

STLS POLICY MANUAL

2026 Edition



**SOUTHERN TIER LIBRARY SYSTEM
POLICY MANUAL
2026 Edition**

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BOARD DEVELOPMENT

- New York Library Association www.nyla.org
- NY State Library – DLD Training Webinars www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/webinars
- NYS Trustee Handbook Book Club <https://midhudson.org/trusteebookclub/>
- Handbook for Library Trustees – 2023 Edition

STLS OVERVIEW

Southern Tier Library System (STLS) advocates for excellent service at the 48-member public libraries, branches and reading centers located in the five counties we serve – Allegany, Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben and Yates. We are one of New York State's 23 public library systems established in 1958 by State Education Law. We help members save funds through economies of scale and by sharing resources and services. Through System services residents use library resources online from home, school, or work. Over 150,000 cardholders access the combined library collections of more than 1.6 million items, including books, audio recordings and CDs, DVDs, magazines, digital audio books, eBooks and more.

The Southern Tier Library System is a 501(c)3 cooperative library system chartered by the Regents. Most of our financial support is state aid, allocated annually by the State legislature and distributed through the New York State Department of Education. Boards of Trustees of local libraries elect the fifteen members of the System Board. STLS completes an annual application for state aid, files an annual financial and services report with the NYS Division of Library Development and State Comptroller, and files a 990 form with the Internal Revenue Service.

In 2011 STLS worked with a Steering committee of community residents to create the Foundation for Southern Tier Libraries. The Foundation is chartered by the Regents, has 501(c)3 status, has a eight-member Board of Trustees, and raises funds to benefit STLS and its member libraries.

MISSION

STLS' purpose is to connect, empower and advocate for all Southern Tier public libraries.

STLS CONNECTS LIBRARIES THROUGH:

- Delivery among libraries
- Shared online catalog STARCAt, Blue Cloud Analytics & Workflows
- E-mail and distribution lists
- Internet and phone connections
- Website hosting
- Cloud-based computing

STLS CONNECTS LIBRARIES AND THEIR RESIDENTS TO:

- Interloan of materials from outside the region
- Online requests through STARCAt, the regional catalog
- Free online resources like downloadable audio and eBooks as well as magazines and newspapers
- Rotating collections of large print books, audio books, and books for young people
- Program resource kits to support local library programming for all ages

LIBRARIES BENEFIT FROM:

- Loan of materials between libraries

- Shared patron database
- Cataloging of library materials
- Back-up reference available through Chemung County Library District
- Continuing education for staff and trustees
- Consultant support for adult, youth, outreach, and IT services and library administration
- Help with local and capital funding, annual reports, library charters, library law and best practices

TRUSTEE JOB DESCRIPTION

STLS TRUSTEE

Governance and Oversight

GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Southern Tier Library System (STLS) Trustees play a unique and important role in supporting the dedicated and prudent use of library system resources while striving to ensure services that benefit the library community at large. An STLS Trustee is a someone to whom STLS property is legally committed in trust, including both the physical property and the resources and services the library system provides to its member libraries. While delegating day-to-day activities to competent staff, Trustees must always be mindful of how their decisions impact the library system’s five-county community.

Trustee is a volunteer position serving the Southern Tier Library System on behalf of the county in which the volunteer is associated.

Trustees must be tireless advocates for improving library services while demonstrating, “care, loyalty, and obedience” to the STLS mission. The effective trustee must be well versed in good governance practices that will enable the board to meet the challenges presented by a rapidly changing political, social and cultural environment.

In performing their duties, Trustees must act in good faith and exercise the degree of diligence, care and skill that an ordinary individual would deem prudent in a like situation. Trustees owe allegiance to the library system and must act with the best interest of the system in mind, with fiduciary responsibility and dedication to the fulfillment of the library system’s mission and goals. All Trustees are indemnified by an “umbrella” liability policy for Trustees. Directors & Officers (D&O) Insurance coverage is maintained by the System.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THIS POSITION

Oversight of Executive Director: Select, hire, and regularly evaluate a qualified STLS Executive Director.

Financial and Facility Oversight: Manage the System’s assets using accepted business practices, making certain that all financial matters of the organization are addressed with care, integrity, and honesty. Oversee the STLS financial strategy in keeping with board-approved policies to ensure there are

adequate resources to support the System’s mission. Review and make recommendations concerning matters affecting STLS facilities, equipment, and vehicles.

Policy Development: Develop, revise, and adopt policies pertinent to System governance, operations, and employee and public safety.

Ethics and Conduct: Conduct the business of the System in an open and ethical manner in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, and STLS By-Laws, policies, and procedures with respect for the institution, staff, and public. Avoid any conflict of interest when exercising Trustee duties.

Advocacy: Participates as able in advocacy initiatives as identified by STLS staff. Speaks in concert with fellow trustees in support of the STLS mission.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Attend all STLS Board meetings, unless excused.
- Serve on one or more Board committees.
- Support Board decisions and maintain confidentiality of the Board’s executive sessions.
- Serve willing in leadership positions and/or undertake special assignments.
- Suggest and recruit nominees to the Board with an eye to their potential for making significant contributions.
- Visit member libraries and interact with library system staff, as circumstances permit.
- Promote the Southern Tier Library System’s programs and service its fundraising activities.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Commitment to the mission of the Southern Tier Library System.
- Declaration to equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice professional practices
- Assurance to environmental and social sustainability professional practices
- Willingness to devote time, resources, and talent to ensuring STLS resources are used for the betterment of the entire library community.
- Awareness in the ways in which libraries function in diverse communities and the challenges they face.

EXAMPLES OF WORK

- Attendance at monthly committee meeting, as [assigned/appropriate]
- Attendance at monthly Board meetings
- Attendance at projects or events outside of meetings, as assigned and/or appropriate

ADDITIONAL DEMANDS AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Occasional travel throughout System’s region for meeting attendance

*Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees April 17, 2012
Updated September 16, 2025*

REFERENCES: Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State;
Statement on the Governance Role of a Trustee or Board Member;
Authority of the Board Policy
Conflict of Interest Policy

2026 Board Meeting Dates and Locations

The 2026 meeting dates are as follows:

- January 20 - Southern Tier Library System, Painted Post, NY
 - March 17 - Southern Tier Library System, Painted Post, NY
 - April 21 - Wayland Free Library, Wayland, NY (Steuben County)
 - May 19 - Penn Yan Public Library, Penn Yan, NY (Yates County)
 - June 16 - Montour Falls Memorial Library, Montour Falls, NY (Schuyler County)
 - July 21 - Wide Awake Club Library, Fillmore, NY (Allegany County)
 - September 15 - **Steele Memorial Library, Elmira, NY (Chemung County)
 - October - STLS Annual Meeting
 - November 17 - Southern Tier Library System, Painted Post
 - December 15 - Southern Tier Library System, Painted Post
- ** Still awaiting confirmation as of January 15, 2026**

All meetings begin at 2:00 pm and are open to the public and STLS member libraries.

2026 BOARD COMMITTEES

Executive Committee

Louise Richardson President
 Lynnette Decker Vice President
 Sisi Barr Treasurer
 Barbara Hubbell Secretary
 Kathy Green Past President

Personnel & Policies Committee

Barbara Hubbell, Chair
 Richard Ahola
 Mary-Claire Krebs
 Susan McGill

Finance & Facilities Committee

Sisi Barr, Chair
 Dan Acton
 Louise Richardson
 Richard Urban

Public Relations Committee

Lynnette Decker, Chair
 Rachel Barbour
 Kathy Green
 David Haggstrom

2025 ACTION ITEMS

January 2025

BOARD ACTIONS

12. Annual Organizational Meeting Actions * **FOR APPROVAL** **Doc. #25-11**

Finance & Facilities Committee Recommendation: Approve action items per STLS Organizational Meeting Policy

- A. Designation of the Official Newspaper – Corning Leader
- B. Appointment of the Financial Clerk – Brian Hildreth
- C. Appointment of the Financial Clerk Designee – Erika Jenns
- D. Appointment of the Internal Auditor – Louise Richardson
- E. Appointment of the Alternate Internal Auditor – Richard Urban
- F. Appointment of the External Auditor – Mengel, Metzger & Barr, LLC.
- G. Appointment of the Attorney – Sayles and Evans
- H. Authorization of the Executive Director to Certify Payrolls
- I. Authorization of Executive Director to Make Grant Applications
- J. Authorization of the Executive Director to certify payments
- K. Authorization of the Business Mileage Reimbursement Rate – 70 cents
- L. Designation of the Bank Depository – Community Bank NA
- M. Designation of the Authorized Signatories for Checks – President, V.P, Treasurer, Executive Director & Betsy Gorman – Alternate Signatory
- N. Authorization of Certain Payments between Board Meetings - Credit card, utility bills, lease payments, payroll, payroll taxes, payroll deductions, and fringe benefit expenses.
- O. Establish Treasurer and Internal Auditor surety coverage for the year - \$750,000

Move: _____ B Gorman _____	Second ___ R Ahola _____
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Aye ___13___ Nay ___0___ Abstain ___0___ Absent ___0___ Vacant ___2___
 Approved/Failed: Approved
 Discussion:None

13. Approve 2025 Board Meeting Schedule * FOR APPROVAL Doc. #25-12
Executive Committee Recommendation: Approve the 2025 Board Meeting Schedule.

Aye ___13___ Nay ___0___ Abstain ___0___ Absent ___0___ Vacant ___2___
 Approved/Failed: Approved
 Discussion:None

14. Expenditure Approvals -Monthly Unpaid Bills Detail * FOR APPROVAL Doc. #25-13
Finance & Facilities Committee Recommendation: Approve expenditures of the *Unpaid Bills Detail* for the most recent month as authorized by the Financial Clerk, Internal Auditor and Treasurer per the Authority of Board Policy.

Aye ___13___ Nay ___0___ Abstain ___0___ Absent ___0___ Vacant ___2___
 Approved/Failed: Approved
 Discussion:None

15. Receipt Approvals – Monthly Deposit Summary * FOR APPROVAL Doc. #25-14
Finance & Facilities Committee Recommendation: Approve receipts of the *Deposit Summary* for the most recent months as authorized by the Financial Clerk per the Finance Policy.

Move: _____ B Gorman _____ Second ___R Ahola _____
 Aye ___13___ Nay ___0___ Abstain ___0___ Absent ___0___ Vacant ___2___
 Approved/Failed: Approved
 Discussion:None

16. Approve the Establishment of a 13-Month Certificate of Deposit * FOR APPROVAL Doc. #25-15

Finance & Facilities Committee Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the proposed establishment of a 13-month certificate of deposit in the amount of \$250,000 through Community Bank N.A. at an interest rate of 3.39 percent, and authorizes the Executive Director to set up the certificate of deposit utilizing board signatories as approved during the library system’s January 21, 2025 annual organizational meeting.

Aye ___13___ Nay ___0___ Abstain ___0___ Absent ___0___ Vacant ___2___
 Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: B Hildreth stated this is the same CD that was set up last year. The CD was \$350,000.00 last year and is \$100,000.00 less for purposes of cash flow management. The \$100,000.00 will be added to another CD that comes to maturity this summer.

March 2025

BOARD ACTIONS

12. Expenditure Approvals -Monthly Unpaid Bills Detail * **FOR APPROVAL** Doc. #25-27

Finance & Facilities Committee Recommendation: Approve expenditures of the *Unpaid Bills Detail* for the most recent month as authorized by the Financial Clerk, Internal Auditor and Treasurer per the Authority of Board Policy.

Aye ___13___ Nay __0___ Abstain __0___ Absent ___0___ Vacant___2___
Approved/Failed: Approved
Discussion: None

15. Receipt Approvals – Monthly Deposit Summary * **FOR APPROVAL** Doc. #25-28

Finance & Facilities Committee Recommendation: Approve receipts of the *Deposit Summary* for the most recent months as authorized by the Financial Clerk per the Finance Policy.

Aye ___13___ Nay __0___ Abstain __0___ Absent ___0___ Vacant___2___
Approved/Failed: Approved
Discussion: None

14. Approve Proposed Bylaws Revisions * **FOR APPROVAL** See **Doc. #25-8** from January 21, 2025 Board Meeting

Personnel & Policies Committee Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the proposed Bylaws revisions as presented at the January 21, 2025 board meeting, and considers any revisions incorporated during board meeting discussion.

Aye ___13___ Nay __0___ Abstain __0___ Absent ___0___ Vacant___2___
Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: B Hildreth stated that there needs to be clear language about a trustee that serves a partial term and then follows that with two full terms. The statement is:

“A Trustee who is serving the balance of an unexpired term is eligible to serve 2 additional full 5-year terms.”

April 2025

BOARD ACTIONS

12. Expenditure Approvals -Monthly Unpaid Bills Detail * **FOR APPROVAL** Doc. #25-41

Finance & Facilities Committee Recommendation: Approve expenditures of the *Unpaid Bills Detail* for the most recent month as authorized by the Financial Clerk, Internal Auditor and Treasurer per the Authority of Board Policy.

Aye ___10___ Nay __0___ Abstain __0___ Absent ___3___ Vacant___2___
Approved/Failed: Approved
Discussion: None

15. Receipt Approvals – Monthly Deposit Summary * **FOR APPROVAL** **Doc. #25-42**

Finance & Facilities Committee Recommendation: Approve receipts of the *Deposit Summary* for the most recent months as authorized by the Financial Clerk per the Finance Policy.

Aye ___10___ Nay ___0___ Abstain ___0___ Absent ___3___ Vacant ___2___

Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: None

14. Approve Proposed Records Retention & Disposition Policy Revisions

* **FOR APPROVAL**

See **Doc. #25-23** from March 18, 2025 Board Meeting

Personnel & Policies Committee Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the proposed Records Retention & Disposition Policy revisions as presented at the March 18, 2025 board meeting, and considers any revisions incorporated during board meeting discussion.

Aye ___10___ Nay ___0___ Abstain ___0___ Absent ___3___ Vacant ___2___

Approved/Failed: Approved

May 2025

BOARD ACTIONS

10. Expenditure Approvals -Monthly Unpaid Bills Detail

* **FOR APPROVAL**

Doc. #25-55

Finance & Facilities Committee Recommendation: Approve expenditures of the *Unpaid Bills Detail* for the most recent month as authorized by the Financial Clerk, Internal Auditor and Treasurer per the Authority of Board Policy.

Aye ___12___ Nay ___0___ Abstain ___0___ Absent ___1___ Vacant ___2___

Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: None

11. Receipt Approvals – Monthly Deposit Summary

* **FOR APPROVAL** **Doc. #25-56**

Finance & Facilities Committee Recommendation: Approve receipts of the *Deposit Summary* for the most recent months as authorized by the Financial Clerk per the Finance Policy.

Aye ___12___ Nay ___0___ Abstain ___0___ Absent ___1___ Vacant ___2___

Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: None

12. Approve General Statement on Policies Revisions

* **FOR APPROVAL**

Doc. #25-57

Personnel & Policies Committee Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the proposed General Statement on Policies revisions as presented at the April 8, 2025 board meeting, and considers any revisions incorporated during board meeting discussion.

Aye ___12___ Nay ___0___ Abstain ___0___ Absent ___1___ Vacant ___2___

Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: None

13. Approve ILS Specialists’ Job Description Revisions .

*** FOR APPROVAL** (See April 2025 Board Packet for Document...) **Doc. #25-37**

Personnel & Policies Committee Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the proposed ILS Specialists’ Job Description revisions as presented at the April 8, 2025 board meeting, and considers any revisions incorporated during board meeting discussion.

Aye 12 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 1 Vacant 2
 Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: B Hildreth stated that M. Fleming met with L. Wagner and C. Hobbie to review the job description.

14. Approve the 2024 Annual Financial Report (AFR) to the New York State Comptroller’s Office

*** FOR APPROVAL** (See April 2025 Board Packet for Document...) **Doc. #25-38**

Executive Director Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the 2024 Library System Annual Financial Report to the New York State Education Department as presented at the April 8, 2025 board meeting.

Move: L Richardson Second B Hubbell
 Aye 12 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 1 Vacant 2
 Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: B Hildreth pointed out a mistake in the May 20 agenda for this action item. The action item has been amended to read “New York State Education Department”. This was to fix the incorrect version of the action item was included in the May 20, 2025 agenda that read “New York State Comptroller’s Office”

June 2025

BOARD ACTIONS

10. Expenditure Approvals -Monthly Unpaid Bills Detail

*** FOR APPROVAL**

Doc. #25-66

Executive Director Recommendation: Approve expenditures of the Unpaid Bills Detail for the most recent month as authorized by the Financial Clerk, Internal Auditor and Treasurer per the Authority of Board Policy.

Move: B Gorman Second L Richardson
 Aye 10 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 3 Vacant 2
 Approved/Failed: Approved
 Discussion: None

11. Receipt Approvals – Monthly Deposit Summary *** FOR APPROVAL Doc. #25-67**

Executive Director Recommendation: Approve receipts of the Deposit Summary for the most recent months as authorized by the Financial Clerk per the Finance Policy.

Move: S Barr Second R Urban
 Aye 10 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 3 Vacant 2
 Approved/Failed: Approved
 Discussion: None

12. Approve Social Justice Activities Plan 2024 – 2028

(See April 2025 Board Packet for Document...) **Doc. #25-51**

Executive Director Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the proposed Social Justice Activities Plan 2024 - 2028 as presented at the May 20, 2025 board meeting, and considers any revisions incorporated during board meeting discussion.

Move: _____ M Krebs _____ Second _____ S McGill _____
 Aye __ 10 __ Nay __ 0 __ Abstain __ 0 __ Absent __ 3 __ Vacant __ 2 __
 Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: B Hubbell noted that the changes made to the document were specific to acronyms and specific service terms.

13. Approve the 2024 Annual Financial Report (AFR) to the New York State Comptroller’s Office

*** FOR APPROVAL** (See May 2025 Board Packet for Document...) **Doc. #25-53**

Executive Director Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the 2024 Library System Annual Financial Report to the New York State Comptroller’s Office as presented at the May 20, 2025 board meeting.

Move: _____ B Gorman _____ Second _____ R Urban _____
 Aye __ 10 __ Nay __ 0 __ Abstain __ 0 __ Absent __ 3 __ Vacant __ 2 __
 Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: None

July 2025

BOARD ACTIONS

12. Expenditure Approvals -Monthly Unpaid Bills Detail

*** FOR APPROVAL**

Doc. #25-81

Finance and Facilities Committee Recommendation: Approve expenditures of the *Unpaid Bills Detail* for the most recent month as authorized by the Financial Clerk, Internal Auditor and Treasurer per the Authority of Board Policy.

Aye __ 9 __ Nay _____ Abstain __ 3 __ Absent __ 1 __ Vacant __ 2 __
 Approved/Failed: Approved
 Discussion: None

13. Receipt Approvals – Monthly Deposit Summary

*** FOR APPROVAL Doc. #25-82**

Finance and Facilities Committee Recommendation: Approve receipts of the *Deposit Summary* for the most recent months as authorized by the Financial Clerk per the Finance Policy.

Aye __ 9 __ Nay _____ Abstain __ 3 __ Absent __ 1 __ Vacant __ 2 __
 Approved/Failed: Approved
 Discussion: None

14. Approve Proposed NYS Public Library Construction Aid Allocations

*** FOR APPROVAL**

Doc. #25-83

Public Relations Committee Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the proposed 2025/2026 NYS Public Library Construction Aid Allocations as presented at the July 15, 2025 board

meeting considering any revisions during board meeting discussion.

Aye 9 Nay _____ Abstain 3 Absent 1 Vacant 2

Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: All libraries with Total Project Costs below \$150,000 were funded at the 75% match level, and the libraries with projects exceeding \$150,000 received equal portions of the remaining funds.

*Additional funds from other library systems will be distributed to STLS applicants who didn't receive a 75% match based on an equitable formula: (Applicant's Total Project Cost / Total Cost of All Projects Not Funded at 75% Match)*Total Funds from Other Library Systems. **David A. Howe Public Library removed application to enable other applying libraries to receive more funds in 2025-2026 funding cycle. STLS Board of Trustees will earmark a minimum of \$125,758 to DAHPL's 2026-2027 Construction Aid Application for making the 2025-2026 accommodation.

