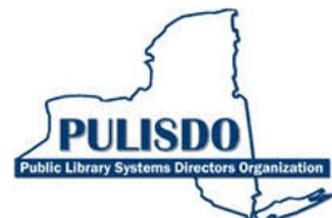




HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEETING MINIMUM PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS IN NEW YORK STATE

Prepared by the New York State Library and the
Public Library System Directors Organization
(PULISDO)

The University of the State of New York
State Education Department
New York State Library
Division of Library Development
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Helpful Information for Meeting Minimum Public Library Standards In New York State

INTRODUCTION

A New York State Library and Public Library System Directors Organization (PULISDO) *Work Group* created this publication, *Helpful Information for Meeting Minimum Public Library Standards In New York State*, as a guide for librarians, library directors, trustees, and library system personnel in understanding the why, what and how of each standard.

Success for all libraries, with improved service for library users, is one of the highest priorities of both the State Library and PULISDO. This publication, previously revised in 2002, addresses how library boards and directors can achieve both the letter and the spirit of the minimum public library standards.

The revised *Helpful Information for Meeting Minimum Public Library Standards In New York State* covers amendments to existing standards and three new minimum library standards that were adopted by the Board of Regents in July 2018. Amendments became effective as a permanent rule on August 1, 2018. The current standards will expire on December 31, 2020 and all “new” updated standards will take effect as of January 1, 2021. Standards were last updated over twenty years ago, and amendments and additions update and clarify language related to the existing standards and reflect changes in governance, technology and library use that have occurred over the last twenty years. Major amendments include:

- Updates to the standards related to library bylaws, a long-range plan, an annual report, annual budget, and the evaluation of programs, services, and collections.
- Addition of language to the existing standards to clarify that current information about the library, its governance and its services should be available to the community in both print and online.
- Addition of language to the existing standard about maintaining a library facility that addresses community needs and to clarify the need for adequate data infrastructure.
- Updates to the current language in the standard related to providing equipment, technology and internet connectivity to address community needs, to include the need for a circulation system that facilitates access to the local library collection and other library catalogs.
- Addition of three new standards—one related to library programming, one related to annual technology training for library staff, and one related to establishing and maintaining partnerships with other education, cultural and community organizations.
- Providing for a two-year implementation period to allow libraries sufficient time to obtain additional resources or expertise to achieve compliance.

The Board of Regents sets standards for public and association libraries under [Education Law, Section 254](#). Registration ([Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Section 90.1](#)), which is certified by the State Education Department, means that a chartered (incorporated) library

meets the minimum standards ([Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Section 90.2](#)) for its size and is thereby qualified to receive and expend state and local public funds. Libraries are registered following Regents incorporation by charter. Once registered, each library provides an annual assurance that minimum standards are met through their annual report to the New York State Library.

This publication is designed to assist libraries in meeting the minimum standards and provide a framework for system staff in working directly with member libraries.

Many thanks to library leaders from across the state who contributed ideas and suggestions for this revised edition.

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HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEETING STANDARD #1: WRITTEN BYLAWS

Each library...is governed by written bylaws which define the structure and governing functions of the library board of trustees, and which shall be reviewed and re-approved by the board of trustees at least once every five years or earlier if required by law.

WHY ARE BYLAWS NECESSARY?

Written bylaws clarify the rules by which the board of trustees operates and governs the library. They set the procedures for the smooth running of board business. As membership on the board changes over time, specifics and agreements may be forgotten. Bylaws are essential to assuring continuity and preventing disagreements and misunderstandings. Bylaws need to be reviewed and updated at least once every five years or earlier if required by law.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BOARD'S BYLAWS AND THE LIBRARY'S CHARTER?

The *bylaws* are the rules and procedures by which the Board of Trustees functions. The *charter* is a legal document from the Board of Regents that incorporates the library, making it an **education corporation** that must meet certain standards of operation. The bylaws must be consistent with enabling legislation (if applicable), the current charter, Education Law, and the Education Commissioner's Regulations.

WHAT DO BYLAWS TYPICALLY CONTAIN?

Bylaws usually cover such items as type of library and service area; number of trustees; terms of office of trustees; officers, duties and responsibilities; meeting frequency (e.g., third Monday) and rules (e.g., what is a quorum, order of business, filling vacancies on the board, trustee attendance, etc.); committees (e.g., standing committees, how committee members are appointed, ad-hoc committee procedures, etc.); conflict of interest; the library director's duties and responsibilities; and amendment procedures.

TRUSTEE ATTENDANCE AND THE BYLAWS?

One of the responsibilities of every trustee is to attend Board meetings and to be engaged in the decision-making process. [Education Law Section 226](#) states that "If any trustee shall fail to attend three consecutive meetings without excuse accepted as satisfactory by the trustees, he shall be deemed to have resigned, and the vacancy shall be filled."



HELPFUL TIP: Add a sentence or two to the bylaws on how a Board will handle a situation where a trustee is not fulfilling his/her duties and responsibilities. For example, a Board member who missed 50% of Board meetings within a year without providing an excuse will be

asked to submit their resignation. It is up to each Board to define what is an acceptable “excuse” in their bylaws.

WHAT DOES THE CHARTER CONTAIN?

The charter typically covers such items as name and location of the education corporation (in this case, the library); the names of the board members at the time of incorporation; the date the Regents approved the charter; the number or range of trustees and the length of their terms. The charter should also include the library's service area; the IRS 501(c)(3) language for not-for-profit corporations; language designating the Commissioner of Education as an agent of the corporation upon whom process in any action or proceeding against it may be served; and amendments. **To change any of these elements requires a charter amendment approved by the Board of Regents. These elements may not be changed by the Board in the bylaws.**



HELPFUL TIP: If the library's current charter does state a range of trustees (e.g., 5 to 15), the Board can change the number of trustees at any time by amending the bylaws. However, if the charter states a specific number of trustees (e.g., 7 trustees), the Board may not change the bylaws without amending the charter first. It is advisable to amend the charter to state a range of trustees. Libraries should first contact their library system to discuss any proposed charter-related actions. [Then either the library or library system should contact State Library staff who will provide appropriate forms and assist in their proper completion.](#)



HELPFUL TIP: It is also advisable that a Library with a range in its charter institutionalize a vote at the Annual Board organizational meeting to confirm the number of trustees for the coming year.

SHOULD BYLAWS BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY?

Yes. Current, board-approved bylaws are required to be publicly available online (See *Standard 11: Provides access to current library information*) and the library should also have printed copies available for public distribution. Online and printed bylaws provide the community with transparency and accountability about library operations.

WHERE CAN THE LIBRARY GO FOR HELP?

Below is a typical example of library bylaws. Consult the [Library System](#) for further advice or assistance in developing bylaws.



HELPFUL TIP: Provide a copy of the Library Bylaws to new trustees and ask them to review them. Many successful boards also schedule a formal new trustee orientation with the Library Director and the Board President that includes a Bylaws review on the orientation agenda.

SAMPLE BYLAWS (from the [Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State: 2018 Edition, p. 90-94](#))

The material below is presented for illustrative purposes only. Each library should adapt their bylaws to suit their particular needs and circumstances. Bylaws must align with the library’s charter and enabling legislation (if applicable). These bylaws are based on a typical association library legal structure.

Mission Statement

(insert the Library's Mission Statement)

The _____ Library exists to provide quality service to the residents of _____ in an open and non-judgmental environment with free access to library materials in a variety of formats.

Preamble

The Board of Trustees (hereinafter designated as the “Board”) of The _____ Library, a corporation created under a charter granted under Section 253 of the New York State Education Law by the Board of Regents (or Secretary of State) of the State of New York, dated _____, shall be governed by the laws of New York State, the regulations of the Commissioner of Education and by the following bylaws.

Bylaws

1. NAME OF ORGANIZATION

1. The name of the organization shall be the _____ Library

2. PURPOSE

1. The purpose of the organization is to provide superior library service to the residents, adults and children, of the communities of _____.

3. FISCAL

1. The fiscal year of the library shall be the _____ year.

4. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1. The library shall be governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board shall consist of _____ members, elected for terms of _____ years each. *(Insert any particular language regarding areas of representation or method of election. The number of trustees must conform with the Library's charter.)* Newly elected members will take office at the first meeting following the annual meeting.
2. Eligibility for office shall be limited to adults residing or owning property within the geographical limits of the library.
3. Absence from three consecutive meetings shall constitute automatic dismissal from the Board unless the Board defers this dismissal by majority vote. The President shall inform the absent Board Member in writing that he/she is no longer on the Board. If dismissal is deferred by Board action, the President shall inform the absent Board Member in writing the conditions of this deferral.
4. No member shall serve for more than two consecutive three-year terms. (insert local restrictions)
5. Any vacancy shall be filled by special election by the remaining members of the Board for the remainder of the term of that particular position. *(Refer to charter for local provisions)*
6. The Board may remove a Trustee for misconduct, incapacity, neglect of duty or refusal to carry into effect the library's educational purpose as provided in Education Law 226; subdivision 8.
7. Each Trustee shall have one vote, irrespective of office held.
8. A Trustee must be present at a meeting to have his/her vote counted.
9. A majority of the whole Board (including vacancies) is required for any motion to pass.
10. All actions of the Board shall be of the Board as a unit. No Board member shall act on behalf of the Board, on any matter, without prior approval of the Board. No Board member by virtue of his/her office shall exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the library nor, as an individual, command the services of any library employee.

