're at. She helps individuals with rental assistance, childcare, bus passes, and more.

Kansas City Public Library – North Resource Center

In La Crosse Public Library in Wisconsin, a social worker with the title "resource specialist" was hired, operating out of the library three days per week. With a population of 51,543, where the median income is \$46,438 and the poverty rate is 23.4%, Kate McNamer was hired in the spring of 2022 as part of their CLC ARPA grant local project. The main issues patrons are facing which McNamer aids in alleviating are food insecurity, mental health needs, job seekers, challenges related to aging, and drug/substance abuse.

STAFF SURVEY

To collect data on details regarding occurrences at the library, a survey was sent to staff who interact with the public regularly. The descriptive graphs below illustrate responses to survey questions.

19 staff members completed the full survey and 4 partially completed the survey. The survey analysis considers only the 19 full responses (which also accounts for all written responses to open-ended questions.).

Of the staff members who completed the survey, 11 are full-time and 8 are part-time. Average tenure for full-time staff respondents is 14.3 years, compared to 2.9 for part-time.

Nearly all respondents reported that they assist or encounter patrons with "brain health challenges, substance abuse issues, limited or no access to basic necessities, or domestic violence situations" on a daily basis. When asked how often these interactions "become disruptive," six respondents chose "some", twelve said "few", and one said "none". However, 12 indicated that the issue has become a greater concern over time.

12 respondents feel that they are "probably" or "maybe" able to navigate situations where patrons require social assistance beyond core library services, while 7 said "probably not" or "definitely not". No respondents chose "definitely yes".

7 respondents think disruptive incidents impact the overall library environment "quite a bit" and 10 selected "a little". 11 respondents think incidents deter some patrons from using the library.

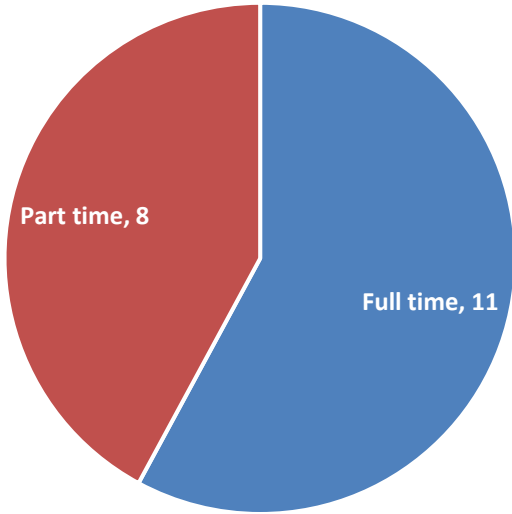
All respondents reported some familiarity with local social services agencies, with 4 feeling "very familiar".

11 respondents "somewhat" or "strongly" agree that hiring a social worker would be effective, while 3 "somewhat" or "strongly" disagree. Feelings about support among decision makers to hire a social worker vary widely.

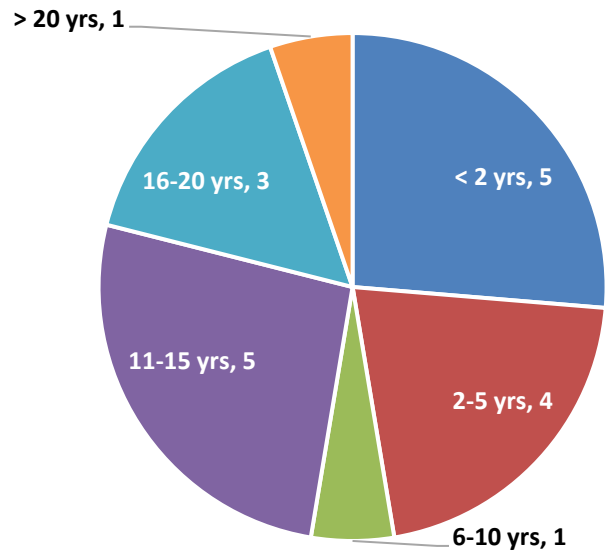
Respondents also responded to open ended questions. Their responses are included in the Appendix.

STAFF SURVEY

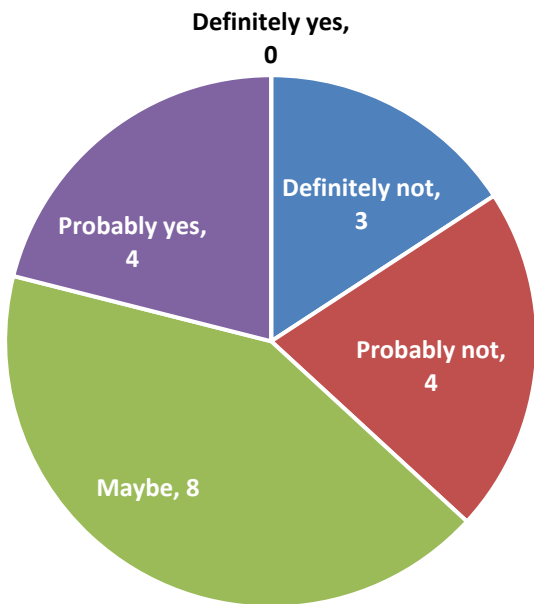
Employment Status



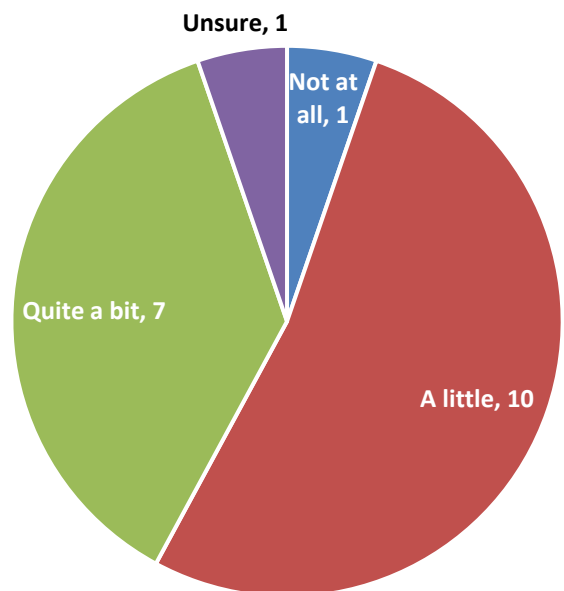
Years of Employment



Do you feel that you are able to navigate situations where patrons require social assistance beyond core library services?

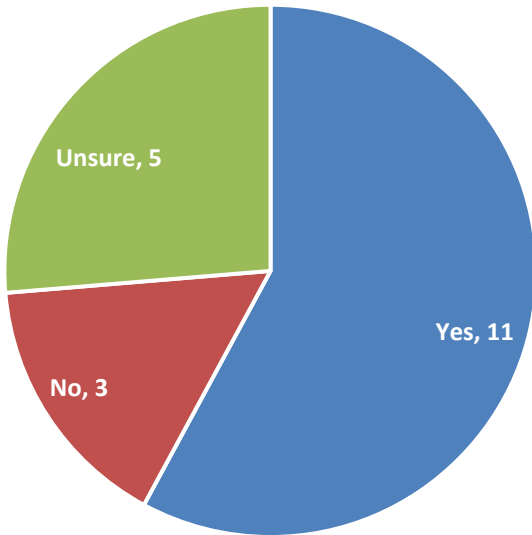


In general, how much do you think disruptive incidents impact the overall library environment?

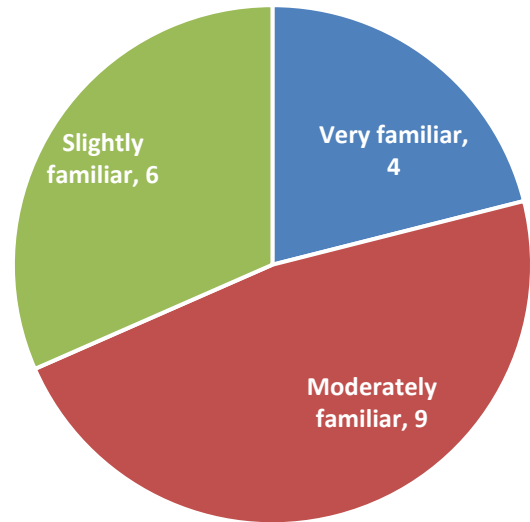


STAFF SURVEY

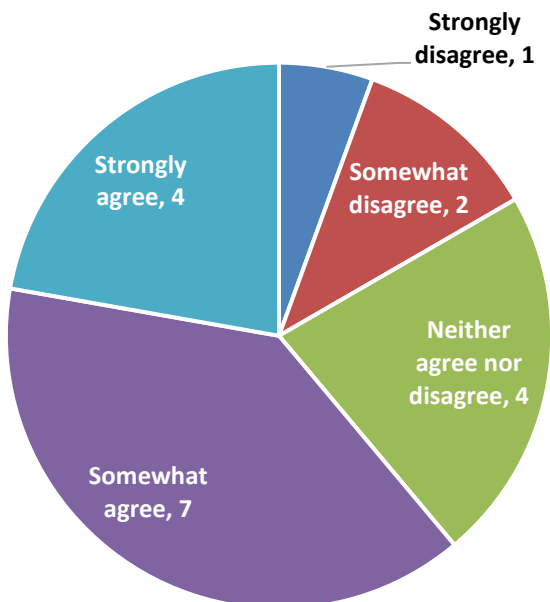
Do you believe disruptive incidents deterring some patrons from using the library?



