

Public Library Law of the PRC

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Chapter I — General Provisions

Article 1 — This Law is enacted for the purposes of promoting the development of public libraries, giving full play to the functions of public libraries, protecting the basic cultural rights and interests of citizens, improving the scientific and cultural quality of citizens and the degree of social civilization, passing on human civilization, and strengthening cultural confidence.

Article 2 — For the purposes of this Law, "public libraries" means public cultural service facilities that are open to the public free of charge, collect, organize, and preserve documents and information, provide inquiry and lending of documents and information and related services, and carry out social education. The documents and information specified in the preceding paragraph include books, newspapers, periodicals, audio-visual products, microfilms, digital publications, and other documents and information resources in the collection.

Article 3 — Public libraries are an integral part of the socialist public cultural service system, and the development of public libraries shall adhere to the direction of advanced socialist culture, adhere to the people-centered approach, adhere to the core socialist values as the guide, carry forward the excellent traditional Chinese culture, inherit and develop revolutionary culture, and develop advanced socialist culture.

Article 4 — The people's governments at or above the county level shall incorporate the development of public libraries into their plans for national economic and social development and their overall land use plans, and incorporate the funds required for public libraries into the government budget at the corresponding level, and ensure timely and full allocation. The State shall encourage and support the participation of social forces such as citizens, legal persons, and other organizations in the construction of public libraries.

Article 5 — The cultural department under the State Council shall be responsible for the administration of public libraries nationwide. The cultural departments of the local people's governments at or above the county level shall be responsible for the administration of public libraries within their respective administrative regions. Other relevant departments under the State Council and the local people's governments at or above the county level shall, within their respective scopes of duties, be responsible for the relevant work relating to the administration of public libraries.

Article 6 — The State shall encourage citizens, legal persons, and other organizations to establish public libraries through donations, and shall provide preferential treatment in accordance with the relevant provisions of the State. The State shall encourage citizens, legal persons, and other organizations to lawfully establish public libraries in the form of naming rights.

Chapter II — Establishment

Article 7 — The State shall establish public libraries at a national level to serve as the national documentation and information resource center, the national research and exchange center for library science, and the central repository for the collection and preservation of national literature. The State shall establish a national library for children and adolescents.

Article 8 — The local people's governments shall, based on the population size, population distribution, and needs for services and resources within their respective administrative regions, determine the number, size, and layout of public libraries. Public libraries shall be rationally arranged, and a service network covering both urban and rural areas and with convenient access shall be formed.

Article 9 — The State shall support the construction of public libraries in old revolutionary base areas, ethnic minority areas, border areas, and poverty-stricken areas. The State shall support the construction of grassroots public libraries such as community libraries and village libraries, and promote the extension of public library services to grassroots levels.

Article 10 — The establishment of public libraries shall comply with the relevant national standards for the construction of public libraries. Newly constructed, renovated, or expanded public libraries shall comply with the mandatory standards for the construction of barrier-free facilities, and shall give due consideration to the needs of special groups such as the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Chapter III — Operation and Services

Article 11 — Public libraries shall be open to the public free of charge and shall provide the following services: (1) inquiry and lending of documents and information; (2) opening of reading rooms and self-study rooms; (3) public interest lectures, exhibitions, and training; (4) reading promotion and social education; (5) reference and advisory services; and (6) other services that should be provided.

Article 12 — Public libraries shall reasonably determine their opening hours through announcements and other methods. Public libraries shall open on statutory holidays and public holidays. The opening hours of public libraries shall take into account the needs of the public and the capacity of the library, and shall be

sufficient to meet the basic needs of readers.

Article 13 — Public libraries shall strengthen the development of their collections, systematically collect and preserve documents and information, and form a collection system with distinctive characteristics and continuous coverage. Public libraries shall strengthen the digitization of their collections and promote the sharing of digital resources.

Article 14 — The people's governments at or above the county level shall establish public library service systems with public libraries as the main body and other types of libraries such as community libraries, village libraries, and mobile libraries as supplements. Public libraries shall strengthen inter-library resource sharing and service collaboration, and promote equalization of public library services.

Chapter IV — Statutory Duties

Article 15 — Public libraries shall properly collect, organize, preserve, and utilize documents and information. Public libraries shall dispose of documents and information in accordance with the relevant provisions of the State and shall strictly prevent the loss or damage of documents and information.

Article 16 — Public libraries shall protect the personal information of readers and shall not sell or illegally provide the personal information of readers to others. Public libraries shall respect and protect the intellectual property rights in their collections in accordance with the law.

Article 17 — Public libraries shall strengthen the professional training of their staff, and the staff of public libraries shall possess corresponding professional knowledge and skills. The State shall promote the establishment of a professional qualification system for library professionals.

Chapter V — Legal Liability

Article 18 — Where any entity or individual damages or destroys the documents, information, facilities, or equipment of a public library, or violates the management systems of a public library, the public library may stop its conduct and request compensation in accordance with the law. Where a violation constitutes a violation of public security administration, the public security organ shall impose public security administration penalties in accordance with the law.

Article 19 — Where any public library or its staff sells or illegally provides personal information of readers, or fails to perform its duties as required and causes the loss or damage of documents and information in its collection, sanctions shall be imposed on the directly responsible person in charge and other directly responsible persons in accordance with the law.

Chapter VI — Supplementary Provisions

Article 20 — This Law shall come into force on January 1, 2018.

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