15. Approve Purchase of Cisco Meraki Licenses * FOR APPROVAL Doc. #25-84

Executive Director Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the proposed purchase of Cisco Meraki Licenses through Teracai as part of STLS' 2025 Category 2 ERate Funding Application at a cost of \$40,448.90 per the Purchasing Policy.

Move: B Gorman _____ Second B Hubbell _____

Aye 9 Nay _____ Abstain 3 Absent 1 Vacant 2

Approved/Failed

Discussion: K Green wanted to know what the Licenses are? B Hildreth explained that it is Erate funding.

September 2025

BOARD ACTIONS

12. Expenditure Approvals -Monthly Unpaid Bills Detail * FOR APPROVAL Doc. #25-98

Finance & Facilities Committee Recommendation: Approve expenditures of the Unpaid Bills Detail for the most recent months as authorized by the Financial Clerk, Internal Auditor and Treasurer per the Authority of Board Policy.

Aye 10 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 3 Vacant 2

Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: None

13. Receipt Approvals – Monthly Deposit Summary * FOR APPROVAL Doc. #25-99

Finance & Facilities Committee Recommendation: Approve receipts of the Deposit Summary for the most recent months as authorized by the Financial Clerk per the Finance Policy.

Aye 10 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 3 Vacant 2

Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: None

14. Approve Proposed Staff Guide Revisions

*** FOR APPROVAL** (See July 15, 2025 Board Packet) **Doc. #25-76**

Personnel & Policies Committee Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the proposed revisions to the STLS Staff Guide as presented at the July 15, 2025 board meeting, and considers any revisions incorporated during board meeting discussion.

Aye 10 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 3 Vacant 2
Approved/Failed: Approved
Discussion: None

15. Approve Proposed Trustee Job Description Revisions

*** FOR APPROVAL** (See July 15, 2025 Board Packet) **Doc. #25-77**

Personnel & Policies Committee Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the proposed Trustee Job Description as presented at the July 15, 2025 board meeting, and considers any revisions incorporated during board meeting discussion.

Aye 10 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 3 Vacant 2
Approved/Failed: Approved
Discussion: None

16. Approve to Remove the Deferred Compensation Plan Document from the Trustee Manual

*** FOR APPROVAL Doc. #25-100**

Personnel & Policies Committee Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the removal of the Deferred Compensation Plan document from the STLS Trustee Manual and include new language that refers to the plan in the proposed revisions to the STLS Staff Guide as presented at the July 15, 2025 board meeting, and considers any revisions incorporated during board meeting discussion.

Aye 10 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 3 Vacant 2
Approved/Failed: Approved
Discussion: None

17. Authorize Annual Salary Payment per Executive Director Contract

***FOR APPROVAL**

Personnel & Policies Committee Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees authorizes the Business Office to make an annual salary payment contribution to the Executive Director in the amount of \$3,600, and designate such payment per the Executive Director’s Contract 2022 – 2026 – Other Benefits of Employment.

Aye 10 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 3 Vacant 2
Approved/Failed: Approved
Discussion: None

18. Approve the Payment to SirsiDynix for 2025/2026 Automation Services

*** FOR APPROVAL Doc. #24-101**

Executive Director Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the payment to SirsiDynix for automation services for 2025/2026 on behalf of STLS member libraries and per the STLS Purchasing Policy in the amount of \$83,388.34.

Move: B Gorman Second: R Urban
Aye 10 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 3 Vacant 2
Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: B Hildreth explained that STLS has a seven-year contract with SirsiDynix and the cost increases by 3% each year. B Hildreth explained SirsiDynix provides StarCat, and WorkFlows and is paid for with cost share funds.

November 2025

BOARD ACTIONS

16. Expenditure Approvals -Monthly Unpaid Bills Detail *** FOR APPROVAL Doc. #25-119**

Finance & Facilities Committee Recommendation: Approve expenditures of the Unpaid Bills Detail for the most recent months as authorized by the Financial Clerk, Internal Auditor and Treasurer per the Authority of Board Policy.

Aye 11 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 2 Vacant 2
Approved/Failed: Approved
Discussion: None

17. Receipt Approvals – Monthly Deposit Summary *** FOR APPROVAL Doc. #25-120**

Finance & Facilities Committee Recommendation: Approve receipts of the Deposit Summary for the most recent months as authorized by the Financial Clerk per the Finance Policy.

Aye 11 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 2 Vacant 2
Approved/Failed: Approved
Discussion: None

18. Public Communications Policy

*** FOR APPROVAL (See September 16, 2025 Board Packet) Doc. #25-93**

Personnel & Policies Committee Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the proposed revisions to the Public Communications Policy as presented at the September 16, 2025 board meeting, and considers any revisions incorporated during board meeting discussion.

Aye 11 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 2 Vacant 2
Approved/Failed: Approved
Discussion: None

19. Approve 2026 Library System Operating Budget *** FOR APPROVAL Doc. #25-121**

12. Proposed 2025/2026 Executive Director’s Performance Objectives

*** FOR APPROVAL See Doc. #25-113** from November 2025 Board Meeting Packet

Personnel & Policies Committee Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the proposed Executive Director’s Performance Objectives as presented at the November 18,2025 board meeting, and considers any revisions incorporated during board meeting discussion.

Aye 10 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 3 Vacant 2

Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: There was discussion as to who would be surveyed this year. B Hubbell stated the survey changes would be discussed.

13. Approve Proposed Facilities Policy Revisions

*** FOR APPROVAL See Doc. #25-116** from November 2025 Board Meeting Packet

Personnel & Policies Committee and Finance & Facilities Committee Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the proposed revisions to the Facilities Policy as presented at the November 18, 2025 board meeting, and considers any revisions incorporated during board meeting discussion.

Aye 10 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 3 Vacant 2

Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: None

14. Approve Proposed Executive Director’s Salary

Personnel and Policies Committee Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the Executive Director’s salary of \$139,637.00 for Brian Hildreth retroactive to September 16, 2025 based on the successful completion of his 2024/2025 performance evaluation.

Aye 10 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 3 Vacant 2

Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: None

15. Approve 2025 Library System Mid-Year Budget Revisions

*** FOR APPROVAL See Doc. #25-115** from November 2025 Board Meeting Packet

Executive Director Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the 2025 STLS Library System Mid-Year Budget Revisions as originally presented during the November 18 2025 board meeting, and considers any revisions incorporated during board meeting discussion.

Move: B Gorman Second R Urban

Aye 10 Nay 0 Abstain 0 Absent 3 Vacant 2

Approved/Failed: Approved

Discussion: None

16. Authorize Filing of IRS Form 990 for the 2024 Fiscal Year

*** FOR APPROVAL See Doc. #25-117** from November 2025 Board Meeting

Executive Director Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees authorizes the Executive Director to file IRS Form 990 for the 2024 fiscal year as presented at the November 18, 2025 board meeting on behalf of STLS.

Move: _____ M Krebs _____ Second __ S Barr _____
Aye __10____ Nay __0__ Abstain __0____ Absent _3__ Vacant _2____
Approved/Failed: Approved
Discussion: None

17. Proposed 2026 Executive Committee – Officers of the Board

Nominating Committee Recommendation: The STLS Board of Trustees approves the proposed 2026 Executive Committee – Officers of the Board for the 2026 Fiscal year. Committee Recommendation includes Louise Richardson (President), Lynnette Decker (Vice President), Barbara Hubbell (Secretary), Sisi Barr (Treasurer), and Kathy Green (Designated Trustee).

Aye __10____ Nay __0__ Abstain __0____ Absent _3__ Vacant __2____
Approved/Failed: Approved
Discussion: None

2026 LIBRARY SYSTEM OPERATING BUDGET

2026 Approved Library System Operating Budget
Southern Tier Library System

	2025 Budget	2026 Budget	Difference
Revenue			
4700 · Basic State Aid	\$ 912,879.00	\$ 934,607.00	\$ 21,728.00
4706 · Jails and Institutions	\$ 3,904.00	\$ 3,877.00	\$ (27.00)
4709 · Local Services Support	\$ 100,383.00	\$ 102,773.00	\$ 2,390.00
4710 · Supplemental Aid	\$ 135,244.00	\$ 138,463.00	\$ 3,219.00
4711 · Coordinated Outreach	\$ 93,782.00	\$ 96,014.00	\$ 2,232.00
4713 · State Corrections	\$ 27,965.00	\$ 28,630.00	\$ 665.00
4714 · Special Aid	\$ 50,000.00	\$ -	\$ (50,000.00)
4716 · Love Your Library Fund	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,375.00	\$ (125.00)
4719 · Interest	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -
4721 · E-Rate Funding	\$ 211,500.00	\$ 211,500.00	\$ -
4723 · Member Library Cost Share	\$ 419,395.00	\$ 439,776.00	\$ 20,381.00
4724 · Member Library IT Contracts	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 79,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
4725 · Grants Revenue	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ -
4781 · Retiree Health Ins Payments	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ -
4782 · Donations	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
4784 · General Reimbursements & Refund	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,800.00
Total Revenue	\$ 2,303,252.00	\$ 2,314,515.00	\$ 11,263.00
Expenses			
5100 · Salaries	\$ 1,083,385.00	\$ 1,032,292.00	\$ (51,093.00)
5150 · Personnel Benefits	\$ 450,000.00	\$ 528,828.00	\$ 78,828.00
5203 · STLS Equipment	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ -
5204 · STLS Software & Small Equipment	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 2,500.00
5205 · Maintenance Contracts & Leases	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ (2,000.00)
5407 · Integrated Library System	\$ 83,430.00	\$ 85,900.00	\$ 2,470.00
5408 · Platform Fees & Licenses	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
5409 · STLS Telephone/Internet	\$ 235,000.00	\$ 235,000.00	\$ -
5417 · Library Materials	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 17,000.00	\$ (3,000.00)
5418 · Consultant Collection	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ (600.00)
5419 · Electronic Materials	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ (5,000.00)
5420 · Staff Development Travel	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 14,000.00	\$ (1,000.00)
5422 · Trustee Mileage	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 8,500.00	\$ (1,500.00)
5423 · Trustee Continuing Education	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 2,400.00	\$ -
5424 · Conference Registration	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ (2,000.00)
5425 · Staff & Member Library Mileage	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -
5427 · Programming & Annual Conference	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -
5428 · Meeting Supplies	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ -
5430 · Office Supplies	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ -

2026 Library System Operating Budget Continued

5433 · Postage	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 2,400.00	\$ -	
5434 · Public Relations	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	
5436 · STLS Grants to Member Libraries	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -	
5442 · Professional Fees	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	
5443 · Legal Counsel	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	
5444 · Accounting Support & Audit	\$ 17,000.00	\$ 19,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	

Page 1 of 2

2026 Approved Library System Operating Budget
Southern Tier Library System

5450 · Utilities	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	
5451 · Building Maintenance & Repairs	\$ 27,500.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ (2,500.00)	
5454 · Commercial Insurance	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 11,500.00	\$ (1,000.00)	
5471 · Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	
5473 · Vehicle Fuel	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ (2,500.00)	
5474 · Vehicle Insurance	\$ 5,875.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 125.00	
5475 · Vehicle Purchase	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
5490 · Grants	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ -	
Total Expense	\$ 2,361,890.00	\$ 2,395,620.00	\$ 33,730.00	
	\$ (58,638.00)	\$ (81,105.00)	\$ 22,467.00	

**STATE AID FUNDING
and
RESPONSIBILITIES OF SYSTEMS AND MEMBER LIBRARIES**

Basic Library System Aid

Public Library System responsibilities according to State Law & Regulations:

- Plan of service
- Director with 8 years of experience
- At least 3 full-time certified public librarians, exclusive of librarians employed in technical processing
- A means of location of materials added in libraries of the system (*STARCat*)
- Annual budget on forms prescribed by the Commissioner of Education

- Coordination of the reference and interlibrary loan programs and functions with local Reference and Research Library System (*South Central Regional Library Council*)
- Coordinated Outreach Services designed to identify, contact, and serve persons who are educationally disadvantaged, developmentally or learning disabled, members of ethnic or minority groups in need of special library services, unemployed or underemployed, living in areas underserved by a library (more than 20 miles from a library facility), blind or physically disabled, aged, or confined in institutions. Eligibility criteria include:
 - an approved plan
 - administration by at least one full-time certified professional librarian with expertise in outreach service
 - an advisory council (5-11 members) composed of persons who are members of the target population
- Reserve funds for an automation program to support bibliographic control and interlibrary sharing of information resources of member libraries, and to coordinate and integrate the automated system of member libraries.

Central Library Aid

Central Library responsibilities according to State Law and Regulation:

- Provide an annual average of not less than 55 hours per week of service, or amount required under Regulation 90.2
- At least two FTE professional positions paid for from local funds
- A 10 year plan of Central Library Development prepared by the Board of Trustees of the Central Library which meets system-wide needs
- An annual report submitted to the Division of Library Development on steps taken to achieve the objectives of this plan
- Purchase of books and materials, including non-print materials, as defined in regulations...to provide maximum use of the collection by residents of the area served by the system
- Materials acquired shall be adult non-fiction or foreign language materials in print form or microform

Member library responsibilities according to State Law and Regulations:

- Acceptance by all libraries in the system of a borrower's card issued by the system or by any library in the system, to be honored on the same basis as that specified for cardholders in each individual library
- Restrictions upon the loan of specific materials shall be limited to nonprint materials and equipment, and printed materials less than one year old, including fiction and nonfiction books and periodicals. Such materials must have been purchased from local funds.
- Meet minimum standards

OUTREACH SERVICES

STLS receives three state grants which together fund System-centered outreach endeavors. These grants are determined by, and obtained through, adherence to NYS Education Law and Education Commissioner’s Regulations. Some things to note about the STLS outreach program:

- 1) Funding is separate from the general STLS budget
- 2) There are specific laws, guidelines, and regulations which determine how the funds may be used and who is to be served
- 3) Services under these programs are developed and implemented with advisement from the populations and facilities to be served
- 4) STLS with the advice and consent of the Coordinated Outreach Services Advisory Council (COSAC) and the 2 state correctional facilities has developed the following guidelines:
 - services funded by these programs will be offered to all System residents in all libraries and all facilities
 - wherever possible, STLS will take an “expansive” approach in making services as widely available to as many System area residents as possible

Coordinated Outreach Services Program

Under New York State Education Law, §273 (1) (h) (1), and Commissioner's Regulations §90.3, Public Library Systems provide Coordinated Outreach Library Services directly and through their member libraries to New Yorkers who are most in need and who often are not regular library users.

Program Basics

I. Each System provides service to all or some of the following **target populations**:

- Blind/Physically Disabled
- Aged
- Developmentally or learning disabled
- Institutionalized
- Members of ethnic/minority groups in need of special services
- Educationally Disadvantaged
- Unemployed/Underemployed
- Geographically isolated

II. Each System must employ at least one full-time, certified librarian with expertise in providing public library outreach service.

III. Each System maintains a **Coordinated Outreach Services Advisory Group** which meets at least twice a year, includes 5-11 members, includes members of the target population groups and agencies

who work with these groups within the system's service area, and one director of a member library. Council members are to serve three-year terms

Each public library system receives **Coordinated Outreach State Aid**: \$43,000 plus \$.13 per capita population annually.

State Aid for Services to State Correctional Facility Libraries

Under New York State Education Law, §285 (1); Commissioner's Regulations §90.14, seventeen of the 23 public library systems receive state correctional facility aid.

Program Basics

Each System must meet with state correctional facility General Library librarians annually to negotiate a plan to make System library resources available to the facilities general population. The plan must include:

- the identification of the eligible State correctional facility libraries in the system area, and the reasons given by any such facility which elects not to participate
- the identification of system personnel involved in negotiating the plan of service with participating correctional facility libraries and of the personnel responsible for implementation of such plan, including any consultant services to be provided
- a description of how the public library system resources will be made available for the educational, cultural and recreational needs of the inmates
- an agreement on procedures to recover or replace missing or damaged materials loaned to a participating facility library

Each public library system receives **State Aid for Services to State Correctional Facilities**: \$9.25 per inmate based on population in each correctional facility in the system's service area as of July 1 of the previous year. The New York State Department of Corrections provides the population figure to Library Development.

County Jail “Interinstitutional” Aid

Under New York State Education Law, §285 (2); Commissioner's Regulations §90.14, provides each system with one or more county jails with an amount based on the population in the jails as of July 1 of the previous year. The New York State Commission of Correction provides the population figure to Library Development. The total statewide aid is set at \$175,000.

Examples of STLS Outreach Services

The following services are offered to STLS member libraries, state and county correctional facilities, and area residential facilities housing coordinated outreach populations. Note that STLS general funds

pay for housing these services: building upkeep, heat, lights, etc. State law & Commissioner’s regulations forbid using outreach grant funding to pay for these costs.

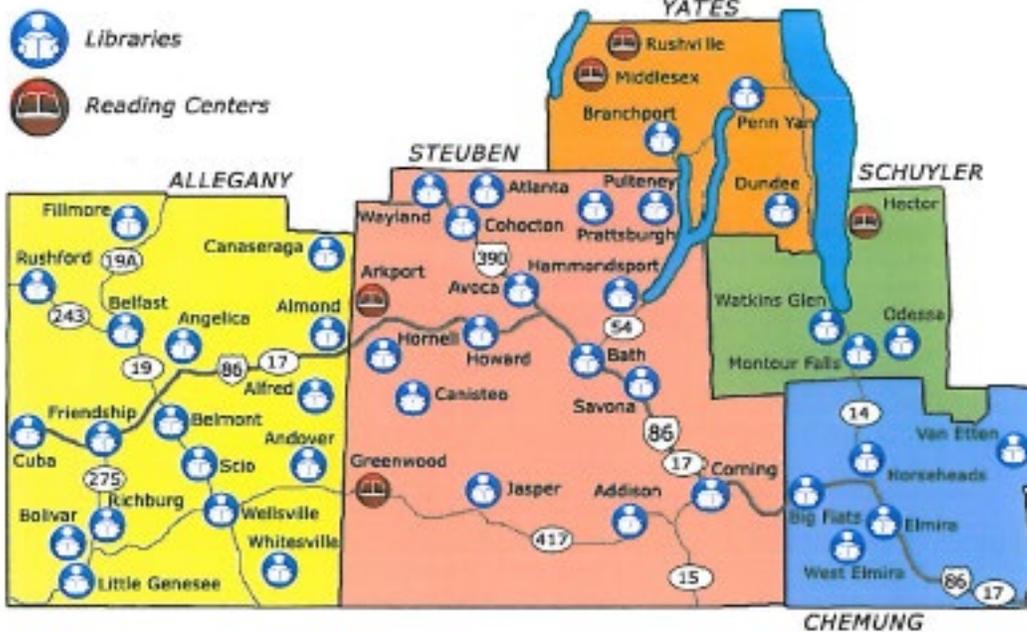
- Training of library staff to provide library services to targeted outreach populations. *(Coordinated Outreach Services, State Correctional Facility, and County Jail funding)*
- Build library awareness and connect underserved populations with library services by offering speaker services and presentations at community events. *(Coordinated Outreach Services, State Correctional Facility, and County Jail funding)*
- Consultant services on outreach topics to libraries and on library services to agencies/organizations *(Coordinated Outreach Services, State Correctional Facility, and County Jail funding)*
- Downloadable Audio books and eBooks *(Coordinated Outreach Services)*
- Outreach Mini-Grants to Libraries *(Coordinated Outreach Services funding)*
- Rotating Collections of large print and audio books *(Coordinated Outreach Services funding)*
- Circulation of Program Resource Kits
- Talking Book & Braille Library (TBBL) *(Coordinated Outreach Services funding)*

MAP OF MEMBER LIBRARIES

[Print version](#)

Member Libraries of the Southern Tier Library System

Click on the library or county name in the map for more information about each library, or use the [alphabetical listing](#) below.