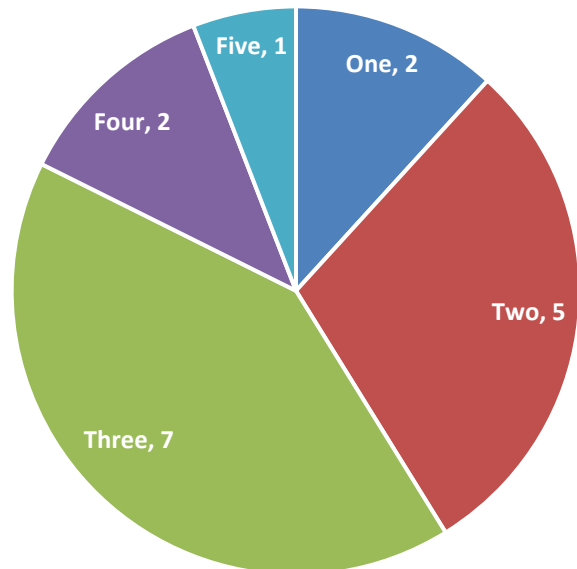
How familiar are you with the local community resources available to assist patrons facing challenges?



Do you think hiring a social worker would be effective?



How much support do you think that decision makers would have for hiring a social worker - (1 = no support and 5 = strong support)



RECOMMENDATION #1

UPDATE PATRON BEHAVIOR POLICIES

Currently, Carnegie Stout Public Library has a list of patron behavior guidelines, but not internal policies and procedures providing guidance to staff about how to deal with disruptions and special challenges. Because the needs and circumstance vary among libraries, no consensus about the role of libraries or the most appropriate polices exists

The internal policies and procedures from the ICPL and DMPL are used to consider new policies for the Carnegie Stout Public Library. Internal policies should give examples of prevalent disruptive behaviors as well as tiered incremental responses to disruptions determined by their severity, which should be clearly defined. Internal policies also provide guidance to determine who is responsible for managing disruptions-- whether that be the library director in a severe situation, or the director of whichever division in which the disruption occurs. The new internal policy should also include consequences determined by severity of behavior and frequency of disruption. Disruptions should be documented.

RECOMMENDATION # 1

CSPL PATRON BEHAVIOR POLICIES

The Board of Trustees believes patrons have the right to a safe, secure, and comfortable library environment with unimpeded access to friendly service and materials in good condition.

Violations of the requirements of this Policy or the commission of any crime on Library property will have consequences. To enforce this policy, Library staff are authorized, but not required, to call for police assistance, security guard assistance, or to take other measures reasonably appropriate and necessary.

A violation of any Federal, State of Iowa, Dubuque County, or Dubuque law or regulation may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Depending on the severity of the violation of this Policy as determined by the Library Director or designee(s), enforcement may include, but is not limited to, issuance of warning(s), immediate request for removal or involuntary removal from the premises, and suspension for a period of time from the library.

1. No CSPL patron shall fail to act in accordance with federal, state, city, and local laws.
2. No CSPL patron shall use Library bathrooms for unreasonable or unintended purposes, including bathing and laundering.
3. Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey taking, soliciting, or selling are prohibited unless authorized by the Director.
4. No patron shall sleep or exhibit the appearance of sleeping, lay down on the floor, benches, or other furniture, have feet on furniture, or block aisles, exits, or entrances.
5. No CSPL patron shall engage in sexual activity of any kind or cause indecent exposure on library premises.
6. No CSPL patron shall harass (including physical, sexual, verbal, or stalking), intimidate, or discriminate against any member of the Library staff or other patron(s) on Library premises.
7. No CSPL patron shall use Library property to view sexually explicit images on the Internet or violate the Library's Internet Acceptable Use Policy.
8. No CSPL patron shall enter non-public or locked areas on Library premises, unless accompanied by a staff member or through prior authorization from a staff member.
9. No CSPL patron shall remove Library materials without authorization; authorization is obtained with a CSPL Library card. CSPL patrons shall cooperate with staff/security/police to allow belongings to be searched in accordance with State law.

RECOMMENDATION # 1

10. Patrons must wear appropriate footwear and clothing while in the Library.
11. Patrons whose bodily hygiene is offensive to cause a nuisance to others must leave the building.
12. No CSPL patron shall consume, possess, or be under the influence of illicit or intoxicating substances on Library property.
13. No CSPL patron shall smoke, vape, or use tobacco products on Library premises or within 25 (twenty-five) feet of the library entrances.
14. Patrons may bring no more than two bags into the library, only one of which may be a small gym bag or school-type backpack. Other acceptable bags are a small store bag, briefcase, laptop bag, messenger bag or purse. Wheeled carts, luggage, bedrolls, and trash bags of any kind are not allowed. Library staff will not store a patron's personal belongings while the patron is in the library.
15. No CSPL patron shall leave packages, backpacks, luggage, or any other personal items unattended. Personal property must be within sight of the owner. Library staff will not store a patron's personal belongings while patron is in the library and the library is not responsible for theft, damage to, or loss of said personal belongings.
16. No CSPL patron shall disrupt other patrons from using CSPL services. Prohibited disruptions include shouting, carrying on loud conversations, or using audible devices without earphones. Cell phone ringers should be set to silent or vibrate.
17. No CSPL patron shall congregate on Library premises in a manner which obstructs, hinders, prevents or disrupts access into or out of the premises or the normal functions carried on in said premises. This policy shall not prohibit peaceful picketing, public speaking, the ordinary conduct of a legitimate business, or other lawful expressions of opinion not in contravention of other laws.
18. No CSPL patron shall use any collections, equipment, facilities and furniture on the Library premises for any means other than their intended purposes. No CSPL patron shall fail to provide proper supervision of children and dependent(s) for whom they are responsible. A parent or caregiver is responsible for their children's safety, behavior and well-being on Library property.
19. No CSPL patron shall enter the library with animal(s) except for service animals necessary for those with disabilities. Service animals are defined as "any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability" (28 CFR 35.104) and also as any animal which is under control and specially trained to assist a person with a disability (Iowa Code Section 216C.11).

RECOMMENDATION #1

VIOLATIONS OF PATRON BEHAVIOR POLICIES

1. Patrons who violate the Customer Behavior Policy will be warned and/or asked to leave the premises and may be suspended for the periods listed below. Anyone suspended at one CSPL building is suspended from all CSPL buildings, unless otherwise specified.
2. CSPL employs an incremental response to policy violations. The following tiers are guidelines only. When multiple behaviors are in violation or the violation is deemed more serious, consequences may increase to the next tiers at the discretion of the manager on duty at that building. Violations by minors may be treated differently and include contacting the patron's guardian. In the absence of a manager, the person in charge (PIC) or security guard is empowered to call the building's manager or Deputy Director, use these guidelines, or ask a person to leave for and give the person a manager's card to contact about consequences.
 - Tier 1 violations are behaviors that temporarily distract or impede from others' use of the library.
 - Tier 2 violations are more problematic behaviors that impede others use of the library.
 - Tier 3 violations are behaviors that substantially impede others' use of the library, violate the law, or threaten the safety of others.

Offense	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
First	Warning and/or leave the building to correct the problem	Warning and/or leave the building to correct the problem	Suspension for three months
Second	Leave the building for the day	Suspension for one week	Suspension for six months
Third	Leave the building for the day	Suspension for one month	Trespass
Fourth	Suspension for one week	Suspension for three months	Trespass

RECOMMENDATION #1

VIOLATIONS OF PATRON BEHAVIOR POLICIES CONT'D

3. All offenses committed within 365 days of the first violation, or the end of the person's last suspension period, are subject to an increased suspension length. If no additional violations of any kind are committed within the 365-day period, any subsequent violation may reset as a first offense. Suspensions may be extended if someone returns during their suspension period.
4. Repeated returns may result in trespass charges.
5. Policy violations in study rooms or Tech Central may result in suspension of privileges in those spaces. Violations on public computers may result in suspension of computer use privileges.
6. When a situation occurs, staff should consider:
 - Do I need the support of a coworker?
 - Is this an illegal activity, library policy infraction, or health/safety (biological) concern? What is my responsibility and authority to respond?
 - Whether this is a one-time occurrence or repeated event, what does the response key instruct me to do?
 - How should I record and/or communicate this occurrence to other staff members?

