

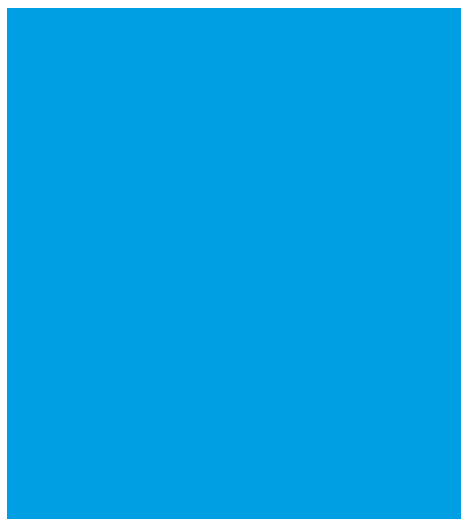


STLS

Southern Tier Library System

Connecting Community Libraries

Plan of Service 2017 - 2021





Connecting Community

Mission

The Southern Tier Library System connects, empowers and advocates for all Southern Tier public libraries.

Values

STLS is an organization that recognizes the importance of connection. It is at the core of all the work each person in our institution is engaged in.

Further, we believe that through connections we will empower our member libraries by helping them build greater local capacity to endure future disruption. Our connections will help them build the capacity to grow, to expand, to change and to embrace the challenges of the future.

We believe that each person in each of

the 48 communities we serve - through their local public library - deserves a future in that community. A community that is thriving in 100 years, not forgotten.

And we advocate on behalf of: our mission, our belief in libraries to catalyze positive change, our belief that public libraries in upstate New York are the best community anchor to offer stability and potentially growth.

We agree with what John Muir once said, "Everybody needs beauty as well

as bread." (*The Yosemite*, 1912) The library, is the first, and sometimes the only, place where the human need for cultural experience is met in a community setting.

And finally, as professionals, we advocate for equitable access to all the gifts and resources of our democracy for all of our libraries, and the empowerment of their community members.



A Path Forward

This Plan of Service is a reflection of our cooperative library system. In 2016, more than 100 member librarians or trustees participated in focus groups throughout our region's five counties. Each participant brought a unique perspective to the discussions.

These discussions helped us map our path forward.

Purpose

The intent of this plan is to guide STLS to best serve our 39 chartered libraries and five reading centers.

We believe at the end of five years our members will have increased their capacity (ability over time) to provide high quality library services for the betterment of Southern Tier residents.

Method

STLS hosted five focus groups in different member libraries throughout the system.

After data from participants was compiled, a committee of three STLS

trustees, and four STLS librarians worked through an analysis of the data to determine which of the service areas given priority by the membership aligned with STLS strengths and resources.

Once the highest priority services were determined, STLS directors, librarians, and consultants worked together to set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound goals.

Trends

STLS member libraries feel strongly that their role is to facilitate the needs and aspirations of their community members. Throughout all the discussions, the need to work with one another to accomplish tasks came up repeatedly. Additionally, there was a strong sense that the work ahead could only be done in partnership with organizations outside the field of librarianship.

In the committee work, STLS saw system services as a natural extension

of the experiences of the membership in their individual communities.

Result

Learning, Facilitating, Building and Sharing were the four priority categories of service that emerged from the dozens of needs and aspirations STLS members communicated, the dozens of service responses STLS staff developed, and the 23 state-required service elements. Partnership, engagement, and collaboration run throughout all of these service areas.

This plan will be an active road map as well as an evaluation tool to assess our progress along the way. Our future annual reports will feed back to the plan. All members are encouraged to read the full set of action items on our website: <http://www.stls.org/about-stls>



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Priority Service Areas

Learning

Libraries are providers of educational resources. The best libraries, and library systems, are learning organizations – institutions which recognize that learning must happen everywhere and for everyone in order to meet changing needs.

Facilitating

Providing direct services to patrons isn't an STLS strength, but we can, and will, expand our facilitation services to match member library needs to resources in the system, community, or state.

Priority Service Areas

Building

Libraries offer many services that are infrastructural. STLS will take an active role in making those services more sustainable, resilient, and regenerative.

Sharing

As a cooperative library system, STLS is a resource sharing engine. ILL, delivery, and the digital library are staples of system services and STLS will focus on efforts to enrich each of these areas.



Priority Service Area

Learning

Increase Member Understanding of the ILS (Integrated Library System)

Why is it important? Our libraries use the ILS every day to meet patron needs. Better serving those needs starts with fully utilizing all the benefits of the ILS, including the online catalog, circulation, and reporting capabilities.

