

# SOUTHERN ADIRONDACK LIBRARY SYSTEM

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## Direct Access Plan to fulfill Education Commissioner's Regulation §90.3(a) through (d)(4)

1. *Describe how all individuals residing within the boundaries of the system but outside a member public library's chartered service area will receive library services.*

All member libraries offer direct access and on-site use to all residents of Hamilton, Saratoga, Warren and Washington counties as defined in New York State Commissioner's Regulation (hereafter CR) §90.3(a)(3) and (8). Member libraries meeting criteria described elsewhere in this Plan may restrict direct access as permitted under CR§90.3(d).

2. *Describe how the system will assure that those patrons living within the system boundaries in an area where a member library chooses to withdraw from the system, or where a chartered and registered library was never a member of the system, will be served by the system.*

- (a) Member library that withdraws from membership: System Service Center services, such as those of the Books by Mail and the Library without Walls programs, will be offered to residents of withdrawn member libraries' chartered service area under the same conditions as those offered to residents of member libraries.

The services of member libraries to residents of the chartered service area of withdrawn member libraries will be offered at the discretion of each member library's board of trustees within the requirements of CR§90.3.

- (b) Chartered and registered library that was never a member of the system, to wit, the Hillview Library in Diamond Point on Lake George: The system and member libraries serve—and have always served—the 400 residents of this library's chartered service area under the same conditions they serve all other residents of the four counties.

3. Describe what the system considers "serious inequities and hardships" and the criteria used by the system to make the determination.

Serious inequities and hardships occur when the circulation of materials to non-resident borrowers is excessive and significantly deprives local residents the borrowing of materials in a reasonable time period. Excessive is defined below in paragraph 4.

4. Describe what constitutes excessive out-of-chartered service-area borrowing in the system.

Excessive out-of-chartered service-area borrowing occurs in a member library when:

- (a) the circulation to non-residents of high-demand materials—as defined by CR§90.3(d)(2)(ii) and identified with date of acquisition—reaches 20% of the total circulation of such materials,  
or
- (b) the circulation to non-residents of all materials reaches 10%.

5. *Unserved and underserved populations:*

- (a) *Describe the unserved and underserved populations within the system.*

The unserved are those some 76,000-plus individuals as defined by CR§90.3(a)(10): "Unserved means those individuals residing in geographic areas that are within the boundaries of a public library system but outside the boundaries of a chartered service area of a library which is a member of that system."

The underserved are those individuals as defined by CR§90.3(a)(11) and (b) below.

Color-coded maps are enclosed and depict served and unserved areas of service. These maps were developed by the Education Department.

- (b) *Describe the criteria used by the system to identify libraries as having an inadequate level of local income to support the delivery of acceptable library services (underserved). List those libraries so identified.*
- i. Our criteria for determining an adequate level of support is the member library's ability to comply with minimum standards contained in New York State Education Law and New York State Commissioner's Regulations as reported by member libraries on their annual report to the state.

Member libraries that do not meet those standards as of December 31, 1998 are:

Library Location	Non-compliance with Standard (Numbers)	Comments
Bolton	Restroom (8e)	The board hopes to meet this standard by the end of 1999.
Horicon	Space (8a) & Restroom (8e)	The board is exploring ways to meet these standards, but may require variances until solutions are found.
Mountainside	Restroom (8e), Telephone (9a), Copier (9b), Microform (9c), Microcomputer (9d), Printer (9e), Modem (9f), Fax (9g), paid director (11)	We will encourage the board to request variances.
Schuylerville	Modem (9f)	The library has since installed Road Runner with a high speed cable modem.

- (c) In addition, all member library boards wishing to be eligible for participation in SALS' incentive-based materials grant program will perform a self-assessment using the guidance at Appendix 1 and forward it to SALS with the State's annual report.

The self-assessment at Appendix 1 includes recommendations exceeding state standards, but these are recommendations only, i.e. eligibility for the grant program will be achieved by completing the self-assessment.

6. Describe the actions the system will take to expand the availability of library services to unserved and underserved individuals residing within the boundaries of the system.

- (a) Unserved: SALS is especially concerned about the communities of southern Hamilton County, the most rural and lightly populated county in the state. Although it is the third largest county in the state, about the size of Rhode Island, it has a population of only 5,279 and a population density of only 3.3 people per square mile. These communities are remote, lightly populated and, moreover, are economically depressed. SALS would like to see public library services in these communities, but it recognizes that

a solution will require cooperative participation by SALS, the state, and the communities themselves. SALS will take the lead in promoting a dialog to correct this situation.