Member Library Listing

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| Addison Public Library | Cohocton Public Library | Montour Falls Memorial Library |
| Alfred Box of Books Library | Coming, Southeast Steuben County Library | Odessa, Dutton S. Peterson Memorial Library |
| Almond 20th Century Club Library | Cuba Circulating Library Association | Penn Yan Public Library |
| Andover Free Library | Dundee Library | Pretsburg Library |
| Angelica Free Library | Elmira, Steele Memorial Library | Pulteney Free Library |
| Arkport Village Book Center | Fillmore, Wide Awake Club Library | Richburg, Colonial Library |
| Atlanta, E. J. Cottrell Memorial Library | Friendship Free Library | Rushford Free Library |
| Avoca Free Library | Greenwood Reading Center | Rushville, Mabel D. Blodgett Memorial Library |
| Bath, Dormann Library | Hammondsport, Fred & Harriett Taylor Memorial Library | Savona Free Library |
| Belfast Public Library | Hector, Elizabeth B. Part Reading Center | Scio Memorial Library |
| Belmont Library & Historical Society Free Library | Hornell Public Library | Van Etten Library |
| Big Flats Library | Horseheads Free Library | Watkins Glen Public Library |
| Bolivar Free Library | Howard Public Library | Wayland Free Library |
| Branchport, Modeste Bedient Memorial Library | Jasper Free Library | Wellsville, David A. Howe Public Library |
| Canaseraga, Essential Club Free Library | Little Genesee, Genesee Library | West Elmira Library |
| Canisteo, Windaughian Free Library | Middlesex Reading Center | Whitesville Public Library |

ANNUAL SYSTEM AWARDS

Outstanding Library Advocate Award

The Outstanding Library Advocate Award recognizes a person who has made extraordinary contributions to the development, improvement or expansion of library service to the residents of the STLS. The award also encourages and rewards the fine tradition of citizenship and excellence.

Eligible Candidates: Directors, Friends, Staff, Trustees, Volunteers and Community Advocates

Library Volunteer Award

The Library Volunteer Award recognizes a person within a member library that assists member librarians or board members in the day to day operations of the library. The award takes a particular interest in volunteers that go above and beyond to make their library a special place.

Eligible Candidates: Friends and Volunteers

Sustainable Practices Award

This award recognizes an STLS member library that took on transformational changes that address the library's economic sustainability or demonstrate practices that are socially or environmentally responsible. This award pays particular attention to projects that have longstanding community impacts.

Eligible Candidates: Member Libraries, Friends Groups, Association Clubs and Foundation Boards

Best Use of Social Media Award

This award will be presented to an STLS member library, or friends group that demonstrates an effective use of social media to promote library services, engage library users, or disseminate information about library advocacy initiatives. Nominations can be based on a single social media post that generated many "likes", "comments", "shares" or "followers". Nominations may also incorporate a string of social media posts.

Eligible Candidates: Member Libraries, Friends Groups, Association Clubs and Foundation Boards

Outstanding Promotional Video Award

This award recognizes an online video that inspires, encourages, informs, or promotes library services of a specific STLS member library. Entries will be reviewed on originality, creativity and overall video message. The content of the video can portray specific library projects, or overall library services. All entries must be uploaded to the member library's individual YouTube web account for consideration.

Eligible Candidates: Member Libraries, Friends Groups, Association Clubs and Foundation Boards

Innovation in Outreach Programming Award

This award recognizes a member library’s achievement in planning and implementing an innovative or creative outreach program, which has had a measurable impact on its community.

Eligible Candidates: Member Libraries

NYLA Scholarships

STLS will offer a board-determined number of NYLA scholarships to member librarians annually. Scholarships will provide an expense reimbursement up to \$1,000 for the annual NYLA Conference. Scholarships will cover hotel for 3 nights, mileage reimbursement to and from conference, and conference registration. Scholarship winners are required to participate in a post-conference wrap-up where they share conference experiences with other STLS member librarians.

Philip D. Archer Memorial Scholarship

A scholarship is available annually sponsored by STLS in memory of library advocate, trustee and friend, Phillip D. Archer. Phil was a life-long educator, public servant, and advocate for libraries. Most notably, Phil represented the interests of rural STLS member libraries and STLS through his service on the Montour Falls Library Board, STLS Board of Trustees, Foundation for Southern Tier Libraries and Library Trustee Association of New York State.

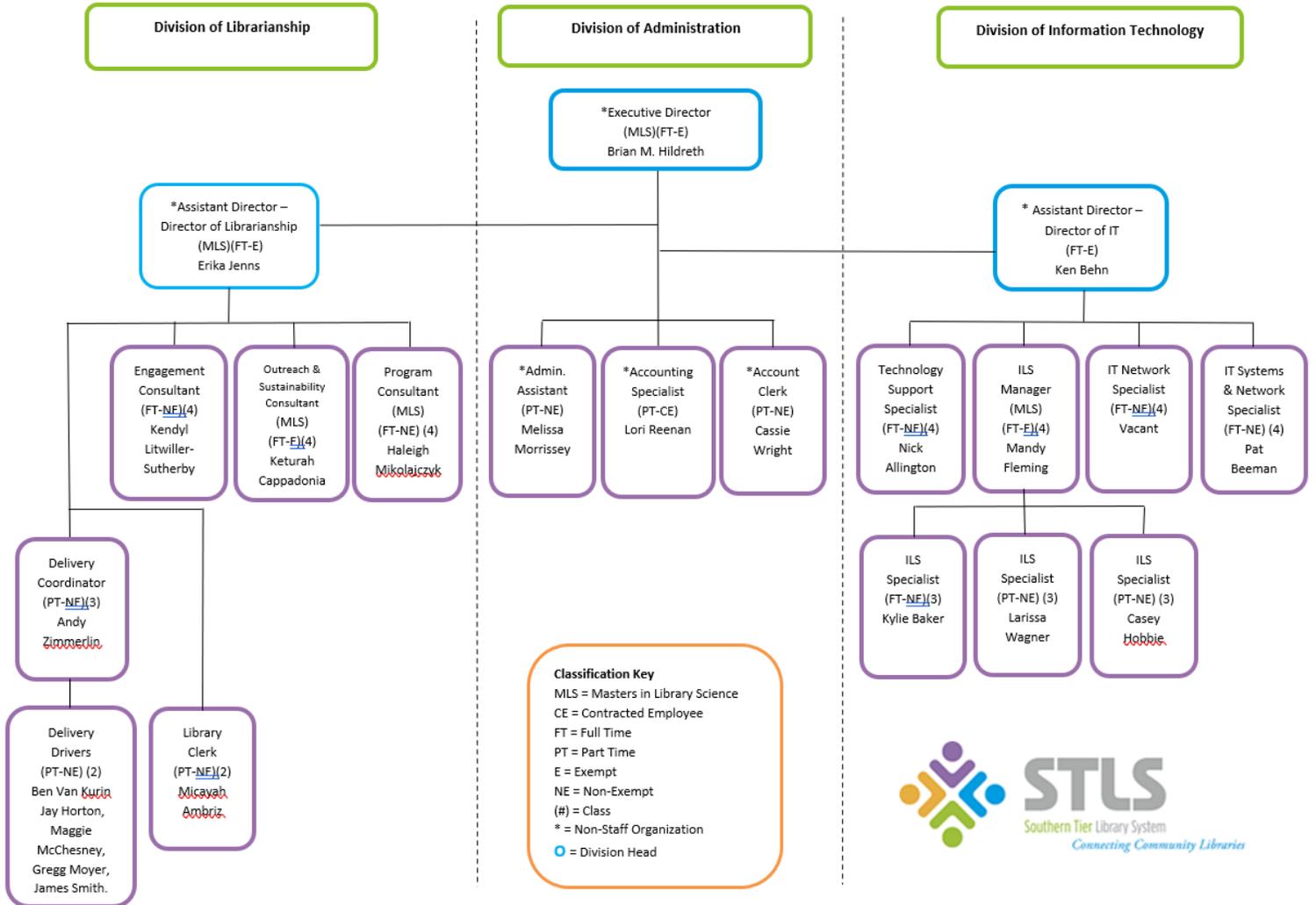
This annual scholarship will enable a member librarian to attend the NYLA Conference. Scholarships will cover hotel for 3 nights, mileage reimbursement to and from conference, and conference registration.

OFFICE STAFF

SOUTHERN TIER LIBRARY SYSTEM		
9424 Scott Road, Painted Post, NY 14870-9598		
Phone: (607) 962-3141		
		Updated 02/24/2026
Employee	Extension	Department
Andy Zimmerlin	2223	Delivery Coordinator
Ben Van Kurin	2223	Delivery Driver
Brian Hildreth	2207	Executive Director - Division of Library Sustainability
Casey Hobbie	2226	ILS Specialist
Cassie Wright	2206	Account Clerk
Erika Jenns	2212	Assistant Director - Director of Librarianship
Haleigh Mikolajczyk	2215	Program Constulant
Jim Smith	2223	Delivery Driver
Kendyl Litwiller-Sutherby	2209	Engagment Consultant
Keturah Cappadonia	2204	Outreach Consultant
Kylie Baker	2218	ILS Specialist
Ken Behn	2211	Assistant Director - Director of IT
Larissa Wagner	2219	ILS Specialist
Lori Reenan	2217	Account Specialist
Maggie McChesney	2223	Delivery Driver
Mandy Fleming	2210	ILS and Technical Services Manager
Mark Eckler	2223	Delivery Driver
Melissa Morrissey	2201	Administrative Assistant
Micayah Ambriz	2214	Library Clerk
Nick Allington	2208	Technology Support Specialist
Pat Beeman	2224	Information Technology Specialist
Urgent Assistance	5228	IT
Main Conference Room	2221	
Back Conference Room	2202	
Server room	TBD	In an Emergency, dial Extension 8 - all phones will ring;
Spare Office	2215	phones will display Priority
Work Room	2203	
STL_Staff@STLS.org		

Staff Organizational Chart

**Southern Tier Library System
Organizational Chart - Board Approved**



Staff Performance Evaluation: Guide



The following evaluation form is designed to formally document the performance of an employee during a specified period of review. It is also expected that informal communication between the supervisor and employee regarding job performance will be ongoing throughout the review period.

The performance evaluation process should allow employees to further understand what is expected from them, how well they are doing and how they can improve job-related performance. Finally, the supervisor and employee will together decide on development goals for the upcoming year.

◆ Procedures

- The employee and supervisor will each review the employee’s current **Job Description** (to be attached to this evaluation form).
- Supervisors will assign one overall rating for each of the five **Performance Factors**. Ratings for each performance factor should be considered according to the needs of each department and the employee’s job description. The possible ratings are as follows:
 - *Does Not Meet Expectations*—Performance is significantly below expectations.
 - *Meets Expectations*—Proficient in the performance factor.
- An employee’s notable achievements, outstanding work performance and/or job-related strengths can be formally documented in the **Notes/Comments** section of the relevant performance factor. Work on special projects may also be noted. A supervisor should also use this section to substantiate a “Does Not Meet Expectations” rating with specific examples of job performance that were unsatisfactory, and/or comment on how the employee could improve their job performance.

- The **Action Plan & Development Goals** section provides an opportunity for the employee and supervisor to identify and discuss up to three training, education and/or professional growth priorities for the upcoming evaluation period, as well as review any previously established goals.
- The **Comments & Signatures** section offers both the employee and supervisor a formal opportunity to include their written comments regarding the employee's performance evaluation. Signatures of the employee, supervisor and system director are required before the performance evaluation is added to the employee's personnel file.

◆ **Timeline**

- Evaluations are required following an employee's probationary period and on an annual basis. The annual evaluation process will generally be performed in all departments during the month of January.
- A *workday* is defined in this context as an employee's regularly scheduled work day, excluding weekends, vacations, holidays and scheduled time off.
- The supervisor and employee will meet and discuss the employee's performance evaluation. This meeting will be held no later than five workdays after the evaluation form has been filled in by the supervisor.
- A copy of the evaluation form filled in by the supervisor will be provided to the employee within five workdays of the meeting.
- An employee who does not agree with a rating received in any area of the evaluation may submit a statement of rebuttal in the space provided for employee comments, or as an attachment. The employee has up to 15 workdays in which to respond to the evaluation and return the form to the supervisor.
- When the evaluation form is turned in to the supervisor, both the employee and supervisor will sign and date the form. The supervisor will then immediately pass the form on to the system director.
- The system director will have five workdays to review, sign and return copies of the evaluation form to the employee and the supervisor, and a copy will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

This evaluation form was developed in August 2002 by a seven-member committee, with the participation of representatives from the STLS Staff Organization and STLS Administration.

Staff Performance Evaluation



Employee: _____ Position Title: _____
 Evaluating Supervisor: _____ Date Report Prepared: _____
 Type of Evaluation: Probationary Annual Other: _____
 Evaluation Period: From _____ To _____ Date of Meeting: _____

◆ **Review of Attached Job Description**

- The employee’s current job description should be reviewed by both supervisor and employee.

◆ **Review of Performance Factors**

*One overall rating should be assigned for each performance factor.
 Bulleted items provide examples of some behaviors which may be considered.*

Factor	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Notes/Comments
<p>Job Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has clear understanding of the policies, procedures and skills pertinent to job. • Gathers background information, identifies priorities and establishes realistic deadlines. • Thinks beyond the details of the job and contributes to meeting system goals. 			

Factor	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Notes/Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepts and uses new system standards, procedures and guidelines as they are introduced. 			
<p>Job Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets deadlines or expected production level without compromising thoroughness, neatness or accuracy. Accepts responsibility for job duties, new challenges and problems encountered. Strives to provide high quality service. Makes reasoned decisions about areas affecting job functions. 			
<p>Problem-Solving & Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses relevant information for decision-making and for anticipating, analyzing and problem-solving. Volunteers for tasks and responsibilities; actively seeks ways to contribute to the organization. Seeks out and participates willingly in training opportunities. Shares resources and information to help identify and solve problems; responds rapidly 			

Factor	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Notes/Comments
<p>and courteously to requests; resolves problems as they arise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates willingness to refocus efforts when new directions better enable the accomplishment of the organization’s mission. 			
<p>Teamwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks to make everyone in the organization successful. • Interacts well with staff and/or member libraries to cooperatively solve problems. • Works with peers, supervisors and subordinates toward common goals; fills in and backs up as needed. • Coordinates work with others. 			
<p>Work Rules/Regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrives on time to begin work. • Obtains supervisor approval for planned or emergency leave. • Punctual in attending meetings and appointments. • Maintains equipment and building according to accepted standards. • Observes appropriate time for breaks. 			

Factor	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Notes/Comments
Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional factors of particular significance, as needed. Factors specified: 			

◆ **Action Plan & Development Goals**

• **Review of Past Year’s Development Goals**

- Goal #1: _____
 - Actions/Comments: _____
 - _____

- Goal #2: _____
 - Actions/Comments: _____
 - _____

- Goal #3: _____
 - Actions/Comments: _____
 - _____

• **Identification of Development Goals for Upcoming Year**

- Goal #1: _____

- Associated Action/Training Plans: _____

- Goal #2: _____
 - Associated Action/Training Plans: _____

- Goal #3: _____
 - Associated Action/Training Plans: _____

◆ **Comments & Signatures**

- **Supervisor's Comments:**

print or type name

signature

position title

date

- **Employee’s Comments**

I met with my supervisor on _____ to discuss my work performance during the stated review period. I have read this evaluation and discussed it with my supervisor. My signature does not necessarily signify that I agree with this evaluation.

My written comments concerning this evaluation, desires for future work, or anything that should become part of my personnel record follow. (Additional comments may be made on a separate paper and appended to and made part of the evaluation form.)

print or type name

signature

position title

date

- **Review by System Director**

This performance evaluation is now a permanent record in the employee’s personnel file.

print or type name

signature

position title

date

Distribution of Final Evaluation

Original: Personnel File

Copy: Employee

Copy: Supervisor

Staff Guide for STLS Employment

Adopted: May 16, 2017

Updated: September 15, 2025

A. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Guide

The purpose of this guide is to acquaint new and current STLS staff with the culture of our organization and the ways in which we work together to achieve the organization's goals.

STLS Purpose

Governed by a 15-member board of trustees, STLS is a cooperative library system focused on *Connecting Community Libraries* within the region. We subscribe to a single mission of empowering 48 public libraries to provide meaningful services within our communities. We do this to make the Southern Tier a vibrant community in which we are all proud to live.

Your Role

STLS believes in fostering a supportive, collaborative, innovative, and dynamic work environment. We acknowledge that public librarians are a unique group of individuals who are passionate about their cause. Our organization provides staff with the resources needed to exceed member library expectations. In return, it is our goal that staff will succeed in their positions through the support of STLS administration.

B. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Professional Expectations

STLS is a professional organization charged with leading public library services throughout the region. Employees are expected to fulfill their role as professionals based on their job title and description. In addition to meeting professional expectations, staff should be aware that their work is viewed by hundreds if not thousands of people working within the New York State library community.

Staff activities including but not limited to consultations, presentations, writings, meetings, committees, board work, and social media all represent the collective mission of STLS. Any action or communication directly tied to an employee's position should professionally represent the organization and the field of librarianship. For this reason, STLS staff subscribe to

the Library Bill of Rights as adopted by the American Library Association and the STLS Board of Trustees as well as Core Values of Librarianship.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Social Justice

Southern Tier Library System recognizes racism, discrimination, and systemic inequalities exist within our communities, and we have a professional responsibility to work in ways that promote equality. For this reason, we also feel compelled to uphold our library system's *Declaration Promoting Racial and Social Justice*.

STLS professional staff have developed an evolving plan to spearhead activities that promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice. All STLS staff are encouraged to review STLS' Social Justice Activities Plan and consider how their daily work can encompass activities within the plan as well as create additional activities that empower our organization to foster a more just community.

Ethical Behavior and Reporting

The ***Ethical Behavior and Whistleblower Policy*** requires STLS trustees, staff, and volunteers to embrace high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. Below is an excerpt from this policy which is available to everyone at STLS.

The STLS board embraces the organization's values of integrity, honesty, ethical behavior, loyalty to the organization, courtesy, civility, respect for and cooperation among team members, trustees, member libraries, and vendors. Harassment, on the basis of sex, race, age, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, disability or any other reason, whether conducted by, or affecting, an employee, vendor, client, volunteer, board member, or other individual connected with STLS is strictly prohibited.

Each trustee, employee, and volunteer of STLS has an obligation to report in accordance with this Whistleblower and Ethical Behavior Policy (a) harassment or bullying, (b) questionable or improper accounting or auditing matters, (c) violations and suspected violations of this policy and (d) wrongful conduct.

In accordance with this policy, STLS provides procedures for reporting, corrective action, acting in good faith, confidentiality and no retaliation. This policy is intended to hold STLS to the highest standard for personal and professional behavior.

In addition to promoting ethical behaviors, STLS has zero tolerance for sexual or workplace harassment. All STLS staff, trustees, and volunteers will receive annual sexual harassment prevention training as part of the organization's ***Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy***. All staff

are encouraged to exercise reporting procedures as warranted. A copy of the policy is available in the Kitchen along with Complaint Form. The documents are also made available through shared files on MS Teams – All STLS Staff – Files.

Workplace Environment

STLS seeks to provide a safe and healthy working environment. As a result, we have a policy that prohibits smoking, vaping, alcohol, illegal substances, violence, and firearms on the property.

Sustainability

STLS joined the Sustainable Libraries Initiative in 2023. We are doing our best through transactional and transformational change to reduce our carbon footprint, and think mindfully about how our services, programs, and actions impact the triple bottom line. Staff are encouraged to join the STLS Staff SLI Team, or follow the recommendations of SLI team members to help STLS do its part economically, socially, and environmentally.

C. WORKPLACE GUIDELINES

Building Access

Each employee will receive a key fob and personalized security code for building access. This fob and code will be provided by the Director of Information Technology, Ken Behn, behnk@stls.org. Ken is also able to answer any questions about how the security system works.

Security alarms are active on weekdays from 9:00 pm until 5:00 am. They are also activated all weekends from 9:00 pm on Friday until 5:00 am Monday morning. Staff will need to use their key fob and security code to enter the building during these activated times. A key fob is the only device needed to enter the building during regular business hours. Staff should only be in the building during business hours unless their duties require them to have access at other times.

Parking

Parking for staff is provided on site. There are two reserved parking spaces at the side entrance. These spots are made available for staff on a rotating monthly basis. When there are STLS-sponsored meetings and trainings, staff should park at the far end of the parking lot, leaving closer spaces for guests. Both ADA compliant and visitor spaces are available near the Front Entrance. Employees are encouraged to keep vehicles locked while unattended. STLS is not responsible for loss or damage to vehicles.

