

Appendix G: MeLCat Resource Sharing POLICIES

1.0 Introduction

Access to information is a fundamental right of all Michigan residents. Since no individual library has the resources available to meet all patron needs, libraries participate in resource sharing services. These services supplement and greatly expand local collections, remove geographic barriers, and are essential to libraries of all types and sizes. Successful resource sharing services depend on the ability to identify, locate, and promptly deliver specific items to library patrons.

The purpose of the Michigan eLibrary Catalog (MeLCat) resource sharing service is to facilitate unmediated, patron-initiated borrowing and lending between participating libraries in Michigan. Participating libraries have agreed to abide by the resource sharing policies in this document. These policies are developed by the MeL Resource Sharing Policies Committee and are based on the ATLAS Interlibrary Loan Policies finalized on February 7, 2002. They become effective upon approval by the State Librarian.

A. *Purpose of the Resource Sharing Policies*

The purpose of the policies outlined herein is to:

- a. support interlibrary cooperation among all types of libraries participating in MeLCat;
- b. encourage continued development of high quality resource sharing services to Michigan library users;
- c. provide standards, guidelines, and protocols for consistent MeLCat practice at the state level;
- d. provide delivery of information and materials across the state in a timely manner;
- e. help ensure equitable lending and borrowing within Michigan.

MeLCat resource sharing services, as defined in these policies, are intended to serve as a supplement to, not a substitute for, local collection development and local automated circulation systems. Participating libraries are responsible for providing their own local circulation systems.

B. *Existing Resource Sharing Arrangements in Michigan*

In Michigan, resource sharing arrangements have been developed by library groups and networks organized geographically or by mutual interest. The intent of these policies is to expand local resource sharing to a statewide level. The policies established in this document are based on accepted national practice and have been designed to be as liberal and easy to use as possible. It is not the intent of these policies to govern resource sharing with libraries outside of Michigan.

C. *Scope of Service*

MeLCat libraries that participate in the resource sharing system are expected to use both the borrowing and lending components of the service.

2.0 Definitions

API

The INN-Reach Application Programming Interface (API) is the set of instructions needed for local system software to interact with the MeLCat system. It is through this interaction

that bibliographic and holdings records are updated either in real time or batch mode on MeLCat. The API also describes all INN-Reach circulation messages between the central server and local systems. API programs can be written by vendors of library systems according to specifications supplied by Innovative Interfaces.

A. *Authentication*

The process used to authorize patrons for access to resources or services. A library card number (or similar library identification number) from a participating library will be used when placing MeLCat resource sharing requests.

B. *Borrowing library (home library)*

The library that borrows items requested by its patrons through the MeLCat resource sharing system. The borrowing library checks out the requested items to its patrons. It is the patron's home library.

C. *MeLCat Staff*

The staff at the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS) responsible for MeLCat implementation, training, and support.

D. *NCIP*

The NISO Circulation Interchange Protocol (NCIP) standard (Z39.83) intended to facilitate communication between diverse circulation and interlibrary loan systems. The standard defines the messages corresponding to circulation transactions such as authenticating patrons, checking-out, renewing, or checking-in items between disparate remote systems.

E. *Non-returnables*

Materials that the lending library does not expect to have returned. Examples of non-returnables include photocopies or facsimiles, fiche to fiche copies, print copies of microfilm, and electronic full-text documents.

F. *Patron Type Coding (Ptype)*

Ptypes are used to define categories of patrons who may have different circulation privileges.

G. *SSH*

SSH (Secure SHell) is a program designed to perform a number of functions, such as file transfer between computers, execution of commands on a remote computer, or logging on to a computer over a network. It does these tasks with greater security than previous programs such as telnet or ftp.

H. *SSL*

SSL is an acronym for "Secure Sockets Layer", a security protocol that provides communications privacy over the Internet. The protocol allows client/server applications to communicate in a way that is designed to prevent eavesdropping, tampering, or message forgery.

I. *Lending library*

The library that supplies an item requested through the MeLCat resource sharing system. The lending library lends the item to the borrowing library.

J. *Transit time*

The time it takes an item to be transported between libraries.