5. OFFICERS

1. The officers of the Board shall be the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, elected annually by the Board at the annual meeting. These officers shall serve for a period of one year or until their successors shall have been duly elected.
2. The duties of such officers shall be as follows:

1. The **President** shall preside at all meetings of the Board, authorize calls for any special meetings, appoint all committees, execute all documents authorized by the Board, serve as an ex-officio voting member of all committees, and generally perform all duties associated with that office.
2. The **Vice President**, in the event of the absence or disability of the President, or of a vacancy in that office, shall assume and perform the duties and functions of the President.
3. The **Secretary** shall keep a true and accurate record of all meetings of the Board, shall issue notice of all regular and special meetings, and shall perform such other duties as are generally associated with that office.
4. The **Treasurer** (*Many public libraries must appoint an independent Treasurer who is not a member of the Board. See chapter on [Board Organization: Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State: 2018 Edition,](#)*) shall be the disbursing officer of the Board and shall perform such duties as generally devolve upon the office. In the absence or inability of the Treasurer, his/her duties shall be performed by such other members of the Board as the Board may designate.

6. DIRECTOR

1. The Board shall appoint a Director who shall be the chief executive officer of the library corporation and shall have charge of the administration of the library under the direction and review of the Board. The Director shall be responsible for the care of the buildings and equipment; for the employment and direction of the staff; for the efficiency of the library's service to the public; and for the operation of the library under the financial conditions contained in the annual budget.
2. The Director shall render and submit to the Board reports and recommendations of such policies and procedures, which, in the opinion of the Director, will improve efficiency and quality of library service. The Director shall attend all Board meetings except the portion of the meeting at which the director's appointment or salary is to be discussed or decided.

7. COMMITTEES

1. A nominating committee shall be appointed by the President three months prior to the Annual Meeting who will present a slate of officers and names of candidates for new trustees. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.
2. Committees for specific purposes may be appointed by the President. Such committees shall serve until the completion of the work for which they were appointed.

3. All committees shall make a progress report to the Board at each of its meetings.
4. No committee will have other than advisory powers unless, by suitable action of the Board, it is granted specific _____ power to act.
5. The President shall be, ex officio, a member of all committees.

8. MEETINGS

1. Meetings shall be held each month, the date and hour to be set by the Board. Written notice of all meetings shall be mailed by the Secretary to each member at least five days before the meeting.
2. A special meeting of the Board may be called at any time by the President or upon the request of three members _____ for a specific purpose. No business may be transacted at such special meeting except the stated business.
3. The Annual Meeting shall be held in _____ of each year. The business transacted at this meeting shall _____ include the election of new trustees and new officers.
4. The operating and financial reports for the previous year shall be presented at the regular meeting in January.
5. The preliminary budget for the subsequent calendar year, required for submission to the _____ voters, _____ shall be presented at the regular meeting in _____.
6. The final budget for the subsequent calendar year shall be presented for approval at the regular meeting in _____.
7. A simple majority of the whole Board (including vacancies) shall constitute a quorum for the conducting of all business. A majority of the whole Board (including vacancies) is required for any motion to pass. If a quorum is not present at a regular meeting, the attending members may set a date for another meeting to be held within one week, and the presiding officer shall notify the absent members of this specially called meeting.
8. The order of business for regular meetings shall include, but not be limited to, the following items which _____ shall be covered in the sequence shown unless circumstances make an altered order more efficient:
 1. Call to Order and roll call of members
 2. Pledge of Allegiance
 3. Adoption of Agenda
 4. Approval of prior Meeting Minutes
 5. Period for public expression

6. Correspondence
7. Personnel Actions Report
8. Treasurer's report
 - Report of receipts and disbursements
 - Warrants
 - Presentation of projected cash flow
9. Director's and Department Heads' reports
10. Committee Reports
11. Old Business
12. New Business
13. Period for public expression
14. Dates of future board meetings
15. Other Business
16. Adjournment

9. AMENDMENTS

1. Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed at any regular meeting and shall be voted upon at the next regular meeting. Written notice of the proposed amendment or amendments shall be sent to all absent members at least ten days prior to the voting session. A simple majority of the whole Board (including vacancies) shall be sufficient for adoption of an amendment.
2. Any rule or resolution of the Board, whether contained in these Bylaws or otherwise, may be suspended temporarily in connection with business at hand, but such suspension, to be valid, may be taken only at a meeting at which two-thirds of the members of the Board shall be present and two-thirds of those present shall so approve.

10. PROCEDURE

1. All procedures not specified herein shall be in accord with *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*.

Approved by The _____ Library Board of Trustees

Dated: _____.

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEETING STANDARD #2: LONG-RANGE PLAN

Each library. . . has a community-based, board-approved, written long-range plan of service developed by the library board of trustees and staff.

WHY IS A LONG-RANGE PLAN IMPORTANT FOR EVERY LIBRARY?

Every library needs a long-range plan as a formal document to:

- Provide information about the community and library to use in decision-making;
- Clarify for board, staff, and community the role of the library in the community;
- Evaluate the usefulness and quality of specific services and activities;
- Assist in preparing for change (dropping old services or adding new ones);
- Establish priorities for the allocation of resources;
- Document the need for sustainable funding.

WHAT IS A LONG-RANGE PLAN? DOES IT DIFFER FROM A STRATEGIC PLAN?

A long-range plan and a strategic plan both involve investigating the library's services in light of community needs and resources, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the library and the services the trustees and staff believe the library should or can provide, and creating a structured plan for providing the resources and direction for the "right" services for that community.

Long range planning prepares for the future. Strategic planning is based on the premise that change is necessary to survive and thrive in the future. Strategic planning answers the question, "What do we have to do now in order to improve our ability to operate five years in the future?" If the planning time frame is shorter it involves operational planning. Operational planning focuses on the improvement of things the library already does and is primarily concerned with the allocation of resources. (Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State, 2018 Edition, pg. 59).

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR LONG-RANGE PLANNING?

The way a library moves through its planning process is as important as the plan itself. The planning process helps raise the community's awareness of library programs, services and needs and gains library support from the community.

The long-range planning process is a cyclical one. While there are a variety of ways to develop a long-range plan, a successful planning process often includes the following steps:

1. **Develop a board vision.** Have a conversation at a special planning meeting to discuss the hopes, dreams, and concerns for the future of the library.

2. **Assessment.** Identify usage trends through library circulation, program and technology data. Comparing the library to others with similar budgets or service populations can be a useful planning activity as well. The New York State Library provides a compilation of financial and service statistics through its website at:
<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/index.html#Statistics>.
3. **Gather input from the community.** Talk to the community. Use a combination of focus groups, surveys, and interviews with community opinion leaders to get a broad amount of input, from both library users and non-users, which will help the board to identify community trends, aspirations, and priorities. This is an outward-looking activity asking the community what their aspirations and priorities are.
4. **Analyze what was learned.** Identify the library's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
5. **Assess the library's capacity to move forward** in the areas of:
 - *Personnel
 - *Finance
 - *Facility
 - *Policy
 - *Partnerships
 - *Governance
 - *Marketing & Public Relations
 - *Measurement & Evaluation

Through these five steps, the board and staff will have the information they need to create and write a solid plan for the future of the library.

WHO PARTICIPATES IN THE PROCESS?

Many people should be involved in the planning process in addition to the library director and the board of trustees. These may include: staff, library users, and representatives of business, education, government, or other key community groups. Public library system consultants or, in larger libraries, consultants under contract, may also advise or otherwise assist with the process.



HELPFUL TIP: One way of involving the community is through the information-gathering stage of the plan. For example, use focus groups of community members, or community surveys that ask people to identify ways the library can meet community needs.

WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF A LONG-RANGE PLAN?

- Mission, Vision and Core Values
 - The mission is a short, carefully crafted statement that tells why the library exists. The vision of a library is the type of statement that answers the questions: “where are we going?” and “what can we achieve?” Values are the principles and ideals that bind the library together including patrons, employees, vendors, and all stakeholders. Values are critically important to organizations because those who have the same value systems, or core values, tend to succeed within the organization, while those who do not share that set of values generally do not succeed.
- Goals
 - Broad statements of program intent that support the mission statement.
- Objectives
 - Specific, measurable, tasks or projects in support of a goal usually stated in terms of outcomes.
- Action Steps or Activities
 - Specific assignments that must be completed in order to reach an objective.
 - Timeline.
- Evaluation
 - Assessment and measurement of activities that have already occurred and provides a foundation for moving forward.