RECOMMENDATION #1

Behavior as it Appears in the Policy	Tier	Authorized Responders
No DMPL patron shall fail to provide proper supervision of children and dependent(s) for whom they are responsible. A parent or caregiver is responsible for the safety, behavior and well-being of their children at all times on Library property. See DMPL Unattended Child Policy for further details.	1	All Staff—explanation of policy violation upon first offense
Patrons must wear appropriate footwear and clothing while in the Library.	1	All Staff—explanation of policy violation upon first offense
Patrons whose bodily hygiene is offensive to cause a nuisance to others must leave the building.	1	All Staff—explanation of policy violation upon first offense
No CSPL patron shall enter the library with animal(s) except for service animals necessary for those with disabilities. Service animals are defined as “any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability” (28 CFR 35.104) and also as any animal which is under control and specially trained to assist a person with a disability (Iowa Code Section 216C.11).	1	All Staff—explanation of policy violation upon first offense
No patron shall sleep or exhibit the appearance of sleeping, lay down on the floor, benches, or other furniture, have feet on furniture, or block aisles, exits, or entrances.	1	All Staff—explanation of policy violation upon first offense
No CSCPL patron shall use Library bathrooms for unreasonable or unintended purposes, including bathing and laundering.	1	All Staff—explanation of policy violation upon first offense
No CSPL patron shall leave packages, backpacks, luggage, or any other personal items unattended. Personal property must be within sight of the owner. Library staff will not store a patron’s personal belongings while the patron is in the library and the library is not responsible for theft, damage to, or loss of said personal belongings.	1	All Staff—explanation of policy violation upon first offense
No CSPL patron shall use any collections, equipment, facilities and furniture on the Library premises for any means other than their intended purposes.	1	All Staff—explanation of policy violation upon first offense
No CSPL patron shall smoke, vape, or use tobacco products on Library premises or within 25 (twenty-five) feet of the library entrances.	2	All Perm Staff
Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey taking, soliciting, or selling are prohibited unless authorized by the Director.	2	All Perm Staff

RECOMMENDATION #1

No CSPL patron shall disrupt other patrons from using CSPL services. Prohibited disruptions include shouting, carrying on loud conversations, or using audible devices without earphones. Cell phone ringers should be set to silent or vibrate.	2	All Perm Staff
No CSPL patron shall remove Library materials without authorization; authorization is obtained with a CSPL Library card. CSPL patrons shall cooperate with staff/security/police to allow belongings to be searched in accordance with State law.	2	All Perm Staff
No CSPL patron shall congregate on Library premises in a manner which obstructs, hinders, prevents or disrupts access into or out of the premises or the normal functions carried on in said premises. This policy shall not prohibit peaceful picketing, public speaking, the ordinary conduct of a legitimate business, or other lawful expressions of opinion not in contravention of other laws.	2	All Perm Staff
Patrons may bring no more than two bags into the library, only one of which may be a small gym bag or school-type backpack. Other acceptable bags are a small store bag, briefcase, laptop bag, messenger bag or purse. Wheeled carts, luggage, bedrolls, and trash bags of any kind are not allowed. Library staff will not store a patron's personal belongings while the patron is in the library.	2	All Perm Staff
No CSPL patron shall engage in sexual activity of any kind or cause indecent exposure on library premises.	3	All Perm CSPL staff—call police, patron must leave
No CSPL patron shall consume, possess, or be under the influence of illicit or intoxicating substances on Library property.	3	All Perm CSPL staff—call police, patron must leave
No CSPL patron shall harass (including physical, sexual, verbal, or stalking), intimidate, or discriminate against any member of the Library staff or other patron(s) on Library premises.	3	All Perm CSPL staff—call police, patron must leave
No CSPL patron shall use Library property to view sexually explicit images on the Internet or violate the Library's Internet Acceptable Use Policy.	3	All Perm CSPL staff—call police, patron must leave
No CSPL patron shall enter non-public or locked areas on Library premises, unless accompanied by a staff member or through prior authorization from a staff member.	3	All Perm CSPL staff—call police, patron must leave
No CSPL patron shall fail to act in accordance with federal, state, city, and local laws	3	All Perm CSPL staff—call police, patron must leave

RECOMMENDATION #1

FURTHER DEFINITIONS

Suspension (preferred term instead of ban): Library manager has the authority to suspend library privileges (police are not required). In most cases, that will mean the person is not allowed in any CSPL building. The manager can decide to make it just one building or just one type of service. Suspension can be delivered verbally. When possible, a written notice is preferred. An incident report should always be completed when a patron is suspended. A Suspension Form also should be entered, and a note made on the patron's account (if applicable). Police can be called when necessary to notify someone of their suspension, especially if the person refuses to leave. In general, refusal to comply with the manager or security guard issuing a suspension moves the violation up to a stronger consequence.

Trespass (or Criminal Trespass): Only police can notify someone of trespass. Trespass applies to all DMPL buildings. The earliest reinstatement is one year from the incident and must be approved by a library manager or Deputy Director. If the person returns, the police can arrest the person for trespassing. Like a suspension, an incident report, suspension form, and note on the patron's Koha account (if applicable) should be made.

Sleeping Guidelines Policy: No CSPL patron shall sleep on Library premises or exhibit the appearance of sleep in a manner which obstructs, hinders, prevents, or disrupts access into or out of the premises or the normal functions carried on in said premises. We do not ask people to leave because they are sleeping.

Reasons to wake people:

- Wellness check
- Loud snoring
- Sleeping on the floor
- Sleeping in the gateway
- Sleeping in a study room or at a computer
- Blocking walkways
- Moving furniture together

How to wake people:

- Stand back a few feet and use your voice.
- Crouch down, still at a distance, and use your voice.
- Increase volume without yelling.
- Make some noise, clap.
- Do not touch a patron.

If a person doesn't wake up, call the police for a wellness check. If the person wakes up and exhibits other behaviors that aren't allowed, such as alcohol on the breath or violent actions or words, then we can ask them to leave for those reasons.

RECOMMENDATION #2

PROVIDE STAFF TRAINING

Library staff are faced with changing roles of what their primary job description entails. As there has been an increase in patrons in need across the United States, and even internationally, staff frequently experience disruptive and potentially dangerous situations from individuals who are unhoused, suffering from mental illness, are victims of domestic violence, and more.

As staff are not trained social workers, and as part of their job description are not trained in de-escalation techniques, it is imperative to educate library staff, so they feel safe interacting with patrons and to learn how to best serve the differing needs of individuals. Later this year, Beth Wahler will be releasing free training materials regarding mental health and first aid for staff.

Effective staff training in public libraries covers a range of topics, including conflict resolution, de-escalation techniques, cultural competency, trauma-informed care, and understanding community resources. By familiarizing staff with these concepts, libraries can better support patrons facing difficult circumstances and connect them to appropriate services and assistance.

Numerous resources exist to support staff training initiatives in public libraries. These include online courses, webinars, workshops, and conferences offered by library associations such as the American Library Association (ALA) and state library organizations. Additionally, specialized training programs may be available through partnerships with local social service agencies, mental health organizations, or law enforcement agencies. These resources provide valuable insights and practical strategies for addressing the complex needs of library patrons, particularly those experiencing homelessness, mental health crises, or domestic violence.

Training functions as a proactive policy solution for dealing with disruptive patrons by equipping library employees with the skills and confidence to respond effectively to challenging situations. Staff members are trained to recognize signs of distress or agitation in patrons and to intervene calmly and respectfully. They may employ techniques such as active listening, empathetic communication, and offering referrals to relevant community resources. Additionally, libraries may establish clear policies and protocols for managing disruptive behavior, which are reinforced through ongoing training and professional development opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION #3

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The Des Moines Public Library serves as an example of how community organizations can partner with public libraries to reach individuals experiencing crises. From our interview with Community Resource Specialist Ashlan Lipert at DMPL, she provided details about the twice a week community outreach event at the library. She noted that individuals attending the event were 90% unhoused Des Moines residents. Their number one need from patrons coming into the library and seeking help will always be housing. On average, 71 people are at this event twice a week. On the busiest day, the event saw over 223 individuals.

Although the city of Des Moines has a population nearly four times larger than that of Dubuque, the continually large turnout from one location is promising that the event would find success in other communities such as Dubuque. The outreach event was formerly planned and implemented by one of the library staff members, but since the hiring of the community resource specialist, they have taken over the organization and execution of the event.

The community outreach event allows high needs patrons to access social services such as acquiring a valid driver's license and attending public transportation literacy events to get a free bus pass for one month. This event highlights the importance of maintaining relationships with community organizations not only to serve patrons in need but also to alleviate stress from library staff having to act as social workers unable to fulfill their designated role as librarians. A community outreach event in CSPL can be implemented to connect high-needs patrons with resources all in one location.

“Locating partners can be as easy as attending local government meetings, joining meet ups of social service organizations, consulting a directory of local social services, searching the Internet or phone book”

- ALA, 2017

RECOMMENDATION #4

ENGAGE SOCIAL WORKER

Looking to successful implementations at Des Moines Public Library, Davenport Public Library, and La Crosse Public Library, it's clear that embedding social work services within library environments can yield substantial benefits for both patrons and communities.

Carnegie Stout Public Library can benefit immensely from the introduction of a dedicated social worker. This professional would offer tailored assistance to individuals grappling with homelessness, mental health issues, substance abuse, and other complex challenges. Not only would the social worker benefit high- needs patrons, but also alleviate stress from library staff facing high-needs patrons daily.

By providing direct support within the library, such as facilitating access to housing, social security, medical insurance, and employment opportunities, the social worker would address immediate needs while fostering a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.

By creating and maintaining partnerships with local social service agencies and community organizations, Carnegie Stout Public Library can expand its reach and offer comprehensive support networks. Collaborative efforts could include targeted outreach programs, connecting patrons with relevant resources, and organizing workshops or events to address prevalent community issues, which a hired social worker could spearhead.

Integrating social work services into Carnegie Stout Public Library aligns with its mission of education, empowerment, and community engagement.

By integrating the expertise of a social worker and implementing strategies proven effective in similar libraries, Carnegie Stout Public Library can significantly enhance its impact to high-needs patrons and library staff, contributing to the well-being of its patrons and the broader community.



CONCLUSION

Addressing the needs of library patrons experiencing homelessness, substance abuse issues, mental health challenges, and domestic violence situations, and more is not only a social responsibility but also aligns with economic rationale and policy goals such as equity, efficiency, economy, and effectiveness. Failing to address these issues can have significant economic consequences for both the library and the broader community.

