

Geauga County Public Library  
Operating Policy Manual

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On August 26, 1848, the Chardon Public Library was organized at the meeting of interested persons at the Geauga County Courthouse. John French, County Recorder was chosen Librarian. Donated books were housed in the Recorder's Office and were administered as an association library with membership fees. The library collection grew and was moved several times before a village library in the Village Hall was established and a library board was appointed in 1913. In 1929 the Village Council established the legal status of the library by creating it as a municipal institution. Intangible taxes were received for the first time in 1936. Service to county schools began in 1936 also.

Library extension services were established throughout the county during the succeeding years. A branch library was established in Middlefield in 1942. Library service in Chesterland got its start in the late 1940's when a dedicated resident, Mary Eykyn, delivered books to the township's children at the Chester summer day camp in her own home-made version of a bookmobile --- a modified baby buggy outfitted with bookshelves to hold around 100 books borrowed from the Chardon Library. A branch library was established in Chesterland in 1957.

In 1963 the Library was designated a County District Library by the County Commissioners at the request of the Library Board. A new seven member Library Board of Trustees was created and the name Geauga County Public Library became its official designation.

Geauga County Public Library continued to grow with the establishment of the Bainbridge Library in 1965. Chardon Library moved into its present building on Chardon Square in 1970 and has been renovated several times over the years to meet service demands and space needs. Chardon Library houses the major genealogy and local history collection for the Library system in the Anderson Allyn Room. The Library partners with the Geauga County Genealogical Society to provide the service and collection. The Thompson Library Station in Ledgemont High School opened in 1979.

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Bookmobile service to townships and county residents not directly served by a library facility began in 1986. An Administrative Center providing adequate office space for administration and support services, was established in the former Chardon Post Office building in 1987. The Readmobile serving Parkman and Newbury townships on alternating weeks began service in 1990.

Newbury proved to be a popular location and an arrangement was made with the Newbury School District to open Newbury Public Library Station in the school library beginning November 1, 1993.

Voters in the West Geauga school district approved a bond issue to build the Geauga West Library to replace the Chester Library, in 1986. The new library was opened for service May 22, 1989.

At the November 1991 general election, voters in the county library district approved a one mill, continuing, operating levy. Proceeds from the new property tax were first included in the 1992 library budget. In June 1992 a new, replacement Bookmobile began service.

Geauga County Public Library set a record circulation of 1,000,000 items checked out in 1991. The highest circulation ever was achieved in 2009 when 2,215,202 items were checked out by library patrons.

The Library built a new Administrative Center on Ravenwood Road, south of the City of Chardon to house the System's support services in February, 1999 and moved out of the cramped former Post Office in Chardon.

The voters in the Cardinal School District approved a bond issue to construct a new building for the Middlefield Library in November 2001 and the Library opened in its new building in August 2004. The Bookmobile and Outreach Services were re-located from the Administrative Center to this new facility as well. This highest circulating Bookmobile in the State began serving patrons from a new bookmobile in 2007. The old vehicle was purchased by the Burton-Middlefield Rotary Club and was driven to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico to serve as a traveling library in early 2009.

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Gardens for reading and learning were introduced at some of the branches. In 1991 Bainbridge Library and the Chagrin Valley Herb Society formed a partnership so that an herb garden could be installed on library property for learning and enjoyment. This garden has received regional recognition in herb and horticultural circles. The Friends of the Geauga West Library established a reading garden in the front of this branch in 2005 and in 2008, Middlefield Library received a READ Garden which was paid for in part by the East Geauga and

Bookmobile Friends. Then in 2009, the East Geauga Friends of the Library donated a bronze sculpture that was installed at the entrance to the Middlefield Library.

The Library system experienced flat funding from the State throughout the late 1990's and into the new century which led to a return to the polls for a replacement levy in 2007.

The Library migrated to Koha, a graphical user interface and open source ILS computer system in 2008, replacing the text-based Dynix ILS System which was used for over 20 years for circulation, acquisitions and book collection inventory functions. The Library was the first library in the World to use the 3.0 version of Koha. It was exciting and painful all at once. .

Bainbridge and Geauga West Libraries received interior face-lifts thanks to an LSCA - Trading Spaces grant awarded in 2007. The projects were successfully completed in 2008.

More cuts to State funding occurred in 2009 which led to cuts in library services and staff reduction in hours and layoffs. A new continuing 1 mill levy was approved by the voters in 2010 which resulted in the restoration of library services and staffing in 2011 after gather community input at public forums. A capital project plan was put in place so the Library could begin to tackle a backlog of maintenance issues and projects. Among them, purchasing property in Bainbridge in 2013 in anticipation of providing much needed space for the undersized Bainbridge Library.

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The library moved forward to build its e-content collection by subscribing to Overdrive for downloadable audio and e-books and expanded this collection in 2013 by subscribing to Zinnio, an e-magazine service and in 2014 Hoopla, was added which provides downloadable loans of movies, TV shows, music and audio books.

GCPL celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013 with a major system-wide marketing plan. Also in 2013, the library determined that the open source Koha ILS system was not performing to our standards and so a decision was made to migrate to a proprietary ILS system with Innovative Interfaces, Inc. This vendor was selected in part because of the seamless link it developed to SearchOhio and OhioLink, for interlibrary loan providing access for GCPL cardholders to about 6 million items in Ohio public and academic libraries.

The Anderson Allyn Genealogy and Local History Room at Chardon Library was renovated in 2014 to accommodate new tools and collection formats used for research using a gift from the Allen estate donated to the GCPL Foundation.

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