HOW MANY YEARS SHOULD A LONG-RANGE PLAN COVER?

The time frame of the library’s plan depends on the organization and the initiatives the director and board set. Typical plans are for 3 to 5 years. Although most libraries will want to use a long-range plan to set a direction for an extended period, they will probably limit detailed planning to a shorter period, perhaps two or three years. Although every library board should take into consideration continuous development for the library and the opportunities presented by the electronic information environment, they should set objectives and plan activities which, with a reasonable amount of effort, the library and community can achieve in the identified time period.

HOW DOES A LIBRARY USE THE PLAN?

Planning is a smart way to inform decisions about budgeting, personnel, capital improvements, library services and community involvement. Often, plans are used to develop a yearly "Action Plan" which is an outgrowth of the direction and choices made in the longer-range plan. Persons with responsibility for tasks within the plan work on these assignments according to the timeline in the plan. Staff and trustees review the entire plan for action and accomplishments according to a schedule provided in the plan. Many institutions use a "rolling" process in which one year is "added" or revised when the current year is completed (or nearly completed).

SHOULD LONG-RANGE PLANS OF SERVICE BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY?

Yes. The current, board-approved long-range plan of service is required to be publicly available online (See *Standard 11: Provides access to current library information*) and the library should also have printed copies available for public distribution. Online and printed long-range plans provide the community with transparency and accountability about library operations.

WHERE CAN THE LIBRARY GO FOR HELP?

Consult the library system for examples of different types of plans, as well as other assistance. It would also be helpful to submit a copy of the plan to the library system so it can be shared with others. Also, check out:

Planning and Evaluation in the *Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State*:

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/handbook/handbook.pdf>

Helping All Trustees Succeed (HATS) webinar series:

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/webinars.htm#hats>

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEETING STANDARD #3: REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Each library. . . provides a board-approved, written annual report to the community on the library's progress in meeting its mission, goals and objectives, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.

WHY PRESENT AN ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY?

An annual report:

1. Provides an opportunity to report on progress in meeting the library's mission, goals, and objectives as identified in the board's long-range plan of service.
2. Gives board and staff an opportunity to review the past year's activities.
3. Provides an opportunity to inform the community of the library's activities and encourages community engagement.
4. Offers an opportunity for publicity and promotion of the library with public officials and other stakeholders.
5. Serves as a resource for advocacy.
6. Furnishes accountability to community and funding sources.

WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

- Library users, the general public, and community partners
- Board members, staff, and Friends of the Library
- Public and elected officials (local, State and national)
- Media (print and electronic)
- Current and potential funding sources (local, regional, state and national)

WHAT SHOULD THE REPORT INCLUDE?

- Refer to the library's goals and objectives, long-range plan of service of the year in review.
- Statistics that give a quantitative picture of the library's activities (e.g., number of people who visit the library, circulation, interlibrary loans, programs, in-library use, number of registered borrowers, number of people who receive outreach services).
 - Use Project Outcome or similar data reporting tools to create infographics.
 - Highlight the impact of new programs and/or services.
- Noteworthy grants, fundraising events, or capital programs that the library undertook.
- Community partnership activities.
- Building construction and renovation initiatives.
- Communicate the return on investment of resources offered to the community

- Use Library Value Calculator from the New York Library Association (NYLA) <https://goo.gl/k9AEmF>.
- Photos to highlight some of the most successful and impressive programs and activities. (*Tip: use pictures to convey success of the programs. Pictures of kids always go well. Always ask for parent or guardian permission prior to using a child's photo.*)
- Honors that the Director, staff members or trustees may have earned during the year that are relevant to library service. (e.g., ALA, NYLA or Library System awards, community awards, degrees earned, promotions.)
- Library contact information: Director's name and phone number and board president's name and number.
- Don't forget to thank community partners, local government officials, legislators, staff, etc. who have contributed to the success of the library during the previous year.

WHAT FORMATS AND MEANS OF DISTRIBUTION ARE USEFUL?

- **Written Report** distributed internally among board and staff. Have multiple copies available for library users. Don't forget the library's support base.
- **Include a link to the report on library website.**
- Short versions of the report could be done in **bookmark format or fact sheet** and made available to all.
- **News Release** to appropriate newsletters, penny-savers, and newspapers (*Tip: let the widest distribution help spread the word of the great services and resources. Great public relations opportunity!*).
- **Hand deliver** or email reports to the movers and shakers of the community **encouraging their endorsement and support for the library.** (e.g., Chief of Police, Fire Chief, Mayor, School District officials, presidents of clubs, etc.) Support from influential members of the community who have no relationship to the library will carry greater weight with funding sources than support from trustees and Friends of the Library.
- **Written report with photos** sent individually to local officials, county, state, and national public officials as well as private contributors and benefactors, current and potential. (*Tip: this will strengthen the library's case for funding!*)
- **Copies to neighboring libraries, and the Library System** to foster cooperation and idea sharing.
- **Oral presentation** given to electronic media (radio and TV), and/or at village or town boards.
- **Social Media tools** can be used to share the library's report, photos and statistics.

Other ideas are also possible. At a minimum, choose one that allows for the widest distribution. It's so important to keep the library's story before the public! Don't be afraid to use it in several ways! Consider producing different versions for different audiences. The current, board-approved annual report is required to be publicly available online (*See Standard 11: Provides access to current library information*).

SHOULD THE ANNUAL REPORT BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY?

Yes. The library's current annual report is required to be publicly available online (See *Standard 11: Provides access to current library information*) and the library should also have printed copies available for public distribution. Online and printed annual reports provide the community with transparency and accountability about library operations.

WHERE CAN THE LIBRARY GO FOR HELP?

Consult the library system for examples of different types of annual reports as well as other assistance. Consider submitting a copy of the annual report to the library system so it can be shared with others.



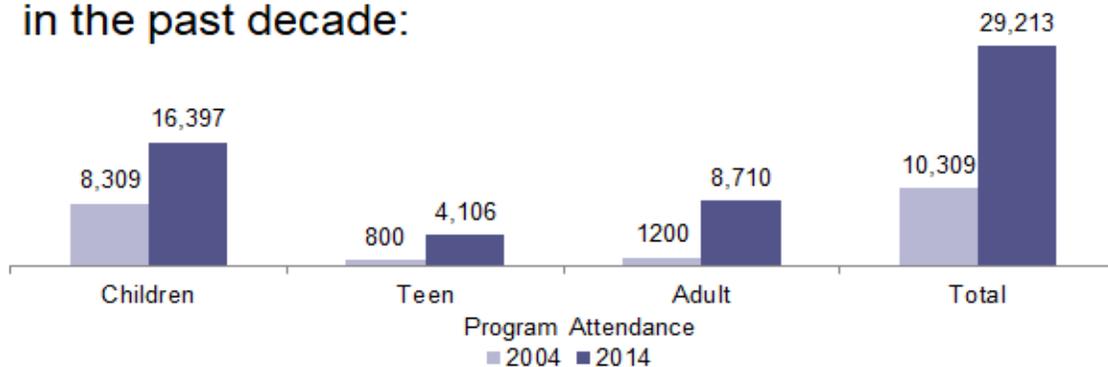
HELPFUL TIP: Use infographics, on the next page, to keep the community informed of library successes.

2014 By the Numbers: Stony Brook Public Library

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nullam libero enim, vestibulum nec fermentum a, sagittis id ligula. Mauris vulputate, neque sit amet venenatis blandit, justo urna condimentum sapien, quis egestas magna quam ac nulla.

69,000 visits  **7%** since 2013
2 visits per capita

Total program attendance almost **tripled** in the past decade:





99,113
items
circulated

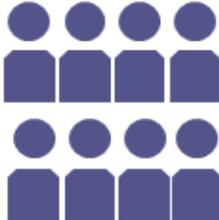


72,982
reference
questions
answered



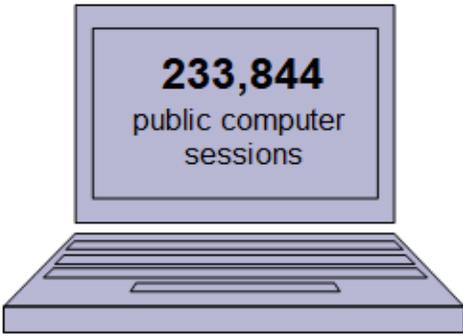
16,941 e-books borrowed

www.stonybrooklibrary.org
109,520 website visits



78,112
wireless
access uses





233,844
public computer
sessions



952 seniors completed a computer skills basics class series.

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEETING STANDARD #4: WRITTEN POLICIES

Each library ...has board-approved written policies for the operation of the library, which shall be reviewed and updated at least once every five years or earlier if required by law.

WHY ARE WRITTEN POLICIES NECESSARY?