What will we do? First we will determine the most useful and practical methods for sending information and teaching software skills. Then we'll ask what is of greatest interest to the membership and deliver on what we hear.

Increase Awareness & Usage of Digital Resources

Why is it important? While patron usage of the shared Digital Library continues to grow, local library expertise in assisting those patrons in using digital resources hasn't. Patrons should receive consistent service for all of their information needs across all of the member libraries.

What will we do? We will increase opportunities for group and one-on-one learning for all libraries. We will also develop, print, and distribute marketing materials to the membership.



Increase Overall Training for Member Librarians

Why is it important? As educational institutions, each of our librarians need to engage in continuous learning.

What will we do? Each Division within STLS will provide at least one workshop a month. Each consultant/specialist will engage with a member at their library at least once a week. All training will be aligned with member requests.



Priority Service Area

Learning

Build Trustee Learning Opportunities

Why is it important? Great governance is key to impactful libraries. Many trustees have expressed a lack of clarity and direction in their position within the library organization.

What will we do? Using HATS (Helping All Trustees Succeed) as a curricular structure, we will provide monthly opportunities offered in geographically diverse areas scheduled to accommodate trustee needs. Additionally, we will generate, organize and distribute governance tools & guidance like FAQs and templates.

Build Opportunities to Enhance Leadership & Management Skills for Directors

Why is it important? Rural librarianship can feel isolating and lack of funding can restrict a director's ability to access high quality leadership training. Additionally, library management training isn't often available for non-MLS degreed directors.

What will we do? STLS will work with surrounding library systems to develop and implement a high quality certification program. It will be offered free of charge to motivated directors. The resulting certificate will assist boards in finding local, qualified candidates for director positions throughout the region.





Priority Service Area

Facilitating

Improve Local Collection Impact

Why is it important? Library collections that reflect their communities' educational, entertainment, information and creative needs have greater impact on local literacy – across material types.

What will we do? Assist members in mindful collection management by developing step by step tools & assistance in selection, acquisition, organization and display of those collections.

Build Connections Between Members & Community Agencies

Why is it important? Our members have high hopes and limited resources. Helping them find and work with partners will help them meet their goals.

What will we do? STLS will actively seek out community partners, make initial contact and coordinate service partnerships with member libraries.

Better Serve Special Client Groups

Why is it important? Equitable service means actively seeking out people for whom traditional service doesn't reach, and adjusting to meet their needs.

What will we do? STLS will assess and improve rotating collections, as well as provide guidance and training on talking books and other accessibility tools.





Priority Service Area

Facilitating

Heighten Regional Public Library Awareness

Why is it important? Public libraries offer life-changing resources to their community members. Awareness of those offerings increases the potential for positive impacts on their communities.

What will we do? STLS will sponsor billboard and other public media campaigns throughout the five counties on topics of literacy, funding and programming.

Increase Elected Officials' Understanding of Libraries

Why is it important? Legislators and representatives at all levels want the best for their constituents, just like us! Helping them understand how public libraries make government resources more impactful helps all of us.

What will we do? STLS will increase visits to local and regional officials, as well as continue state-wide efforts.

Make Visible Social Inclusion for All

Why is it important? For some, barriers to accessing the resources of our government and economy are social rather than physiologically based. Adjusting services to provide equitable access to every member of our community is our work.

What will we do? STLS will assist in educating library communities on the Library Bill of Rights and the importance of equitable access to a functional democracy. STLS will provide policy guidance and templates as well.



Priority Service Area

Building



Increase Local Funding for Member Libraries

Why is it important? Public libraries in upstate New York have been chronically underfunded for decades. As foundation, grant, and municipal funds become more scarce, libraries need to identify and retain stable sources of funding.

What will we do? STLS will work with members seeking additional funds by providing consultation on budgeting and campaign building.

Enhance Members' Ability to "Pop-Up"

Why is it important? Across every focus group, STLS member libraries said they wanted to serve community members outside the library, but didn't have the resources to meet their aspiration.

What will we do? STLS will identify and purchase equipment and resources to assist with pop-up libraries. Also, the system will research and share best practices, policies and vendors for a continuum of mobile library services.

Develop IT Plan 2019 – 2021

Why is it important? Within the rapidly changing world of technology, STLS must approach IT infrastructure and services pro-actively to serve member libraries effectively.

What will we do? Meet with membership, gather input and research trends and best practices. Develop a plan that plots a path forward for system IT services and infrastructure.



Priority Service Area

Building



Build Reliable IT Infrastructure for Members

Why is it important? Members' biggest IT concerns are around efficiency, security, and effectiveness of their hardware and network connections.