Economic rationale for providing services for high needs patrons involves investing in programs and services to support vulnerable populations and can lead to long-term cost savings and benefits. Homelessness and untreated mental health issues often result in increased utilization of emergency services, such as hospitals and law enforcement, which are costly for both taxpayers and service providers. According to a report by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, providing permanent supportive housing for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness can result in cost savings of up to 49% when compared to the costs associated with emergency shelter, incarceration, and hospitalization.

Addressing substance abuse issues and mental health challenges among library patrons can improve their overall well-being and productivity, leading to positive economic outcomes for both individuals and society. Investing in mental health treatment and support services can result in higher employment rates, reduced absenteeism, and increased productivity among individuals with mental health conditions. This not only benefits individuals by improving their quality of life but also contributes to economic growth and stability.

By providing access to resources and support services, libraries can help meet individuals where they're at--ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to access information and participate in civic life.

Also, investing in preventive measures and early interventions can be more cost-effective in the long run than addressing crises or emergencies after they occur, leading to greater efficiency and economy in resource allocation.

Failing to address the increasing prevalence of high-needs patrons within the library creates significant economic costs and consequences. By investing in programs and services to support vulnerable patrons, libraries can promote equity and efficiency while also contributing to the overall well-being and prosperity of the community.

APPENDIX A – CURRENT CSPL PATRON BEHAVIOR POLICY

Carnegie-Stout Public Library

PATRON BEHAVIOR POLICY

The Board of Trustees believes patrons have the right to a safe, secure, and comfortable library environment with unimpeded access to friendly service and materials in good condition.

No person shall engage in any conduct which disturbs or interferes with patrons or employees of the Library.

Sleeping is not permitted in the library.

Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey taking, soliciting, or selling are prohibited unless authorized by the Director.

Patrons must wear appropriate footwear and clothing while in the Library.

Patrons whose bodily hygiene is offensive so as to cause a nuisance to others shall be required to leave the building.

Smoking tobacco or the use of vapor cigarettes is prohibited in the building and on the grounds of the Library.

Patrons should not bring items into the Library larger than a backpack or briefcase and cannot impede passageways in any way.

Any patron who causes a disruption in the Library will be asked to leave. Repeated disruptions by the same patron may result in said individual being temporarily or permanently barred from Library property. Library staff has the authority to exclude any disruptive patron and may summon the police if necessary.

Parents are responsible for their children's behavior while on Library property. The inability of the parent to provide immediate assistance, may result in suspension of Library privileges of the child and his or her parent(s) at the discretion of the Library Director.

Animals are not permitted in the Library, except for service animals or for program activities.

APPENDIX B – COMMUNITY RESOURCES



Men's Emergency Housing

Almost Home - seasonal	563-583-6572
Dubuque Rescue Mission	563-583-1394
Hope House	563-582-9079



Women's Emergency Housing

Mary's Inn (Pregnant)	563-552-6288
Teresa Shelter	563-690-0086



Domestic Violence Shelter

Amani (culturally specific)	1-888-983-2533
Dubuque Community YMCA/YWCA	563-556-1100 or 1-800-332-5899
Friends of the Family	319-352-1108/1-800-410-7233
Iowa Domestic Violence Hotline	800-770-1650 or text IOWAHELP to 20121
Riverview Center	563-557-0310/1-888-557-0310-crisis line
WayPoint Services	319-365-1458/1-800-208-0388



Housing/Housing Assistance

City of Dubuque Housing	563-589-4230
Coordinated Entry Housing Service Hotline	1-833-587-8322
Hillcrest Transitional Housing	563-543-6410
EIRHA/ECIA County Housing	563-556-4166 or 800-942-4648
Maria House	563-582-7480 Hillcrest
PATH	563-588-0605
Support Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)	563-588-0605

APPENDIX B – COMMUNITY RESOURCES



Mental Health Services

Catholic Charities	563-588-0558/800-772-2758
Crisis Text Line for crisis help	Text 741741
Crossroads Counseling Center	563-556-0699
Families First Counseling	888-316-3025
Hillcrest Mental Health & Counseling	563-582-0145/Crisis Line 855-800-1239
Hillcrest Wellness Center	563-690-1239
Iowa Compass- Individuals with disabilities	800-779-2001 or text
Iowa Warm Line (5 pm – 10 pm)	1-844-775-9276
ISU Extension Iowa Concern	800-447-198
National Alliance on Mental Illness	800-950-6264 or text NAMI to 741741
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	800-273-8255/888-628-9454-En Espanol
Your Life Iowa-24/7 crisis support in Iowa	855-581-8111 or text 855-895-8398
The Trevor Project (LGBTQ Crisis and Suicide Hotline)	866-488-7386
Veterans Crisis Line in Iowa	800-273-8255



Substance Abuse Services

Helping Services of Northeast Iowa	563-582-5317
Mercy Turning Point Treatment Center	563-589-8290
Substance Abuse Services Center (SASC)	563-582-3784
The Source	563-583-5440
Substance Abuse & Mental Health	
Services National Helpline	800-662-4357 (English and Spanish)



Legal Services

Iowa Legal Aid	563-588-4653
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APPENDIX C – GUIDELINES FROM IOWA CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Iowa City Public Library 809 Library Use Policy Guidelines – Feb 2023

Phone numbers: Emergency 9-911 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline 9-988

The 809 Library Use Policy is designed to maintain a **safe and pleasant environment** for all Library visitors. It addresses staff intervention regarding library space and environmental factors, visitor behaviors that impede access, health, or safety, and guides expectations for those using Library services. Infractions may result in a suspension from Library premises and the use of Library services. Guidelines for suspension periods may vary based on the severity of a patron’s misconduct and on any past non-compliance by the patron.

When an issue occurs, staff should consider:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do I need the support of a coworker? 2. Is this an illegal activity, library policy infraction, or health/safety (biological) concern? 3. What is my responsibility and authority to respond? 4. Whether this is a one-time occurrence or a repeated event, what does the response key instruct me to do? 5. How should I record and/or communicate this occurrence to other staff members? 			
Infraction Examples	Occurrence	Immediate Response	Authorized Responders
<p>809 Library Policy Infractions <i>Examples of prohibited activities include but are not limited to:</i></p> <p>809.201 Sexual, physical or other harassment including bullying youth or others on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity</p> <p>809.202 Possessing, consuming, selling or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or other substances</p> <p>809.203 Soliciting, panhandling, or gambling</p> <p>809.204 Trespassing or entering Library property when suspended</p> <p>809.205 Impeding passageways through physical presence or with personal property</p> <p>809.302 Using threatening or abusive language.</p> <p>809.303 Running, shoving or throwing things.</p> <p>809.304 Using audible devices without headphones or using headphones set at a volume that disturbs others.</p> <p>809.305 Failing to comply with a staff request, unauthorized entry in a staff area, failure to leave the library during emergencies and at closing time.</p> <p>809.306 Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey taking, posting notices, fundraising or selling, unless authorized</p> <p>809.307 Taking pictures or videotaping people, except at events, unless authorized by the Director or designee and by the patrons involved or parents if minors are present.</p> <p>809.401 Using e-cigarettes, chewing tobacco or other tobacco. See open flame response below under Safety, Odor, Hygiene Concerns.</p>	1	<p>Explanation of Policy Violation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals may not be aware that their conduct is disruptive Articulate problem behavior and explain continued violation may result in suspension of library services Immediate escalation may result if behavior involves actual / potential harm to another person or damage to library property Add conduct report as necessary 	All Staff
	2	<p>1 Day Suspension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 day suspension issued Notify Service Points Add conduct report Call Iowa City Police upon any threat to safety or refusal to leave 	All Perm Staff
	3	<p>1 Week Suspension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 week suspension issued with letter Notify Service Points Update conduct report Call Iowa City Police upon any threat to safety or refusal to leave 	Librarian-In-Charge, Coordinator, Director
	4	<p>1 Month Suspension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow prior procedures 	Librarian-In-Charge, Coordinator, Director
	5	<p>2-11 Months Suspension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow prior procedures 	Coordinator, Director
	Continued Infractions	<p>1-10 Year Suspension</p> <p>Long-term Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-10 year suspension issued with letter Update conduct report 	Director <i>Director may designate a Coordinator to work with the Police to deliver the suspension.</i>

APPENDIX C – GUIDELINES FROM IOWA CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Infraction Examples	Occurrence	Response	Authorized Responders
Major Illegal Activity <i>Examples include but are not limited to:</i> Physical assault - willful injury Intimidation with a dangerous weapon Theft or destruction of Library property (\$100 or more) Indecent exposure of genitals or pubic area Engaging in sexual activity	1	Immediate Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Call Iowa City Police <input type="checkbox"/> Patron must leave and will be notified of long-term response <input type="checkbox"/> Add conduct report 	All Perm Staff
		Long-term Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1-10 year suspension <input type="checkbox"/> Update conduct report 	Director <i>Director may designate a Coordinator to work with the Police to deliver the suspension.</i>

Healthy/Safety (Biological) concerns range from concerning odors to the presence of bed bugs or other contagions which could inflict harm to library staff, visitors, or the collection. Odor, hygiene is considered offensive if it constitutes a nuisance to others or poses a health risk. A higher standard is maintained in limited resources areas.