- Policies provide a mechanism for library managers and staff to translate the library's service priorities into actions.
- Policies serve as the primary tool for ensuring that all staff has the information they need to do their jobs effectively.
- Policies provide a way to ensure that all members of the public know what they can expect from the library and that they are treated equitably.
- Policies provide support for the library staff and members of the library's governing body in the event of legal action.
- Policies contribute to the overall culture of an organization by instilling norms and values.



HELPFUL TIP: A policy that is written after an event has occurred may not be applied to that event. The new policy may help with future events or legal actions.

WHAT ARE THE FOUR TESTS FOR LEGALLY ENFORCEABLE POLICIES?

Library policies are enforceable only if they are in writing and adopted formally by the library board in an open meeting. In addition, these policies will be valid only if they meet the four tests of legality, reasonableness, nondiscriminatory application, and measurability. Policies which do not meet these tests could be ruled invalid if challenged in court. Prior to adopting a new policy or when reviewing a current policy, a library board should ask the following questions to test the policy for legal enforceability:

1. Does the Policy Comply with Current Statutes? The library board should review the policy to determine whether any provisions would be illegal under state or federal law. For example, a library policy of "no animals or pets allowed" must provide an exception for service dogs and other support animals. It is illegal for a library to refuse entry to people accompanied by licensed support animals.

2. Is the Policy Reasonable (including reasonable penalties)? Some policies, although not illegal per se, could still be ruled invalid because they are unreasonable. For example, state laws usually authorize the library's governing board to adopt rules for resident's access to the library, which includes setting hours the library is open to the public. Let's say a library board decides to set the library's hours as "10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday." Although it would not be illegal to set such hours, a court could find the policy to be

unreasonable because in effect it denies library access to people who work or go to school during the day.

The library board should also examine proposed policies to determine if any penalties are unreasonable. For example, it would be reasonable for a “no skateboarding in the library” policy to include a “penalty” that violators would be asked to leave for the rest of the day. It would not be reasonable to penalize the skateboarders by banning them from the library “for the rest of their lives.”

3. Could There Be Discriminatory Application of the Policy? In order to be legally enforceable, library policies must be applied fairly. Courts will invalidate library policies which are not applied equally and are used to discriminate against certain groups of people. An example of discriminatory application of policy is that, “no sleeping” policy might be enforced against people who are homeless but not against others (such as the mayor or even a library board member) who drift off while reading in a comfy chair. Another example is that some libraries might have “no noise” policies which they enforce only against tables of giggling adolescents but never against tables of loud-speaking adults.

4. Is the Policy Measurable? It is difficult, if not impossible, to enforce a policy fairly if the policy and penalty are not quantifiable. Policies should be written clearly so that library board members, library staff, and library users can read a library policy and know what constitutes a “violation” of the policy. For example, if a library has a policy which states that people will lose borrowing privileges if they have “too many overdue books for too long,” the definitions of “too many” and “too long” are not clear and may result in unfair application when interpreted by different staff members. On the other hand, a quantifiable policy states that people will lose borrowing privileges if they have “library material which has been overdue for three weeks or longer and if the individual has not returned the material or paid the replacement cost or made arrangements with the library for payment.” The policy also provides that the penalty, “loss of borrowing privileges,” will continue until the material is returned and/or paid for.

When reviewing and rewriting existing policies, library boards should also ask themselves whether there is still a viable reason to have the policy in the first place. Some boards have eliminated long-standing policies which have outlived their original usefulness to the public library and have opted instead for a more positive image for the library in the community. These include policies such as overdue fines, rental fees, and restrictions of the number of materials borrowed at one time.

HOW ARE POLICIES DEVELOPED?

In general, policies should be clear and concise, legal and fair. The library board is responsible for creating such policies, reviewing and revising them, and ultimately enforcing them with the assistance of the library director and staff. While trustees alone have the legal authority to make policy, the process works best when the library director and other key staff are closely involved. The staff has an important role in researching options, drafting recommendations, and presenting them to the board for discussion and approval.



HELPFUL TIP: It's a good idea to start with a sample and then adapt it to the library's specific needs. Contact the library system for sample policies.

The Board can appoint an ad hoc committee made of some board members, the director, and a staff member or two to work on policies. In some libraries the director develops the policies and the board reviews and approves them. It is important that the director and staff have input since they are familiar with the day-to-day operations of the library.

WHAT POLICIES SHOULD A LIBRARY HAVE?

All policies should include a process by which the board can respond to public comments or complaints. Policies are, in effect, the rules of the library and should not be confused with procedures, which are an administrative function and describe how things are done.

It is a good idea to categorize the library's policies into internal (such as personnel, business continuity, financial controls, etc.) and external (dealing with the public). These areas can be further broken down to suit the library's particular organizational structure.

All policies should be able to stand alone, and each policy should be dated with the original adoption and review and/or revision dates. The board's policies should be recorded, compiled, and organized for ready access in a policy manual. The director and every trustee should have a copy of the policy manual and must be familiar with its contents. A thorough understanding of the library's policies is the foundation from which to adopt new policies, revise old ones, and interpret or defend the library's rules.

The State Library requires the following policies be adopted by all association and public libraries at the time of registration:

- **Open Meeting Policy**—All public and association libraries are subject to open meetings law ([Education Law, Section 260-a](#)).
- **Confidentiality of Library Records**—All public and association libraries are required to keep library records confidential according to [Civil Practice Laws and Rules, Section 4509](#).

- **Conflict of Interest Policy**—All public and association libraries are subject to [Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, Section 715-a](#).
- **Whistle Blower Policy**—All public and association libraries with twenty or more employees AND an annual revenue in excess of one million dollars in the previous fiscal year are subject to [Not-for-Profit Law, Section 715-b](#). (*Note that this is required only for certain libraries.*)
- **Disaster Response Policy**—A board-approved disaster response policy in the event of a natural or man-made disaster that affects the library facilities, holdings, or staff and library users.
- **Collection Development Policy**
- **Meeting Space Policy** (exception: if the library does not have a meeting room).
- **Internet Use Policy** (required by Chapter 357 of the Laws of 2000)
- **Code of Ethics**
- **Personnel Policy**
- **Financial Controls:** Purchasing/Procurement Policy and Petty Cash Policy.



HELPFUL TIP: Find a recommended list of policies here:

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/handbook/policies-checklist.htm>

SHOULD POLICIES BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY?

Yes. Current, board-approved policies are required to be publicly available online (See *Standard 11: Provides access to current library information*) and the library should also have printed copies available for public distribution. Online and printed policies provide the community with transparency and accountability about library operations.

WHERE CAN THE LIBRARY GO FOR HELP?

Contact the library system for samples of policies and assistance with reviewing the policies.

See the chapter on Policies in *the Handbook for Library Trustees* for further information and resources: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/handbook/#Policies>



HELPFUL TIP: Library Boards are advised to review library policies on a regular basis. It takes time to update a policy. New trustees should be given a copy of all library policies.

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEETING STANDARD #5: WRITTEN BUDGET

Each library. . . annually prepares and publishes a board-approved, written budget, which enables the library to address the community's needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.

WHY IS PRESENTATION OF A BOARD-APPROVED WRITTEN BUDGET TO THE PUBLIC NECESSARY?

1. A written budget request ensures fiscal accountability from the board to the public. It allows for the provision of services necessary to ensure proper functioning of the library.
2. A budget request notifies the funding agency of the fiscal requirements for the library in the coming year so that funds may be properly and timely allocated.
3. A written budget request serves as a barometer for future needs and avoids potential future shortfalls.
4. A written budget request is a powerful advocacy tool notifying the public about the crucial role of the library in the community through the breadth and variety of programs and services provided.

WHO SHOULD PREPARE THE BUDGET?

Preparation of the budget should be a joint project of the board of trustees and the library director. It is recommended that the budget draft be reviewed by the library treasurer and/or a board finance committee prior to presenting to the full Board.



HELPFUL TIP: “The best budgets are developed in relationship to the library’s long-range and strategic planning process and include projections for future years.” (*Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State*, 2018 Edition, pg. 50.)



HELPFUL TIP: In order to be transparent to community members, the library’s budget should be made readily available for review by any members of the public, both in person at the library and online at all times.

WHAT SHOULD THE BUDGET INCLUDE?

Although formats and fiscal year may differ, all library budgets should:

1. Indicate the resources that will be needed to meet the library's goals and objectives within the time period covered in the document.
2. Indicate income and expenditure figures based on past experience considering anticipated changes.

The library's long-range plan should be the foundation for the development of any library budget. Library budgets should contain sufficient expenditure allocations to meet the information and service needs of the community while complying with the NYS Comptroller's guidelines and meeting the minimum standards.

SHOULD BUDGETS BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY?

Yes. The current, board-approved budget is required to be publicly available online (See *Standard 11: Provides access to current library information*) and the library should also have printed copies available for public distribution. Online and printed budgets provide the community with transparency and accountability about library operations.

WHERE CAN THE LIBRARY GO FOR HELP?

Contact the library system for assistance.