What will we do? STLS will connect member libraries to high-speed fiber lines in a direct loop to the system for maximum security, efficiency and speed. Connected libraries will no longer have to accept slow, unstable cable internet connections. Additionally, STLS will work to provide each library with a standard connection set-up, including hardware and software.

Increase Member Libraries' Online Presence

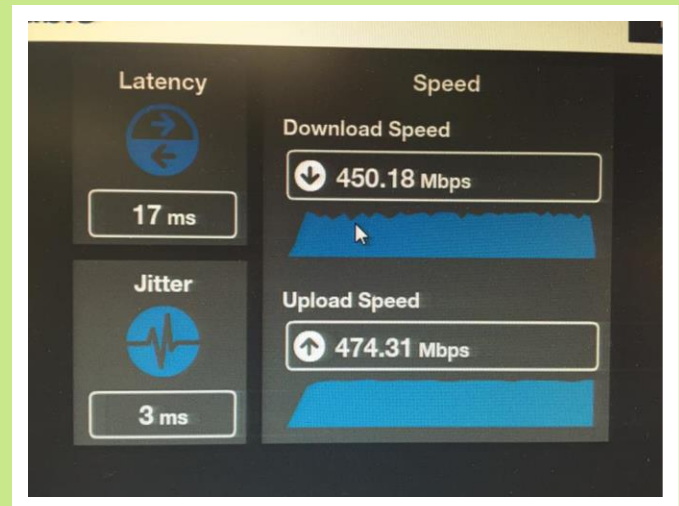
Why is it important? STLS member libraries must be as visible online as they are in their geographic location, in order to best serve their patrons.

What will we do? Consultants & staff will work with members to develop an online presence reflective of the community and the library resources available to them.

Improve Access to Member Libraries' Facilities

Why is it important? Library buildings are, in themselves, an important service the library provides to the community. Making them ADA compliant, as well as reflective of community aspirations, is essential to providing good service.

What will we do? STLS will facilitate existing conditions reports for qualified libraries, including assessing accessibility and sustainability. STLS will prioritize Construction Aid to Public Libraries funds to projects identified in those reports.



Priority Service Area

Sharing



Increase Awareness of Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Processes

Why is it important? Libraries can't (and shouldn't) own all the books that their community might wish to read. Understanding the ILL system will help them obtain titles that would be otherwise unavailable to their community.

What will we do? STLS will develop marketing resources on ILL, train and consult with members on when and how to use ILL and continue to cover shipping and service costs associated with interlibrary loan.

Improve Availability of Programs & Resources for Children & Youth

Why is it important? Children and Youth Services are core to any library suite. Literacy across platforms begins with newborns and is built throughout the life of a young person.

What will we do? STLS will continue to build a culture of service to children and youth through workshops, program resources, news flashes, research assistance and hands on training in a variety of program types.

Provide Wi-Fi Hot Spots to Community Outdoor Spaces

Why is it important? When the membership discussed mobile library service, their first request was for Wi-Fi Hot Spots that could be a shared resource among our communities.

What will we do? STLS will purchase Wi-Fi Hotspots and circulate them to libraries for use in locations around their communities. We will also train libraries on how to use them and create documentation to make them as user-friendly as possible.



Priority Service Area

Sharing

Build System Capacity through Shared Resources

Why is it important? Our cooperative public library system was founded on the belief that services across our 5 counties would be improved if libraries pooled resources and worked together to create efficiencies.

What will we do? STLS will enhance services in each shared resource category, including how we support our shared collection materials, how we deliver those materials and how we support purchases and acquisitions.

Assist Members through Support of the Central Library

Why is it important? STLS member libraries differ in their capacity to support and promote regional collection development. Central Book Aid and Central Library Development Aid are catalysts for enriching all member libraries' collections and services.

What will we do? Chemung County Library District, our Central Library, in partnership with STLS, will help member libraries improve their community's access to relevant collections in both print and digital formats. We will also work together to provide quality library services through collection development practices and effective training of member librarians.



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Without the willing work of our membership, staff, and trustees, this document would never have been produced, nor the road map laid. *Thank you.*

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Participating Member Libraries

Addison Public Library

Alfred Box of Books Library

20th Century Club Library

Angelica Free Library

Avoca Free Library

Dormann Library

Belmont Literary &
Historical Society Free
Library

Bolivar Free Library

Essential Club Free Library

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Library

Dutton S. Peterson
Memorial Library

Penn Yan Public Library

Prattsburg Free Library

Colonial Library

Savona Free Library

Scio Memorial Library

Watkins Glen Central
School District Free Public
Library

Wayland Free Library

David A. Howe Public
Library

Whitesville Public Library