Infraction Examples	Response	Authorized Responders
Safety, Odor, Hygiene Concerns: <i>Use of open flames including cigarettes, candles, incense, lighters, etc.</i> 809.206 Leaving personal property unattended . Items left unattended will be removed. 809.301 Sleeping , except for attended individuals. 809.402 Personal hygiene, odor or scent that constitutes a nuisance to others or poses a health risk. 809.403 Bringing animals inside Library buildings, with the exception of service animals and those allowed during special Library programs. 809.405 Introducing bed bugs or other pests via returned materials or personal belongings.	Immediate Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Follow Training Procedures for applicable concern: bed bugs, personal property, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Add conduct report Long-Term Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> As applicable, suspend services until concerns are resolved 	Immediate: All Perm Staff Long-term: Coordinator, Director

Appeals Process	
Appeals	Suspensions of one month or longer may be appealed to the Library Director or Library Board by pre-scheduled appointment.
Return Appointment	Return Appointments are required for patrons suspended for one month or longer. A suspension remains in effect until released by Library Staff. If the suspended patron is 17 or younger, a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult must also be made aware of the meeting. The Director may designate a Library Coordinator or Librarian in Charge to meet and process appeals.
Scheduling an Appointment	Patrons may call the Business Office, 319-887-6001, for more information and to make an appointment. Staff are available to answer the telephone on weekdays 8AM-Noon and 1-5 PM. Patrons may email the Director at elsworth-carman@icpl.org .

Please note that this Infraction Response Key and Response Guideline cannot be an exhaustive list of behaviors and outcomes. Staff are required to acquaint themselves with the 809 Library User Policy and other relevant Iowa City Public Board of Trustee policies, to review related City and State code, and to provide knowledgeable responses within the provided framework. Staff are required to administer Library policy in a consistent manner to support clarity in expectations for visitors and staff, to mitigate unconscious bias in staff response, and to eliminate conflicting outcomes. However, every situation is unique and outcomes may vary under particular and situational circumstances.

APPENDIX D – GUIDELINES FROM DES MOINES PUBLIC LIBRARY

Customer Behavior Guidelines

Patrons who violate the Customer Behavior Policy will be warned and/or asked to leave the premises and may be suspended for the periods listed below. Anyone suspended at one DMPL building is suspended from all DMPL buildings, unless otherwise specified.

DMPL employs an incremental response to policy violations. The following tiers are guidelines only. When multiple behaviors are in violation or the violation is deemed more serious, consequences may increase to the next tiers at the discretion of the manager on duty at that building. Violations by minors may be treated differently and include contacting the patron's guardian. In the absence of a manager, the person in charge (PIC) or security guard is empowered to call the building's manager or Deputy Director, use these guidelines, or ask a person to leave for and give the person a manager's card to contact about consequences.

Tier 1 violations are behaviors that temporarily distract or impede from others' use of the library.

Tier 2 violations are more problematic behaviors that impede others use of the library.

Tier 3 violations are behaviors that substantially impede others' use of the library, violate the law, or threaten the safety of others.

All offenses committed within 365 days of the first violation, or the end of the person's last suspension period, are subject to an increased suspension length. If no additional violations of any kind are committed within the 365-day period, any subsequent violation may reset as a first offense. Suspensions may be extended if someone returns during their suspension period. Repeated returns may result in trespass charges.

Policy violations in study rooms or Tech Central may result in suspension of privileges in those spaces. Violations on public computers may result in suspension of computer use privileges.

Offense	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
First	Warning and/or Leave building to correct the problem	Warning and/or Leave building to correct the problem	Suspend three months
Second	Leave the building for the day	Suspend for one week	Suspend six months
Third	Leave the building for the day	Suspend for one month	Trespass
Fourth	Suspend for one week	Suspend for three months	Trespass

APPENDIX D – GUIDELINES FROM DES MOINES PUBLIC LIBRARY

	Behavior as it appears in the policy	Tier
1	No DMPL patron shall fail to act in accordance with federal, state, city and local laws .	3
2	No DMPL patron shall refuse to comply with the lawful directive of a Library staff member, security personnel, or law enforcement officer(s).	3
3	No DMPL patron shall use a false Library card or one that has not been issued to the patron or their dependent(s) by the DMPL. A patron may only use their own Library card to access Library computers or to check out or download materials.	2
4	No DMPL patron shall use any collections, equipment, facilities and furniture on the library premises for any means other than their intended purposes .	1
5	No DMPL patron shall disrupt other patrons from using DMPL services . Prohibited disruptions include, but are not limited to, shouting, carrying on loud conversations, or using audible devices without earphones. Cell phone ringers should be set to silent or vibrate.	2
6	No DMPL patron shall fail to provide proper supervision of children and dependent(s) for whom they are responsible . A parent or caregiver is responsible for the safety, behavior and well-being of their children at all times on Library property. See DMPL Unattended Child Policy for further details.	1
7	All DMPL patrons must be fully clothed , including with shirt and shoes.	1
8	All DMPL patrons must be free of strong, pervasive odors including body odor and odors caused by perfume, cologne or alcohol.	1
9	All DMPL patrons shall share Library equipment and furniture so that no one person monopolizes Library property or prevents others from using them . Adult patrons shall not use seating in the designated youth area when not accompanied by their minor child(ren).	1
10	No DMPL patron shall remove Library materials without authorization ; authorization is obtained by use of a DMPL Library card. DMPL patrons shall cooperate with staff/security/police to allow belongings to be searched in accordance with State law.	2
11	No DMPL patron shall enter the library with animal(s) except for service animals necessary for those with disabilities. Service animals are defined as “any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability” (28 CFR 35.104) and also as any animal which is under control and specially trained to assist a person with a disability (Iowa Code Section 216C.11).	1
12	No DMPL patron shall consume food or beverages within Library buildings except for those non-alcoholic beverages in lidded containers.	1
13	No DMPL patron shall sleep on Library premises or exhibit the appearance of sleep in a manner which obstructs, hinders, prevents, or disrupts access into or out of the premises or the normal functions carried on in said premises.	1
14	No DMPL patron shall use Library bathrooms for unreasonable or unintended purposes , including but not limited to bathing and laundering.	1
15	No DMPL patron shall deposit litter anywhere on Library premises other than in garbage receptacles provided.	1
16	No DMPL patron shall engage in sexual activity of any kind or cause indecent exposure on Library premises.	3
17	No DMPL patron shall smoke, vape, or use tobacco products on Library premises or within 25 (twenty-five) feet of the Library entrances.	2

APPENDIX D – GUIDELINES FROM DES MOINES PUBLIC LIBRARY

18	No DMPL patron shall consume, possess, or be under the influence of illicit or intoxicating substances on Library property.	3
19	No DMPL patron shall harass (including physical, sexual, verbal, or stalking), intimidate, or discriminate against any member of the Library staff or other patron(s) on Library premises.	3
20	No DMPL patron shall use Library property to view sexually explicit images on the Internet or violate the Library’s Internet Acceptable Use Policy .	3
21	No DMPL patron shall leave packages, backpacks, luggage, or any other personal items unattended . Personal property must be within sight of the owner. Library staff will not store a patron’s personal belongings while patron is in the library and the library is not responsible for theft, damage to, or loss of said personal belongings.	1
22	No DMPL patron shall congregate on Library premises in a manner which obstructs, hinders, prevents, or disrupts access into or out of the premises or the normal functions carried on in said premises. This policy shall not prohibit peaceful picketing, public speaking, the ordinary conduct of a legitimate business, or other lawful expressions of opinion not in contravention of other laws.	2
23	No DMPL patron shall use or threaten to use weapons of any type on Library premises. No person shall carry a firearm or weapon into the Central Library or other Library branch that is within a “weapons free zone” as defined by Iowa Code Section 724.4A, as allowed by Iowa law. Weapons shall mean any gun, device, or instrument as defined in Iowa Code Chapter 724 or prohibited in Des Moines Municipal Code Chapter 70, Article III, to the extent allowed by State law.	3
24	No DMPL patron shall conduct media or commercial photography or filming , without prior written permission from the DMPL Director or his or her designees. (See DMPL Photography Policy)	1
25	No DMPL patron shall use skateboards on Library property.	1
26	No DMPL patron shall bring or leave excessive personal belongings into the library in a manner which obstructs, hinders, prevents or disrupts access into or out of the premises or the normal functions carried on in the premises, or which damages or threatens to damage the structure or personal property within the Library. Library staff will not store a patron’s personal belongings while patron is in the library and the library is not responsible for theft, damage to, or loss of said personal belongings. Store-owned shopping carts are not permitted in the library.	2
27	No DMPL patron shall enter non-public or locked areas on Library premises , unless accompanied by a staff member or through prior authorization from a staff member.	3

APPENDIX D – GUIDELINES FROM DES MOINES PUBLIC LIBRARY

Behaviors Organized by Tier

Tier 1

1. Warning 2. Leave 3. Leave 4. Suspend 1 week

- Can't use collections, equipment, etc. for other than their intended purposes (#4)
- Must provide proper supervision of children and dependent(s) (#6)
- Must be fully clothed (#7)
- Must be free of strong, pervasive odors (#8)
- Can't monopolize Library property or prevents others from using them (#9)
- Can't bring in animal(s) except for service animals (#11)
- No food or beverages, except for those non-alcoholic beverages in lidded containers (#12)
- Can't sleep or exhibit the appearance of sleep in a manner which obstructs access (#13)
- Can't use bathrooms for unreasonable or unintended purposes (#14)
- Can't leave litter anywhere on Library premises (#15)
- Can't leave packages, backpacks, luggage, or any other personal items unattended (#21)
- Can't conduct media or commercial photography or filming without approval (#24)
- No skateboarding (#25)

Tier 2

1. Warning/Leave 2. Suspend 1 week 3. Suspend 1 month 4. Suspend 3 months

- Can't use a false Library card or one not issued to the patron or their dependent(s) (#3)
- Can't disrupt other patrons from using DMPL services (#5)
- Can't remove Library materials without authorization (#10)
- Can't smoke, vape, or use tobacco products (#17)
- Can't congregate on Library premises in a way that obstructs, hinders, prevents or disrupts access (#22)
- Can't bring or leave excessive personal belongings into the library (#26)

Tier 3

1. Suspend 3 months 2. Suspend 6 months 3. Trespass 4. Additional year

- Can't Violate federal, state, city and local laws (#1)
- Can't refuse to comply with the lawful directive of Library staff, security, or law enforcement officer (#2)
- No sexual activity of any kind (#16)
- Can't consume, possess, or be under the influence of illicit or intoxicating substances (#18)
- Must not harass, intimidate, or discriminate against staff or other patrons (#19)
- Can't view sexually explicit images or violate the Internet Acceptable Use Policy (#20)
- Can't use or threaten to use weapons of any type; Can't carry a weapon into Central or other Library branch that is within a "weapons free zone" (#23)
- Can't enter non-public or locked areas on Library premises (#27)

APPENDIX D – GUIDELINES FROM DES MOINES PUBLIC LIBRARY

Definitions and Procedures

Lawful Directive: Staff requests that may include asking someone to stop a prohibited behavior, asking someone to comply with a required behavior, or asking someone to leave due to violations of library policies (see policy #2).

