



**Ministry of Education**  
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## **Preface**

This booklet provides information for library cadets and persons interested in the information technology and related professions. It contains pertinent subjects such as history of libraries, and more specifically, a brief history of libraries in The Bahamas along with the Bahamas Library Service vision, mission, goals and objectives that serve as background Information for future librarians in the “Recruiting and Training Library Cadets” (RTLCL) Programme.

Knowledge of the institution of libraries and the profession of librarianship is essential not only for employees but also potential employees of the library and information field. This is especially true, since in recent years, libraries have been intermarrying traditional services with new technologies for more effective and efficient service.

## History of Libraries

The history of libraries began approximately around 3000 B.C. in the areas of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers called the Fertile Crescent. The earliest libraries were found in Babylonia, Assyria, Greece, Egypt and Rome.

During 1500-1800, there was an increase in literacy and libraries throughout Western Europe. For example, in Germany, town libraries were established providing popular reading for its citizens. Great Britain established municipal libraries in the 1600s and passed the first Public Libraries Act in 1850.

The first American public libraries were begun in 1803 in Salisbury, Connecticut. However, it was not until 1850s that the Boston Public library was established and publicly supported in the manner that we are familiar with today. American libraries mirrored the growth of those in Europe from 1500 to 1800. Like, Europe many private collections laid the foundation for university libraries such as Harvard and Yale and the national library, the library of Congress.

## Types of Libraries

The four main types of Libraries library are:

(i) **School Libraries**

These were developed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century so as to provide materials to support the curriculum. They also provide students with the basic skills needed to use libraries effectively.

(ii) **Academic Libraries**

These are found primarily in colleges and universities. They support the curriculum and provide and preserve information and resources for papers, research projects, thesis and dissertations.

(iii) **Special Libraries**

Special Libraries provide research and information needs of special groups of people for example, physicians, lawyers, scientists, and artists. Special collections can be found in banks, engineering, and shipping firms, hospitals, research laboratories, law offices and art galleries.

(iv) **Public Libraries**

These are the most common type of libraries. They serve all sectors of society. The general collections provide information for:

- answering queries
- leisure reading
- research projects
- class assignments
- self improvement
- general education

**National Libraries**

Many developed and emerging countries have National Libraries. The main aim of a country's National library is to preserve and safeguard the national culture and heritage and fulfill the informational needs of its society.

## ***A Brief History of Public Libraries In The Bahamas***

The need to establish libraries in the Bahamas evolved from two main sources:

- local communities which viewed them as a necessity for educational advancement or upward mobility, social recreation; and
- governments, which deemed it necessary to provide libraries to serve the communities. (Brennen, 2001)

The foundation was laid for the development of libraries as early as 1804, when populations increased following the migration of the loyalists of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The first libraries were started over 150 years ago and are still in existence today. They are the Nassau Public Library (1937), Inagua Public /Erickson Library, (1855) Harbour Island /Sir George Roberts Public Library, (1854) New Plymouth/ Green Turtle Cay Public Library (1862), Abaco and Governor's Harbour/ Haynes Public Library (1897), Eleuthera.

## **Bahamas Library Service**

Bahamas Library Service was established in 1999. Its main role is to unite the public libraries in New Providence and the Family Islands into one modern, automated system offering quality, standardized services in all islands.

## **VISION**

To access a library system with a full complement of staff, possessing skills and competencies to meet the information and technological age of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our motto is 'Quality staff and service are hallmarks of good Public Libraries'.

## **MISSION**

To provide ready access to quality resources and services for all persons throughout the Commonwealth of The Bahamas in order to meet their intellectual, information and cultural needs; and to promote a spirit of sharing, cooperation and commitment to quality among all stakeholders.

## Goals and Objectives

1. To provide training as an ongoing process to maintain quality service in the public library system.
2. To increase the quota of professional librarians by providing opportunities for them to receive in-service to pursue a Master's in Library Science.
3. To increase and strengthen staff at Central Administration level.
4. To have new library legislation passed to ensure that library personnel matters regarding pensions and other benefits are satisfied.
5. To employ qualified librarians and other library workers to fill key areas of service in the public library system.
6. To expand 'Story Hour' and annual summer reading programmes to at least seven (17) public libraries in the country.
7. To standardize services in public libraries in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.
8. To further development of the Central Technical Services at the Wulff Road Library.
9. To provide extended opening hours for all public libraries.
10. To have public libraries services automated to provide faster and more efficient service.
11. To expand and maintain <http://www.balibs.org> website
12. To compile a union catalog for the public library system.
13. To create a national bibliography.

