

Elements of a Policy

Policy Statement
A brief, written statement that describes WHY the library does something. Policy statements are written from the customer's point of view and approved by the library's governing authority.
Regulations
Specific, written rules that further define a policy, describing WHAT must be done to support the policy. Regulations are normally approved by the library's governing authority.
Procedures
Written, step-by-step description of HOW the staff will carry out a policy and regulations. Procedures are more flexible than regulations and will change as the tools available to staff change. Frontline staff may be allowed to modify procedures in certain circumstances. Procedures are developed by staff and approved by library managers. They are not reviewed by or approved by the library's governing authority.
Guidelines
A description of best practice that provides suggestions for staff on the most efficient ways to implement policy statements, regulations and procedures. Guidelines are more philosophical than policy statements, regulations, or procedures and often are developed by staff committees. Guidelines are always approved by the library director but are rarely reviewed by the library's governing authority. Typical guidelines include reference guidelines and guidelines for serving people with special needs.

Source: *Creating Policies for Results: From Chaos to Clarity*, by Sandra Nelson and June Garcia, for the Public Library Association, c. 2003.