Library card: See CSM for exceptions to policy #3 for situations such as when someone designates another person to pick up their holds, etc.

Minors: Because the parent or guardian is responsible for supervising the minor while in the library (see policy #6), behavior concerns should be addressed directly with the parent/guardian if they are present.

Open Records: This document, like most documents created by a public entity, is an open record and can be requested by a member of the public. Refer requests for open records to the Deputy Director.

Reinstatement: To be allowed back in the buildings after a trespass, the patron must talk to a manager or the Deputy Director and be reinstated. At this point, suspension time can be extended past the year, or the person can be allowed to resume library privileges. When reinstated, update the Suspension form in Savannah and remove the note from the patron's Koha account.

Restriction on Koha Account: In addition to making a note on the person's Koha account, you can add a restriction. To add a restriction, use the restrictions tab in the patron's record and add manual restriction. Use the word banned to ban the account from checking out and using the public computers.

Sleeping: See Appendix B for guidelines

Suspension (preferred term instead of ban): Library manager has the authority to suspend library privileges (police are not required). In most cases, that will mean the person is not allowed in any DMPL building. The manager can decide to make it just one building or just one type of service. Suspension can be delivered verbally. When possible, a written notice is preferred. An incident report in Savannah should always be completed when a patron is suspended. A Suspension Form also should be entered, and a note made on the patron's Koha account (if applicable). Police can be called when necessary to notify someone of their suspension, especially if the person refuses to leave. In general, refusal to comply with the manager or security guard issuing a suspension moves the violation up to a stronger consequence.

Trespass (or Criminal Trespass): Only police can notify someone of trespass. Trespass applies to all DMPL buildings. The earliest reinstatement is one year from the incident and must be approved by a library manager or Deputy Director. If the person returns, the police can arrest the person for trespassing. Like a suspension, an incident report, suspension form, and note on the patron's Koha account (if applicable) should be made.

Weapons: See Firearms Law 101 document (Appendix A). For Central and other branches within a "weapons free zone," staff may call the police when someone brings a weapon into the building.

APPENDIX D – GUIDELINES FROM DES MOINES PUBLIC LIBRARY

New firearms laws 101: How to respond at DMPL

WHAT OUR POLICY SAYS: No DMPL patron shall **use or threaten to use weapons of any type** on Library premises. **No person shall carry a firearm or weapon into the Central Library or other Library branch that is within a “weapons free zone”** as defined by Iowa Code Section 724.4A, as allowed by Iowa law. Weapons shall mean any gun, device, or instrument as defined in Iowa Code Chapter 724 or prohibited in Des Moines Municipal Code Chapter 70, Article III, to the extent allowed by State law.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS: Iowa Code Section 724.28 **restricts the library’s ability** to prohibit firearms in DMPL facilities. HF756 went into effect on July 1, 2021, and allows a person to carry a handgun without a permit as long as the individual is not otherwise prohibited by state or federal law from possession of a firearm and abides by all other provisions of the law.

WHAT THAT MEANS FOR BUILDINGS NOT IN A WEAPONS FREE ZONE: DMPL **cannot** require a person who is legally carrying a firearm, who is not otherwise acting in a threatening or hostile manner, to leave library property.

DO provide the same high-quality service to customers who are carrying a handgun.

DO NOT request or attempt to inspect a license or permit of someone carrying a handgun.

DO leave the area and call 911 immediately if you: feel threatened at any time, see someone acting suspiciously, or believe someone is committing or is about to commit a crime. Your safety and those of your coworkers and the public is of utmost importance.

DO NOT call 911 solely because someone is carrying a handgun – either in a holster or concealed that does not rise to the level of suspicious, threatening, or criminal behavior. **However**, carrying a handgun in conjunction with certain behaviors, actions, words, or past experiences with the person may rise to the level of suspicious, threatening, or criminal behavior and provide the basis for calling 911.

DO notify your supervisor immediately if you call 911.

DO NOT bring a weapon to work. Library staff are prohibited from bringing weapons to or using weapons in the workplace as stated in City Violence Prevention Policy 5.29.

WHAT THAT MEANS FOR BUILDINGS IN A WEAPONS FREE ZONE: DMPL **can** require a person who is legally carrying a firearm to leave library property.

DO report anyone with a weapon to the security guard or supervisor to call the police to ask the person to leave the building.

APPENDIX D – GUIDELINES FROM DES MOINES PUBLIC LIBRARY

Sleeping Guidelines

Policy: No DMPL patron shall sleep on Library premises or exhibit the appearance of sleep in a manner which obstructs, hinders, prevents, or disrupts access into or out of the premises or the normal functions carried on in said premises.

We do not ask people to leave because they are sleeping.

Reasons to wake people:

- Wellness check
- Loud snoring
- Sleeping on the floor
- Sleeping in the gateway
- Sleeping in a study room or at a computer
- Blocking walkways
- Moving furniture together

How to wake people

- Stand back a few feet and use your voice.
- Crouch down, still at a distance, and use your voice.
- Increase volume without yelling.
- Make some noise, clap.
- Do not touch a patron.

If a person doesn't wake up, call the police for a wellness check.

If the person wakes up and exhibits other behaviors that aren't allowed, such as alcohol on the breath or violent actions or words, then we can ask them to leave for those reasons.

APPENDIX E – SURVEY QUESTIONS

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this completely anonymous survey conducted by capstone students in the Masters of Public Affairs program. This survey is part of a partnership between the City of Dubuque and the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC), a program of the University of Iowa. For more information, please visit <https://iisc.uiowa.edu/>

This survey is a series of open and closed-ended questions and will take 10-15 minutes to complete. Your answers will not be tied to you in anyway and the individual answers will remain with the capstone team.

This survey will help use better understand the experiences and perceptions among Carnegie-Stout Public Library staff and volunteers regarding interactions with patrons who have unmet needs or special needs (living with brain health challenges, substance abuse issues, limited or no access to basic necessities, or domestic violence situations).

If you would like to reach out to the capstone team, please email us:

1. What is your employment status?
 - Part time
 - Full Time
 - Volunteer
2. How long have you been working at the library?
3. In an average week, how often do you assist or encounter patrons with brain health challenges, substance abuse issues, limited or no access to basic necessities, or domestic violence situations?
4. How often do these encounters become disruptive? 1-2
 - a. All
 - b. Most
 - c. Some
 - d. Few
 - e. None
5. Do you perceive that this issue has gotten better, worse, or stayed the same over time? Better
 - a. Worse
 - b. Stayed the same
 - c. Not sure
6. What are some of the challenges that involve patrons living with brain health challenges, substance abuse issues, limited or no access to basic necessities, or domestic violence situations?
7. Do you feel that you are able to navigate situations where patrons require social assistance beyond basic library services?
8. How do you typically navigate situations where patrons require social assistance beyond basic library services. For each question below, please choose the response that most closely resembles your actions.
9. When a presumably homeless patron is sleeping
 - a. I alert other staff
 - b. I don't intervene
 - c. I wake them up and recommend an appropriate resource

APPENDIX E – SURVEY QUESTIONS

- d. I contact outside service organization for assistance
 - e. Other
10. When a person is being disruptive
- a. I alert other staff
 - b. I monitor but don't intervene unless necessary
 - c. I am able to intervene and find the patron an appropriate resource
 - d. I contact outside service organization for assistance
 - e. Other
11. When there is a domestic violence situation
- a. I monitor closely but don't intervene unless necessary
 - b. I intervene and ask them to leave
 - c. I contact outside service organization for assistance
 - d. Other
12. When I notice there are alcohol and/or drugs present
- a. I monitor closely but don't intervene unless necessary
 - b. I don't intervene
 - c. I intervene and ask them to leave
 - d. I contact outside service organization for assistance
 - e. Other
13. Have you ever called the police in a situation where you felt threatened by a patron or thought they needed social assistance beyond what the library can provide?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
14. If yes, could you elaborate on an instance of this?
15. Please describe any policies, resources, training, or guidance offered by the Carnegie-Stout Public Library to navigate challenging situations with patrons.
16. In general, how much do you think these incidents impact the overall library environment?
- a. A little
 - b. Quite a bit
 - c. Unsure
17. Do you believe it is deterring patrons from using the library?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Unsure
18. If yes, how much do you see these incidents as influencing patrons to change their behaviors about visiting and spending time in the library?
- a. Scale, 1 low impact – 5 high impact
19. How familiar are you with the local community resources available to assist patrons facing challenges?
- a. Not familiar at all
 - b. Slightly familiar
 - c. Moderately familiar
 - d. Very familiar
 - e. Extremely familiar

APPENDIX E – SURVEY QUESTIONS

20. On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate the local homeless service providers collaboration with the library?

a. 1 = negative – 5 = positive

21. Do you think there is an importance in collaborating between library staff and social service agencies that serve certain populations?

