

Frequently Asked Questions about the MichiCard Program

1. Q. What libraries may participate?

A. The MichiCard project is a voluntary program extended initially to Michigan public libraries beginning in 1990. In 1994, academic libraries were added to the program. In 2000, all other types of libraries were invited to participate.

2. Q. Who can receive a MichiCard from a library?

A. Public libraries should issue a MichiCard sticker only to those persons that are part of the legal service population of their service area and are in good standing with the library. A resident is commonly considered a person who owns property and pays local taxes. Academic, school and special libraries may attach a sticker to the faculty, staff or student identification card. These libraries cannot issue MichiCard stickers to the general public. The general public must obtain their MichiCard from their local participating library.

3. Q. Once a person obtains a MichiCard are they then ready to borrow from any participating library?

A. No, people generally need to register at a participating library. Libraries provide various options when loaning materials to a MichiCard patron.

4. Q. Must a person pay a non-resident borrowing fee?

A. No, all participating MichiCard libraries agree not to charge a borrowing fee for persons from MichiCard participating libraries.

5. Q. What items can a person borrow?

A. The policies and rules of the participating library always apply and determine what items are loaned. The library's policy may permit the borrowing of non-print items or may restrict the borrowing of some print items. Also, the age of the person may restrict what may be borrowed.

6. Q. Can the library be reimbursed for lost materials?

A. The MichiCard program will only reimburse for lost printed material. As of Oct. 1, 2010, reimbursements for lost printed materials will no longer be available due to Library of Michigan budget cuts.

7. Q. Can the library be reimbursed for postage costs?

A. Yes, a library returning materials to another MichiCard library will be reimbursed for postage cost by the Library of Michigan. However, at the time of borrowing, the library user is encouraged to return materials to the lending library at their own expense. As of Oct. 1, 2010, reimbursements for postage will no longer be available due to Library of Michigan budget cuts.

8. Q. Can one library share the name and address of a patron when another library is seeking the return of materials?

A. Yes, patron names and addresses can be shared but the titles of the materials cannot be shared under the Michigan Privacy Act.

9. Q. How does a library know if a borrower is in good standing?

A. One cannot know for sure. Generally, a person in good standing is a first-time borrower or one who has an established record of returning materials. However, a library takes minimal risk with borrowers because the MichiCard program will reimburse for lost or unreturned printed resources.

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10. Q. How does a library circulate materials to a MichiCard borrower?

A. Libraries use many different approaches. Some libraries have automated systems that record and identify MichiCard borrowers, some maintain a separate manual system specific to MichiCard patrons; others issue non-resident, non-institutional cards, and still others use creative approaches tailored to their unique local system.

11. Q. How does a library handle a patron from a library not participating in the MichiCard program?

A. The library should follow its local policies and procedures for handling non-resident persons. The MichiCard program does not suggest that any changes are necessary.

12. Q. Do adults have to sign for a child's card?

A. The local policies and rules of the participating library dictate the minimum age for borrowing, the proof of identification required, or when and if an adult signature is required.

13. Q. Does the Library of Michigan issue MichiCard stickers?

A. No, the voluntary requirements of the MichiCard program prevent the Library of Michigan from issuing MichiCard stickers, since all Michigan residents are entitled to borrow from the Library of Michigan.

14. Q. How were MichiCard rules and guidelines developed?

A. The State Librarian appointed a statewide Advisory Committee that proposed recommendations for agency consideration.

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