Notwithstanding the definition in CR 90.3(a)(10), all other residents have public library service through direct access in nearby communities. In some cases a town government pays a nearby library to provide service to that town's citizens.

That said, SALS will continue, on a local and statewide basis, to encourage the passage of Assembly Bill A.1641 and Senate Bill S.1482, a unibill which SALS was instrumental in advancing and which would guarantee free public library service to all residents of the state via a change in the state constitution.

Member libraries will be encouraged to contact local elected officials of neighboring unserved communities to obtain contracts for serving those areas or, when appropriate, to consider adding the unserved area to the member library's chartered service area. In both instances, contracted support or an enlarged service area will be encouraged only if the resulting increase in funds is meaningful.

- (b) Underserved: SALS will work with the boards of Horicon and Mountainside—and with assistance from Library Development, we hope—to address the inability of the libraries to meet the minimum standards listed above. Both cases are unique situations and deserve consideration for variances. On request of a member library, SALS will offer to assist the library in its efforts to expand the availability of library services to the unserved and underserved.

7. *Provide a timetable for such actions.*

- (a) Issue of the unserved: This will be a continuing effort.
- (b) Issue of the underserved: Immediate on approval of this plan by the Education Department.

8. *Identify who will be responsible for these actions.*

- (a) Issue of the unserved: Board of trustees of member libraries and board of the Southern Adirondack Library System.
- (b) Issue of the underserved: Board of trustees of member libraries listed above in paragraph 5(b) and board of the Southern Adirondack Library System.

9. Describe the conditions under which modifications to the free direct access plan can be made:

- (a) Without the prior approval of the Commissioner of Education on the recommendation of the SALS board of trustees and after approval of a majority of the member libraries of this plan and after approval of that plan by the Commissioner:
  - i. Municipalities over 10,000 in population that do not contract for public library service or that have not exercised their ability to establish a public library: the member library board wishing a waiver from serving residents of such municipalities shall petition SALS board and indicate in the petition the efforts it has taken to persuade the municipality to either establish a public library or contract for public library service.
  - ii. Restricting loans of non-print materials and equipment and printed materials less than one-year old from acquisition date and purchased with local funds: the member library shall petition SALS board for a waiver and indicate in the petition the hardship the library has undergone, such hardship as defined in paragraphs three and four above.
  - iii. Attendance at programs: a member library may limit attendance at programs supported entirely by local funds without contacting SALS board when local residents would be deprived of attendance at such programs.
- (b) With the prior approval of the Commissioner for requests falling outside of this plan and after approval by a majority of the member libraries:
  - i. The member library will provide documentation to SALS board of trustees indicating the serious inequities and hardships affecting the residents of the library's chartered service area.
  - ii. The member library will include in the documentation the proposed modifications it intends to make to address the serious inequities and hardships that differ from those in paragraph 4 above.
  - iii. The member library will also describe the expected impact on resident and non-resident borrowing after the modifications are approved and implemented.
  - iv. The member library will propose a time frame for the beginning and end of the requested modifications.
  - v. SALS board will make recommendations for remedying the underlying inequity with a proposed timetable for action.

10. *Describe how the system will assure that member libraries are complying with the system free direct access plan approved by a majority of member libraries.*

We shall include with our distribution of the Education Department's annual report forms to member libraries, questions about compliance with the plan. We shall also be responsive to any queries or complaints about possible non-compliance by our member libraries.

11. *Describe how the system obtained member library input to the plan for free direct access.*

SALS board designated its Library Services Committee to develop a draft plan. Added to that committee were a library director from a large member library and a small member library. The director of the system and of another large member library were invited to meetings of the committee as resource people. The director of the central library attended meetings of the committee. A president of a small member library who is also on SALS board also served on the committee. Also represented were: a trustee from SALS board who was once a trustee of a large member library; a trustee from SALS board who was a principal in the development and recent chartering of a member library; a SALS trustee who was once the president of a medium-sized member library; and a trustee of SALS not associated with a member library as a trustee.

At a meeting of member library directors on May 13, SALS director and other staff explained a draft of this plan and engaged the directors in discussion and asked them for input.

At SALS annual meeting the vice-president of SALS' board of trustees explained the draft plan to trustees of member libraries.