K. *Visiting patron reciprocal borrowing*

In-person borrowing by patrons authorized by their home libraries to check out materials at the lending libraries. Both the home and lending libraries must be participants in the MeLCat reciprocal borrowing service. These patrons are called visiting patrons.

L. *Weekdays*

Weekdays are Monday through Friday, excluding the [Delivery Holidays](#).

3.0 Interlibrary borrowing

A. *Eligible patrons*

The MeLCat resource sharing service is available to registered library patrons at any participating MeLCat library in Michigan. Patrons must be authorized to borrow materials through MeLCat and be in good standing with their local school, public, academic, or special libraries as defined by the policies of their home libraries. The patrons can search, make requests, renew, review status, and cancel requests prior to the items shipping. Patrons may not place holds or recalls on MeLCat items.

B. *Maximum number of MeLCat requests*

Eligible patrons will be allowed to have up to 70 active MeLCat requests at a time. MeLCat requests are active from the time they are made until the requested items have been returned to the lending libraries or until they are canceled.

C. *Patron responsibilities*

Patrons requesting and receiving items through the MeLCat system are responsible for complying with the conditions of loan established by MeLCat and their home libraries. They are responsible for making sure their patron information is up-to-date at their home libraries. Patrons are also responsible for returning items to the library from which they were borrowed on or before the stated due date, as well as for paying any late fees, damage or replacement reimbursement fees while the item is in their possession as determined by the policy of the patron's home library. If patrons return materials to a different library, they may be responsible for any fines assessed by the borrowing library (i.e., their home library).

D. *Eligible libraries*

Any Michigan library may participate in the MeLCat resource sharing service. Participation is voluntary. A participating library agrees to:

- a. loan its requestable materials at no charge;
- b. assign barcodes to returnable items loaned from its collections;
- c. provide access to up-to-date local patron records to be used to authenticate patrons;
- d. register patrons with a barcode or other identification number so they may use the MeLCat system, e.g., by issuing library cards or identification numbers;
- e. use MeLCat's INN-Reach and Direct Consortial Borrowing (DCB) system to check out MeLCat items to its patrons;
- f. compensate the lending library for materials lost or damaged by its patrons;
- g. participate in the designated statewide delivery service;
- h. add its holdings to the MeLCat statewide union catalog;

- i. provide a MeLCat Resource Sharing contact. This contact must subscribe to the MeLCat discussion list. Additional library staff may also be subscribed to the discussion list; and
 - j. abide by the MeLCat statewide catalog and resource sharing policies and procedures.
- E. *Requestable materials*

Libraries are encouraged to be generous about lending their circulating materials.

 - a. Participating libraries are required to make their circulating book collections available for loan with the following exceptions:
 - i. special collections;
 - ii. audio-visual collections;
 - iii. collections required for academic coursework (i.e., reserves);
 - iv. new items, if set to non-requestable via data loading processes.
 - 1. MeLCat staff may request that libraries modify the categories of materials they have made eligible for lending.
 - b. Participating libraries that wish to borrow audio-visual materials must make a significant percentage of their locally circulating audio-visual collection available. Libraries with no locally circulating or otherwise restricted audio-visual collections may [apply for a waiver of this requirement](#).
 - c. As new media formats become available, libraries must review their MeLCat AV policy to determine if additional formats should be available for lending.
 - d. MeLCat staff may review libraries' AV policies and practices as needed.
 - e. Libraries may lend selected materials with the requirement that the borrowing library must handle the item as "library use only." Any materials lent with this requirement must be clearly marked as such. Materials that may be lent as "library use only" must fall into one of the following categories:
 - i. fragile materials;
 - ii. items with multiple art plates;
 - iii. maps;
 - iv. rare materials.
 - f. Borrowing libraries may restrict use of MeLCat-loaned material to "library use only".

F. *Request balancing principles*

The MeLCat resource sharing service goal is to get requested materials to patrons as quickly and efficiently as possible from any participating library in the state. Further, the service seeks to balance lending and borrowing. To balance lending and borrowing, MeLCat staff will regularly monitor usage and adjust the request balancing tables in the software.