Dress Code

The dress code for STLS is considered business casual Monday through Thursday between Labor Day and Memorial Day. Staff are expected to use their professional discretion when dressing for work. Friday is considered a “dress down” day. When dressing down, staff should still be mindful of the professional space in which we work. Employees conducting site visits on Friday or working with member libraries should exercise the Monday – Thursday’s dress code. Staff are expected to dress professionally while traveling for business or attending STLS-sponsored events. Summer months between Memorial Day and Labor Day are considered dress down everyday unless traveling for business or attending STLS-sponsored events.

Meal Space

The Kitchen is located on the west side of the building near the wash rooms. Staff may store personal food items and kitchen supplies in designated areas of the Kitchen. The refrigerator and freezer are also available for storing personal food items. Staff are encouraged to mark their personal items to identify their belongings. STLS is not responsible for missing personal items. As a shared space, all staff should do their very best to keep the Kitchen organized and sanitary.

Staff are asked to dispose of all meal waste in proper locations as part of our Sustainable Libraries Initiative. This includes sorting recyclables, composting food scraps, and disposing as little as possible in trash receptacles.

Cell Phone Usage

Staff are expected to use reasonable and professional practice when it comes to personal cell phone usage while at work. Break times and lunch are best for texting, social media, gaming, or phone calls.

Phone System

Most employees have access to a phone for their work space. The phone is for library system purposes and emergencies only. Assistant Director – Head of IT Ken Behn (behnk@stls.org) maintains the phone system, and will provide training to all staff.

Company Vehicles & Property

Vehicles are provided to staff for the purpose of serving member libraries throughout the five-county region. STLS has two vehicles for staff to use in visiting libraries to consult, meet, or coordinate IT support, and three additional delivery vehicles to coordinate system-wide delivery of library materials. Vehicles are to be used in accordance with all traffic laws and

treated as STLS property. Employees found in violation of traffic laws are responsible for all legal liabilities, and will receive appropriate corrective action up to and including dismissal as is appropriate.

Staff should use the SharePoint Calendar to sign-out consultant vehicles based on assigned library visits. Vehicles are available on a first come first served basis unless more than two consultants are traveling at the same time. In this case, the consultant traveling the farthest distance is guaranteed an STLS vehicle, while the consultant traveling the shortest distance should use their personal vehicle and submit for mileage reimbursement. Consultants are responsible for recording mileage and refueling vehicles with a designated STLS credit card.

Delivery Vehicles are intended for the sole purpose of delivering STLS library materials to and from member libraries and partnering agencies. The Delivery Coordinator is charged with developing the Delivery Schedule in consultation with the Executive Director to meet member needs. The Delivery Driver Schedule is also created by the Delivery Coordinator. Delivery Drivers should communicate schedule requests to the coordinator.

STLS subscribes to a limited idle practice, which is intended to save fuel, limit carbon emissions, and reduce health hazards. Delivery Drivers should refrain from idling from April 1 to October 31 when stopped at member libraries and partnering agencies for delivery.

D. HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SECURITY

Health, Safety and Emergency Preparedness

STLS strives to offer a safe space that promotes mental, emotional, and physical wellness of all staff. Several practices have been put in place to ensure our culture and environment is healthy. Employees are provided various health, safety, and emergency preparedness training during the year. This training is intended to encourage healthy personal and professional lifestyles, and help all staff in handling emergency situations.

Inclement Weather

In the event STLS deems it necessary to close the library system's headquarters due to inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances, or if roads are closed by the employee's county of residence, employees who are unable to work remotely will be paid for the hours that they are scheduled to work on that particular day. Compensation will consist of up to five work days per incident each year.

Incident/Accident Report Forms

If an accident or incident occurs within, on STLS property, or while conducting STLS business an incident or accident report form must be completed. These reports are important for documenting incidents or accidents. They help STLS administration work with staff to ensure they receive the insurance benefits offered as a result of injury or accident. Staff must complete an Incident/Accident Report Form if they witness the injury of STLS staff or visitor to the STLS building. This form is also completed in the event of a vehicle accident. Forms are available in the Business Office or on MS Teams – All STLS Staff – Files.

Basic First Aid/CPR/AED Training

STLS will make this training available to all staff on a biennial schedule. The training will either take place online or in-person dependent upon the provider of the training service. Any staff who complete this training will be certified in Basic First Aid/CPR/AED. Certifications will need to be renewed as they are only typically valid for two years. Staff may use the skills acquired in this training to help an injured STLS staff person, STLS building guest, person at a member library, or in their personal life.

E. COMPENSATION, BENEFITS, AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Staff Organization Contract

Compensation is an important part of employment. The Staff Organization Contract is where all salaries, wages and benefits are afforded to STLS staff. Staff should contact the Business Office, the Executive Director or a Staff Organization Representative with any questions.

Cassie Wright, Account Clerk / HR - Accounting Office: wrightc@stls.org

Brian Hildreth, Executive Director: communitylibrarypartner@stls.org

Tom Lawrence, Staff Organization President: lawrencet@stls.org

Keturah Cappadonia, Staff Organization Secretary: cappadoniak@stls.org

A copy of the current contract is made available on the shared STLS Public Drive at <Z:\Staff\Contracts>

Employee Supported Retirement Options

STLS is a member of the New York State and Local Retirement System. Employee benefits of this program are covered in the current Staff Organization Contract. In addition to membership, STLS participates in two optional, employee-supported retirement plans. Employees can enroll in these plans by communicating with the Business Office. The office coordinates employee contributions to these plans as part of bi-weekly payroll deductions.

New York State 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan

This deferred compensation plan is a State-sponsored employee benefit for State employees and employees of participating employers (STLS). This voluntary retirement savings plan provides quality investment options, investment education programs, and related services to help State and local public employees achieve their retirement savings goals.

Enrolled employees may consult with account executives to answer questions about the plan and monitor investments. The plan provides an online portal that employees can use to track savings.

Vanguard 403(b) Plan

This retirement savings plan is a private program established by STLS for the benefit of its employees. It is a voluntary tax-deferred plan administered by The Vanguard Group, Inc. The plan offers target retirement date investment options to assist employees with their savings goals.

Enrolled employees may consult with account executives to answer questions about the plan and monitor investments. The plan provides an online portal that employees can use to track savings.

Performance Evaluation

Each employee will participate in performance evaluations based on their job description and performance objectives. Evaluations are completed after a staff member's probationary period and on an annual basis thereafter. A Staff Performance Evaluation is completed by the employee's direct supervisor and is presented during a face-to-face discussion. Staff have up to 15 workdays to respond to the evaluation and return a signed copy to the direct supervisor. The evaluation will then be reviewed by the Executive Director within five business days. A copy will be retained in the employee's personnel file.

Employee Reimbursement for Expenses

STLS has comprehensive finance and purchasing policies. Employees are not permitted to use personal funds to conduct STLS business. Proper procedures and practices have been put in place to ensure employees are not expending their own financial resources for business purposes. STLS purchase orders, credit cards and mileage reimbursement forms should be used to cover business-related expenses in all cases.

STLS-Supported Staff Technology

All staff will be afforded a laptop or desktop and any necessary equipment/software accessories that support the essential functions of their job title/description. Staff are

responsible for updating this equipment every three years after receiving verbal approval from the Executive Director.

Staff may request this equipment by submitting a HelpDesk request to STLS IT. STLS IT will be responsible for purchasing this equipment for the staff member and completing the proper paperwork as outlined in the STLS Purchasing Policy. Any equipment/software purchased is property of Southern Tier Library System and must be returned to STLS IT at the end of the equipment's lifespan.

The purchase of other small equipment (headphones, speakers, mice, etc.) may be coordinated with the Administrative Assistant or through submission of Purchase Order to the employee's Division Head. Division Heads will consult with the Executive Director on budget guidelines at time of purchase.

Staff Supplies for Remote Work

Staff may purchase supplies to support remote work within the guidelines of division budgets. The opportunity to work remotely is afforded to employees through the library systems *Disaster and Emergency Operations Response Plan*, all staff still have access to the STLS building on a scheduled-basis to use building equipment such as printers, scanners, copiers or postage meter. Staff should work with the Administrative Assistant to purchase supplies as needed.

Travel, Working Remotely & Conferences

Business travel and continuing education are essential functions of staff duties. For this reason, the board of trustees has established the ***Travel, Working Remotely and Conference Policy***. This policy is *Addendum A* to The Staff Guide for STLS Employment. Staff are asked to read this policy and encouraged to discuss with their Division Head or the Executive Director.

STLS does its best to accommodate necessary travel, fluctuations in personal/professional schedules and professional development needs. Accommodations are made based on work demands and STLS' ability to pay.

Professional Associations

STLS recognizes the important role of professional associations. Two associations that provide the most benefit to the mission of STLS include the New York Library Association (NYLA) and American Library Association (ALA).

STLS pays for the annual membership of all interested staff to NYLA. Membership includes: 1 Section and 1 Roundtable. Staff are financially responsible for any additional Sections or

Roundtables. The Executive Director renews NYLA memberships for all staff in June. Staff are responsible for indicating their choice of Sections and Roundtables at that time.

The organization also pays for the annual membership of all interested MLS librarians or professional staff to ALA. Membership includes: 1 Division and 1 Roundtable. Staff are financially responsible for any additional Divisions or Roundtables. Eligible staff are individually responsible for keeping their membership current. They can do this by purchasing ALA membership online using an STLS credit card and submitting an appropriate Purchase Order with documented receipts.

STLS also maintains organizational memberships for the Library Trustee Association of New York, Public Library System Directors Organization of New York, the New York Alliance of Library Systems, South Central Regional Library Council and the Institute for Human Services of Steuben County, NY.

ADOPTED by the STLS Board of Trustees on May 16, 2017
Updated on May 17, 2022, October 15, 2024, September 15, 2025

ADDENDUM A: TRAVEL, WORKING REMOTELY & CONFERENCE POLICY

TRAVEL, WORKING REMOTELY & CONFERENCES POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Employees

REFERENCES: Finance Policy
Purchasing Policy
Staff Organization Contract

Travel

STLS employees travel as an essential function of their duties. The specific nature of an employee's travel depends on the employee's job title and description. All necessary and job-related travel shall be communicated to an employee's direct supervisor and documented on the organizational calendar.

Each employee who visits a member library, or attends a meeting or conference within, or outside the STLS service region shall drive one of two STLS vehicles. Employees shall use their

own vehicle if it reduces drive time relative to the travel location, the employee's home and STLS offices. An employee shall also use their own vehicle if an STLS vehicle is not available. In such cases, the employee will be reimbursed for mileage based on the current IRS rate.

Employees shall communicate among each other about the need and availability of STLS vehicles to minimize organizational travel expenses. Employees traveling the farthest on any given day have first access to STLS vehicles.

Working Remotely

Working Remotely is defined as an employee working outside of STLS offices for one or more days within an employee's normal work week. Examples of *working remotely* include member library site visits, local, regional or state meetings, and on occasion, the employee's home or another suitable location.

Each employee who indicates they are *working remotely* on the organizational calendar shall record all hours worked on their time sheets, and note the hours worked were remote. Employees are responsible for managing their schedules to stay within the hours allotted under a regular work week. This includes travel, meals and time at meetings.

Member Library Site Visits

Employees visit member libraries frequently. Employees shall document their time away from STLS offices on the organizational calendar by indicating the name of the library or libraries they are visiting, the time frame of the visit and the STLS vehicle they are using to drive there.

Meetings

Employees who attend meetings within and outside the STLS' service region shall document their time away from STLS offices on the organizational calendar by indicating the name of the library, libraries or agency they are visiting, the time frame of the visit and the STLS vehicle they are using to drive there.

Home or Another Suitable Location

Employees may work from home or another suitable location on occasion, so long as they can perform most of their essential duties *Working Remotely* within their regular work, and do not require accommodations that are already afforded through STLS offices. This option shall be exercised when it is most efficient to the job-related work of the employee.

As a general rule, full time employees are allotted two days per week for *Working Remotely*, and part time employees are allotted one shift per week for *Working Remotely*. All other work days should take place within STLS offices, member libraries, or locations specific to library system operations. Employees must obtain verbal approval from their direct supervisor prior to exercising this option.

Time worked away from the office shall be documented on the organizational calendar as *Remote* and the hours worked. The employee shall respond to phone calls and email as well as produce tangible work as defined by their direct supervisor while *Working Remotely*.

Conferences

The Executive Director establishes the conference budget annually. This budget is communicated to division heads. Employees shall communicate their interest in attending conferences to their direct supervisors. Conference expenses will only be paid for by STLS if an employee receives approval from their direct supervisor. An employee may register and make travel/lodging accommodations upon supervisor approval. Conference expenses are limited to: registration, travel, lodging and meals. The Executive Director establishes meal allowances prior to each conference.

All conference expenditures shall be realized through a purchase order or STLS issued credit card. Employees will not be reimbursed for conference expenditures if they use their own credit or debit card. Employees shall seek reasonable pricing for all conference expenses.

STLS vehicles are to be considered the primary means for conference transportation unless air travel is required. Use of a personal vehicle requires approval from the Executive Director. Employees shall coordinate the sharing of vehicles if more than one employee is attending the same conference.

Employees may also attend conferences which are job-related at their own expense if the STLS budget does not support participation. Conference attendance will be considered as a regularly scheduled working day, as approved by the Executive Director. Employees should record travel, meals and time spent at conference-related events on their time sheets.

Adopted by the STLS Board of Trustees on May 15, 2018

Revised by the STLS Board of Trustees on May 17, 2022

SOUTHERN TIER LIBRARY SYSTEM

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I

Name

This organization shall be known as the Southern Tier Library System.

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The purpose of the Southern Tier Library System shall be to expand and improve public library service in the counties of Allegany, Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben and Yates in the State of New York.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Section 1.

The Membership of the Southern Tier Library System (henceforth referred to as the System) shall be open to all libraries chartered by the New York State Board of Regents within the five-county area served by the system.

Section 2.

An Annual Membership Meeting of the System shall be held each year, preferably in October. The Executive Director of the System shall be responsible for notifying the member libraries of the time and place of the Annual Membership Meeting. Each member library shall be represented at the Annual Membership Meeting by an individual selected by the Board of Trustees of that library. That individual shall cast one vote in all actions taken at the Annual Membership Meeting.

Section 3.

An agenda for the Annual Meeting shall be sent to each member library at least thirty days in advance of the Annual Meeting. Agenda shall be addressed to the member library's Board President and Director. A minimum of three items shall be placed on the Annual Meeting agenda (1) Election of Trustees, as needed, to the Board of Trustees of the System -- this election shall be made by the representatives of the member libraries present at the meeting; (2) A brief report by the Executive Director of the System on the performance of the System

during the previous 12 months and plans for the year ahead; (3) a report by the Executive Director regarding the audited finances of the System for the previous financial year.

ARTICLE IV
Board of Trustees

Section 1.

The System shall be governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of fifteen members. Each member of the Board of Trustees shall reside within the county they will represent on the Board. Ten of the Board positions shall be distributed equally among the five counties comprising the System. In recognition of the population differences between the five counties, the remaining Board positions shall be assigned as follows: Allegany County, one additional Trustee; Chemung County, two additional Trustees; and Steuben County, two additional Trustees. At least two, but not more than two, of the four Steuben County Trustees shall reside in the Southeast Steuben County Library service area. All Trustees shall be nominated by the member libraries in the counties they represent. Current employees of the System and current employees of member libraries are not eligible to serve as Trustees of the System.

Section 2.

A term of office of a Trustee shall be five calendar years, beginning on January 1. Terms of Trustees shall be staggered so that three expire each year. A Trustee may not be elected to more than two consecutive full five-year terms. Following such service, a Trustee may again be appointed or selected after an interim of at least one year. A Trustee who is serving the balance of an unexpired term is eligible to serve two full five year terms.

Section 3.

When a vacancy occurs on the Board of Trustees, whether through the normal completion of a Trustee's authorized period of service, or the departure before the completion of an authorized period of service, the Public Relations Committee shall, in a timely fashion, actively canvass the library community in each county where ~~wherein~~ the vacancy exists to identify and nominate one or more candidates. In the case where the term was completed by a Trustee fulfilling the authorized period of service, the candidate or candidates shall stand for election at the next Annual Membership Meeting. In the case of a premature ending of a term, the candidate or candidates shall be presented to the current Board of Trustees for consideration for appointment as a Trustee, as noted in Article IV, Section 5.

Section 4.

The System shall inform, all Member Library Boards and their Directors of the nominating process described in this section and encourage them to recommend potential candidates to the STLS Board of Trustees Public Relations Committee. At the same time, the Member Library shall also be informed where a System Trustee or Trustees have indicated a willingness to serve an additional five-year term, this in no way precludes the nomination of other candidates for election to the position.

Additional candidates may be nominated from the floor at the Annual Membership Meeting. These nominations shall be made solely by representatives from libraries in the same county as that of the Trustee position to be filled.

Section 5.

In the event of a vacancy on the board occurring during an unexpired term, a successor Trustee shall be elected by the remaining Trustees to serve from the day of election until the next Annual Meeting. Candidates for this Trustee position shall be nominated by the same process as stated in Section 4 of this Article. In the event that, after diligent effort by the Public Relations Committee, no candidate for an expired term is available for election at the Annual Meeting, the Public Relations Committee shall continue their efforts to identify a candidate for the open position. Such a candidate will be elected by the remaining Trustees to serve from the day of election until the next Annual Meeting.

Section 6.

In accordance with New York State Education Law, Section 226(4), "If any trustee shall fail to attend three consecutive meetings without excuse accepted as satisfactory by the trustees, they shall be deemed to have resigned..." The vacancy shall be filled in accordance with the provisions in Article IV, Section 5 of the System by-laws. Therefore, each Trustee shall notify either the Board President or the Executive Director in advance if unable to attend a Board meeting.

The Board of Trustees may remove a Trustee for misconduct, incapacity, neglect of duty, or refusal or failure to carry into effect the System's purpose as defined in the mission statement. In the event that information is brought forward that a Trustee is engaged in behavior(s) that suggest that the Trustee should be removed from the Board, the Trustee may be subject to a removal hearing conducted by the Board in a special meeting called for that purpose upon at

least ten (10) days written notice specifying the time and place of such hearing and a description of the allegations.

The President of the Board, if not the accused, or the Vice President if the President is the accused, shall preside over such meeting as they would over any other Board meeting. The presiding officer will appoint a Board Trustee to present the substance of the allegations and the proof thereof and the accused Trustee will be permitted a full and fair opportunity to respond.

The hearing will take place in Executive Session which is not a hearing on the record, nor is it open to the public. Each Trustee shall have one vote, except for the accused. If the number of Trustees present at this Executive Session who vote in favor of removal constitutes a two-thirds majority vote of the full fifteen-member Board of Trustees then the motion shall be carried. For the purpose of this hearing, including the subsequent open meeting as noted below, the President or the presiding officer shall have a vote. Immediately following the Executive Session, if there is a determination that the accused Trustee is subject to removal, a resolution in open meeting shall be moved to a vote for the accused Trustee to be removed from the Board. The accused Trustee shall not be permitted to vote in the open meeting. This resolution shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the full fifteen-member Board of Trustees to become effective.

As directed by New York State Public Education Law, Section 226, the Executive Committee may not make removals from office.

Section 7.

Every Trustee, Officer, Executive Director and staff member of the System shall be indemnified by the System to the fullest extent provided by New York State law for claims arising out of the employee's duties for the System. The foregoing right of indemnification shall not be exclusive of any other right to which such person may be entitled.

ARTICLE V Officers

Section 1.

The Officers of the System and its Board of Trustees shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. They shall be elected annually at the December meeting of the System Board, as stated in Section 3 of this Article.

Officers shall be members of the Board of Trustees; refer to Section 2D of this Article for Treasurer duties.

Section 2.

A. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board and also at the Annual Membership Meeting; shall appoint members of all committees; shall be ex-officio member of all committees; shall authorize calls for Special Board Meetings and Emergency Board Meetings; shall sign official documents; shall serve as liaison to STLS Directors' Advisory Council; and shall perform all other duties of a presiding officer.

