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**DULUTH
PUBLIC
LIBRARY**

**City of Duluth - Duluth Public
Library**

520 West Superior Street • Duluth,
Minnesota 55802
www.duluthmn.gov

*For more information contact DPL's Public
Relations Department at
218-730-4236*

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SUBJECT: Changes to Library Policy to Remove Barriers and Expand Access

BY: Elizabeth Spehar

(DULUTH, MN) Changes coming to the Duluth Public Library's library card policy will ease the process of getting a library card and expand access to library resources.

Beginning in 2023, area residents will be eligible for an Easy Access Card without needing to provide proof of address. Under the library's current policy, patrons are required to provide a government-issued photo ID along with proof of address in order to receive a card. Anecdotal and statistical data show that requiring proof of address is a significant barrier to access. According to data collected by Circulation staff, approximately one to two applicants per day are unable to get a same-day card because they cannot provide proof of address.

"The library is a place where all are welcome and resources are free to use...it is disappointing for everyone when a person is turned away from getting a card because their ID doesn't have their current address," said Library Technician Barbara Opal. Opal is one of three Circulation staff members who initiated the change in policy by collecting stories and statistics. Using their data, the three employees developed an alternate policy and presented it to colleagues and leadership. The policy change was reviewed and unanimously approved by the library's Leadership Team and the Library Board.

A government-issued photo ID will still be required to get an Easy Access Card and that can be a barrier for some, but Byron Johnson, Circulation Coordinator, believes this change of policy will make things easier for many people. "An Easy Access Card gets people using the library right away. They can leave the library with a card, with up to four items checked out, and with information about what they need to bring on their next visit to get full access." The card also gives access to the library's electronic resources. Individuals expected to benefit from the new policy are those in supportive residential housing, those experiencing homelessness, and those who have recently moved.

This library card policy change is the most recent example of DPL's ongoing commitment to removing institutional barriers and utilizing a community-responsive approach to library services. In 2019, the library eliminated late fines for overdue books, and in 2020, implemented a curbside pickup service in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

About the Duluth Public Library:

Founded in 1902, the Duluth Public Library serves Duluth and the greater Arrowhead region. The Duluth Public Library provides free access to reading materials, early literacy instruction, information, technology, and creative and cultural materials and services.

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