Definitely not Probably not Neutral Probably yes Definitely yes

Crisis Intervention services
Substance Abuse Organizations
Homeless shelters
Food Pantry
Domestic Violence Shelter

22. Have you witnessed instances where recommending community resources helped address patrons' needs?

a. Yes
b. No

23. If yes, could you elaborate on an instance of this?

24. Do you think hiring a social worker would be effective?

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

25. How much support do you think that decision makers would have for hiring a social worker

a. 1 = no support and 5 = will support

26. If nothing were done about these occurrences, the occurrences would have an increasingly negative effect on the library environment:

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

27. Is there anything else you would like us to know?

APPENDIX F – OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION RESPONSES

What are some of the challenges that involve patrons living with brain health challenges, substance abuse issues, limited or no access to basic necessities, or domestic violence situations?

I wish that I had more options to do anything other than direct them to other area social services. I also dislike that many library staff make those patrons feel unwelcome, often due to our strict policies of no sleeping or eating and needing to remain quiet.

Direct challenges with patrons include them escalating minor issues, having brain health issues but nowhere to go, and limited access to shelter housing. This often leads to combative interactions that make me uncomfortable and mildly afraid. I wish we had someone that could directly refer these patrons to the appropriate services instead of only being able to give them a phone number to call.

hygiene, home less, storage of items, medication

Becoming too comfortable. Our policy is no sleeping or eating. The library is the first place they find during or after a severe weather condition. We provide a warming and cooling location but won't allow them to sleep or eat in building. The other is personal hygiene.

Things can become quickly become difficult. It is not always possible to anticipate.

Limited access to health care and medication. Limited employment options. Difficulties with technology. Self medication/drug abuse. Local shelters close for parts of the day the library is a safe place to go. Many people in brain health crisis have expressed trauma from sexual assault. The roller coaster of service, person hits bottom gets committed to some type of treatment, comes back apparently on medication with a health aid worker, they do well for a while, then services seem to be scaled back they do okay for a bit then slowly decline until they are once again committed for treatment. I can think of a couple patrons I have watched this cycle with.

Most pose no issue at all, if anything they might require a little more time and attention than other patrons. Usually they just want to know where a public phone is/where they can charge their own phone- if they need assistance beyond that (info on resources, local shelters, etc) they usually go to a librarian.

Odor and hygiene issues, patrons sleeping in library spaces, patrons accompanied by large amounts of baggage and no where to go with it

The public library is used as a daytime shelter for sleeping and eating, which violates library policies and disturbs visitors. There is some drug and alcohol use in the library, loud and disruptive behavior, hygiene issues like body odor, unattended bulky items like packs, suitcases and bedding, and bed bugs. Occasionally there are health and medical emergencies.

APPENDIX F – OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION RESPONSES

What are some of the challenges that involve patrons living with brain health challenges, substance abuse issues, limited or no access to basic necessities, or domestic violence situations?

poverty; access to digital resources;

They come in to feel safe, but they sleep in public areas--lack of access to bathrooms causes may to smell very very bad--it can be disrupting enough that we have to ask people to leave the building until they can get cleaned up.

Many women come in from the area shelters, some look to have been beaten up, some are very nervous about giving us their information

The library reeks of marijuana--I see young adults to older people, people with their kids who come in and they smell strongly of pot or alcohol

We have patrons who are just angry--their life is hard and it makes them angry if they encounter any obstacles at the library

We know we have patrons with brain health issues who come in and claim they are feeling suicidal, or they are very agitated, swearing and talking to themselves, they think someone is out to get them, some will pick fights with other patrons and argue or threaten staff and other patrons

Once in a while things have come to an actual physical altercation between patrons, though usually the threat of calling the police or telling them they have to leave moves the fight outside before it escalates to physical violence

The library is the only place they can go. They don't want to be here but they have no choice.

Lack of housing, no knowledge of available resources, no access to help of any kind.

The biggest challenge is just not being able to meet their needs. It is challenging to communicate effectively with people who do not have their needs met. I try to be as efficient as possible with the questions I ask or instructions I give, so as not to further stress the person. These library users can be disruptive--yelling, fighting, body odor--in a way that breaks library policies and have to be asked to leave from time to time.

One very clear challenge that I see weekly is that the social workers conducting supervised visits and meetings in the very public area (wide open space where anyone is walking by and in close proximity to the Children's Help Desk) of our Youth Services Department evidently do not have another place to meet with their clients. We are privy to all of their private information, as is anyone from the public who is in the department. At times, the interactions are confrontational. Sometimes the parent or child is lying down in the middle of the circle carpet area (a walkway), speaking very loudly or leaves a mess for library staff to clean up. We often need to tell them about library policies, such as turning off the speaker on their cell phone or no eating allowed in the area. Complete histories and extremely private information, including a whole heap of unfortunate circumstances, are shared right out in the open, within earshot of our Children's Help Desk. Whoever is at the desk hears and sees everything.

APPENDIX F – OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION RESPONSES

What are some of the challenges that involve patrons living with brain health challenges, substance abuse issues, limited or no access to basic necessities, or domestic violence situations?

When I think about the experience of living in those types of adverse circumstances, I think about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. So, without food or safety, there isn't room for a number of things central to well-being.

digital resources;

Lack of hygiene: bad odors (requires use of deodorizer products by staff at times) and attempts to bathe in the restrooms (restrooms sometimes require extra cleaning because of this)

Lack of safe place to sleep: sleeping in the library (snoring, laying on floor, unconscious in ways that are indistinguishable from a medical emergency), poor mood, sleeping outside of the library when building closed

Lack of safe place to keep belongings: patrons bring many bags to library which they sometimes leave unattended (leading to theft), sometimes patrons have attempted to "hide" their items in the library overnight for storage, sometimes patrons ask staff to monitor their belongings (which staff *should not* do, but sometimes staff make exceptions which causes more drama)

Substance use in library: there is absolutely drinking, there has been vaping, there have been medical situations or interpersonal conflicts that likely involved other substance use. The building constantly reeks of pot.

Lack of brain health support: frequently patrons are targets of scams that target lonely individuals, patrons trauma dump on staff, patrons ask for help with suicidal ideation (with no good referral options available to staff: 1) call hotline 2) call emergency services), patrons sometimes have brain health crises that result in fights or other aggressive behavior. We have had teen runaways hide in the library. We have had domestic violence victims hide in the library. We have social worker supervised visits happen in the library. We have watched patrons suffer from untreated physical and mental ailments deteriorate in ways that we are unable to intervene or assist, with their lives ending in tragic ways.

Lack of housing: the library building is the de facto "day shelter" for most area unhoused. When the shelters close, the residents come to the library to have somewhere comfortable to be with access to internet and other resources. We have one designated area where patrons can eat. When food gets in other parts of the building, it's harder for staff to clean and we have issues with rodents.

Some days are harder than others, but the frequency of incidents is high enough that staff suffer varying levels of burn out, compassion fatigue, and stress. At times staff have been physically threatened or stalked.

APPENDIX F – OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION RESPONSES

Have you ever called the police in a situation where you felt threatened by a patron or thought they needed social assistance beyond what the library can provide? (13 of 19 reported that they have called the police in the past)

A patron was threatening to commit suicide and was on the phone asking for help, but did not seem to be getting what he needed. We called dispatch so that we could get him some help. I hesitate to call the police unless it's an extreme situation.

Started as a domestic situation. Asked the male to leave and he refused. Yelled cussed and as he was leaving he hit library items and through them in the air.

I have been spat out by a patron and my life threatened. I called dispatch. I have witnessed domestic abuse and when I found a safe place for the abused in the library, my life was threatened. Dispatch was called by another department.

Not that long ago a patron was up set that the library computers opened to the libraries home page, he thought this was a popup trying to scam him. I tried to explain the situation and find a solution for him. He became very agitated and began cursing loudly at me. I calmly told him I would be glad to help him but if he continued to be verbally abusive he would have to leave for the day and we could start over tomorrow. He through back his chair lunged at me like he might strike me. He then proceeded to leave while yelling obscenities at me right before he left the area he threw his coffee at my feet. My co-workers called the police and stayed on the periphery of the incident ready to back me up. I chose not to press simple assault charges as I felt this would only exasperate his already difficult situation.

I have had drunk patrons grab hold of me until I talked them into letting me go.

I have seen a abusers chase their victim into the library had staff slow the abuser down long enough for the victim to lock themselves in the bathroom until police could arrive.

I woke a sleeper who then became argumentative and disruptive, and refused to leave the library when asked. The sleeper left after I called police dispatch.

A patron became angry when asked to leave because he was being disruptive. He became threatening and police were called. They had to physically remove the patron.