B. The Vice-President shall perform all the duties of the President in case of the absence or disability of the President; shall act as Parliamentarian for the interpretation of Robert's Rules of Order, if required; and shall be given first consideration for chairperson of any ad hoc committees that may be appointed by the President.

C. The Secretary shall ensure that the minutes of all Board meetings are kept and recorded.

D. The Treasurer, who may be a non-Board member duly appointed by the Board, shall have charge of the funds of the System; shall have oversight of all monies received and disbursed, and of all financial records; shall have oversight of all duly appointed signatories and the signing of all checks; shall make a report of the status of the funds of the System at each regular meeting of the Board; and shall be covered by a commercial fidelity bond.

E. The Past President or Elected Trustee, shall serve as the fifth member of the Officers of the Board, or Executive Committee.

F. In addition to the foregoing duties, each Officer shall have such additional powers or duties as conferred by the Board.

Section 3.

The term of office of all elected Officers shall be one calendar year. No Officer, except for the Secretary and the Treasurer, shall serve for more than three consecutive full year terms.

Section 4.

Any Officer may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority vote of the full Board of Trustees.

Section 5.

Should an office become vacant prior to its expiration, the Board at the first regular meeting held after such vacancy occurs, shall select one of the members of the Board to fill the unexpired term.

ARTICLE VI
Committees

Section 1.

At the December meeting, the incoming President of the Board of Trustees shall promptly appoint the Chairs and members of the Standing Board Committees. Each Committee Chair shall be responsible for reporting results of committee meetings for distribution to the Trustees at the time of notification of Board meetings.

A. The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, as well as the immediate Past-President, if that person is a current member of the Board, or, if not, another Trustee elected by the Board. The responsibilities of this Committee are:

1. To create and set the agenda for all regular Board meetings;
2. To make decisions required before the next regular Board meeting and to advise the Executive Director on crucial issues between regularly scheduled Board meetings, or when there is not a quorum at a regular board meeting;
3. To plan and implement the orientation of newly appointed/elected Board members on the workings of the Board of Trustees and the System.

B. The Finance and Facilities Committee shall consist of up to five members of the Board appointed by the President. The responsibilities of this committee are:

1. To review annual budgets, budget amendments, financial plans, borrowing arrangements and any other financial matters;
2. To receive and investigate possible financial concerns under the STLS Whistleblower and Ethical Conduct Policy;
3. To review, oversee and make recommendations concerning matters affecting the facility, property, equipment and vehicles of STLS.

C. The Personnel and Policies Committee shall consist of up to five members of the Board appointed by the President. The responsibilities of this committee are:

1. To review, oversee and make recommendations concerning matters of personnel;
2. To develop and review written policies to ensure the effective operation of the System, as required by NYS Commissioner's Regulation 90.2 for part of the minimum standards set by the Board of Regents;
3. To oversee the Executive Director's Annual Performance Evaluation as established by the Board.

D. The Public Relations Committee shall consist of up to five members of the Board of Trustees appointed by the President. The responsibilities of this committee are:

1. To oversee awarding of System grants;
2. To oversee such activities as System awards, and planning the Annual Meeting, etc.;
3. To oversee the process of nominating candidates for election to the Board of Trustees;
4. To advocate on behalf of the System.

Section 2.

The President may appoint Board members to *ad hoc* committees necessary to deal with temporary issues or projects as established by the Board.

Section 3.

All committee appointments shall continue until new appointments are made by the newly elected President of the Board as required in Article VI, Section 1.

Section 4.

All committee meetings except for the Executive Committee will have a quorum of a majority of enrolled members. The quorum for the Executive Committee is three (3).

Section 5.

All committee meetings are subject to the Open Meetings law.

ARTICLE VII
The Executive Director

Section 1.

The Executive Director of the Southern Tier Library System shall be its chief administrative and financial officer, and shall possess at least the minimum qualifications required by New York State Education Law. The Executive Director shall be hired and appointed by a two-thirds majority of the full Board of Trustees, and shall perform their duties according to a written job description and ~~or~~ contract with the Board of Trustees. Removal of the Executive Director shall be pursuant to the terms of the contract, upon a two-thirds majority vote of the full Board.

Section 2.

The Executive Director shall supervise the System staff and be responsible for the hiring, termination, direction, training and evaluation of personnel, their job classifications and job descriptions. These shall be approved by the Board.

Section 3.

The Executive Director shall administer the System in accordance with the policies adopted by the Board and shall efficiently serve the member libraries within the board-approved budget. The Executive Director shall be responsible for the oversight of operations and maintenance of the System's headquarters, facility and equipment.

Section 4.

The Executive Director shall attend all Board meetings and may take part in deliberations but shall have no vote. The Executive Director shall furnish such information and reports as may be requested by the Board, assist in the development of the annual budget, make recommendations, and offer professional advice.

Section 5.

At each Annual Membership Meeting the Executive Director shall present a brief report on; (1) the condition and progress of the System concerning established goals and objectives during the current year, (2) recommendations for the coming year and (3) a report on the financial condition of the System as stated in Article III, Section 3.

Section 6.

The Executive Director shall be evaluated annually in writing by the Board. This evaluation of the Executive Director's performance shall be based on (1) performance against objectives jointly established by the Executive Director and the Board, and (2) a review by the Board of input from the Trustees of STLS and/or Directors of the member libraries.

ARTICLE VIII Board Meetings

Section 1. Meeting Procedure

- A. Board meetings shall be held at least nine (9) times each calendar year, as called by the President of the Board upon at least a seven-day notice to all Board members. Special meetings may be called as noted in Section 3 of this Article.
- B. At all Board meetings a quorum shall consist of eight members of the Board.
- C. Unless stated otherwise in these By-Laws, motions before the Board shall be approved by a simple majority of those Trustees present.
- D. The latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Board in matters of parliamentary procedure.
- E. Public notice of the time and place of all scheduled Board meetings shall be given to the news media at the beginning of the System's fiscal year, and shall be conspicuously posted in a public space of the System's offices and on the System's website.
- F. All Board meetings are subject to New York State Open Meetings Law.

Section 2.

- A. Prior to each meeting, all members of the Board shall be sent a copy of the agenda, a copy of the minutes of the preceding meeting, a copy of the Treasurer's report and a copy of the committee reports.
- B. An Executive session may be called at any time during a regular Board meeting by any Trustee by means of a motion to go into closed or Executive

session. As directed by New York State Public Officers Law, Section 105, (1) the motion must identify the “general area or areas of the subject or subjects to be considered”, (2) the subjects to be discussed must be limited to the eight items specified in the law, and (3) the motion must be adopted by majority vote of the full Board. As required by Section 105, attendance at an Executive session shall be permitted to all Trustees and to any other persons approved by the Board.

Section 3.

A. A Special meeting is a separate Board meeting held at a time different from that of any regular Board meeting. It is convened only to consider one or more items of business specified in the call for the meeting. Only business mentioned in the call for the meeting may be transacted.

B. Such Special meetings shall be called at the direction of the President of the Board or at the written request of four (4) Board members to the President.

C. Advance notice and an agenda should be given to the Trustees at least five business days before the day the Special meeting is to be held and should specify the time and place of the meeting.

D. If, in a Special meeting, it becomes necessary to take an emergency action for which no notice was given, that action must be ratified at the next regular Board meeting or at another Special meeting called for that purpose in order to be legal.

ARTICLE IX Amendment of the By-Laws

Section 1.

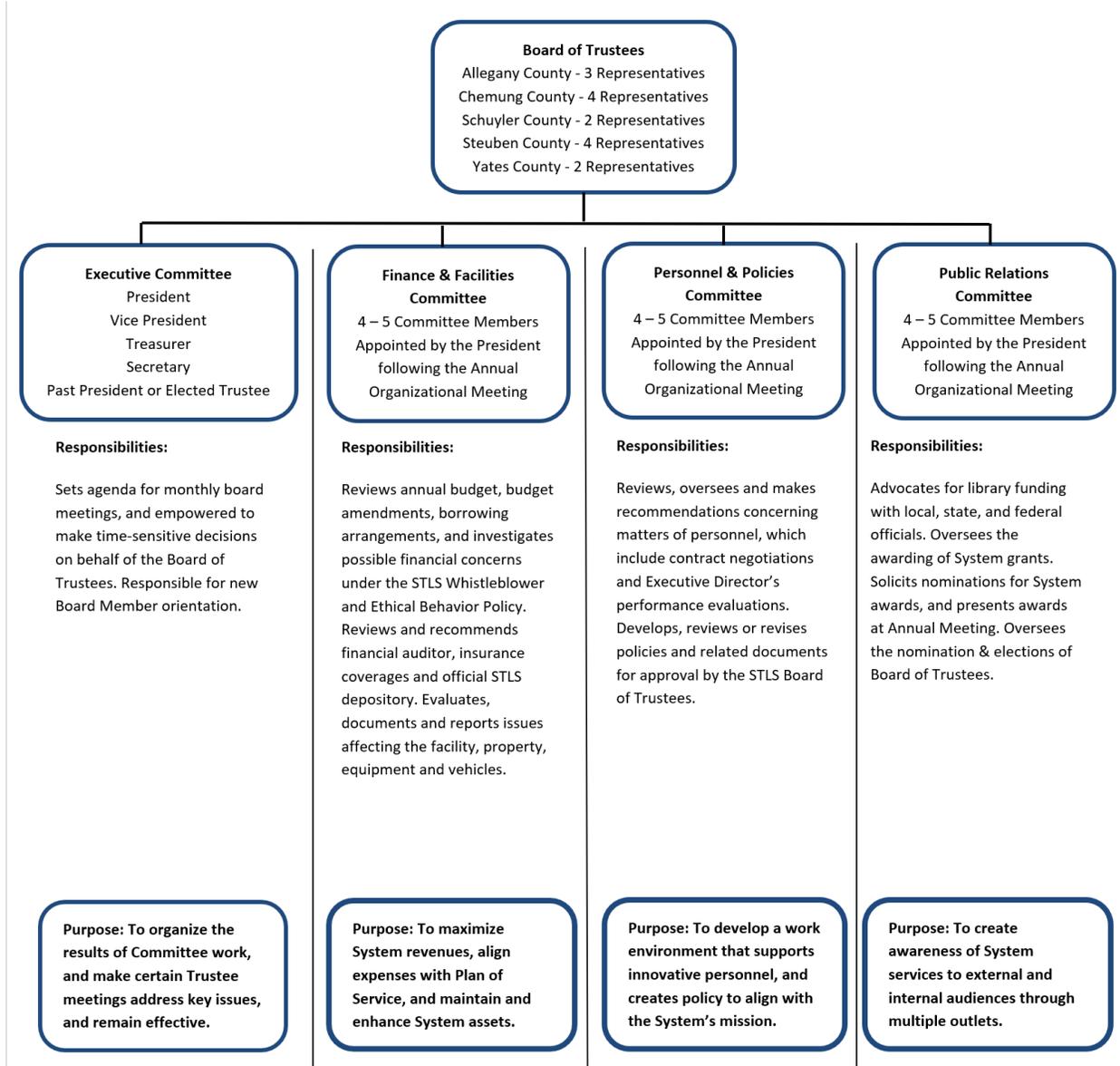
1. Amendment of these By-Laws shall be a two-step process requiring approval both by the Board of Trustees and subsequently by the member libraries at an Annual Membership Meeting.
2. Any member of the Board may initiate the amendment process as follows (1) By presenting a proposed amendment at any Board meeting with a vote to be taken at the next Board meeting, or (2) By presenting a proposed amendment in writing at least five days prior to a meeting, a vote to be taken at that meeting. In either case, this first step in the adoption of an amendment requires a two-thirds majority vote of the Trustees present, except that, as required by

New York State Education Law, Section 226, “no rule by which more than a majority vote shall be required for any specified action by the trustees shall be amended, suspended, or repealed by a smaller vote than that required for action thereunder.”

3. If the proposed amendment or amendments are approved by the Board, they shall be presented to the member libraries at the next regularly scheduled Annual Membership Meeting. Each amendment shall come into effect if it receives a simple majority of votes from the duly appointed representatives of the member libraries present at the Annual Membership Meeting. However, the Board may act in accordance with the Board approved amendment(s) between the first and second step of the amendment process. In the event that the Board approved amendment(s) is not ratified by the membership at the Annual Meeting, such amendment(s) shall be revoked until further approved revision.

These By-Laws supersede those approved September 23, 1958, revised by vote November 13, 1989, revised by vote October 22, 1991, revised by vote February 15, 1995, revised by vote May 18, 1999, revised by vote December 18, 2001, revised by vote March 22, 2005, revised by vote May 16, 2006, revised by vote June 20, 2006, revised by vote October 16, 2007, revised by vote October 21, 2008, revised by vote October 25, 2011, revised by vote October 23, 2012, revised by vote October 23, 2012, revised by vote October 22, 2013, revised by vote October 7, 2014, revised by vote October 6, 2015, October 7, 2022, March 18, 2025.

Southern Tier Library System – Board of Trustees Committee Structure



GENERAL STATEMENT ON POLICIES

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees and Executive Director

References: STLS Authority of the Board Policy
Handbook for Library Trustees for New York State

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to establish and maintain written policies to ensure the effective operation of the Southern Tier Library System. Policymaking is an important part of a Trustee's job, requiring a thoughtful study of the issues involved and a deep understanding of the System's mission.

The STLS Board is required by the NYS Commissioner's Regulation 90.2 to create certain policies as part of the Minimum Standards set by the Board of Regents for libraries and systems. These policies, along with other federal or state required policies, are intended to be used by the Board of Trustees for its own functions. The Board of Trustees is responsible for reviewing and revising these policies on a timely basis as well as ultimately enforcing them with the assistance of the library system staff.

This Policy Manual includes the STLS By-Laws, internal policies that support board operations and staff, and external policies that address partnering with member libraries and, serving the public. The STLS Personnel & Policies Committee will seek input from the Executive Director when developing new policies or revising existing policies. The Personnel & Policies Committee will establish procedures that apply to board functions. The Executive Director will implement those operations procedures necessary to comply with approved policies.

Policies established by the Board must comply with current laws and regulations and be consistent with the System's mission, goals and plans. Every effort has been made to have each policy be clearly written, easily understandable and enforceable without undue burden on library system staff. Each policy in this manual has been formally adopted by the Board of Trustees, and the date of the latest revision noted.

Each policy under development or review will be presented to the Board at one meeting for review and possible discussion, and presented to the Board at the next meeting for Board action.

The Personnel & Policies Committee of the STLS Board of Trustees will undertake to review and, if necessary, revise each policy every five years from the date of adoption or latest revision. New proposals for policies must be presented to the Personnel & Policies Committee for approval before being presented to the Board of Trustees for adoption.

Keeping and maintaining the Policy Manual will be the responsibility of the STLS Executive Director. Each Trustee will be given a complete and updated copy of the Policy Manual following the Board's Annual Organizational Meeting, and copies of the Policy Manual must be on file at the library system, and be easily accessible to staff and public through the STLS website.

ADOPTED by the STLS Board of Trustees on April 17, 2012
Revised by Board Approval on November 17, 2015; June 15, 2021; May 20, 2025

STLS POLICY MANUAL

AUTHORITY OF THE BOARD POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees

REFERENCES: New York State Education Law, Sec. 226 *Powers of Trustees of Institutions*; NYS Code of Rules and Regulations, Part 90.6c [11, 12] *Financial accounting in cooperative library systems and reference and research resources systems*. NYCRR 90.9c [12]; *Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State*.

INTRODUCTION

The Board of Trustees of the Southern Tier Library System has broad authority to establish policy and manage the affairs of the System. As an educational corporation chartered by the Regents of the State of New York, this authority is granted to the STLS Board of Trustees by Section 226 of the New York State Education Law, Powers of Trustees of Institutions.

The authority delegated by law to the Board shall be applied as follows. As its prime responsibility, the Board shall ensure that the System is accountable to its members and the public for the System's finances, property, and programs. The Board will comply with all applicable laws and ethical standards, protect the rights of its staff and members, and exercise fiduciary responsibility in the use of public and private funds.

The oversight authority of the STLS Board includes, but is not limited to: (1) the commitment of all System funds; (2) the disbursement of all System funds, originating from both governmental and non-governmental sources; (3) the review and approval of all contractual commitments to be made by the System; (4) the review and approval of all personnel actions, both of an individual and organizational nature; (5) the delegation of authority where appropriate to individual STLS trustees or members of the STLS staff; and (6) ensuring that the Board acts as a collective authority when interacting with the public, STLS staff and STLS member libraries.

COMMITMENT OF FUNDS

For those individual items, systems, and services included in an annual budget previously approved by the Board and not exceeding \$20,000.00 in value, the Executive Director, or their designee, may proceed with purchase actions with a vendor as required without additional specific approval by the Board. Individual items, systems, and services, whether included in an approved budget or not, but exceeding \$20,000.00 in value, require additional specific approval by the Board before a purchasing action may be initiated with a vendor, except expenditures for those items which have previously been specifically approved by the Board when the grant applications were approved, and the item description of value has not changed. Board approval must be received before moving funds from contingency to pay for an identified need.

The Executive Director may authorize the purchase of an item or service up to \$5000.00, even if it is not an approved budget item. In the event of an emergency expenditure exceeding \$5000.00, the Executive Director shall ask the President of the Board to poll the Executive Committee of the Board to obtain approval of the expenditure. This action will be reported at the next regular Board meeting.

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

In conformance with the New York State Code of Rules and Regulations, Part 90.6c[11,12] *Financial accounting in cooperative library systems and reference and research library resources systems* (8NYCRR90.6c[11,12]) the STLS Board of Trustees shall disburse all library funds only on the basis of itemized vouchers which have been certified by the claimants or the purchasing agent and audited and approved by the Board except as otherwise provided below.

(1). At the beginning of each calendar year, the STLS Board of Trustees shall appoint an individual to be designated as Auditor and an individual to be designated as Alternate Auditor. These persons shall act on behalf of the Southern Tier Library System and shall be considered employees of the System only while performing the duties of Auditor and shall not receive any benefits or rights of regular employees. These individuals so designated may not hold the office of Financial Clerk or Treasurer and they shall be bonded with such penalties and sureties as the Board may require. The Auditor and/or Alternate Auditor shall be authorized by the Board to act on its behalf in the disbursement of all STLS funds in the manner required by 8_NYCRR90.6c [11]. The Auditor and/or Alternate Auditor shall formally examine in each case, a vendor claim form together with its supporting documentation, including but not limited to an original invoice, background ordering information as prescribed by policy, a purchase order if one has been issued, and documentation to show receipt and acceptance of the item or service. The auditing process should determine:

- That the proposed payment is for a valid and legal purpose:
- That the obligation was incurred by an authorized STLS official¹

¹“official” means any person authorized to act on behalf of STLS

- That the items for which payment is claimed were in fact received, or to ensure that in the case of services, that they were actually rendered;
- That the obligation does not exceed the available funding; and
- That the submitted vendor claim form is in proper form, mathematically correct, does not include previously paid charges and agrees with the purchase order or contract.

The Executive Director or their designee is authorized to inspect and sign Purchase Orders, invoices marked with a vendor claim stamp, and vendor claim forms as part of the Accounts Payable process, and will do so before the Auditor or Alternate Auditor examines the Accounts Payable packet. The Executive Director or their designee in the long-term absence of the Executive Director is the only staff member authorized to sign the Purchase Order form when approving the purchase transaction and moving it to the Accounts Payable process. The Board Auditor shall examine each packet in accordance with the provisions of this policy and initial the vendor claim form or vendor claim stamp for approval of payment.

To ensure the timely payment of bills, the audit activity described above shall take place within the existing bi-weekly bill payment schedule.

In the case of inconsistencies pertaining to the review of Accounts Payable, all actions by the Board Auditor and/or Alternate Auditor will be available for review at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

(2). If by sickness or any other cause the Auditor or the Alternate Auditor is unable to perform their duties the Executive Committee may undertake the Auditor's responsibilities: The STLS Board President will appoint an eligible member of the Executive Committee to perform the audit.

