

DRAFT Onondaga County Public Library System

Artificial Intelligence Use Policy for Staff

Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning models and technology by employees performing work-related responsibilities for public libraries in Onondaga County, regardless of who owns the device they are using to access AI for work-related tasks. OCPL: System is committed to the ethical, transparent, and responsible use of artificial intelligence in a manner that supports human-centered services and respects patrons and staff.

Scope

Artificial intelligence can be a ~~wonderful~~ tool that can greatly enhance the everyday workflows of its users, but as an easily accessible technology that has implications for patron privacy, information accuracy, information bias and ethics; standards must be set to prevent harm to staff and patrons in OCPL: System using these tools.

This policy will outline how staff at OCPL member libraries should interact with artificial intelligence tools in regard to patron privacy and proprietary library information security. This policy does not address use of AI tools by people who do not have access to OCPL's ILS and its data. Vendor responsibilities are addressed in the Privacy & Data Protection section. Member libraries that decide to develop their own AI usage policies must comply with the prohibitions set forth in this policy related to data stored in the ILS and patron privacy.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, artificial intelligence (AI) tools generally fall into the following categories:

Public or Consumer AI Tools

AI tools that are freely available to the general public and not governed by a formal data-use or privacy agreement with OCPL. These tools must not be provided with any non-public, internal, patron, staff, or operational information and may only be used with generalized, non-sensitive content.

Authorized Enterprise or Licensed AI Tools

AI tools that are licensed by OCPL or its partners and governed by contractual privacy, security, and data-handling terms. These tools may be used for approved internal purposes consistent with this policy and applicable administrative procedures.

Specific approved tools, safeguards, and use cases will be defined through administrative procedures in addition to this policy.

Training & Awareness

The OCPL AI Community of Practice will provide staff with ongoing training, guidance, and resources to support responsible and effective use of AI tools. Training will include topics such as: privacy protections, accuracy verification, ethical considerations, reference support, and other best practices for using AI tools.

Privacy & Data Protection

AI tools that have been implemented by OCPL (System) vendors will not have access to patron data through the ILS unless they can conform to this policy. OCPL AI Community of Practice will provide guidance to members about when vendors release an AI tool that, if a patron uses it, may expose their personal data.

- AI tools are prone to instances of data leaks and hacking. Therefore, employees at libraries in Onondaga County should never share sensitive information with AI tools, as it may compromise them and their organization's information security if leaked in an incident.
- Employees at libraries in Onondaga County are required to protect the privacy rights of patrons by never sharing their Protected Personal Information (PPI) and Personally Identifiable Information (PII) with any unauthorized third parties. This includes AI models. Employees at libraries in Onondaga County must never share any patron, staff, organizational, or vendor PPI or PII with an AI model, as it violates our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Confidentiality Law.
 - Vendor tools approved for handling PPI and PII are authorized third parties.

Equity, Bias, & Ethical Considerations

- The library staff member using AI is responsible for ensuring that all AI-generated content created for use in their work is appropriate, accurate, and does not expose confidential information.
- This policy acknowledges that staff are unable at this time to ensure copyright compliance as cases are still being litigated. The OCPL AI Community of Practice will provide relevant updates and resources as legal decisions are codified.
- Libraries must follow all laws related to employment protections for their staff members.

Prohibited Uses/Actions

The following uses and actions are prohibited for library staff:

- Library staff shall not provide to public or unauthorized AI tools sensitive, in-house data. This includes un-anonymized data of the following kinds:
 - Staff member PPI or PII, including photos or video of staff
 - Patron PPI or PII, including photos or video of patrons
 - Polaris data
 - OCPL operational information (i.e. financial, employment, medical, etc.)
- Library staff shall not enter sensitive data including PPI or PII into an AI tool even at the request of the patron to whom the data refers. Staff may discuss the risks of doing so with the patron if it is appropriate.

Approved Uses/Actions

The following uses and actions are approved for library staff, as examples of possible, acceptable uses when working with non-sensitive, general, or anonymized data, staff members must conform to their local policy when considering the following actions:

- Library staff may use AI tools embedded in authorized products, such as Libby's InspireMe, with patrons. Staff may discuss the risks of doing so with the patron if it is appropriate.
- Library staff may assist patrons with any AI-related questions or to demonstrate the use of AI technology using general, non-sensitive information and in the

course of doing so, make responsible efforts to promote accuracy and appropriateness and mitigate bias and potential harm.

- Library staff may use AI to generate a template or structure including lists, ideas, and recommendations that a staff member will interpret using their skills or professional knowledge. These can be things such as program or outreach ideas, displays, outlines for presentations, brainstorming potential community partnerships, etc.
- Library staff may use AI tools to edit or fix errors in text containing general, non-sensitive information. Staff remain responsible for accuracy, appropriateness, bias, and potential harm mitigation in content produced in the course of their work duties.
- Library staff may use AI tools to summarize single or sets of documents that contain general, non-sensitive information.
- Library staff may use AI tools to edit images including photos (adjusting color, saturation, etc.). Images of Patrons or staff may not be used with AI tools without their express written permission.
- Library staff may use AI tools in question/answer exchanges when the AI tool is provided with general, non-sensitive information.

Recommended considerations for member libraries (due to complications in enforcement, these recommendations will be left to each library to consider, include in or exclude from local policies, and enforce locally):

- Will your library allow or prohibit the use of AI to independently make decisions assigned to library staff or replace human judgment in the execution of work activities and the delivery of library services?
- Will your library allow or prohibit supervisors to replace human workers with AI tools? To what extent?
- Will your library allow or prohibit the use of AI tools to recommend or automate decisions affecting staff or patrons including employment and Human Resources decisions?
- Will your library allow or prohibit the employment of AI tool prompts from an external source that has not been fully reviewed by a library staff member (a potential cybersecurity risk)?
- Will your library allow or prohibit the use of content of any type generated by AI tools that has gone through the procedure employed by your library to vet content?

- Will your library allow or prohibit the use of AI tools that have violated copyright law in their training phase? If they have paid an assessed fee as compensation for this infringement or established a marketplace for creators to be paid for their works to be used as training data, etc. will the answer change?
- When do staff need to disclose when they have used AI and to whom in carrying out their work responsibilities?
- Has your library staff's union been contacted about employment protection requirements with regard to the library using AI tools in the workplace, if applicable?
- How will AI use records to be retained to conform to ~~F.O.I.A. and F.O.I.L.~~ **Freedom of Information Law (FOIL)** requirements if your library has them?

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Updated 2/23/2026