A patron said he wasn't feeling well and really wanted to kill himself--he asked me to call him an ambulance--I called 911 for him but was told to tell him officers would come and talk to him (he was known to the police) He waited for awhile, but when it took too long he left on his own

Also had two men starting to get physical with each other and I just called dispatch immediately because we had seen the conflict brewing and I was not going to get between them

APPENDIX F – OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION RESPONSES

Have you ever called the police in a situation where you felt threatened by a patron or thought they needed social assistance beyond what the library can provide? (13 of 19 reported that they have called the police in the past)

A very drunk patron was being extremely disruptive. Another staff member called 911 because of his behavior. I spoke to the patron, thought he was having a stroke and also called 911. The patron left the library, I followed (something I normal don't do, but he was very intoxicated) and saw that he passed out in the alley behind the library. I called 911 again and they finally responded.

Patrons fighting.

The manager called the police when a child refused to leave the library after repeated warnings and after refusing to give the parent's name or phone number.

I had to call the police on a man who exposed himself to me.

I did not call the police but I informed the library director that a banned patron was in the library's Makerspace, When I told them that they were not allowed to be there they started getting confrontational and threatened to burn the place (library) down.

APPENDIX F – OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION RESPONSES

Please describe any policies, resources, training, or guidance offered by the Carnegie-Stout Public Library to navigate challenging situations with patrons.

We have policies of no sleeping in the library and no leaving personal belongings unattended, but there is no specific training offered to navigate these situations. Guidance comes as the situations arise but are not reinforced or communicated effectively.

We have had Blackbelt librarian training in the past. time to do it again.

We had a series of video training with Ryan Dowd that I believe has really helped. His empathy building training has helped most of the library employees to enforce the rules with compassion and empathy to keep everyone safe. Enforce the rules with dignity and respect.

Most library staff have CPR and narcan certification. A good number of us have done most of the Ryan Dowd homeless trainings online. On Staff Development days we have had trainings on approaching difficult situations. All staff is empowered to ask any patron to leave for the day of contact authorities if needed

Training at staff development days, emails from Ryan Dowd at homelesslibrary.com, Documents in the online staff folder

We have patron behavior policies and have had training in previous years on how to deal with disruptive patrons and emergency situations like fire, weather, and active shooters. We have had CPR and Narcan training. Managers and Admin provide some guidance in daily situations. More and ongoing training is needed, and the library spaces continuously evaluated for safety improvements. For example are our AED Defibrillators and Narcan supplies up to date? Are these available on all floors?

We've had law enforcement presentations as well as active shooter training; We subscribe to Ryan Dowd's newsletter and he always has helpful information on how to work together with folks that may need assistance.

We've had workshops with the Police Department--many of us went through the Homelessness Training workshop offered by Ryan Dowd online--our membership has since run out so new staff don't have access to that. We've had other social services and mental health professionals do workshops with us at varying times

Our policy for the most part is to be welcoming to everyone, treat people with respect and give them some space if they seem troubled. Unless they are creating a disturbance with other patrons we usually leave people to their own devices unless they ask for help. If they come to us or seem to be particularly distressed offer any resources we are aware of to them, give them community agency numbers and when the patron seems to be a danger to themselves or to others or if others complain about a person we intervene as necessary

APPENDIX F – OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION RESPONSES

Please describe any policies, resources, training, or guidance offered by the Carnegie-Stout Public Library to navigate challenging situations with patrons.

We've used Ryan Dowd's trainings on how to approach and speak to patrons experiencing homelessness and who are disruptive. The city also offers EAP for patrons who need to talk about situations either at work or in their private lives.

Years of staff training days, continuing education, attempts to build relationships with area service providers and local social work university programs, etc. etc. etc.

We had a one-time emotional intelligence training in 2022. The instructor was a police officer and I think it was about an hour long. Here and there, we get emails from Ryan Dowd with the Homeless Library. I think we had a de-escalation training in 2021. Our patron behavior policy describes what is considered disruptive--it is a very broad description which allows us to cover a lot of behavior under the policy.

My Supervisor forwards emails from Ryan Dowd, who wrote "The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness" and specializes in de-escalation. Otherwise, I refer to our "Patron Behavior Policy."

Our policies state the rules that all must follow such as no sleeping in the library and not being disruptive to others. We have a list of Dubuque County Food Resources that we can use if children are hungry and asking for food. I haven't been offered or given any training, but that is very much needed. The guidance is always to get the manager on duty involved and they take it from there. Because it usually involved the patron refusing to leave, the police are called. I know that there are a few managers who have contact with some of the local shelters, but it's not regular/consistent. A few months ago, the director of one of the shelters came to the library to walk through, but as far as I know, he hasn't been back. When I tried to call him -twice- to share my concerns over one of our homeless patrons, no one ever called back. The next week the police were in and let me know that this patron had been arrested.

APPENDIX F – OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION RESPONSES

Have you witnessed instances where recommending community resources helped address patrons' needs? (11 responses selected "Yes")

During Covid we were still open. We had many hungry patrons in the building. We printed and distributed calendars for services including meals and sleeping services.

Directing patrons to the shelters and meal services does make an impact. This doesn't address the causes.

Have been able to direct patrons to food, ride resources. Also we assist patrons who need assistance on the computer filling out aid forms (rental, government rebates, etc, job applications, etc)

We recently had a young man come to the library--he literally had just gotten to town and was feeling alone and not sure what to do. We helped him find the Rescue Mission, gave him directions and suggested that he start there for a meal and a place to stay for the night. He wanted to stay at the library for awhile so we offered him a quiet room, some resource pamphlets so he could make some calls. He used that time to call the mission and was able to secure a bed for that night.

We had a patron sleeping outside of the library for a over a month and spending all day in the library with his dog. After finally getting to know him we learned he had a housing choice voucher and our director was able to contact the City's housing department to get them involved. I don't know the ultimate outcome but somehow he was able to find housing, but only after we took drastic steps to get involved. He had been asked to leave the Rescue mission because his dog was aggressive.

I mean, I can only hope that it helped. Sometimes. I have way more stories of the local shelters turning away someone in need and then paying for a night in a hotel out of my own pocket, etc. The negatives always stand out more strongly. If the referrals work, we likely don't see that person ever again and will never know what happened, unless there is a police report or an obituary. Or several years later they are released from a facility or jail and right back here facing the same issues they had before.

This past December, I helped oversee our temporary Food Pantry, and I wanted to ensure that the table had pamphlets and physical resources patrons could take along with the food. I was restocking those frequently, so I hope those helped, but I didn't have any explicit interactions with them. Also, I've helped people find some resources and connected them to Resources Unit (a non-profit in Dubuque). Usually, patrons are very grateful when you do help them.

I have never witnessed an instance where community resources were recommended, other than the police being called.

There was an instance where a couple patrons needed assistance navigating an online job search using our computers, after they were assisted I recommended some flyers and other resources available which they accepted and thanked for.

APPENDIX F – OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION RESPONSES

Is there anything else you would like us to know?

my answers may be vague because its the person not the title of the person that is going to help our situation. We have learned to be as personal as we can with the patrons and I don't know if a temporary person coming into the building can have the relationship or rapport we work hard to achieve.

I believe it would stay much the same as it has been for the last 17 years I have been here, with library staff doing the best they can to direct patrons available services.

I love the idea of having a social worker available, but I don't really know how effective it would be--most of patrons who really need the help are in such bad shape because they are unwilling to get involved with any agencies. I almost feel like it would be better if we had kind of an "on-call" social worker who would be able to come in and see someone who would really benefit from talking to them. It would be nice if we had a person we could call and they would be able to give us concrete answers for people that are actually seeking help.

Unfortunately most of the folks coming here are looking for a place to get out of bad weather, to feel safe for awhile, to use a computer. The often leave to use whatever substances they want to use and them come back in. The majority of the those who are in the worst shape do not come to use any of our materials besides the computer and to maybe read the paper.

The frustration I feel is that I worry about someone who loses control and comes in angry with a weapon. I worry about making someone angry enough that they could possibly wait outside and hurt me on my way to my car. I have patrons who I have so much empathy for that it hurts me to not be able to help them. Mental health, homelessness, substance abuse, domestic violence--all of these are issues we deal with in one way or another every day--but I think many of us feel like these issues are too complicated and overwhelming to really be able to help anyone in a meaningful way in our capacity as library staff. Maybe having a trained professional in the library would be the best way to help, but would it be helping the patrons or the library staff?

Staff at the library do their best, however there seems to be a disconnect between the library and other social services agencies. They either don't know the problems we face or they just think that the library is where folks experiencing brain health or homeless problems should hang out all day.

There's no budget to hire a social worker. There's some evidence that libraries with very strong permanent social work programs in other communities face heavier burdens to support those community needs. I like the idea of peer support programs.

There are some decision makers that believe that an armed guard should be present at all times in the library. There are others who are vehemently opposed to this.

APPENDIX F – OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION RESPONSES

Is there anything else you would like us to know?

Libraries are meant to serve everyone not just a few dozen with special needs. We are not a place that can solve or handle these issues. If money is available for a social worker then great, our community needs one, but not here. Rotate at the local shelters to help. People see the library as a daytime shelter and don't visit. That needs to change.

Even if we don't get a social worker, I would like to see proper & continuous training on navigating these interactions with our underserved library users. I don't know if full-time staff are getting this training but part-time staff are not. And I would like to see the library have less involvement with the police.

I'm proud that our library is able to provide a safe, comfortable space for whoever needs it. I truly think that's part of what libraries are for (and why they're great and necessary), so I'm saddened when we can't help people to a full extent. Also, so many of our patrons who are in adverse circumstances are incredibly respectful and kind.

We deal with these occurrences on a consistent basis that most of these occurrences aren't memorable to me, personally, but the comfort level of one individual isn't the same as the rest of the staff.