## **An Overview of Recruiting & Training Library Cadets (RTL) Programme**

The concept was discussed as early as 1994 as plans for a Teachers Cadet Programme was being implemented. In response to a call for projects by Information For All Programme (IFAP), UNESCO, the project entitled “Recruiting and Training Library Cadet for a sustainable Bahamas” was submitted in February 2005, and was approved in April of the same year.

### **Philosophy**

Its main purpose is to motivate young men and women to make Librarianship a profession of choice. Realizing that the profession is graying, some tangible and proactive steps need to be taken to recruit and train vibrant young people in the field of information that is growing by leaps and bounds.

The time has never been so ripe for students with information, communication and technological skills to play a vital role in society. Libraries and information centres are ideal places to not only demonstrate such skills but also to acquire information literacy skills that are crucial to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The main objectives of the programme are:

- To increase the cadre of qualified library staff in The Bahamas;
- To identify promising intellectually capable young men and women who wish to choose professions in Library Science and information technology;
- To sensitize the Bahamian society of the important and critical role of library and information profession in the nation.

## **Academic qualifications**

### Cadet Librarian/Library Page

High school education in progress. The Library Page must be able to file materials within the appropriate classification scheme, particularly the Dewey system with Cutters. As with all employees, Library Pages must be able to courteously refer patrons/ clients to the appropriate service desk or area.

Five BJC subjects pass with C or above including Mathematics and English

**OR**

A cumulative GPA of 3.0

General interest in all subject areas

Potential to succeed in the profession of librarianship or Media specialist.

- Ability to understand and follow oral and written instructions in English at an 8th grade level.
- An awareness of the purposes and functions of the public library and the ability to learn routine library procedures.
- Requirement of twenty (20) hours at an assigned public library.

### Physical Qualifications

- Ability to push and pull library book trucks.
- Carry up to 15 lbs. of books across the library.
- Stand for a long time in one area.
- Bend and stretch to reach high and low shelves.

## **Developing skills for future Careers In Librarianship**

Topics to be covered:

Definition of a library

### **Public or user services**

- Reference using printed/and electronic resources
- Databases
- CD-ROM
- Research
- circulation of books and library materials

### **Technical Services**

- Acquisitions
- Book processing
- Classification/Cataloguing using Dewey Decimal System
- Newspaper clippings/Vertical file

Areas of skill and concentration

- Projects a positive and pleasant attitude to the public and cooperates and maintains an effective relationship with other staff members as part of a team.
- Shelves library materials.
- Locates requested items.
- Puts books in order on shelves
- Assists staff with checking materials for damage and removing them from the shelves.
- Stamps and pockets new materials for circulation.
- Stamps date due cards.
- Adheres to library policies and procedures.
- Performs any other tasks as requested.

## **Activities to reinforce learning**

Mentoring from supervisors and others

Educational videos promoting librarianship

Journal writing

Big 6 information skills

Focused groups

Field trips/Tours to libraries, museums and The Archives

## **Benefits of the RTALC Programme**

Your country needs you. There is a growing shortage of library workers and librarians in The Bahamas. When you help others, you help yourselves.

-Participants will receive a stipend

-Knowledge and experiences

-Eligible to receive partial tuition to pursue an Associate Degree in Library Science

## **Evaluation**

The duration of pilot Library Cadet programme in conjunction with UNESCO is 1 year targeting 10-12 graders of Secondary High Schools in The Bahamas. During the programme and at the end of the first year, Heads of Department will assess and determine participant's interests, propensity for librarianship. Section Heads will receive the assistance of library supervisors who will be required to closely observe, monitor and evaluate the students' performance and progress. The ideal length of a sustainable programme is three years.

The following methods of evaluation would be included:

Short quizzes (oral & written)

Essays involving research

'Hands' on library work experience

## **Conclusion**

It is anticipated that this inaugural Library Cadet programme would pave the way for young men and women to begin a rewarding career in Library and Information Science and encourage others to enter into a field that is vast with much potential for self growth and development.

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