(3). In conformance with the provisions of 8_NYCRR90.9c [12], the STLS Board may provide by resolution that amounts due upon contracts, for fixed salaries or for compensation of employees regularly engaged at agreed periodic rates, may be paid without prior audit upon submission to the STLS Treasurer of a voucher or payroll duly certified by the STLS Executive Director or their duly authorized representative. The STLS Board may, by resolution, annually pre-authorize the disbursement of funds to pay most recurring bills such as utilities, etc. This may be done without prior audit, upon submission to the STLS Treasurer of a voucher. The Board shall then formally approve the disbursement action after the event at the next Board meeting. One of the Board signatories shall sign all checks.

CONTRACTUAL COMMITMENTS

The Executive Director or a staff member designated by the Executive Director or a Trustee designated by the President of the Board of Trustees shall negotiate all contracts, except as otherwise provided in paragraphs (1) and (2) below. The Board of Trustees shall approve all contracts involving capital projects, loans, real property leases, grant applications, consultant

agreements and major procurements in which a statement of work is required to define the task. The Executive Director shall perform appropriate review and analysis of a proposed contract or contract renewal, or amendment to a contract before submitting it to the Board for approval. If there are issues related to the proposed contract that cannot be resolved at the Board meeting at which the contract is discussed, the President of the Board shall assign the contract to the appropriate committee for further review. A multi-year contract, once approved, does not have to go through the approval process in subsequent years, as long as the terms of the contract are unchanged. Board approval is not required for normal maintenance or service contracts that relate to day-to-day operations. The commitment of funds for these contracts is covered by the STLS Purchasing Policy. All approved contracts shall be signed either by the President or the Executive Director, except as noted below.

(1). Contract negotiations by the System with the Staff Organization of the Southern Tier Library System shall be conducted by an ad-hoc negotiating committee selected by the Board President. Prior to the opening of formal negotiations, the ad-hoc negotiating committee shall make recommendations for negotiating points, issues, and a financial commitment cap to the Board of Trustees for their approval or modification. The Executive Director will participate in the negotiations and the discussions of the ad-hoc committee in an advisory role. The final text of a new contract with the Southern Tier Staff Association shall be submitted to the Board for approval. If approved by the Board, the contract shall be signed by the Board President on behalf of the Southern Tier Library System.

(2). Any negotiations potentially leading to a formal employment contract (not an 'at will' arrangement) with a candidate for the position of Executive Director shall be conducted by an ad-hoc negotiating committee selected by the Board President. If a contract results from the negotiation, it shall be signed by the Board President.

PERSONNEL ACTIONS

The Board of Trustees is solely responsible for the hiring of a professional and competent STLS Executive Director. The Board is also responsible for the evaluation of the Executive Director's performance on a regular basis and for the termination of the Director's employment when this action is required. The Board creates all other positions, establishes salaries, and formally appoints and discharges staff on the recommendation of the Executive Director. In conformance with the provisions of New York State Education Law (Section 226-7, *Officers and employees* and 226-8, *Removals and suspensions*) the STLS Trustees shall approve all personnel actions at a legal meeting of the Board.

The Executive Committee is authorized to appoint staff on behalf of the Board only in the following circumstances: to fill a vacant staff position, other than that of Executive Director, that has already been authorized by the Board and funded in the annual budget where action by the full Board may cause an unacceptable time delay injurious to the well-being of the System. As required by the STLS By-Laws, the chairman of the Executive Committee shall report the

Committee's actions to the Secretary for distribution to the Trustees at the time of notification of the next Board meeting.

Personnel actions are not final until they have been approved by the Board or Executive Committee as described above. In any personnel action at STLS, whether involving a current or potentially new employee, the individual involved should be made aware that he or she has not been formally hired or separated from employment by STLS until Board action has been completed.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

In certain circumstances the Board may delegate authority to the Executive Director. The scope and degree of this delegation is documented in this and other policy documents, in the by-laws of the System, in the job description of the position of Executive Director and any associated employment contract.

BOARD INTERACTIONS WITH THE PUBLIC, STLS STAFF, AND STLS MEMBER LIBRARIES

The STLS Board of Trustees exercises a collective authority. As noted in the *Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State*, "Individual trustees, regardless of their position on the Board, do not have the power to command the services of a staff member, nor to speak or act on behalf of the System unless they have been specifically granted that authority by a vote of the Board." Every STLS Trustee is expected to publicly support, as the Board's official position, all decisions adopted by the Board. Should a Trustee disagree with any Board decision, he or she should first address the whole Board with those concerns at a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, the rights of a Trustee who strongly disagrees with a Board decision are protected, should he or she speak out publicly against it. However, in such instances, the individual must make it clear to all concerned that he or she does not represent the Board's position in the matter.

Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees April 19, 2011 to be effective July 1, 2011

Revised by the Board of Trustees July 19, 2011, November 15, 2011, April 17, 2012, June 21, 2016, January 18, 2022

BUILDING USE AND ACCESS POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees
STLS Employees
STLS Member Libraries
General Public and Contractors

Southern Tier Library System (STLS) is a cooperative library system chartered through the New York State Education Department to serve 48 member libraries in Allegany, Chemung, Schuylers, Steuben, and Yates counties. The library system's main offices (Headquarters) are located at 9424 Scott Road, Painted Post, New York 14870. STLS' sole purpose is to provide direct support to its member libraries, so member libraries may provide high quality services to community members across the region.

Member libraries of STLS are open, public buildings. STLS is a State and member funded agency that limits building access to the public to conduct business of the organization. STLS Headquarters and its meeting room spaces are accessible to, and available for use by STLS employees and trustees, member libraries, and affiliated agencies determined by STLS. Agencies must register with STLS in order to request access to its meeting rooms. Community members or contractors must also register with STLS to be considered for building access to meet with STLS employees or trustees, or to conduct business with the organization. STLS reserves the right to determine building access eligibility to agencies, community members, and contractors.

Agencies

Agencies that seek meeting room access should contact STLS Headquarters to determine affiliated agency status. Meeting rooms may only be used by current STLS-determined affiliated agencies within the library system's five-county service region, when the rooms are not in use for STLS-related activities, and at the discretion of the Executive Director or their designee. STLS will suggest that service area agencies use meeting rooms provided by member libraries as the agencies' first-choice option.

Agencies that are granted access to meeting room space and placed on the registration list must schedule use of the room at least two weeks in advance of the desired date by contacting STLS' Administrative Assistant. All agencies are required to follow STLS policies and procedures, and will be held financially and legally accountable for any damage incurred while the agency is using the space. Advertising that promotes a meeting hosted by an affiliated agency in STLS' meeting rooms must state, *"Activities or discussions at this event do not reflect or represent the views or positions of Southern Tier Library System."*

Community Members and Contractors

Community members and contractors who wish to access STLS Headquarters to meet with STLS employees or trustees, or to conduct business with the organization must register with the organization by contacting STLS' Administrative Assistant. The Administrative Assistant, in consultation with the Executive Director or their designee, will determine if the community member or contractor may be placed on the registration list.

Once on the registration list, community members and contractors may be granted building access by scheduling an appointment to meet with an STLS employee or trustee during regular business hours (7:00 am – 5:00 pm). Appointments between community members, or contractors and STLS employees or trustees must be scheduled 24-hours in advance in order for the community member to have access to the building. STLS employees or their designee, and trustees must be in the building and take responsibility for the community members or contractors for whom they have scheduled appointments. Community members and contractors who have not registered with STLS, and who do not have a scheduled appointment, will not be permitted to enter Headquarters.

Audio and Video Recording

STLS maintains video surveillance systems in designated areas of its building for the purpose of safety and security. Anyone occupying the building on the library system's grounds may not record audio or video during their visit without prior approval from the Executive Director.

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on December 16, 2008
Revised by the Board of Trustees November 17, 2015; January 18, 2022; April 16, 2024***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

CHARTERED PUBLIC LIBRARIES POLICY

The Southern Tier Library System, a regional consortium of chartered public libraries, works in partnership with its members to support and strengthen them through clearly defined, cost-effective services that make possible the coordination and sharing of resources, enabling all individuals in the five-county region to have equal access to excellent library services.

The intent of this document is to assist reading centers identify with public library best practices, and strive to become chartered public libraries with the New York State Education Department within a set period of time.

In order to apply fair and equitable practices to all chartered public libraries, the STLS Board of Trustees has created formal requirements for services to the established reading centers of Greenwood and Hector.

In these days of transparency and accountability, the System requires each Reading Center meet most Minimum Standards for Chartered Public Libraries.

These standards, adopted by the NYS Education Department and Division for Library Development in 1994, and revised in 2021 require that all libraries:

- have a Board of Trustees of at least five (5) members;
 - have Board of Trustees' meetings at least four (4) times a year;
 - be governed by written By-Laws which outline the responsibilities and procedures of the Reading Center Board of Trustees;
 - has Board-approved written policies for the operation of the Reading Center and oversight of its finances;
 - has a Board-approved, written Long Range Plan of Service;
 - presents a written budget annually to the appropriate funding agencies which would enable the Reading Center to meet or exceed these standards, and carry out its Long Range Plan of Service;
 - annually present a narrative report to the community on the Reading Center's progress toward meeting its goals and objectives, as well as a statistical report to the Southern Tier Library System;
 - periodically evaluates the effectiveness of the Reading Center's collection and services in meeting community needs;
 - maintains a facility adequate to meet community needs, including adequate space, lighting, shelving, seating, and a restroom;
 - compiles and maintains regular library records;

- maintains its collection with standard library classification and arrangement;
- procures the technology to meet community needs, which 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.
- distributes printed information listing the library's hours open, borrowing rules, services, location and phone number.
- offers technology training for staff, which 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.
- reaches out to community partners to establish and maintain relationships 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.

In addition, each STLS reading center must:

- provide its community with a Reading Center Director hired (implies paid) and trained in local library practices;
- be open at least 12 regularly scheduled hours per week all year

Any Reading Center not meeting the requirements of this policy for two consecutive years will be placed on probationary status. Should the condition continue, STLS will withdraw its services from Reading Centers.

Communities wishing to create a reading center are ineligible for services from Southern Tier Library System. STLS will partner with local communities to create a new chartered public library under the Board of Regents. Charter applications for public libraries must meet all criteria outlined by the Board of Regents.

Southern Tier Library System will work with all reading centers to apply for, and leverage sustainable funds to provide services aligning with public library best practices. Reading centers will need to begin the work within the scope of Minimum Standards for Public Libraries, chartered service areas and mechanisms prescribed in NYS Education Law to become chartered entities by December 31, 2024.

***Adopted by Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees July 21, 2015
Revised by the Board of Trustees on April 9, 2022***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees
STLS Member Libraries
General Public

REFERENCES: Authority of the Board Policy
The Library Bill of Rights. American Library Association
Freedom to Read Statement. American Library Association
Freedom to View Statement. American Library Association
Italiano, Julie. Library Collection Management 101. Infopeople Project, 2006.
Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

This Collection Management policy reflects the mission and core values of the Southern Tier Library System, which includes the library system's Board of Trustees, and member libraries. In accordance with the guidelines included in the American Library Associations' *Library Bill of Rights*, *Freedom to Read* and *Freedom to View Statements*, the Southern Tier Library System maintains a collection of materials, both print and digital, that meet the needs of a diverse community of member libraries, library staff, and residents.

The Southern Tier Library System is committed to equity in collection management. Any information which does explicit or implicit harm to marginalized identities through the promotion of bias, discrimination, or oppression does not merit equal consideration. We strive for a collection which goes beyond merely mirroring the diversity of our community, but instead modeling the equitable society we aspire to by building a collection that celebrates the humanity of all cultures and backgrounds.

Policies governing the library system's collection of materials rest with the Board of Trustees through its collective authority. The responsibility of material content and format in the collection rests with the Executive Director and qualified members of the library system's staff. Materials included within STLS collections, both print and digital, will be selected by library system staff in partnership with participating member libraries.

The purpose of STLS collections is to facilitate access to library materials that:

1. Support member libraries by enhancing the availability of cultural, educational, and recreational resources;
2. Increase access to library materials that assist members of *historically underserved population groups.
3. Identify and encourage use of new formats and technologies.
4. Encourage equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice in subject matter, authors, illustrators, and publishers.
5. Facilitate professional learning for staff, trustees, volunteers and friends at STLS and member libraries.

*Historically underserved population groups include community members who are deserving of equitable outreach library services considering the Mission Statement of Southern Tier Library System’s Coordinated Outreach Services Advisory Council. Target populations include:

- Visually Impaired/Physically Disabled
- Aged
- Developmentally or learning disabled
- Institutionalized
- Members of ethnic/minority groups in need of special services
- Educationally Disadvantaged
- Unemployed/Underemployed
- Geographically isolated

While some STLS materials are of lasting importance, the majority are of temporary value, purchased to reside within member libraries or online by supplementing member library or facility collections and encouraging cooperative collection management.

STLS utilizes reputable, professionally reviewed literature and other sources in the selection, and purchase of new library materials. Additionally, the library system relies on its professional librarians, who are highly trained through state and federal accredited institutions to maintain collections.

Selection criteria include:

- Content
- Format
- Cultural Relevance
- Relation to current collection
- Price
- Demand

A selected work need not satisfy all criteria listed above to be included in the collection.

It is an essential role of the library system to facilitate free access to a wide array of library materials, including possible controversial materials, to all community members. The library system and its member libraries, to the best of their abilities, strive to include a wide and inclusive spectrum of materials and topics. The inclusion of an item in the collection does not imply the library system's endorsement of the author, publisher, or subject matter. STLS supports its member libraries in this role by collecting materials representing minority or controversial viewpoints not owned by member libraries and supplementing titles on lightly represented topics or formats.

Digital resources play an important role in the STLS collection. These materials include databases, e-books, audiobooks, and other downloadable or streaming media. In addition to selection criteria outlined above, supplementary selection criteria apply to digital resources such as ease of use, technology requirements, availability for remote access, and cost.

However, it is not the role of STLS to advocate for or endorse any particular idea, opinion, or point of view; nor will STLS act *in loco parentis*. Any community member who wishes to express opinions regarding STLS materials on loan to a member library should use local member library procedures established by its Board of Trustees. A community member may also use STLS' Request for Library Materials form if they wish to express an opinion regarding STLS materials on loan at a local member library.

The Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of providing a procedure whereby opinions from the member libraries, or community members regarding materials selected can be voiced. A request for reconsideration must be made in writing on forms provided by STLS. These forms are available upon request from the STLS Headquarters and upon completion, should be mailed to the STLS Executive Director. Upon receipt of the signed form, the Executive Director will convene a committee with the Executive Director and two professional librarians not involved in the selection of the material.

Within two weeks the committee shall:

1. Examine the material in question, the issues raised and the circumstances involved.
2. Determine if action is needed.
3. Notify the American Library Association and New York Library Association of any challenges.

The Executive Director will respond in writing by certified mail to the member library, or community member within 10 days of the committee's decision.

Should the member library or community member wish to appeal the decision, the member library Board of Trustees President or the community member may write to the President of the STLS Board of Trustees to request a hearing by the STLS Board. The STLS Board will complete a review of the issue within 90 days and respond to the member library Board of

Trustees, and/or community member as soon as may be possible after such review. Any further appeal must be made to the Commissioner of Education in Albany, N.Y.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Completely fill out the following form and mail to Executive Director, Southern Tier Library System,
9424 Scott Rd, Painted Post, NY 14870.

Member Library Name: _____

Contact Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Resource on which you are commenting:

Book ____ Audiobook ____ Multi-media Kit ____ e-Book ____
Electronic information/network (please specify) _____ Other (please specify) _____

Title: _____

Author/Producer: _____

What brought this title to your attention?

Did you read, view, or listen to the entire work? If no, what parts?

What do you believe is the theme of this title?

What specifically concerns you about this title? Please cite pages, scenes, items, etc.

Are there, in your judgment, any positive elements in this title? Please describe:

Will you share any reviews of this title that support your point of view?

Are there resources you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

Contact Person's Signature: _____

Reconsideration action:

Date request received: _____

Findings of Reconsideration Committee:

Date response sent to member library: _____

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees July 15, 2013
Revised by the Board of Trustees January 19, 2016; October 18, 2022***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees and employees

REFERENCES: Authority of the Board Policy
Whistleblower's and Ethical Behavior Policy

Trustees and employees of the Southern Tier Library System (STLS) shall adhere to the highest standards of integrity, good faith and fair dealing in all activities relating to the organization. STLS encourages all to use the four values of caring, respect, honesty and responsibility in all of their activities.

No trustee, employee or any member of their respective families or households shall accept gifts, gratuities, or favors of any kind from any person, firm or corporation doing business or seeking to do business with STLS and which could reasonably be expected to influence, or create the appearance of influencing, his or her actions affecting the Southern Tier Library System. This prohibition is not intended to preclude business meals or other nominal benefits with a maximum limit of \$50.00 (Fifty Dollars) in value during the reasonable and ordinary course of business.

Full and complete disclosure of any related party transaction is required. A "related party transaction" means any transaction or agreement in which a related party has a financial interest and in which STLS or a member library is a party. A related party can be any trustee, officer, or committee member to whom the board has delegated powers, a key employee of STLS or a member library; any person who exercises any power over the affairs of STLS or its member libraries; a relative of any of the above people, an entity in which any of these individuals has a 35+% beneficial interest; or partnership or professional corporation in which any of these individuals owns a direct or indirect ownership interest >5%.

Without full and complete disclosure to and approval by the Board of Trustees or its Executive Committee, no trustee or employee shall have any position of influence with, or a material financial interest in, any other entity, the existence of which does or could reasonably be expected to conflict with the proper performance of his or her duties or responsibilities to STLS, or which could reasonably be expected to affect his or her independent judgment and action

with respect to transactions between the Southern Tier Library System and such other entity. If such a position exists, it must be disclosed to the Executive Director and to the President of the Board.

Any trustee and/or administrator shall provide the Board of Trustees or the Executive Committee with a written notification of any transaction or situation that may imply any reasonable doubt concerning the possible existence of a conflict of interest by a trustee and/or administrator.

In the event that STLS may wish to contract or enter into an arrangement for goods or services under circumstances that may present a conflict of interest affecting one or more of its trustees or administrators the following shall apply. The affected person(s) of the Southern Tier Library System agree(s) to provide full information to the Board of Trustees or its Executive Committee to allow the Board of Trustees or its Executive Committee to approve or disapprove by resolution, with the advantage of full disclosure, such contract or arrangement. The affected person shall recuse themselves from the vote.

Annually, or upon start of duties, STLS trustees and non-Staff Organization ~~union~~ employees shall complete and return to the Executive Director or their designee a Disclosure of Interests Form.

The Executive Director shall administer this policy. Any disputed action of the Executive Director with respect to this policy shall be resolved by the Board of Trustees.

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on September 18, 2007
Revised by the Board of Trustees on November 2008; March 2011; June 16, 2011;
July 17, 2018; July 18, 2023***

**SOUTHERN TIER LIBRARY SYSTEM
DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST FORM**

Name of Person Completing the Form: _____

Position / Title: _____

Verified By Executive Director: _____ Date: _____

The conflict of interest policy, which sets forth standards of expected conduct, includes a provision which requires trustees and non-Staff Organization employees to disclose all outside interests which could result in a conflict.

Please complete and return the enclosed Disclosure of Interests Form. Please be assured that the disclosure requirements are intended to provide the Board with a systematic and ongoing method of disclosing and ethically resolving potential conflicts of interest. Although it is impossible to list every circumstance giving rise to a possible conflict of interest, the following will serve as a guide to the types of activities that might cause conflicts and that should be fully reported:

1. Outside Interests

- A. To hold, directly or indirectly, a position or a material financial interest in any other entity from which the individual has reason to believe the Southern Tier Library System secures goods or services (including the services of buying or selling stocks, bonds, or other securities), or that provides services competitive with the system.
- B. To compete, directly or indirectly with the Southern Tier Library System in the purchase or sale of property or property rights, interests or services.

2. Outside Activities

To render directive, managerial, or consultative services to any outside concern that does business with, or competes with the services of the Southern Tier Library System, or to render other services in competition with the Southern Tier Library System.

3. Inside Information

To disclose or use information relating to the Southern Tier Library System's business for the personal profit or advantage of the individual or his/her respective families or households.

4. Gifts, Gratuities, and Services

To accept gifts, services, or other favors from any outside concern that does, or is seeking to do, business with, or is a competitor of, the Southern Tier Library System – under circumstances from which it might be inferred that such action was intended to influence or possibly would influence the individual in the performance of their duties.