See the chapter, *Budgets and Finance*, in the *Handbook for Library Trustees*:
<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/handbook/chapter11.htm>.

The Office of the New York State Comptroller has a useful series of [Local Government Management Guides](#) that include technical information and suggested practices for various financial and budgeting topics.

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEETING STANDARD #6: EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS

Each library...periodically evaluates the effectiveness of the library's programs, services and collections to address community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.

WHAT IS EVALUATION?

Evaluation is the systematic and ongoing assessment of an organization's progress and success in fulfilling its mission, using a variety of qualitative and quantitative measurement techniques. It measures what has already occurred to guide the planning process for the future.

To meet this standard, a library should be able to demonstrate that it queried its community, developed service objectives based on community need, and evaluated the results of those objectives. The library also needs to demonstrate that action was taken to incorporate the results in the library's planning process. It is not enough to set a questionnaire on the circulation desk for the occasional curious library user to pick up. There should be an organized effort to determine community needs, and then to evaluate how well the library is meeting those needs through its collection and services.

WHY IS EVALUATION ESSENTIAL?

In order to meet community needs effectively, **ongoing** evaluation is necessary. Evaluation provides a concrete measurement of the quality and impact of what the library offers. Some evaluative efforts will be more comprehensive than others, depending on what the library needs to know. Evaluation includes asking current library users how the library is doing, reaching out to the community at large to see what needs are not being met, and exploring why some potential users are not yet involved in the library. Therefore, the data generated can help the library flourish by providing information regarding how to best meet community needs, fulfill the mission, support advocacy efforts, justify budgets/staffing, etc.

WHAT CAN BE EVALUATED?

Most evaluations focus on one or two areas at a time. Some will be more relevant than others, depending on what the library wishes to learn. Although the area traditionally identified as most important to library users is the library's service offerings, other areas may need to be the focus during any particular evaluation cycle. It is helpful to begin by conducting a community needs assessment and clarifying the library's goals and objectives (refer to the library's strategic plan). This process can help determine what questions need to be answered.

Possible categories and areas of evaluation include:

- Inputs -- staff, materials
- Outputs -- circulation, in-house use of materials, visits, programs, internet use, database searches, engagement on the library's social media sites
- Outcomes -- the "why" behind a program or service
- Internal processes -- efficiency, staff helpfulness
- Community fit -- public opinion
- Access to materials -- the speed of delivery, hours, charges, fees
- [Physical facility](#) -- building appeal, parking, location
- Management elements -- both board and staff activities
- Service offerings -- range, variety
- Service to special groups -- [youth](#), homebound, [aged](#), people with disabilities, unemployed or underemployed, etc.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS?

After a library has decided that evaluation is an important part of meeting its mission, goals and objectives, the process of choosing the most effective evaluation tool begins. Refer to [Library Research Service](#) and [WebJunction](#) courses on assessment, evaluation and planning for helpful information.

Questions a library might ask to facilitate the assessment process include:

- What does the library wish to evaluate, and why?
- What level of performance does the library want to achieve?
- Which investigative technique will work best?
- How will the library actually measure the performance level?
- Did the library do what was promised; to what extent did the library meet the objectives?
- What data does the library already collect or have access to?
- What is the timeline for the evaluation?

There are three categories of evaluation tools:

- **Quantitative measures** - measurements that produce numerical results. Statistical packages are available to assist libraries. Refer to [Librarian and Researcher Knowledge Space](#) for more information.
- **Qualitative measures** - the data are not in the form of numbers.
 - [Focus group](#) /Individual interviews: Interviews and focus groups are conducted with evaluation and program/initiative stakeholders. These include, but are not limited to, staff, administrators, participants and their parents or families, funders, and community members. Interviews and focus groups can be conducted in person or over the phone. Questions posed in interviews and focus groups are generally open-ended and responses are documented in full, through

detailed note-taking or transcription. The purpose of interviews and focus groups is to gather detailed descriptions, from a purposeful sample of stakeholders, of the program processes and the stakeholders' opinions of those processes. (www.imls.gov)

- Observation: Observation is an unobtrusive method for gathering information about how the program/initiative operates. Observations can be highly structured, with protocols for recording specific behaviors at specific times, or unstructured, taking a more casual, "look-and-see" approach to understanding the day-to-day operation of the program. Data from observations are used to supplement interviews and surveys in order to complete the description of the program/initiative and to verify information gathered through other methods. (www.imls.gov)
- Evaluations: For example, evaluation of a meeting or workshop may involve a brief discussion at the end of the meeting or be a more formal written evaluation by participants immediately following the event. Meaningful long-term change may involve follow-up interviews at a later date.
- **Use Surveys of current and potential library users**

Surveys and questionnaires are also conducted with evaluation and program/initiative stakeholders. These are usually administered on paper, through the mail, in a highly structured interview process in which respondents are asked to choose answers from those predetermined on the survey, or more recently, through email and on the Web. The purpose of surveys/questionnaires is to gather specific information—often regarding opinions or levels of satisfaction, in addition to demographic information—from a large, representative sample.

Helpful resources include:

- [Google Forms](#)
- [Project Outcome](#)
- [Survey Monkey](#)
- [Snap Surveys](#)
- [Surveygizmo](#)

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH THE FINDINGS?

The findings need to be analyzed and discussed by the library director and full board and recommendations should be made to achieve a higher level of effectiveness. As with other parts of any planning process, the evaluation results should be widely disseminated and used as a chance to gain publicity and generate support for any proposals. The following tools are very useful when distributing information regarding the value of library services:

- [Valuing Library Services Calculator](#) – determine the value of resources and services
- [CBA/ROI Calculator](#) - benefit for every dollar spent calculation

Responsibilities for board-approved changes should be clearly laid out, timelines set, and tasks completed. Evaluating effectiveness does not end here, as it needs to be an ongoing process.

WHERE CAN THE LIBRARY GO FOR HELP?

Consult the library system for further assistance. In addition to staff expertise, there are a number of manuals and other materials which the system can share with the library.

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEETING STANDARD #7: HOURS

Each library...is open the following hours.

Population	Minimum Weekly Hours Open
Up to 500	12
500-2,499	20
2,500-4,999	25
5,000-14,999	35
15,000—24,999	40
25,000-99,999	55
100,000 and above	60

WHY ARE MINIMUM WEEKLY HOURS IMPORTANT?

A good library is accessible to the community. Standard 7 requires that each public or free association library be open a fixed schedule of *minimum weekly hours open* on a 52-week basis. The minimum number of weekly hours open is linked to the size of the population the library is chartered to serve. *Minimum weekly hours open* means the fewest number of hours the library is open to the public every week during the year.

Many public libraries exceed these standards because the community, library board and library staff recognize that the number of hours of public service leads to greater service to and use by the public. While libraries may consider expanding public service hours during some parts of the year to meet increased library user needs, Standard 7 requires that each library also maintain the fixed schedule of minimum weekly hours open on a 52-week basis.

The library should post the days and the hours when the library is open in a prominent location and include hours open in printed and online information describing the library and its services.

Some communities, such as summer resorts, experience a large influx of population for a part of the year. Although not required, resort community libraries should consider expanding public service hours to meet increased library user needs during these times.

WHAT ABOUT EVENINGS, WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS?

Library hours should include morning, afternoon, evening and weekend hours based on actual and potential library user needs. The standards do not require a library to open on legal holidays or Sundays. In a week where a portion of the library's fixed schedule of *minimum weekly hours open* falls on a legal holiday, the library may fall below the *minimum weekly hours open* requirement for that particular week.

HOW DOES A LIBRARY COUNT THE HOURS IF IT HAS BRANCHES?

Minimum weekly hours open means the fewest number of hours the library is open to the public every week during the year. A library with more than one service outlet may use the total non-overlapping hours of all the library's service outlets to meet the *minimum weekly hours open* requirement. Libraries should try to schedule different hours of service at outlets if possible.

WHERE CAN THE LIBRARY GO FOR HELP?

Consult the library system for help in analyzing library user needs and deciding the hours that best meet varying library user needs.

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEETING STANDARD #8: MAINTAINING A FACILITY TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS

Each library...maintains a facility that addresses community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service including adequate space, lighting, shelving, seating.

HOW DOES THE LIBRARY DETERMINE IF THE FACILITY IS ADEQUATE?

The number one resource for creating a facility that meets community needs is to look at the building in the context of the library's long-range plan. Any building expert would first ask the library director and board, "what are the goals and service plans of the library?" General services planning precedes Facility Planning because it defines the library users, services, and programs of the library. Once these plans are defined, the board, director, and other stakeholders can determine specific space needs, layout, and technical specifications such as wiring for technology, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, compliance with environmental regulations (i.e. asbestos and lead abatement), energy efficiency, and creating spaces that reflect the community.

While there are many resources to help determine the facility needs, the final determination of adequacy rests in the hands of the trustees.

