

Southern Tier Library System  
Free Direct Access Plan to fulfill  
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.**

Member libraries will provide on-site use of library resources to all individuals residing within the boundaries of the public library system service area. No individual shall be excluded from on-site use of the library resources of the system or any of its member libraries because of age, cultural, economic or civic status.

Individuals residing within the boundaries of the system but outside a member public library's chartered service area will receive service and borrow materials by requesting a library card from a local library. Libraries currently issue library cards, loan materials and provide services to any individual wishing service.

**2. Describe how the system will assure that those persons 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.**

All chartered and registered libraries in the Southern Tier Library System region are members of the System. Neighboring libraries will issue cards and provide service to residents living in the service area of a member library that chooses to withdraw from the System.

STLS contracts with the central library to provide interlibrary loan services; those interlibrary loan services will continue to be provided for persons in an area where a library chooses to withdraw from the library system, or ceases to fund library service.

When a jurisdiction (one or more municipalities or districts composing a library service area) with a population of 10,000 or more defeats a library proposition establishing library service, or ceases to fund library service, member libraries, except for the central library, are not required to provide free direct access to materials and services, including borrowing privileges to residents of that jurisdiction.

**3. Describe what the system considers “serious inequities and hardships” and the Criteria used by the system to make the determination.**

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

“Serious inequities and hardships” occur when jurisdictions refuse to support, or provide sufficient support for a library. Services to local taxpayers are reduced and materials are unavailable because out-of-chartered service area residents are using those services and materials. Economic impact on an STLS member library, resulting in serious inequities and hardships results when

- nonresidents who actively borrow materials constitute over 3% of the library’s borrowers
- direct loans to nonresident borrowers constitute over 3% of a library’s circulation

**5. a) Describe the unserved and the underserved population within the System.**

Unserved populations with the STLS region (populations outside of a chartered service area), are represented by the attached maps created by the Division of Library Development. Taxpayers in many school districts contract for library service. Because these school districts extend beyond library service areas, most taxpayers in unserved regions provide some tax support for library service.

**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.**

STLS member libraries which receive less than the average tax support for libraries in New York State have an inadequate level of local support. All STLS member libraries, except Branchport, are inadequately funded. See attached list.

**c) Describe the actions the system will take to expand the availability of library services to unserved and underserved individuals residing with the boundaries of the system.**

The Southern Tier Library System will be available upon request to work with Library boards of autonomous member libraries to:

1. Develop recommendations for funding options and/or charter changes for member libraries, and

2. Meet with town and member library boards of trustees to discuss the following funding options and charter changes:
  - a) contract with neighboring municipalities to provide library service, or
  - b) expand library service areas and request additional funds from expanded area
  - c) establish voter referenda for library funding,
  - d) request funding increases from local funding sources
3. Work with elected and appointed authorities, and local residents, in the various unserved areas in the region to establish “Public Library Committees” to explore various options for the provision of consistent, high quality, library service to area residents. Options may range from the creation of a new or merged library district, to contracting with adjacent libraries for service.

**d) Provide a timetable for such actions.**

Beginning 2000 and subsequent years.

**e) Identify who will be responsible for carrying out these actions.**

The Director of the Library System will be responsible for carrying out these actions.

**6. 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**

If a jurisdiction\* with a population of over 10,000 ceases providing tax support for a library, and does not contract for service with a neighboring library, STLS member libraries, except the central library, may refuse to provide borrowing privileges to members of that jurisdiction. However, under no circumstances will member libraries charge individuals, who reside within STLS, for library cards or deny on-site use as defined in Section 1 of this plan. (\*A jurisdiction may be comprised of multiple municipalities which have formerly constituted one library service area.)

In addition, in cases where a member library, including the Central Library, can document “serious inequity or hardship” as described in items 3 and 4 of this document, the library upon 14 days written notice to the STLS Board of Trustees can place restrictions, consistent with Commissioner’s Regulations 90.3, upon the use of library resources and use of services by residents outside the library’s chartered service area. Libraries must certify to STLS that they are able to identify which materials and services were purchased with various funding sources in order to determine which materials may be restricted.

There restrictions are limited to:

- non-print materials
- equipment
- printed materials, less than one year old,

The above materials must have been purchased with local funds

- attendance at library programs supported entirely with local funds. If attendance at program must be limited, local residents may be given first access to them.

**(b) With the prior approval of the Commissioner of Education**

In cases where a member library, including the Central Library, can document “serious inequities or hardship” as described in items 3 and 4 of this document, and wishes to request alternative modification and/or restrictions to direct access to those described above, the system board of trustees will submit a request to the Commissioner of Education in writing once a majority of member libraries have approved the request to go forward. Such requests shall require the following:

1. Documentation of the serious inequities and hardships affecting the resident borrowers of the member library making the request, including information about the defeat of a library proposition or termination of a contract for library services.
2. A clear description of the proposed restrictions and modifications to this direct access plan being requested, provided such modifications do not include charging for library services.
3. Description of the anticipated impact on resident and non-resident borrowers after modifications are approved and implemented.
4. A time frame for the beginning and end of such a modification.
5. A recommendation from the STLS Director regarding steps to be taken to remedy the underlying inequity with a proposed timetable for action.
6. Approval by a majority of member libraries.
7. Approval by the Commissioner of Education

**7. 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.**

The System will require member library Boards of Trustees to certify annually that their library is in compliance with this Free Direct Access plan.

**8. Describe how the System obtained member library input to the plan for free direct access.**

The plan was discussed at Directors Association meetings in June, August, and October; the July meeting of the Free Direct Access committee; the September meeting of the Steuben County Library Directors Association. A draft copy of the plan was sent to library directors and board presidents for comments before the October Directors Association meeting.

Towns with populations which do not contract for library service or provide tax support for library service are:

**Allegany County**

Birdsall Town—the portion of the town in the Arkport School District

Ward Town—the portion of the town in the Alfred-Almond School District

**Schuyler County**

Dix Town—no support for library service

Orange Town—the portion of the town in the Bradford and Corning School Districts

Tyrone Town—the portion of the town in the Bradford and Hammondsport School Districts

**Steuben County**

Bradford Town—no support for library service

Cameron Town—the portion of the town in the Jasper-Troupsburg School District

Cohocton—the portion of the town in the Avoca School District

Dansville—the portion of the town in the Arkport School District

Greenwood Town—no support for library service

Hartsville Town—no support for library service

Rathbone Town—the portion of the town in the Jasper-Troupsburg School District

West Union Town—the portion of the town in the Greenwood School District

Woodhull Town—the portion of the town in the Jasper-Troupsburg School District

**Yates County**

Italy Town—the portion of the town in the Naples and Prattsburg School Districts