4.0 Participating Library Responsibilities

A. *MeLCat implementation (new MeLCat libraries and system migrations)*

a. New MeLCat libraries

- i. Libraries implementing MeLCat resource sharing will be required to complete their system profiling (deciding which of their patron types are

authorized to borrow materials through MeLCat and which of their collections are requestable), data loading, training, and testing before they "go live".

- ii. If a library cannot complete these steps within the scheduled time, it will be re-scheduled.

b. Existing MeLCat libraries and system migrations

- i. Existing MeLCat libraries that migrate to a new local ILS are responsible for notifying MeLCat staff at least 2 months in advance of the migration.
- ii. If the migration library uses Millennium, Sierra, or Polaris (with the Direct to INN-Reach API), they must contract with Innovative Interfaces for INN-Reach exit services.
- iii. Libraries will be required to provide revised system profiling and test data to facilitate the revision of their MeLCat data load profiles.
- iv. Migration work is scheduled around current MeLCat support schedules. If a library cannot provide the profiling and requested data within a reasonable time, their migration may be substantially delayed.

B. *Unautomated libraries*

Libraries without online catalogs and automated circulation systems will be able to participate in MeLCat resource sharing when they have met the minimum requirement for adding their holdings to the MeLCat statewide union catalog. At that time, they may begin inputting patron records to the MeLCat central system and authorizing patrons to make requests.

C. *Turnaround time*

Participating libraries are expected to respond to requests for materials within two weekdays. Unfilled requests are passed to another library's available copy or to cancellation after 6 days. Lending Libraries are expected to process returned materials within two weekdays.

D. *Right of refusal*

While lending libraries are encouraged to loan materials as generously as possible, it is understood that some items may not be loaned because they are in poor condition, not on the shelf, checked out, being processed, non-circulating, or have local restrictions on use. Libraries are expected to provide reasons why they are unable to lend requested materials.

E. *Shipping requirements*

- a. Participating libraries are responsible for including with each of their shipped items:
 - i. Permanent lending library identification
 - ii. MeLCat identifier, no smaller than 1"x2.63", which, for multi-branch libraries, clearly indicates the branch to which the item should be returned
 - iii. Approved MeLCat paging slip.
 - 1. For procedures, see [MeL Book Bands and Book Labels](#) .
- b. MeLCat libraries are required to participate in the statewide delivery service in a way that enables their shipments to be delivered in a timely manner.

- c. A library's participation in MeLCat resource sharing will be suspended during the summer months for libraries using the partial year delivery option.
 - d. Shipping guidelines for all libraries are available on the [statewide delivery service procedures site](#).
- F. *Returning borrowed materials*

Borrowing libraries will return items promptly, follow up with patrons when needed, and use the packaging required by the statewide delivery service.
- G. *NISO Circulation Interchange Protocol (NCIP) requirements*

Participating libraries without an application programming interface (API) between their local systems and the MeLCat system are strongly encouraged, but not required, to obtain NCIP Direct Consortial Borrowing [INN-Reach DCB Application Profile](#) capability for their local systems.
- H. *Closures and suspensions*
 - a. Participating libraries are responsible for notifying MeLCat staff in advance about closures, or periods of suspended service, that will be longer than three weeks and less than four months.
 - i. All suspensions must have an anticipated end date. No open-ended suspensions will be permitted. If a library needs an extension to the suspension period, staff should contact MeLCat staff as early as possible.
 - ii. When a library is suspended from MeLCat, both borrowing and lending will be turned off.
 - b. Service suspensions longer than 4 months may require a withdrawal from MeLCat participation.
- I. *Patron assistance*

Requests for materials are patron-initiated. Borrowing library staff are expected to help their patrons use the resource sharing system and to communicate between their patrons and the lending libraries about items not returned, items damaged, and other situations. Patrons should not be directed to contact the lending library or MeLCat staff.
- J. *Staff responsibilities*

Participating library staff will be authorized for access to the appropriate MeLCat functions after they have completed the required training.
- K. *Management and statistical reports*

