Checkout procedures can vary quite a bit. Here are a few parameters to consider:

Number of Seed Packs

1. **Limits:** Limits on the number of packets that can be borrowed are sometimes in place and often range from 3-6 packets. This could also be per season or per year. This system probably works best if the seeds are checked out either through the public library system or by a representative of the seed library.

2. **Unlimited:** Some libraries allow an unlimited number of packets and request folks take only what they need. It's often recommended that people take 2-3 seeds per plant they intend to grow this season. For example, for 2 zucchini plants a person would take 4-6 seeds. If seeds are really small, then a pinch of seeds is the recommended quantity. Signage educating members about recommended seed quantities is key for this system.
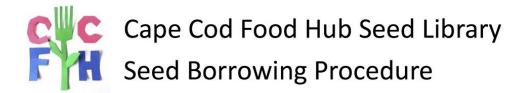
Check-out System

1. **Self-Serve:** In this system members help themselves to seeds, either pre-packaged into envelopes, or available in bulk so they can package what they would like to take. Consider the level of ongoing commitment you are interested in to maintain the library. If you are all volunteers, then a self-serve honor system may be more sustainable in the long run. The Bay Area Seed Interchange Library (BASIL), for example, established a self-serve system that has allowed them to run with minimum volunteer hours since 1999.

COMMUNITY SEED NETWORK

2. **With Library Card:** If you have unusual seeds in your collection and are focused on genetic preservation, then a self-serve system may not be the best to maintain your collection. Checking out seeds with a library card may give you more control and traceability, but, there may be a lot of extra time involved - from repackaging seeds, making labels for all of those packages, getting barcodes (if it's part of a library check-out system), and connecting that information to the library system. These ongoing commitments need to be defined and supported by the public library administration or your organizing group before deciding on this system. An important consideration when repackaging seed is population sizes. If only 4 pea seeds are put in a package, folks may want to eat all of their peas and not save many (or any) seeds to return. In addition, if you encourage members to bring seed back, you'll want to consider the required population size. Failing to provide enough seed to meet the minimum population for that crop could result in poor quality seed down the line.

Record Keeping Systems

1. **Paper:** Creating a binder, or some way of tracking seed check-outs and memberships on paper, is by far the easiest system to set up. Your binder should include:
   a. <u>Checkout Procedures Overview:</u> You'll want to include a paper at the beginning of the binder, and perhaps elsewhere in your library, to orient people on how to check out seeds. See the sidebar for a nice example from the Cape Cod Food Hub Seed Library in Massachusetts.

Cape Cod Food Hub Seed Library
Seed Borrowing Procedure

1. If this is your first time borrowing seeds, fill out a Membership Record in the binder in the cabinet below.

2. Choose your seeds. Feel free to take seeds from any category, even if you are a beginner seed-saver, but please only take as many seeds as you have space for in your garden.

3. Record your choices on the back of your Membership Record form, in your Member's Seed Record.

4. Grow your plants! If you have any questions during the growing season, take a look at the many references listed on the back of the "Introduction to Seed Saving" pamphlet, or contact us by email.

5. Harvest your seeds. Be sure to dry them thoroughly and store them in a cool, dry, dark place until you bring them back to the library.

6. Return your seeds to the library in a sealed paper envelope with your name and the plant name, variety, and year of harvest written on it. Also record this information in your Member's Seed Record. *If you are a beginning seed-saver, please only return seeds from the "Easy" category.*

For the continued success of the seed library, please try to return more seed than you borrowed, and only return seed that you are confident was not cross-pollinated. This will keep our drawers well-stocked and our community of gardeners happy with their results.

Thank you for your participation!

2. **Computer:**

    a. <u>Online, not connected to Library System:</u> Some seed libraries have their list of seeds on the internet. Once again, ask yourself how much ongoing volunteer or staff hours you are willing to commit to ensure that the online seed list is current and accurate. If you are located in the public library, and there is a high demand for public access to computers, then you may have issues if folks try to use your dedicated seed library computer for other purposes. Make signs that clearly state that the computer is for seed library use only and is not for other purposes; this is especially true if the seed library is not supervised.

    b. <u>Online, connected to Library System:</u> A few libraries have pioneered connecting their seeds to the wider library database. Embedded in the code is a way to take them off the list so folks aren't fined. It does provide great data on what is being used. The Seed Libraries of Pima County Public Library (Arizona) have 8 seed library branches and inter-library loans throughout the county system via the computer.

Seed Lending Library
Membership Information

The Seed Library is a free program committed to increasing our ability to feed ourselves wholesome food by offering seeds and education. Through the time-honored tradition of seed saving we celebrate biodiversity, nurture locally adapted plant varieties, and foster community resilience, self-reliance and a culture of sharing.

The Seed Library operates on the honor system. You become a member automatically when you withdraw seeds to plant. We encourage all members to learn basic seed-saving techniques. We encourage that beginning seed savers grow out and return seeds from lettuce, tomato, bean or pea plants the first year. If you are unable to save your own seed, please consider donating a packet or two of fresh, commercially grown, open-pollinated (non-hybrid, non-GMO) seed to keep our library stocked. Returned seed will allow us to keep the library well stocked.

Name:_____

Phone Number (optional):_____

Email Address **(Please print carefully):**_____

Stay connected: Would you like to be contacted about seed swaps, classes, etc.? Yes/No

Background: How much seed saving knowledge and experience do you have? None/Some/Lots
How much gardening experience do you have? None/Some/Lots

Volunteering: Would you be willing to volunteer time at the Seed Library? If so, please circle ways you might help: organizing the library, preparing seed packets, teaching classes, mentoring other gardeners, fundraising, translating information into Spanish, outreach, other

(Please specify)_____

The Safe Seed Promise
Agriculture and seeds provide the basis upon which our lives depend. We must protect this foundation as a safe and genetically stable source for future generations. For the benefit of all farmers, gardeners and consumers who want an alternative **I promise that I do not knowingly buy, grow, share or trade genetically engineered ("GMO") seeds or plants.**
Additionally, as a member of the Seed Library, I promise to grow plants and save seeds according to best practices to insure that I return viable seed that will produce plants true to the variety I label them to be.

Member's Seed Record

Name:_____

Borrowing Seed					Returning/Donating Seed				
Check-out Date	Plant Name	Variety	Year of Harvest	Seed Source	Check-in Date	Plant Name	Variety	Year & Loc. Harvested	Notes
3/5/13	**Tomato**	**Chico III**	**2012**	**Sust. SeedCo**	**9/15/13**	**Tomato**	**Chico III**	**2013; Richmond**	**Dry farmed**

If you are borrowing seeds for an organization, please let us know the name of your

organization: _____ (for grant purposes)

Thank you for your interest in saving seeds.