- A long-range plan with clearly articulated mission statement, goals, objectives and an action plan provide a basis for evaluating whether or not a library has a facility which adequately meets community needs.
- The planning and evaluation process should involve input from staff, members of the community or communities served (including people with physical disabilities), and the board. The process should be conducted in an open, well-publicized manner. This ensures that those paying for and residing in the service area will have a say in, and take ownership of, their library facility. See Standard #2, Long-Range Plan for more information.
- A sub-section of the library's overall long-range plan should include a facility plan that not only looks at the importance of aligning the building with the community's needs, but also taking into consideration general maintenance, upkeep, and scheduled repairs. The library may find it useful to contact their library system to assist in the development of a facility plan.
- Care must be taken to provide for a facility which is accessible to the entire community.
- Where legal mandates (local, State, or Federal) exist, it is the responsibility of the library to be aware of and comply with those requirements.

WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A MASTER FACILITY PLAN?

A Master Facility Plan can include, but is not limited to:

- Plans for expansions or building acquisitions.
- Preventative maintenance schedules for major systems such as HVAC, roof, parking lot, elevators/lifts, sidewalks, etc.
- Making every aspect of the library accessible to all patrons if they are not currently accessible.
- Planned evaluation of space use in conjunction with library users' experience/service.
- Schedule for evaluating safety and security.
- Development of a Disaster Response Plan.
- Environmentally sustainable design and consideration for future generations.

HOW DOES A LIBRARY USE A FACILITY PLAN?

- The library board should appoint a Facilities Committee to regularly evaluate and discuss the library building and its upcoming needs/scheduled maintenance.
- If funding is required to implement projects such as a renovation, expansion, technology infrastructure, and/or new building acquisitions the library may wish to speak to the library system about applying for State Aid for Library Construction funds.
- If a ballot measure, such as a bond vote, is required to fund a facility project, the plan should be widely disseminated and used to gain public understanding and support of the project.
- The Facility Plan should clearly lay out tasks and job responsibilities, timelines, and items completed.
- Regular action, review, and evaluation of the Facility Plan is needed in order to uphold this standard.

WHERE CAN THE LIBRARY GO FOR HELP?

Below are a number of useful resources to guide the library in meeting this standard. One of the first steps is to contact the library system for guidance.

- Nichols, J., Aldrich, R. S., Public Library System Directors' Organization of New York State, Library Trustees Association of New York State & New York State Library. (2018). *Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State*.
- Aldrich, R. S. (2018). *Sustainable Thinking: Ensuring your library's future in an uncertain world*.
- NYLA Sustainability Initiative; <https://www.nyla.org/sustainability/>
- Sannwald, W. W. (2016). *Checklist of library building design considerations*.
- Schlipf, F. A., & Moorman, J. A. (2018). *The practical handbook of library architecture: Creating building spaces that work*.
- *Accessible Building Design*, Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association, Jackson Heights, New York, no publication date. Call 1-800-444-0120.

The following resources prescribe specific building standards to ensure access for all persons including those with disabilities.

- [The Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) \(ADA.gov\)](#)
- [Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines \(ADAAG\)](#)
- [Rehabilitation Act of 1973 \(Sections 504 and 508\) \(Disability.gov\)](#)
- [Architectural Barriers Act \(Access-Board.gov\)](#)

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEETING STANDARD #9: PROGRAMMING

Each library...provides programming to address community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.

WHY SHOULD LIBRARIES PROVIDE PROGRAMMING?

Library “programs help to illuminate the experiences, beliefs and values that unite us as human beings. They stimulate us to make connections where we noticed none before—between our ancestors and ourselves, between one culture and another, between the community and the individual.” ([ALA Public Program Office website.](#))

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PROGRAMMING?

Benefits to the Community

- Connecting people with each other and essential services.
- Delivering high-quality public education.
- Encouraging civic engagement.
- Providing literacy and lifelong learning opportunities.



HELPFUL TIP: Community members can be a great resource to develop and run new programs.

Benefits to the Library

- Positions the library as a valuable community partner in education and establishes the library as a vital part of community life.
- Introduces community members to the resources of the public library.
- Attracts new library users and reaches people who would not usually come to the library.
- Creates positive publicity for the library.
- Promotes community involvement in the mission of the library.
- Establishes partnerships and collaborations with community partners.
- Increases circulation of library materials.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PROGRAM PLANNING AND SCHEDULING

- Know the reasons for holding a library program.
- Review prior year programming data.
- Establish goals and objectives for programming.

- Know the library's resources.
- Plan the components of the program.
- Seek community support for the program.
- Publicize and promote the program both in the library and throughout the community.
- Communicate with all library staff about preparations, registration and programming so everyone is knowledgeable about the programming at the library.
- After Programs: send thank you notes, collect and report results, evaluate.

RESOURCES

- [Programming Librarian](#) [ALA] – A place to share and browse programs, learn from fellow programming librarians and explore learning and grant opportunities.
- [ALA Programs Office](#) – The ALA Public Programs Office promotes cultural and community programming as an essential part of library service.
- [Project Outcome](#) [PLA]- Performance Outcome Measures for Public Libraries Initiative
- [WebJunction](#) – Programming webinars/documents
- [Summer Reading at New York Libraries](#) – Resources for librarians and educators to help make Summer Reading Programs a success!
- [The National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment](#) [NILPPA] – A research project by the American Library Association – aims to develop a research agenda to understand the impacts of library public programs nationwide.
- [Ready to Read at New York Libraries](#)—Resources to improve and expand the availability of high quality public library early-learning services.

These programming guidelines were developed by the Mid-Hudson Library System:

<https://midhudson.org/topics/sustainable-libraries/programming/>.

WHERE CAN THE LIBRARY GO FOR HELP?

Consult with the library system if further assistance or advice is needed.

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEETING STANDARD #10: TECHNOLOGY TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS

Each library.... provides a circulation system that facilitates access to the local library collection and other library catalogs; and provides equipment, technology, and internet connectivity to address community needs and facilitate access to information.

Twenty-first century libraries should be automated and connected to facilitate improved service and resource sharing. As community anchor institutions, local libraries are often the only source of free, high-speed internet access in the community. Libraries should plan to increase broadband speeds and technology infrastructure regularly to keep pace with the rapid life cycles of modern computers and telecommunications equipment. All library facilities should provide high-speed wireless access to the internet so library users may use their own devices.

WHAT IS A CIRCULATION SYSTEM?

A circulation system is also called an integrated library system (ILS). An ILS uses software that facilitates resource sharing by the tracking of items owned by a library, as well as library users' borrowing, returning and requesting activities.



HELPFUL TIP: The library system plays a crucial role in providing system-wide ILS technology, support, and training for local library staff. Contact the library system with all ILS questions or issues.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AN INTEGRATED LIBRARY SYSTEM (ILS)?

Benefits to Library Users:

- Library users can view library holdings and item availability using an online catalog that can be accessed during and after library hours and via a mobile device.
- Library users can renew items online at their convenience.
- Library users can place holds on items not available at their home library or that are currently in use.
- The automated system can provide library users with information about a particular item as well as provide other suggestions depending on the topic of search.

Benefits to Library Staff:

- The ILS can generate statistics and reports.
- The library can track the status of items easily. The automated system prints and emails overdue notices.
- The automated system facilitates collection development, weeding of unwanted materials and assists with inventory.
- Assists with collecting fines and lost books funds.

WHAT IS MEANT BY EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY, AND INTERNET CONNECTIVITY?

Equipment and technology refer to computers, laptops, printers, scanners or other devices that library users can use at the library to access information online or use to meet their particular education, business or personal needs. Internet connectivity refers to the library's broadband internet and Wi-Fi connections. Libraries should strive to provide connectivity speeds of at least 100Mbps where available.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO THE LIBRARY?

The ability to provide technology to the community has an impact on the library budget. Developing a technology plan is recommended in order to better estimate the annual expenses and growth projections based on local needs. This plan should include equipment replacement and broadband connectivity costs.



HELPFUL TIP: Find more information about developing a Technology Plan at the Mid-Hudson Library System website: <https://midhudson.org/topics/resource-sharing/technology-operations/technology-plan/>

BEST PRACTICES

In addition to the technology plan, it is recommended that every library keep and maintain the following technology documents (For additional information and sample documents see "[Tech Documentation](#)" at the Mid-Hudson Library System Website.)

- **IT Reference Sheet:** a basic sheet of contact information.
- **Technology Task List:** a list of tech tasks to be performed.
- **Inventory:** a list of all computers, network equipment, printers, servers, routers, wireless access points, etc.
- **Network Diagram:** a simple diagram mapping out the connections between items on the network.

- **Passwords:** a list of library accounts and passwords. This should include Username, password, and any associated email addresses and websites.
- **Software License Keys:** a list of all software license keys. This should include software name, license key, the quantity of licenses, etc.
- **Vendor and Support Contract information:** a list of all vendors and contractors used. This should include company name, account manager or point of contact, phone numbers, email and websites.