This prohibition is not intended to preclude business meals or other nominal benefits in the reasonable and ordinary course of business.

Full disclosure of any situation in doubt should be made so as to permit an impartial and objective determination. It should be particularly noted that disclosure relates not only to the individual, but also to your respective families or households.

TO: Executive Director and President, STLS Board of Trustees

RE: Conflict of Interest Disclosure

A copy of the Southern Tier Library System's Conflict of Interest Policy has been furnished to me. I hereby state that I, or members of my respective families or households, have the following affiliations or interest and have taken part in the following transactions that, when considered in conjunction with the position with or relation to the Southern Tier Library System, might possibly constitute a conflict of interest. (Check "None" where applicable)

1. Outside Interests

Identify any interests, other than investments, of yourself or your respective families or households, as described in the first numbered paragraph of the accompanying disclosure form.

None

2. Investments

List and describe, with respect to yourself or your respective families or households, all investments that might be within the category of "financial interest", as described in the first numbered paragraph of the accompanying disclosure form.

None

3. Outside Activities

Identify any outside activities, of yourself or your respective families or households, as described in paragraph number 2 of the accompanying disclosure form.

None

4. Other

List any other activities in which you or your respective families or households are engaged that may be regarded as constituting a conflict of interest, giving particular attention to the paragraphs numbered 2 and 3 of the accompanying disclosure form.

None

5. I hereby certify that neither I nor any member of my respective families or households has accepted gifts, gratuities, or services that might influence my judgment or actions concerning the business of the Library System, except as listed below:

I hereby agree to report to the Board Chairperson any further situation that may develop before completion of my next questionnaire.

Date	Name (Printed or typed)	Signature
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Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees November 20, 2007
Revised by the Board of Trustees on July 18, 2023

STLS POLICY MANUAL

Declaration Promoting Racial & Social Justice

our cooperative library system’s statement acknowledging the need to grow diversity, equity & inclusion through librarianship

We, as library leaders, recognize that systemic racism and discrimination exist in our communities. We reject oppression in all forms, and we acknowledge the important role that libraries have as advocates and spaces of solace.

The Southern Tier Library System, in partnership with our region’s member libraries, has upheld the Library Bill of Rights and Core Values of Librarianship since the inception of our library system in 1958. Both documents serve as the foundation of our practice and its implementation.

Our library system recognizes that members of our communities have endured discriminatory treatment because of their race, ethnicity, age, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, or socioeconomic status.

Moreover, ongoing and historic tragedies involving race and discrimination demonstrate that libraries share a social and civic responsibility to unite our communities around a purpose of ending widespread violence and racism towards Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Color.

We know that libraries are integral to the well-being of our communities, and we share the responsibility to speak up in the face of injustice. Libraries must be actively antiracist in all

communities, so we can continually evolve and strive toward a future that is safe and equitable for all.

To that end, we pledge our energy and creativity in our continued efforts to build genuine racial and social justice throughout our communities.

Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on March 16, 2021

STLS POLICY MANUAL

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees
STLS Staff
STLS Insurers

REFERENCES: Authority of the Board Policy
Facilities Maintenance Policy
Steuben County Office of Emergency Services
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Records Retention & Disposition Policy

Natural and man-made disasters, resulting from events such as fires, floods, storms and outbreak illnesses cannot always be prevented; however the severity of their effects can be minimized by preparing ahead of time. The safety and well-being of STLS staff, trustees, volunteers and visitors within the STLS building are of paramount importance should disaster occur. Also concerning is the preservation of library system critical resources.

To ensure practical safety of staff, trustees and visitors in the event of any disaster, the Southern Tier Library System will maintain up-to-date practices. Practices will include but not be limited to such items as:

1. Implementation of a Disaster and Emergency Operations Response Plan
2. Periodic training of staff to facilitate staff, trustee, volunteer and visitor safety
 - a. Inclement weather closings
 - b. Evacuations due to fire, flood, and storms and outbreak illnesses
 - c. Severe weather alerts (tornado & storms)
 - d. Basic CPR, AED & first aid
3. Posted information concerning layout of building, location of fire extinguishers, fire exits and alternate escape routes; emergency contact numbers and emergency shelters
4. Communication with Steuben County Office of Emergency Services
5. Review of Federal Emergency Management Agency guidance

Practices will also protect all legal and essential documents, such as the original STLS charter, current payroll and personnel records, and any necessary records highlighted in the STLS *Records Retention and Disposition Policy*. Critical documents are housed in a fireproof, lockable cabinet and backups of digital information are maintained.

STLS staff and trustees will be provided with a copy of this policy and the Emergency Procedures & Disaster Recovery Plan. The policy and plan will be reviewed and updated as necessary by the Executive Director and STLS Board of Trustees.

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on September 17, 2013
Revised by the Board of Trustees on October 17, 2019; May 19, 2020; November 16, 2021;
May 17, 2022***

Disaster and Emergency Operations Response Plan

A Working Addendum to the *Disaster Preparedness Policy*

Health-Related Outbreaks (Epidemic or Pandemic)

Overview

STLS will respond to the needs of the organization and its member libraries in the event of a health-related outbreak that adversely impacts system-wide library services. In such cases, STLS will make decisions, and provide guidance to member libraries based on directives from federal, state and local governments.

Guidance Documents

In order to respond to an outbreak of large-scale proportions, STLS will develop, maintain and issue outbreak-related *Guidance Documents* that aid in organizational decisions specific to staff, trustees and operations, and support member libraries with local decisions and actions. *Guidance Documents* along with the implementation of this plan are the responsibility of the Executive Director in consultation with trustees and through delegation to key staff.

Guidance Documents shall include:

- Overview of services to member libraries based on governmental directives
- List of services to be maintained, altered, paused or discontinued during an outbreak
- General time frame for how long services will be revised or maintained

- Means of communication with members during an outbreak
- Evolving interpretations from federal, state and local agencies for how STLS and members shall respond to an outbreak
- List of options for how STLS and members will resume normal operations

Guidance Documents will be updated regularly during an outbreak and shared with trustees, staff and member libraries. Primary means for sharing out information will include library system email distribution lists as well as documentation on library system's website. The library system will also host "as needed" meetings to keep library system staff and member libraries informed.

Working Remotely & Paid Outbreak Leave

When the library system closes due to a declared state of emergency, and all or some staff are instructed not to come in to work, STLS will retain and pay all staff positions based on the current board-approved Organizational Chart to assist members through a health-related outbreak.

To be eligible for compensation during outbreak leave, staff must be ready, willing and able to work remotely on projects identified by the Executive Director and Division Heads during their regularly scheduled working hours, and must complete such duties as assigned. When performing tasks remotely, staff should note the time worked through the usual process for logging hours.

Staff should reference STLS' *Travel, Working Remotely & Conference Policy* for general guidance on remote work.

Full time staff shall be paid at their regular rate of pay. Part time staff shall be paid for their regularly scheduled shifts; part-time staff with variable schedules, the weekly amount will be based on the number of hours allotted to their job title/description within their initial job offer.

Working Remotely & Paid Outbreak Leave will begin and end based on the timeline set by the Executive Director in consultation with the library system Board of Trustees.

Capacity Limits and Social Distancing

In addition to allowing for Working Remotely and Paid Outbreak Leave, the library system will establish capacity limits and social distancing requirements. Examples of limits include:

- Assessing and limiting the number of staff members, guests and vendors allowed in the building or specific rooms of the building based on square footage space and recommendations from federal, state or local health agencies.

- Requiring staff members, guests and vendors to maintain a specific distance from other individuals based on recommendations from federal, state or local health agencies.
- Establishing and placing ample signage throughout the library system building to inform individuals of limits and distances.

Masking

Masking is a proven and highly effective form of limiting the spread of airborne viruses. The library system will institute masking policies based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as New York State Department of Health. These recommendations will influence masking practices inside STLS' building, vehicles and visits to member libraries. The Executive Director will work with Division Heads to determine necessary masking practices. Current practices will be communicated to the Board of Trustees, staff, guests and vendors.

Personal Protective Equipment and Building Cleaning

The library system will obtain and provide staff, guests and vendors with any necessary personal protective equipment in order to maintain safe office operations. Equipment and supplies may include:

- Face masks or shields
- Latex gloves
- Hand sanitizer
- Disinfectant wipes or sprays
- Soaps
- Thermometers
- Basic first aid kits

The building will also experience regular or heightened cleaning to offset exposures or possible risks. This includes library system vehicles. HVAC filters will maintain a MERV-13 rating or higher.

Wellness Principles

The following *Wellness Principles* will be established to minimize risk of illness or exposure when staff, guests or vendors are in the building:

- Stay home when sick
- Check for symptoms before work
- Wash or sanitize hands often
- Sanitize shared objects as needed

- Wear masks in shared spaces when required
- Maintain six feet of distance
- Report exposure to system director

Cases, Exposures, Screening and Contact Tracing

Confidentiality of cases, exposures and activities surrounding contact tracing will be maintained at the highest levels possible. The library system will take the following steps if it learns a staff member, guest or vendor contracts a virus (case) or is exposed (contact of a case).

1. Ensure the case is seeking and/or receiving necessary medical attention.
2. Identify when and where the case may have contracted illness.
3. Determine the names of individuals who the case may have exposed through work activities.
4. Assess the level of contact (close or proximate) the case had with individuals exposed.
5. Notify the exposed individuals and inform them if they are a close or proximate contact. (Contacts of a contact will not be notified).
6. Notify the local health department as well as any member libraries or agencies if the case was onsite and posed a possible exposure.
7. Staff, guests and vendors who were a case or exposure may return to the library system following 10-day quarantine and documented proof of a negative virus test.
8. If a vaccine is available and a vaccinated person is exposed, they must quarantine until they get tested 3 days following exposure and produce a documented negative virus test.
9. Vaccinated persons who are a case must quarantine for 10-days and produce a documented negative virus test before returning to work.
10. Employees must work with the Executive Director to complete a *Request to Work Remotely & Self-Quarantine Form* if they are a case, exposed or need to work remotely for any virus-related reason. This form will document how the library system dealt with each individual case, contact and exposure. Forms will be retained for 60-days for contact tracing purposes, and shredded following this time period.

The library system will ask all library system staff, guests and vendors to complete a Wellness Form when entering the building. Individuals must certify they feel well and don't pose a health risk to other individuals in order to start work or enter the building. The library system will retain Wellness Forms for 60-days to assist with contact tracing, and shred following this time period.

Time sheets will be used to contact trace staff who work in the building. A log sheet will also be used for guests and vendors at the library system's two public entrances. Log sheets will be retained for 60-days to assist with contract tracing, and shredded following this time period.

Vaccines

Library system staff are encouraged to receive a vaccine when it becomes available for an epidemic or pandemic-related virus. The library system will ask all current employees and new hires to present proof of vaccine for the sole purpose of assessing *total overall vaccine-status* of library system employees, which will enable library system administration to make decisions about Working Remotely, Masking Requirements, Capacity Limits, Social Distancing, Wellness Principles and overall virus-related operations. Documentation of a staff member's vaccine status will be filed in the employee's *personnel medical file, which may be inspected by the staff member upon request. Staff who cannot show documented proof of vaccine will be determined unvaccinated, and may be required to test as needed to maintain the health and safety of all library system staff.

**Personnel files and personnel medical files may only be accessed by the Executive Director, Business Manager, Account Clerk and the individual staff member.*

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on May 19, 2020
Revised by the Board of Trustees on November 16, 2021; May 17, 2022***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

EMERGENCY CLOSING POLICY

In the event the Executive Director of the Southern Tier Library System, or their Designee deems it necessary to close the library system's headquarters due to inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances, or if roads are closed by the employee's county of residence, employees who are unable to work remotely will be paid for the hours that they are scheduled to work on that particular day. Compensation will consist of up to five work days per incident each year. If more than five work days is required by the status of the situation, or there is an exceptional emergency, the Executive Director or their Designee will inform the Board President, Vice President, or Board of Trustees.

***Adopted by Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees November 2004
Revised by the Board of Trustees November 2008, January 17, 2017, May 16, 2023***

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S PERFORMANCE AND SALARY EVALUATION POLICY

Applies To: Executive Director
Southern Tier Library Board of Trustees

References: Article VII, Section 6 of the STLS By-Laws
Authority of the Board Policy

Policy: The Executive Director of the Southern Tier Library System shall have their performance and salary evaluated annually in accordance with the anniversary date of the Executive Director's hiring by the Board of Trustees. The performance assessment instrument will be developed by the Personnel and Policies Committee based on the following:

- Goals and objectives as mutually established by the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director.
- Execution of duties and responsibilities as described in the Southern Tier Library System Executive Director Job Description. (attached)
- Accomplishment of the Southern Tier Library System goals as described in the System Plan of Service

The performance assessment may be developed by any and/or all of the following means:

- Survey of the System Board of Trustees
- Survey interactions of the staff with the Executive Director
- Survey of the member Library Directors concerning their interaction with the Executive Director

The Personnel and Policies Committee shall, after the Executive Director's evaluation process is complete, present the written performance review to the Board for approval. At that time the Personnel and Policies Committee may make a recommendation for salary change to the Board of Trustees at a regular Board meeting.

Considerations for determining salary change will include:

- Overall effectiveness of work performed during previous year;
- A comparison to other System Director salaries in similar regions of New York State; and the current economic environment.

In the case of a newly hired Executive Director, a six-month progress report shall be conducted based upon objectives jointly established by the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director; a copy of the documentation this report shall be added to the Executive Director's Personnel file.

Minutes of all committee meetings and Board actions concerning the Executive Director's evaluation shall be kept in the appropriate STLS file.

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees April 19, 2011
Revised by the Board of Trustees December 16, 2014; May 18, 2021***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

EXTERNAL CONSULTANT POLICY

Southern Tier Library System (STLS) employs knowledgeable, competent and innovative staff. It is important to recognize that professional and non-professional staff will be asked by outside institutions to share their expertise through presentations, workshops and consultations.

This policy provides guidance for all staff on how to ethically work with all types of institutions with the support of STLS' administration and board of trustees.

Associations, Councils and Organizations

STLS believes all staff should be connected to a professional association in order to evolve within their position. Active staff involvement is mutually beneficial to the professional association. For this reason, board, committee, section and roundtable work, as verbally approved by the Executive Director, is encouraged. Associations may include New York Library Association, American Library Association and Association for Small and Rural Libraries as well as any of their affiliates.

Additionally, STLS is associated with Institute for Human Services, NYS Board of Regents Advisory Council, Public Library System Directors Organization, New York Alliance of Library Systems, and South Central Regional Library Council. Staff are encouraged to serve on governing or advisory boards as well as committees for these councils or organizations.

Appointments, consultations and presentations for these institutions are within the scope of work for STLS staff as they build capacity to offer greater service to member libraries through our Plan of Service.

Staff shall not charge honorarium fees to these associations, councils or organizations. It is reasonable and expected that staff recoup the cost of participation, where possible through:

- travel and/or lodging reimbursements
- reduced cost or reimbursed conference registration

Regional Library System Partners

STLS has specific regional library system partnerships that are encouraged through our Plan of Service and specifically listed in this policy. Partnerships include Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System, Finger Lakes Library System, Four County Library System, Mid-Hudson Library System, North Country Library System and OWWL Library System.

It is understood that staff does not charge honorarium fees for consultations, presentations or workshops conducted at these partnering library systems. Staff shall not recoup costs for travel as they are encouraged to use an STLS consultant vehicle for these engagements. It is reasonable, but not required, that staff recoup the cost of participation when overnight lodging is required in the partnering library system’s region. Staff will consult with the Executive Director to determine if lodging reimbursements shall be requested in these instances.

All Other Organizations

STLS staff shall seek compensation for consultations, presentations or workshops for all other organizations not listed in the previous two sections of this policy. It is the responsibility of all STLS staff, in communication with the Executive Director, to choose one of the following options:

Option #1 – STLS Professional or Non-professional Staff:

- Staff member prepares for the engagement on STLS time, and records hours on the time sheets
- Staff member uses STLS resources to do the work, including:
 - Travel in STLS vehicles
 - Immediate costs incurred with STLS credit card
 - Printing using STLS photocopier
- Staff member is responsible for establishing a formal agreement with the contracting organization using one of the following:
 - STLS Speaker Agreement template
 - STLS MOU template
 - Agreement provided by contracting organization
- All agreements with contracting organization must be signed by the Executive Director
- Staff member is responsible for tracking hours worked and other ~~costs~~ related costs

- Staff member is responsible for invoicing the contracting organization, as well as sharing that invoice with the STLS Business Office for proper coding and accounting
- Completed work is attributed to the staff member, STLS, the organization, and is owned by the contracting organization unless otherwise specified in formal agreement
- As an STLS representative, all STLS policies apply to the staff member's work and in interactions with outside organizations.
- Responses to proposals, contracts, and invoicing will follow this schedule in consultation with the Executive Director
 - Per Hour: \$ 65
 - Per ½ Day: \$300
 - Per Day: \$500
 - Per Travel Hour: \$ 25
 - Keynote Flat Rate: \$400
 - Workshop Flat Rate: \$250
 - Reimbursement for all travel and accommodation costs

Option #2: An Independent Contractor

- Staff member is taking on separate and distinct employment and as such will not engage in this work on STLS time
- Staff member must use vacation/personal leave time for any hours which conflict with STLS standard work hours
- Staff member is working independently and will not make claims during project that they are representing STLS in their opinions, views, practices, or work
- Staff member is solely responsible and liable for the work they produce and its consequences (eg. taxes, insurances, etc.)
- Staff member must file an STLS Transparency in Consulting Form (see attached form).

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees May 21, 2019
Revised by the Board of Trustees on January 16, 2024***

FACILITIES POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees
STLS Employees

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS: STLS By-Laws, Article VI, Section 1, Para D and Article VII, Section 3
Executive Director Job Description
Disaster Preparedness Policy – Operations Response Plan
Sustainability Policy

STLS seeks to preserve and improve the organization's physical assets and ensure a safe, professional workplace environment for staff and visitors through proper management of its facilities, equipment, and vehicles. Appropriate maintenance must be performed on a regular basis while considering economic, environmental, and social impacts. Sustainable design practices will guide building and land use choices during expansion and new construction projects. The Finance & Facilities Committee has the responsibility to review and make recommendations concerning matters affecting STLS facilities, equipment, and vehicles. The Executive Director has overall oversight responsibilities for the management and maintenance of STLS facilities and equipment.

The Finance & Facilities Committee will support activities relating to major equipment and facility acquisition, renovation and modification projects as required by the Board or requested by the Executive Director. The committee will inspect the facilities and grounds each year and as needed. The committee will discuss any resulting recommendations with the Executive Director and report to the Board of Trustees. The committee will review recommendations from the Executive Director on major facility and equipment needs and provide guidance on how to address immediate and long-term issues.

The Executive Director maintains contracts for services provided by outside vendors. Contracts include but are not limited to cleaning services, HVAC, generator, fire extinguishers, security system, copier, IT equipment, and exterior grounds. STLS vehicles are maintained in accordance with manufacturer recommendations and inspected annually. Repairs needed are identified by the driver or user of each vehicle and reported to the Delivery Driver Coordinator, or in case of emergency, the Executive Director or their designee.

In accordance with STLS' Sustainable Libraries Initiative and the Core Values of the American Library Association, the library system will consider best practices when maintaining its facilities, equipment, vehicles, and grounds. Areas of consideration include:

- Minimizing the use of refrigerants and adhering to the U.S Department of Environmental Protection Agency's guidelines, recommendations and regulations when dealing with ozone-depleting substances.
- Purchasing only Energy Star-rated equipment when replacing old equipment or installing new equipment.
- Installing long-term, eco-friendly building materials when maintaining or replacing structures.
- Using renewable energy sources when economically feasible to offset the library system's use of electric or fossil fuels with the goal of becoming a net-zero facility.
- Posting signage to encourage staff to conserve water and install WaterSense products when equipment or fixtures need to be replaced.
- Rehomeing equipment, furniture, or other library system assets before considering disposal in a landfill.
- Prioritizing green procurement including eco-friendly, non-toxic, and locally sourced materials and requiring vendors to meet sustainability criteria.
- Disposing of technology and e-waste properly by partnering with certified e-waste recyclers for outdated electronics.
- Following green building standards, which may include Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or equivalent guidelines for new construction and renovations.
- Improving indoor air quality by assessing current and procured HVAC systems.
- Scheduling energy audits and building condition studies to improve overall facility efficiencies.
- Developing a vehicle procurement rotation that allows for the transition away from fossil fuels as appropriate.