Participating libraries will be responsible for monitoring their own MeLCat management and statistical reports for their lending and borrowing activities and for following up on materials identified in tracking reports. Library staff are required to respond promptly to inquiries from other libraries and from MeLCat staff.
- L. *MeLCat system evaluation*

Libraries will be expected to participate in staff and patron evaluations as needed.
- M. *Withdrawal from MeLCat participation*

If a library decides to withdraw from MeLCat participation, it will be responsible for responding to MeLCat resource sharing requests until a mutually-agreed date within three months notice of withdrawal.
- N. *Rejoining MeLCat after a withdrawal from participation*

Libraries wishing to rejoin MeLCat after a withdrawal will need to repeat the MeLCat implementation process. This will result in the library being placed at the end of the loading queue, generally requiring a wait of more than one year.

5.0 Patron Records

A. *Standards*

Participating libraries must provide access to up-to-date records for their patrons who are eligible to request MeLCat items. Records for other patrons may also be provided and identified as ineligible to make requests. At least two test patron records must be provided. The patron records must have the patron's name, identifier such as a barcode, expiration date, and patron type coding. Optionally, the patron records may also include the patron's address, telephone number, email address, PIN, and blocks, e.g., for money owed.

B. *Updating requirements*

Daily updates of new and changed patron information are recommended. The frequency of patron record updates is at the discretion of the participating library. Patron record deletions can be done as part of the daily update process or on a quarterly basis, depending on local system capabilities.

C. *Patron privacy*

Participating libraries are responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of patron records according to the Michigan Library Privacy Act, PA 455 of 1982 as amended. For information see: [Michigan Library Privacy Act](#) .

D. *Patron records on MeLCat servers*

Participating libraries' patron records that are stored on MeLCat servers will only be accessible to authorized MeLCat staff and to library staff with authorization to view patron records. Only authorized staff at the home library may override blocks for their patrons. Copies of the patron records will be made only for the purposes of system backup in case of emergencies and will be kept no longer than three months. Exported patron data will be retained no longer than one year. MeLCat will keep no borrowing history information linked to patron records after the materials have been returned to the lending libraries.

E. *Transmission of patron information between local and MeLCat servers*

Transmission of patron information between local systems and MeLCat servers must be encrypted via SSL or SSH.

6.0 Circulation Policies

These loan rules are used for all MeLCat returnable materials circulated through borrowing libraries.

A. *Loan periods*

- a. MeLCat's regular loan period between libraries allows 38 days for delivery, pickup and use of the item, and its return. The length of loan to patrons is 28 days with the option of one 28 day renewal.
- b. MeLCat's optional AV loan period between libraries allows 24 days for delivery, pickup and use of the item, and its return. The length of loan to patrons is 14 days

with no renewal. Only video and music audio formats may use this optional loan rule.

- c. MeLCat staff may work with subsets of libraries to create additional loan periods on a pilot basis.
- d. Lending libraries may designate an item as “in-library use only.” Borrowing libraries must adhere to this request.
 - i. Lending libraries must clearly indicate that an item is intended for in-library use only.

B. *Renewals*

MeLCat items on regular loan may be renewed once for 28 days from the date renewed. Renewals will not be granted until seven days before the due date. Renewals are not guaranteed. Library staff are authorized to renew overdue items if the due date is within the prior 6 days. No renewals should be granted for items that are 7 or more days overdue.

C. *Overdue materials and fines*

The borrowing library is responsible for retrieving overdue items from its patrons. Overdue fines are the local decision of the borrowing library. Loans between the lending library and the borrowing library will be considered overdue when they are 30 days past the due date.

Libraries will not charge overdue fines to each other.

D. *Claims returned*

The borrowing library is responsible for items its patrons claim to have returned. No updates will be made in MeLCat until the lending library has been contacted to determine if the item has been received. Claims returned items will be treated as overdue or lost in MeLCat, if the items cannot be located.