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEETING STANDARD #11: PROVIDES ACCESS TO CURRENT LIBRARY INFORMATION

Each library. . . provides access to current library information in print and online, facilitating the understanding of library services, operations and governance; information provided online shall include the standards referenced in paragraphs one through five of this subdivision (standards 1 through 5).

WHY HAVE PRINTED AND ONLINE INFORMATION ABOUT THE LIBRARY?

Providing printed and online information that describes the library and explains the services offered in an attractively produced format such as a brochure or bookmark is an essential element of a good public relations program. Printed and online information also provides the community with transparency and accountability about library operations and services. It is important that the library's website and social media venues have up to date information about the library to keep online library users informed and attract future library users.

WHAT TYPES OF INFORMATION SHOULD BE INCLUDED?

The library's printed and online information should include, at a minimum, the following elements:

- Library name
- Library street address
- Library website address
- Board meeting dates and times
- Agenda for regular board meetings posted at least a week ahead of the meeting time
- Agenda or topic for special meetings posted at least 72 hours in advance
- Draft Board meeting minutes within two weeks of meeting
- Library telephone number, FAX number, and e-mail address
- Listing of the days and the hours when the library is open to the public
- A brief description of the library (e.g., roles, mission)
- Listing of the services offered to the public and who is eligible to use them (e.g., interlibrary loan, reserves, extended vacation loans, community rooms, photocopying, story hours and other programs, public access computers, maker spaces)
- Explanation of the library's borrowing rules:
 - who is eligible for a library card
 - length of loan for library materials
 - policies on overdue items, fines, and fees

In addition to printed information, the library should also have a scheduled program of announcements for social media venues, newspaper, television, and radio and utilize public

service announcements. Build the image of the library as a proactive and vital community service by keeping the community informed of ongoing programs and services.



HELPFUL TIP: Have a [social media policy](#). It will help avoid confusion among library employees on the image the library wants to portray online.

WHAT FORMATS AND MEANS OF DISTRIBUTION ARE ACCEPTABLE?

A library should have an active, ongoing planned and coordinated approach to public relations if it is going to fulfill its mission. An attractively produced brochure or bookmark is a basic element of such a program. This brochure or bookmark should be updated regularly and available for distribution in the library. Library staff should ensure that each new borrower receives a copy. Copies may also be placed in public places in the community.

Public information materials do not need to be expensive or elaborate. Concise, clear information about the library is most likely to be useful. An appealing, neat format is easier to understand. A positive and friendly tone (rather than a listing of what is not allowed, for example) creates an impression that the library is service-oriented. Printed and other information should create an image of the library as a community institution that welcomes and encourages community residents to make full use of library facilities, materials, and services.

Library staff, board members and members of the Friends' group may use the library's printed information when telling community groups and government officials about the library and its services. Some library staff work closely with local community groups and/or realtor associations to distribute information about the library as new families are welcomed to the community. Residents are voters and taxpayers and deserve to be informed about this valuable tax-supported service.

Library website, blogs or social media venues can help increase library use by reaching current or new community members.

To meet this standard, a library must also post the following board-approved information online:

- **ByLaws** (see Standard 1)
- **Long-Range Plan** (see Standard 2)
- **Annual Report to the Community** (see Standard 3)
- **Policies** (see Standard 4)
- **Budget** (see Standard 5)

WHERE CAN THE LIBRARY GO FOR HELP?

Consult the library system for any assistance that may be needed.

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEETING STANDARD #12 EMPLOYS A PAID DIRECTOR

Each library...employs a paid director in accordance with the provisions of Section 90.8 of this Part.

WHY HAVE A PAID DIRECTOR?

A good library is staffed by competent, well-trained personnel so that it can guarantee effective and quality library service to the community. One of a good library's most important assets is the library director. The library director is responsible, among other things, for working with the library board, the library staff and residents of the community to assess library service needs, planning for library services to meet those needs, and administering the day-to-day delivery of quality library service to the community.

While volunteers are helpful in extending the services a library is able to offer the community, the library director, even in the smallest of libraries, should be paid a salary in return for delivering consistent, quality leadership and public service.

The board should offer a salary, hours and benefits comparable with other positions in the community requiring similar educational preparation and job assignments.

WHAT ARE THE PROVISIONS OF COMMISSIONER'S REGULATION 90.8?

[Commissioner's Regulation \(CR\) 90.8](#) addresses the appointment of library personnel in public, free association and Indian libraries. The provisions of CR 90.8 in relation to the director are summarized on the following chart:

	Minimum Education Requirements	
POPULATION	MEMBER OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	NOT A MEMBER OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
Below 2,500	No requirement.	No requirement.
2,500 to 4,999	2 academic years of study at an approved college or university.	A bachelor's degree from an approved college or university.
5,000 to 7,499	A bachelor's degree from an approved college or university.	A public librarian's professional certificate.
7,500 or more	A public librarian's professional certificate.	A public librarian's professional certificate.

WHAT IS THE BOARD'S RESPONSIBILITY IN MEETING THIS STANDARD?

The board should pay the director a salary commensurate with the education and experience level required for the position. Benefits should include some health insurance coverage, provision for sick leave, and paid vacation. Other benefits, such as paid personal leave, retirement plans, investment plans may also be offered in addition to a salary. The board is responsible for ensuring that an accurate accounting of supplemental benefits is kept for each employee for tax reporting purposes.

[CR 90.2](#) does not specify the number of hours that the paid director must be employed. However, the board should hire a director for a sufficient number of hours to adequately administer the library. For libraries open less than 35 hours a week, this means employing a paid director for at least the number of hours that the library facility is open to the public.

In addition to a competitive salary and benefits, continuing education for staff development is essential for the director. In fact, continuing education is important for all library staff, not just the director. The board should make continuing education a priority and allocate funds necessary in the budget. Opportunities in the form of conferences and release time for the continuing education and professional enrichment of the staff, including attendance at system workshops, local, state and national conferences, should be encouraged by trustees.

WHERE CAN THE LIBRARY GO FOR HELP?

Consult the [library system](#) for assistance.

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEETING STANDARD #13: TECHNOLOGY TRAINING FOR STAFF

Each library... provides library staff with annual technology training, appropriate to their position, to address community needs as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.

WHY IS ANNUAL TECHNOLOGY TRAINING NECESSARY FOR LIBRARY STAFF?

Without trained staff, the public's ongoing investment in new library technologies will decrease in value. Providing technology training is an opportunity for library staff to keep pace with changing technologies. A well-trained staff will be able to provide a better library user experience with less frustration. Annual technology training for all library staff ensures the full utilization of library technology resources as defined in the long-range plan.

ORGANIZING AND PLANNING TECHNOLOGY TRAINING

Training opportunities should be provided annually for all staff by the library director, in consultation with the board, depending on the needs of the staff and community as defined in the library's long-range plan. It is recommended that the library director and staff create an annual training plan. Technology training should be flexible to accommodate and adapt to the constantly changing technologies. A best practice is to also have a budget line for staff training. The *Trustee Handbook* recommends at least 1% of the library's budget should be dedicated to education for staff and trustees.

There are many ways to provide annual technology training for staff. Here are some ideas:

- **Professional Development Day:** Work with the library board to determine a day, half day or a few hours when the library will close for a "professional development" or "staff training" day.
- **Staff Meetings:** Devote a portion of every staff meeting to training on a specific technology issue.
- **Webinars/Online Courses:** Assign staff to take specific webinars or online courses and give them uninterrupted time during the workday to complete the webinar or online course.
- **Local, Regional, State and National Conferences:** Encourage staff to attend workshops and conferences. Many conferences such as the New York Library Association's Annual Conference and Computers in Libraries offer many opportunities for technology training.
- **Public Library Systems:** many systems provide in-person and customized training for member libraries.



HELPFUL TIP: Public Library Systems can play a crucial role in providing technology training for library staff. Contact them for help getting started.

WHAT ARE SOME TECHNOLOGY TRAINING RESOURCES?

- [American Library Association](#): Online Webinar Calendar
- [GCF Learn Free.org](#): free online courses
- [Empire State Library Network](#) (ESLN): ESLN is comprised of the nine Reference and Research Library Resource Councils in New York State. Each individual council provides a range of continuing education opportunities.
- [New York Library Association](#): Continuing Education and archived Webinars
- [New York State Library/Division of Library Development](#): upcoming and archived webinars.
- [Public Library Association](#): Conferences, Continuing Education and webinars.
- [WebJunction](#): free self-paced webinars for all library workers and trustees.
- [NOVELNY](#): Webinars and training related to the NOVELNY databases.



HELPFUL TIP: The State Library partners with OCLC to provide *free* access to WebJunction's webinars and self-paced courses for *all* library workers, volunteers, and students in New York State. The *free* access is available at learn.webjunction.org.

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEETING STANDARD #14: COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Each library...establishes and maintains partnerships with other educational, cultural or community organizations which enable the library to address the community's needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.

WHY ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY?

