

## **Southern Adirondack Library System Construction Match**

### **Background:**

New York State has approved a grant aid program for library construction. SALS (Southern Adirondack Library System) is allocated approximately \$962,584.00 each year under this program, and it is anticipated the allocation to be similar for the cycle commencing with grant applications due annually in the Fall.

In the past, a 50/50 match has been the maximum allowable award. Due to changes in the law legislating these funds (Chapter 382 of the Laws of 2019 and Chapter 627 of the Laws of 2021), Library Systems Boards of Trustees are permitted to approve a 25 (Library)/75 (State) match or 10 (Library)/90 (State) for eligible projects located in economically disadvantaged communities (as defined by the Library System's Board of Trustees and NYS (New York State) Education Law 273-a), **if program funds are available after reviewing all eligible projects.**

SALS has been unable to disburse all the grant monies in the past due to the lack of construction applications from the membership, primarily because many of the libraries could not afford to contribute the required 50% match. The intent of these changes in the criteria is specifically to increase participation by libraries which might not otherwise have applied. The SALS Board of Trustees is developing the criteria by which some projects may be awarded a 25/75 match or 10/90 match if program funding is available after all applications have been reviewed.

### **Law:**

The system, to authorize the 25/75 match will need "to provide documentation where such an application requests state aid in an amount greater than fifty percent, demonstrating how the project will address the service needs of one or more economically disadvantaged communities. Such documentation may demonstrate need through poverty rates, concentrations of English language learners, low high school graduation rates, limited fiscal capacity or other relevant factors" and the law also states "geographically isolated or economically disadvantaged communities." In approving any application that would receive state aid beyond fifty percent of the total project approved costs, the board of trustees of the library system shall give particular attention to addressing the library service needs of economically disadvantaged communities as provided for in paragraph e of subdivision two of this section.

The system, to authorize the 10/90 match will need to show that "The poverty rate of the library's chartered service area must be equal to or greater than the New York State average poverty rate according to federal census data from the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate Data Table S1701 (updated yearly).

The State Library will determine if a library meets this requirement. Systems reviewing member library applications and considering allocating additional state funds above 75% to a project will request a poverty rate eligibility determination for the applicant library prior to the final submission of the project application to the State Library.

Determinations made by the State Library are required each year that a library applies for aid; eligibility requirements change annually, which may result in a change from prior year determinations.

Prior to requesting a determination of eligibility, SALS will use the link and charts provided below to find a preliminary poverty rate estimate based on the library's-chartered service area (see example for how to determine rate).

If the official chartered service area cannot be determined by SALS, the search can be done using the library's general service area. If that area is within a range of 1-2% above or below the NYS population poverty rate.

Example: In 2020, the chartered service area of Sinclairville Free Library (Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System) was the town of Gerry (pop. 1560) and the town of Charlotte (pop. 1817). The population below poverty level was 97 and 387, respectively. The populations are added together to get the total population of the chartered service area (3377) and the total population below poverty level (484). The poverty rate of the chartered service area is then determined by dividing the total population below poverty level by the total population of the service area, which in this case equals 0.143, or 14.3% ( $484 / 3377 = 0.143 = 14.3\%$ ). This library did not qualify for 90/10 because the poverty rate was lower than the New York State poverty rate from the same chart (14.6%).

If SALS has determined that the library is a candidate for the 90/10 program, SALS must contact the Division of Library Development to request an official poverty rate eligibility determination well in advance of library system board review and approval of project applications/allocations and submission of the projects to the State Library, but after the library submits an application to the library system.

**Justification:**

Looking at the counties served by SALS, if funds were available, it would be possible to justify that all the libraries are in areas that have people living below poverty, high unemployment rates, and large numbers of children receiving free lunches.

The system, to authorize the 25/75 or the 10/90\* match for a library construction application, the library must meet the following:

County	Poverty	Unemployment	Free/reduced Lunch	Per Capita Support per County	English Language Learners	
Hamilton	8.63%	4.3%	34.1%	\$123.66	0%	
Saratoga	5.93%	2.9%	5.2%	\$69.64	8%	
Warren	8.47%	3.2%	50.9%	\$53.97%	.1%	
Washington	10.94%	3%	9.5%	\$13.73	.1%	
New York	13.6%	6.1%				

Further information to be considered may include the per capita support as documented in the Free Direct Access underfunded libraries.

**Funding guidelines – SALS Policy for review of applications:** There are three potential circumstances facing the SALS Board of Trustees relative to the review process.

1. If there are not enough applications to spend all the construction aid (available funds allocated to SALS), then all libraries will be recommended at the 25/75 match based on the criteria in the chart above.
  
2. If the eligible project applications do not utilize all available funds allocated to SALS by applying a 50/50 match to the budgets, then some libraries will be recommended for the 25/75 match based on economic disadvantage, with other projects recommended for the 50/50 match. The SALS Board will consider the impact on communities, and the level of disadvantage based on the above chart in determining how many and which projects to recommend for increased aid.
  
3. If the eligible project applications total more than the available funds allocated to SALS, then some or all projects may be funded at less than a 50/50 match, at the discretion of the SALS Board, until all available funds are assigned. The SALS Board will strive to fairly and judiciously allocate the available funds based on the merits of the projects, and the proportional impact each might have to the patrons and communities in the chartered to serve areas of our member libraries. The most economically disadvantaged communities, as defined by the information above, will be given higher preference in the determination of more advantageous funding matches.

Data used to determine economically disadvantaged communities:

Per capita support per library from the previous year's Annual reports

[http://portal.nysed.gov/pls/cn\\_port/mel3\\_pkg.elig\\_enroll\\_query](http://portal.nysed.gov/pls/cn_port/mel3_pkg.elig_enroll_query) (free or reduced lunch)

[http://www.nyscommunityaction.org/poverty\\_reports.cfm?location=nystate&section=2011](http://www.nyscommunityaction.org/poverty_reports.cfm?location=nystate&section=2011) (poverty levels)

<http://www.nyscommunityaction.org/PovReport/2011/Supplements/employepage.pdf>  
(unemployment)

[American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate Data Table S1701](#) (updated yearly)

Other links to help determine economically disadvantaged communities: Poverty Information Census Data Collection Directions Free and Reduced Lunch Statistics

\*The poverty rate of the library's-chartered service area must be equal to or greater than the New York State average poverty rate according to federal census data from the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate Data Table S1701 (updated yearly)

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