E. *Patron fees*

Participating MeLCat libraries will not charge any fees to patrons wishing to initiate MeLCat requests, whether for the delivery cost, staff processing time, failure to pick up the requested item, or any similar reason. Libraries will not solicit donations solely for the purpose of offsetting their costs for MeLCat processing or delivery. The Library of Michigan subsidizes the MeLCat system so that it is accessible at no cost to the end user. Borrowing libraries may choose to charge their patrons for lost, overdue, or damaged MeLCat materials. No other fees may be charged by borrowing libraries.

F. *Notices*

Borrowing libraries will be responsible for notifying their patrons when materials are available for pickup and when materials are overdue. Patron notices provided by MeLCat will be sent via email. Libraries using MeLCat for their patron notices will supply a library email account to be used as a default. Libraries without an API can choose whether to notify their patrons through MeLCat or through their local systems. Libraries with an API will use their local systems for notices.

G. *Holds and recalls*

Recalls cannot be placed on items in MeLCat.

H. *Time to pickup*

Patrons will be given ten days to pick up items at the borrowing library before the materials will be returned to the lending library.

I. *Course reserves*

Materials borrowed through MeLCat will not be placed on course reserve at the borrowing library.

7.0 Visiting patron reciprocal borrowing

Visiting patron reciprocal borrowing is a service provided by MeLCat to give patrons of participating libraries the option to get immediate access to the materials they need. Patrons are able to check materials out in person at the lending libraries instead of waiting for the materials to be delivered to their home libraries for pickup. Their home libraries are still responsible for the borrowed materials until they are returned. This service builds on reciprocal borrowing arrangements already in use among Michigan libraries.

A. *Participation in Visiting Patron Reciprocal Borrowing*

- a. Use of the visiting patron reciprocal borrowing service is optional for each MeLCat participating library. Libraries that choose to participate in reciprocal borrowing agree to lend as well as borrow.
 - i. Only those collections eligible for traditional MeLCat requesting can be borrowed via visiting patron.
- b. Libraries will determine which of their patron types are eligible to be visiting patrons. Eligible patrons may go to any MeLCat library that participates in reciprocal borrowing and may check out materials even if the items are available in their home libraries.

B. *Responsibilities of libraries participating in visiting patron reciprocal borrowing*

Participating libraries are responsible for informing patrons about their visiting patron privileges through MeLCat. They agree to take responsibility for the materials their patrons check out at lending libraries. They agree to lend to eligible, registered patrons from other MeLCat reciprocal borrowing libraries. They agree to identify as MeLCat loans the materials they check out to visiting patrons. Visiting patron loans are subject to lending library policies regarding limits for checking out specific formats.

C. *Visiting patron responsibilities*

Patrons who visit lending libraries to check out materials need to be eligible and registered with a barcode or other patron identifier from MeLCat libraries that participate in visiting patron reciprocal borrowing. They will also be expected to present a picture ID when borrowing materials. They may return materials to either the lending libraries or their home libraries.

8.0 Lost and damaged materials

A. *Borrowing library responsibility*

- a. The borrowing library is responsible for borrowed material from the time it leaves the lending library until it has been returned to and received by the lending library. This includes all material checked out directly to visiting patrons by the lending libraries.
 - i. Materials lost or damaged while at the borrowing library or with the patron are subject to these policies. Materials lost or damaged in transit to the

borrowing library or while being returned to the lending library are subject to [RIDES Lost/Missing policies and procedures](#).

- ii. Borrowing libraries will make a concerted effort to retrieve materials from their patrons.
- b. The borrowing library will be responsible for compensation or replacement of lost or damaged items, in accordance with the preference of the lending library.
 - i. The lending library can bill the borrowing library an amount reflecting the cost of replacement. A nominal processing fee can also be charged.
 - ii. The MeLCat replacement default amount for print and AV materials is \$100.01. There will be an explanation on the MeLCat billing notice stating that the actual replacement amount may be higher or lower depending on the cost of the item and the lending library's policies.
 - iii. A borrowing library may contact the lending library to negotiate a lower replacement cost and/or the provision of a replacement copy. Acceptance of a lower dollar amount and/or replacement copy is at the discretion of the lending library. Libraries may contact MeLCat staff for assistance in the event the borrowing and lending libraries are unable to agree upon a dollar amount.
 - iv. If contacted by another library's patron, the lending library should refer the patron to their home library.
- c. A borrowing library must respond to an invoice from the lending library within a month of its issuance. Payment is expected within three (3) months. If payment is not received within three (3) months and the bill is uncontested, the lending library should notify MeLCat Support with all pertinent details.
 - i. MeLCat Support will contact the borrowing library's Resource Sharing contact. If the library does not respond within one month, a letter will be mailed to the library director and the issue turned over to the State Librarian for action recommendation.

