



ECARD FAQs FOR MASSACHUSETTS LIBRARIES

This document was created to guide staff from other libraries and institutions as they promote the BPL's eCard and online resources.

Anyone who lives, works, or goes to school in Massachusetts has access to a wide range of free, high-quality digital resources through the Boston Public Library (BPL), many of which can serve as alternatives to those no longer available through statewide systems.

What's the difference between a BPL eCard and an eCard from my local or network library?

A BPL eCard is issued by the Boston Public Library and provides access to BPL's specific digital resources. It is separate from any eCard issued by your local library or network and features a broader range of online services.

What is the difference between a physical BPL card and a BPL eCard?

BPL eCards do not allow for borrowing physical materials (including museum passes) or placing physical holds. Patrons can upgrade their eCard to a full-access physical card at any BPL location or member library of the Metro Boston Library Network (MBLN).

Please note that some electronic resources are only accessible from inside a BPL location.

Who is eligible for a BPL eCard?

Anyone who meets at least *one* of the following criteria:

- Has a primary residence in Massachusetts
- Lives in Massachusetts while attending school
- Works for a Massachusetts-based employer
- Owns property (real estate) in Massachusetts

Learn more about eligibility at bpl.org/get-a-library-card.

Is there an age requirement for a BPL eCard?

No. There is no age requirement for obtaining a BPL eCard.

Can my school, company, or institution register for an eCard?

No. eCards are available only to eligible individuals. Institutions (e.g., businesses, libraries, schools) may apply in person for an institutional card, which allows for physical borrowing and interlibrary loans—but does *not* offer remote access to digital content due to licensing restrictions.

Can students use an institutional address to register?

Yes. The mailing address used simply needs to be a valid address verified by the USPS database at tools.usps.com/zip-code-lookup.htm. Multiple students can register using the same official school mailing address.

How can my library help promote BPL eCards and resources?

We welcome you to direct your patrons to bpl.org/ecard on your website and in your social media, newsletters, flyers, and outreach materials. There, they can learn more about our resources and register for a BPL eCard.

As a reminder, eCards are for individuals, not institutions. Please follow the promotional guidelines below for more information.

Promotion Guidelines**Do:**

- Use the pre-made infographic found at bpl.org/ecard or...
 - Link to BPL's Online Resources page: bpl.org/popular-online-resources
 - Link directly to the BPL eCard registration page: bpl.org/ecard-registration
 - Include the BPL logo (black/white only, no smaller than 1.5 inches)
 - Use this language:
"Anyone who lives, works, or goes to school in Massachusetts can register for a free Boston Public Library eCard at bpl.org/ecard and gain access to a wide range of digital resources covering newspapers, magazines, streaming media, genealogy, and more."

Please do not:

- Do not link directly to databases -- this violates our vendor licensing agreements.
- Do not list specific database names on your website, because offerings are subject to change
- When speaking with vendors, do not cite BPL access as a reason for canceling or not choosing subscriptions. Instead, please refer to budgetary constraints.

Contact us with questions

Please email ask@bpl.org.