Collaboration and partnerships with other local organizations are critical foundations for long-term sustainability and community impact. The more bridges built to the community and within the community, the stronger the ties between the library and supporters.

To meet this standard, a library must demonstrate that it is actively partnering with one or more community organizations by working collaboratively to offer a library program or library service. For example: Summer Reading by partnering with the school district; partnering with the Chamber of Commerce to provide services to local businesses; working with the county health department to provide opioid overdose prevention programs; partnering with literacy volunteers to offer English as a Second Language courses in the library or literacy tutoring.

“As trusted centers of the community, libraries are in a unique position to attract potential partners, and to provide resources and benefits to organizations with common goals. In a time of diminishing funds and increasing demands, partnerships are essential to meeting community needs, and to sustaining an active and engaged environment for customers.” (WebJunction, Libraries Building Strong Community Partnerships, <https://www.webjunction.org/news/webjunction/building-strong-community-partnerships.html>)

WHAT ARE SOME TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS WITH WHICH A LIBRARY CAN FORM PARTNERSHIPS?

Some good examples of potential community partners include local school districts and BOCES; preschools and nursery schools; Head Start; YMCA; museums; historical societies; community colleges and universities; arts councils; Cornell Cooperative Extension; genealogical societies; United Way; soil and water conservation agencies; governmental agencies; Small Business Administration; Chamber of Commerce; local businesses; Workforce Development agencies; hospitals; Lions and Rotary clubs; and many others depending on the community.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THESE PARTNERSHIPS?

Community partners can provide new programming opportunities, new resources for the library, and new services to library users. Community partnerships can also help bring non-

users, occasional users, and new residents into the library. This results in quality programming for minimal expense that is more responsive to community needs and strengthens community engagement with the library.

RESOURCES TO HELP GET STARTED WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:

- Communication and Partnerships – Tools (WebJunction): https://webjunction.org/documents/webjunction/Communication_and_Partnerships_045_Tools.html
- Community Partnership and Collaboration Guide (WebJunction): https://webjunction.org/documents/webjunction/Community_Partner_Collaboration_Guide.html
- Libraries Building Strong Community Partnerships (WebJunction): <https://www.webjunction.org/news/webjunction/building-strong-community-partnerships.html>
- Library Partnerships Bring People Together (Public Libraries Online): <http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2017/03/library-partnerships-bring-people-together/>
- Partnerships & Collaboration (WebJunction): <https://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/partnerships.html>

WHERE CAN THE LIBRARY GO FOR HELP?

Consult the [library system](#) for assistance.

APPENDIX A: LAWS AND REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO MINIMUM PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS IN NEW YORK STATE

Listed below are links to the New York Laws and Regulations cited in this document. Page numbers refer to the location of the citation in the *Helpful Information for Meeting Minimum Public Library Standards* document.

[Education Law, Section 254: Standards of Library Service](#)

<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EDN/254>

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[Regulations of the Commissioner, Section 90.1: Registration of Libraries](#)

[https://govt.westlaw.com/nycrr/Document/I36517e95c22211ddb29d8bee567fca9f?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=\(sc.Default\)](https://govt.westlaw.com/nycrr/Document/I36517e95c22211ddb29d8bee567fca9f?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=(sc.Default))

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[Regulations of the Commissioner, Section 90.2 Standards for Registration](#)

[https://govt.westlaw.com/nycrr/Document/I36517e98c22211ddb29d8bee567fca9f?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=\(sc.Default\)](https://govt.westlaw.com/nycrr/Document/I36517e98c22211ddb29d8bee567fca9f?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=(sc.Default))

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[Education Law, Section 226: Powers of Trustees of Institutions](#)

<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EDN/226>

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[Education Law, Section 260-A: Meetings of Board of Trustees](#)

<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EDN/260-A>

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[Civil Practice Laws and Rules, Section 4509: Library Records](#)

<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/CVP/4509>

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[Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, Section 715-A: Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/NPC/715-A>

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[Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, Section 715-B](#)

<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/NPC/715-B>

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[Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, Section 90.8 Appointment of Library Personnel](#)

[https://govt.westlaw.com/nycrr/Document/I3651ccb2c22211ddb29d8bee567fca9f?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=\(sc.Default\)](https://govt.westlaw.com/nycrr/Document/I3651ccb2c22211ddb29d8bee567fca9f?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=(sc.Default))

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APPENDIX B: STANDARDS FOR REGISTRATION, effective August 1, 2018

AMENDMENT TO THE REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

Section 90.2 of the Regulations of the Commissioner shall be amended, to read as follows:

§90.2 Standards for registration of public, free association and Indian libraries.

(a) Registration standards through December 31, 2020. A public, free association or Indian library registered on or before December 31, 2020 shall meet the following registration standards:

- (1) is governed by written bylaws which outline the responsibilities and procedures of library board of trustees;
- (2) has a board-approved, written long-range plan of service;
- (3) presents an annual report to the community on the library's progress in meeting its goals and objectives;
- (4) has board-approved written policies for the operation of the library;
- (5) presents annually to appropriate funding agencies a written budget which would enable the library to meet or exceed these standards and to carry out its long-term plan of service;
- (6) periodically evaluates the effectiveness of the library's collections and services in meeting community needs;

(7) is open the following scheduled hours:

Population	Minimum Weekly Hours Open
Up to 500	12
500-2,499	20
2,500-4,999	25
5,000-14,999	35
15,000-24,999	40
25,000-99,999	55
100,000 and above	60

(8) maintains a facility to meet community needs, including adequate space, lighting, shelving, seating, and a restroom;

(9) provides equipment and connections to meet community needs including, but not limited to a telephone, photocopier, telefacsimile capability, and microcomputer or terminal with printer, to provide access to other library catalogs and other electronic information;

(10) distributes printed information listing the library's hours open, borrowing rules, services, location and phone number; and

(11) employs a paid director in accordance with the provisions of Section 90.8 of this Part.

(b) [(1) Any public, free association or Indian library registered by the department at the time this section takes effect shall be required to meet the standards for registration in subdivision (a) of this section on the following schedule:

(1) meet the standards of paragraphs (1) through (5) and (10) of subdivision (a) of this section on or before January 1, 1995.

(2) meet the standards of paragraph (6) of subdivision (a) of this section on or

before January 1, 1997.

(3) meet the standards of paragraphs (7), (8), (9) and (11) of subdivision (a) of this section on or before January 1, 1999].

Registration standards on or after January 1, 2021. A public, free association or Indian library seeking to register with the Department on or after January 1, 2021 shall be registered with the Department if it meets the registration standards set forth in this subdivision in a manner satisfactory to the Commissioner. Any public, free association or Indian library that was registered by the Department on or before December 31, 2020, shall meet the following registration requirements by January 1, 2021 to continue to be registered by the Department:

(1) is governed by written bylaws which define the structure and governing functions of the library board of trustees, and which shall be reviewed and re-approved by the board of trustees at least once every five years or earlier if required by law;

(2) has a community-based, board-approved, written long-range plan of service developed by the library board of trustees and staff;

(3) provides a board-approved written annual report to the community on the library's progress in meeting its mission, goals and objectives, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service;

(4) has board-approved written policies for the operation of the library, which shall be reviewed and updated at least once every five years or earlier if required by law;

(5) annually prepares and publishes a board-approved, written budget, which enables the library to address the community's needs, as outlined in the library's long-

range plan of service;

(6) periodically evaluates the effectiveness of the library's programs, services and collections to address community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service;

(7) is open the following scheduled hours:

<u>Population</u>	<u>Minimum Weekly Hours Open</u>
<u>Up to 500</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>500-2,499</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>2,500-4,999</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>5,000-14,999</u>	<u>35</u>
<u>15,000-24,999</u>	<u>40</u>
<u>25,000-99,999</u>	<u>55</u>
<u>100,000 and above</u>	<u>60</u>

(8) maintains a facility that addresses community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service, including adequate space, lighting, shelving, seating, power and data infrastructure, and a public restroom;

(9) provides programming to address community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service;

(10) provides a circulation system that facilitates access to the local library collection and other library catalogs; and provides equipment, technology, and internet connectivity to address community needs and facilitate access to information;

(11) provides access to current library information in print and online, facilitating the understanding of library services, operations and governance; information provided online shall include the standards referenced in paragraphs one through five of this subdivision;

(12) employs a paid director in accordance with the provisions of Section 90.8 of this Part;

(13) provides library staff with annual technology training, appropriate to their position, to address community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service; and

(14) establishes and maintains partnerships with other educational, cultural or community organizations which enable the library to address the community's needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service

(c) Variances. If circumstances over which any public, free association or Indian library has no control prevent it from meeting one or more of the standards of service set forward in subdivision (a) or subdivision (b) of this section, such library may apply for a variance for such standard(s). The application for such variance shall be submitted for such library by the public library system of which such library is a member, in a form prescribed by the commissioner. No variance granted pursuant to this subdivision shall be deemed to relieve a public, free association or Indian library of any obligation imposed by any other provision of federal or state law.