B. Lending library responsibility

- a. The lending library must initiate contact with the borrowing library, or respond to the borrowing library, within three (3) months of the institutional due date of the overdue item in question. If contact is not made within three (3) months, the lending library forfeits the right to seek reimbursement from the borrowing library for missing/lost items.
- b. A lending library may invoice a borrowing library for material(s) lost or damaged by the borrowing library's patron(s).
 - i. It is the lending library's responsibility to provide an invoice to the borrowing library.
 - ii. Invoices must be issued within seven (7) months of the institutional due date. If an invoice is not issued within seven (7) months of the institutional due date, the lending library forfeits the right to seek reimbursement from the borrowing library for missing/lost items.

- iii. The seven (7) month time frame may be extended if the lending library has been closed for an extended period of time. An extension of the time frame requires approval from MeLCat staff.

9.0 Problem reporting and resolution

A. Problem reporting

Participating libraries will work together to resolve resource sharing problems between themselves and will provide contact persons to follow up promptly on problem reports received.

If problems persist or are ignored, participating libraries may report them to MeLCat Support. MeLCat Support staff will contact the libraries involved to analyze and find solutions to the problems.

B. Unresolved problems

If MeLCat Support staff are unable to resolve an interlibrary problem within one (1) month, they may refer the problem to the State Librarian for action recommendations. Serious problems including, but not limited to, unmet financial obligations may result in suspension of MeLCat resource sharing privileges. The State Librarian will be the final arbiter.

10.0 Policy revisions

- A. These policies will be reviewed as needed by the MeLCat Advisory Committee. Comments on revisions will be solicited from the participating libraries via the MeLCat email discussion list. Participating libraries will have three (3) weeks for comment. In the event a revision is deemed problematic by a majority of commenters, the issue may be further considered by the Advisory Committee before the changes are forwarded to the State Librarian for approval.
- B. Policy revisions go into effect upon posting to the MeLCat email list following approval by the State Librarian. A grace period to permit staff education and training will be granted. The announcement will include the date that the grace period ends.

Recommended by the MeL Resource Sharing Policies Committee: July 26, 2004. Approved by the State Librarian: August 6, 2004.

Revisions to 4.5, 6.1 and 6.2 approved by the Acting State Librarian: July 15, 2005

Revisions to 8.1 and 8.2 approved by the State Librarian: May 17, 2006.

Revisions to 3.5 approved by the State Librarian: July 1, 2009.

Revisions to 3.4, 3.7, 4.2, 4.5, 4.8, 4.9, 4.12, 4.13, 6.2, 6.7, 8.2, 9.2 and 10.0 approved by the State Librarian: July 14, 2010.

Revisions to 6.5 approved by the State Librarian: July 13, 2011

Revisions to 4.1, 4.8, 4.14, 8.1, 8.3, 9.1, 9.2 approved by the State Librarian: May 22, 2013.

Revisions to 2.13, 3.4, 4.7, 6.3, 6.5, 6.8, 7.2.

New section 8 added and subsequent sections renumbered. Revisions to new 9.1, 9.2, 11.0 approved by the State Librarian: March 1, 2016.

Revisions to 4.5, 6.2, 8.3, 9.1 and reordered section 2 to restore alphabetical order approved by the State Librarian: December 28, 2017.

Revisions to 1.3, 2.4, 2.10, 2.13, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.3, 4.5, 4.8, 4.9, 4.11, 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 6.1, 6.2, 6.8, 7.1.

Removed section 8 and subsequent sections renumbered.

Revisions to new 8.1, 8.2, 10.2 approved by the State Librarian: November 21, 2019.