This policy serves as the library system's plan to address near and long-term facility needs. STLS will review this policy periodically to support the overall mission of the organization.

***Adopted By the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on June 19, 2012
Revised by the Board of Trustees on January 19, 2021; December 16, 2025***

FINANCE POLICY

Applies To: Southern Tier Library Board of Trustees, Employees and Volunteers

References: STLS By-Laws, Articles VI & VII Grant Funds Policy
Authority of the Board Policy Organizational Meeting Policy
Investment Policy Tuition Reimbursement Policy
Purchasing Policy

POLICY: It is the policy of STLS to manage all of its assets using accepted business practices. The Board of Trustees and Executive Director will work together to make certain that all financial matters of the organization are addressed with care, integrity, and honesty. This policy and related procedural guidelines are intended to:

Protect the liquid assets, facilities and equipment of STLS by employing judicious management and effective internal controls that ensure best value for STLS and that minimize the risk of fraud, waste and abuse. This applies to all receipts, expenditures, investments, and property;

Ensure the maintenance of accurate records of STLS financial activities;

Provide a framework of operating standards and behavioral expectations; and,

Ensure compliance with federal, state and local legal and reporting requirements.

FINANCIAL STRATEGY – To ensure there are adequate resources to maintain and update services to its member libraries, STLS will continually attempt to increase the number and size of its funding sources through local, state and federal grant writing, active advocacy programs and revenue-enhancing projects while practicing prudent management of organization assets.

FISCAL YEAR: The fiscal year for STLS is January 1 through December 31.

ACCOUNTING METHOD - STLS will maintain its accounting records on an accrual basis conforming to generally accepted accounting principles and in a manner that facilitates the preparation of appropriate audited financial statements. For reporting purposes, the NYS annual report will be filed using an accrual basis of accounting. The Federal 990 Income Tax Report will be filed after depreciation is calculated and the annual audit of STLS records by an outside firm has been completed.

BOOKS OF ORIGINAL ENTRY - STLS will maintain a Chart of Accounts and will utilize established

commercial accounting software for managing funds. Adequate documentation will be maintained to support all general entries. The Business Manager and Treasurer will prepare appropriate monthly financial reports that include receipts, disbursements and activity on special projects. The Budget Report will include a comparison of actual expenditures to the budget.

BUDGET - The Executive Director, together with the Finance and Facilities Committee, will prepare an annual operating budget to be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval. The preliminary budget will be presented for review to the Finance and Facilities Committee in September, and the full board in October. The budget for the coming year must be approved by the Board of Trustees not later than November 30 of the current year.

MEMBER LIBRARY CONTRIBUTIONS

ILS Cost Share Contributions: Member libraries and reading centers contribute monies to STLS to facilitate and pay for the System's Integrated Library System. STLS works with member libraries to set this cost sharing model every three years. The Executive Director facilitates the determination of cost shares through the Directors Advisory Council. The Directors Advisory Council makes a formal recommendation to the STLS Board of Trustees, who approves the final cost share amounts. STLS is charged with developing and maintaining a cost model that provides for an equitable distribution of these costs to each member based on usage of the Integrated Library System. Cost share monies are recorded as part of STLS operating revenues.

Digital Library Contributions: STLS assists member libraries and reading centers in the procurement of digital library content that is made available by all members to their patrons. Each member contributes to the shared collection based on a Digital Library Contribution model set every three years through a recommendation of the Directors Advisory Council to the STLS Board of Trustees. Digital Library contributions are recorded as pass through funds, not STLS operating revenues.

IT Contracts: The STLS Information Technology Division provides direct support to member libraries who enter into IT Service Agreements with STLS. Services under the agreement can include: procurement of equipment and software, data warehousing, remote server support, or other IT-related services that are outside the operational scope of STLS IT services. Agreements may include one-time situational support or reoccurring annual support. STLS invoices member libraries for this support based on services and fees outlined in the signed service agreement. IT Contracts are recorded as STLS operating revenues.

Billed-Entity Internet Service Agreements: STLS administers Internet connections for any member library that enters into a Billed-entity Internet Service agreement with the library system. This service is provided because STLS can leverage significant cost savings for member libraries through federal ERate funds and ensure libraries offer high quality broadband access to patrons. STLS invoices member libraries reoccurring monthly fees, set by the library system, based on STLS' cost to administer the internet connections, prices charged by third-party

internet service providers, and the amount of money STLS secures through federal ERate funds.

AUDITS – The Finance and Facilities Committee will select a qualified external auditor to audit accounting records on an annual basis. Official annual audit reports will be reviewed by the Finance and Facilities Committee and presented to the Board of Trustees for review and approval. An internal auditor will audit disbursements made during the bi-weekly accounts payable cycle in accordance with guidelines provided in the Authority of the Board Policy. A claims auditor report will be furnished by the internal auditor to the Board of Trustees quarterly.

BANK RECONCILIATIONS - Bank and investment account statements will be reconciled monthly with STLS records for accuracy and completeness with review by the Executive Director. In the absence of the Business Manager, the Account Clerk will do the reconciliations on a temporary basis until the Business Manager returns or a new Business Manager is appointed. The Executive Director will review and sign the monthly reconciliations.

INVESTMENTS and BANK ACCOUNTS - The Finance and Facilities Committee will make recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding banking and investment opportunities for STLS in accordance with applicable laws and statutes. The Board of Trustees will approve the initiation and termination of all bank and investment accounts.

No personal funds of individual Trustees, employees or volunteers may be intermingled or combined with any bank or investment account of the STLS. Similarly, no STLS funds may be intermingled or combined with any external accounts of Trustees, employees or volunteers. Invoices for any purchases or services authorized by the STLS may only be paid from properly established accounts of the STLS after appropriate verification, approval and audit as outlined in this policy.

OPERATING CASH BALANCE – STLS' general policy is to accept checks only in payment for services, materials and donations. At each Board meeting the Treasurer will provide an itemized list of all receipts since the last Board meeting. STLS will strive to maintain an unrestricted operating cash balance of one-third (1/3) of the annual operating budget as determined by the year-end audit. The Finance and Facilities Committee shall track progress toward this goal as specified by the Authority of the Board Policy. The Finance and Facilities Committee shall report on the status of the operating cash balance annually at the time STLS receives its total State Aid.

CREDIT CARDS - Employees who make purchases are provided an organizational credit card for the purpose of conducting STLS business. Credit card users and credit limit approvals are at the discretion of the Executive Director. In general, credit card accounts will be managed by the Executive Director and/or Business Manager.

Credit Card Policy Requirements:

All organizational credit cards are the property of STLS and authorized users shall take the necessary precautions to ensure the safekeeping and proper use of the card.

Organizational credit cards may not be used for personal expenditures of any kind.

Credit cards may not be used for cash advances.

Travel expenses charged to a credit card must be accompanied by appropriate receipts.

Purchases charged to a credit card are subject to the provisions of the Purchasing Policy.

Credit card statements will be reviewed for validity and accuracy by the Executive Director, Account Clerk, Internal Auditor and Treasurer prior to being paid.

Personal Credit Cards may not be used to secure vendor accounts opened for STLS. In addition, personal credit cards may not be attached to an STLS credit account.

Upon cessation of business with a vendor that has the STLS credit card on file, the vendor will be contacted to remove the credit card number from their files.

EMPLOYEE AND TRUSTEE REIMBURSEMENT – Employees are not permitted to use personal funds when conducting business on behalf of STLS. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Executive Director, in which case employees will be reimbursed by submitting a completed Expense Reimbursement Form. Trustees will be reimbursed for all reasonable and appropriate expenses when traveling on STLS business, upon submittal of a completed Expense Reimbursement Form.

INSURANCE - Reasonable, adequate coverage will be maintained to safeguard the assets of STLS and its trustees, management and employees. Such coverage will include property and liability, Workers Compensation, Directors and Officers Insurance and other insurance deemed necessary by the Board of Trustees.

PROPERTY

REAL PROPERTY/REAL ESTATE – Acquisition or lease of all real property requires approval by the Board of Trustees.

EQUIPMENT - Equipment shall be defined as items (purchased or donated) necessary to manage and maintain STLS facilities, projects or events.

Fixed Assets shall be defined as all items valued at \$5,000 or more that have an established useful life. Most assets will have a useful life of five years, computers and computer software, 3 years. Such items will be depreciated using a Straight-Line method of depreciation. All other items are considered expense items.

The Business Manager will maintain an inventory record of each item of capital

equipment in the accounting system. The record will include a description of each item, date of purchase or acquisition, price or fair value of each item and its location. Records must be updated whenever property is disposed of or acquired.

PURCHASES – All purchases will be made in accordance with the STLS Purchasing Policy.

LEASE/BUY: When acquiring equipment, where appropriate, a Lease vs. Buy analysis will be conducted to determine the best value for the organization.

MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

TRUSTEES: Trustees may apply for mileage reimbursement when attending STLS Board meetings, assigned Board committee meetings, and assigned duties. They are eligible to be reimbursed for the distance traveled to and from their places of residence to the meeting. Reimbursement will be made only where transportation has not otherwise been provided by STLS. The mileage reimbursement rate will be established each year during the annual organizational trustee meeting. Trustees will be reimbursed by submitting a completed Mileage Claim Form.

STAFF: Normal travel back and forth to work is not reimbursable. When business travel is required, employees will use STLS-owned vehicles when available. In circumstances where it is necessary for staff to use their own vehicles for business travel, employees will be reimbursed for mileage costs incurred for trips authorized by the Executive Director or their Division Heads. The mileage reimbursement rate will be the same as provided for in the current contract between the Staff Organization of Southern Tier Library System and the Southern Tier Library System. Employees will be reimbursed by submitting a completed Mileage Claim Form.

MEMBER LIBRARIES: At the Executive Director's discretion, representatives from member libraries may be reimbursed mileage from their home libraries to attend STLS events at the established reimbursement rate when funds have been made available for that purpose.

Every Trustee and all employees having financial or property management responsibility are to be informed of the appropriate policies and must comply with their requirements.

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on April 17, 2012
Revised by the Board of Trustees on September 20, 2016; May 17, 2022***

Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) Policy

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees
 STLS Employees
 General Public

The primary goals of the Southern Tier Library System’s FOIL Policy are to establish and define:

- The Administrator of system records
- The process for requesting information from the system
- The system’s process for responding to information requests.

New York State’s Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) allows members of the public to access records from certain agencies. The full scope of Public Officers Law Article 6 §87 can be found on the New York State Committee on Open Government website.

This policy was drafted using the “Model Rules for Agencies” on the Freedom of Information Law Website.²

SCOPE

1. The people’s right to know the process of government decision-making and the documents and statistics leading to determinations is basic to our society. Access to such information should not be thwarted by shrouding it with ~~the cloak of secrecy of~~ confidentiality.
2. These regulations provide information concerning the procedures by which records may be obtained.
3. Employees shall furnish to the public the information and records required by the Freedom of Information Law, as well as records otherwise available by law.
4. Any conflicts among laws governing public access to records shall be construed in favor of the widest possible availability of public records.

ADMINISTRATION

The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring compliance with the regulations herein, and the Executive Director and Assistant Director – Director of Librarianship shall act as records access officers for the System.

² Freedom of Information Law, Model Rules for Agencies, <https://opengovernment.ny.gov/freedom-information-law>

The records access officers are responsible for ensuring appropriate agency response to public requests for access to records. The designation of a records access officer shall not be construed to prohibit officials who have in the past been authorized to make records or information available to the public from continuing to do so.

The records access officers shall ensure that agency employees:

1. Maintain an up-to-date subject matter list.
2. Assist persons seeking records to identify the records sought, if necessary, and when appropriate, indicate the manner in which the records are filed, retrieved, or generated to assist persons in reasonably describing records.
3. Contact persons seeking records when a request is voluminous or when locating the records involves substantial effort, so that staff may ascertain the nature of records of primary interest and attempt to reasonably reduce the volume of records requested.
4. Upon locating the records, take one of the following actions:
 - a. Make records available for inspection; or
 - b. Deny access to the records in whole or in part and explain in writing the reasons therefore.
5. Upon request for copies of records:
 - a. Make a copy available upon payment or offer to pay established fees, if any, in accordance with this policy; or
 - b. Permit the requesting person or entity to copy those records.
6. Upon request, certify that a record is a true copy; and
7. Upon failure to locate records, certify that:
 - a. Southern Tier Library System is not the custodian for such records, or
 - b. The records of which the Southern Tier Library System is a custodian cannot be found after diligent search.

LOCATION AND HOURS FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION

Records shall be available for public inspection and copying at:

Southern Tier Library System
9424 Scott Road
Painted Post, New York 14870

Requests for public access to records shall be accepted and records produced during all hours regularly open for business.

REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC ACCESS TO RECORDS

1. A written request may be required, but oral requests may be accepted when records are readily available.

2. If records are maintained on the internet, the requesting person or entity shall be informed that the records are accessible via the internet and in printed form either on paper or other information storage medium.
3. A response shall be given within five business days of receipt of a request by:
 - a. Informing the requesting person or entity requesting records that the request or portion of the request does not reasonably describe the records sought, including direction, to the extent possible, that would enable that person to request records reasonably described;
 - b. Granting or denying access to records in whole or in part;
 - c. Acknowledging the receipt of a request in writing, including an approximate date when the request will be granted or denied in whole or in part, which shall be reasonable under the circumstances of the request and shall not be more than twenty business days after the date of the acknowledgment, or if it is known that circumstances prevent disclosure within twenty business days from the date of such acknowledgment, providing a statement in writing indicating the reason for inability to grant the request within that time and a date certain, within a reasonable period under the circumstances of the request, when the request will be granted or denied in whole or in part; or
 - d. If the receipt of request was acknowledged in writing and included an approximate date when the request would be granted or denied in whole or in part within twenty business days of such acknowledgment, but circumstances prevent disclosure within that time, providing a statement in writing within twenty business days of such acknowledgment specifying the reason for the inability to do so and a date certain, within a reasonable period under the circumstances of the request, when the request will be granted or denied in whole or in part.
4. In determining a reasonable time for granting or denying a request under the circumstances of a request, employee shall consider the volume of a request, the ease or difficulty in locating, retrieving or generating records, the complexity of the request, the need to review records to determine the extent to which they must be disclosed, the number of requests received by the agency, and similar factors that bear on the ability to grant access to records promptly and within a reasonable time.
5. Failure to comply with the time limitations described herein shall constitute a denial of a request that may be appealed. Such failure shall include situations in which an officer or employee:
 - a. fails to grant access to the records sought, deny access in writing, or acknowledge the receipt of a request within five business days of the receipt of a request;
 - b. acknowledges the receipt of a request within five business days but fails to furnish an approximate date when the request will be granted or denied in whole or in part;
 - c. furnishes an acknowledgment of the receipt of a request within five business days with an approximate date for granting or denying access in whole or in part that is unreasonable under the circumstances of the request;

- d. fails to respond to a request within a reasonable time after the approximate date given or within twenty business days after the date of the acknowledgment of the receipt of a request;
- e. determines to grant a request in whole or in part within twenty business days of the acknowledgment of the receipt of a request, but fails to do so, unless the agency provides the reason for its inability to do so in writing and a date certain within which the request will be granted in whole or in part;
- f. does not grant a request in whole or in part within twenty business days of the acknowledgment of the receipt of a request and fails to provide the reason in writing explaining the inability to do so and a date certain by which the request will be granted in whole or in part; or
- g. responds to a request, stating that more than twenty business days is needed to grant or deny the request in whole or in part and provides a date certain within which that will be accomplished, but such date is unreasonable under the circumstances of the request.

SUBJECT MATTER LIST

1. The records access officers shall maintain a reasonably detailed current list by subject matter of all records in its possession, whether or not records are available pursuant to subdivision two of Section eighty-seven of the §Public Officers Law.
2. The subject matter list shall be sufficiently detailed to permit identification of the category of the record sought.
3. The subject matter list shall be updated annually. The most recent update shall appear on the first page of the subject matter list.

DENIAL OF ACCESS OF RECORDS

1. Denial of access to records shall be in writing stating the reason therefore and advising the requester of the right to appeal to the individual or body established to determine appeals. The Executive Director shall be identified by name, title, business address and business phone number.
2. If requested records are not provided promptly, as required in this policy, such failure shall also be deemed a denial of access.
3. The Executive Director and Southern Tier Library System Board President shall determine appeals regarding denial of access to records under the Freedom of Information Law.
4. Any person denied access to records may appeal within thirty days of a denial.
5. The time for deciding an appeal by the individual or body designated to determine appeals shall commence upon receipt of a written appeal identifying:
 - a. the date and location of requests for records;
 - b. a description, to the extent possible, of the records that were denied; and
 - c. the name and return address of the person denied access.

6. Failure to determine an appeal within ten business days of its receipt by granting access to the records sought or fully explaining the reasons for further denial in writing shall constitute a denial of the appeal.
7. The person or body designated to determine appeals shall transmit to the Committee on Open Government copies of all appeals upon receipt of appeals. Such copies shall be addressed to:

NYS Committee on Open Government
Department of State
One Commerce Plaza
99 Washington Avenue, Suite 650
Albany, NY 12231

8. The person or body designated to determine appeals shall inform the appellant and the Committee on Open Government of its determination in writing within ten business days of receipt of an appeal. The determination shall be transmitted to the Committee on Open Government in the same manner as set forth in item 7 of this section.

FEES

1. There shall be no fee charged for:
 - a. inspection of records;
 - b. search for records; or
 - c. any certification pursuant to this part.
2. Copies may be provided without charging a fee.
3. Fees for copies may be charged when the request is excess of reasonable standards, provided that:
 - a. the fee for copying records shall not exceed 25 cents per page for photocopies not exceeding 9 by 14 inches. This section shall not be construed to mandate the raising of fees where agencies or municipalities in the past have charged less than 25 cents for such copies;
 - b. the fee for photocopies of records in excess of 9 x 14 inches shall not exceed the actual cost of reproduction; or
 - c. an agency has the authority to redact portions of a paper record and does so prior to disclosure of the record by making a photocopy from which the proper redactions are made.
4. The fee an agency may charge for a copy of any other record is based on the actual cost of reproduction and may include only the following:
 - a. an amount equal to the hourly salary attributed to the lowest paid employee who has the necessary skill required to prepare a copy of the requested record, but only when more than two hours of the employee's time is necessary to do so; and

- b. the actual cost of the storage devices or media provided to the person making the request in complying with such request; or
 - c. the actual cost to the agency of engaging an outside professional service to prepare a copy of a record, but only when an agency's information technology equipment is inadequate to prepare a copy, and if such service is used to prepare the copy.
5. When an agency has the ability to retrieve or extract a record or data maintained in a computer storage system with reasonable effort, or when doing so requires less employee time than engaging in manual retrieval or redactions from non-electronic records, the agency shall be required to retrieve or extract such record or data electronically. In such case, the agency may charge a fee in accordance with paragraph (4)(a) and (b) above.
6. The System shall inform a person or entity requesting a record of the estimated cost of preparing a copy of the record if more than two hours of an agency employee's time is needed, or if it is necessary to retain an outside professional service to prepare a copy of the record.
7. The System may require that the fee for copying or reproducing a record be paid in advance of the preparation of such copy.

PUBLIC NOTICE

A notice containing the title or name and business address of the records access officers and appeals person or body and the location where records can be seen or copies shall be posted in a conspicuous location wherever records are kept and/or published in the System's Designated Newspaper.

SEVERABILITY

If any provision of these regulations or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is adjudged invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such judgment shall not affect or impair the validity of the other provisions of these regulations or the application thereof to other persons and circumstances.

List of Records Maintained by the Southern Tier Library System Freedom of Information Law

LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Maintained pursuant to Public Officers Law § 87(3)(c)

"a reasonably detailed current list by subject matter, of all records in the possession of the agency, whether or not available under this article. Each agency shall update its subject matter list annually, and the date of the most recent update shall be conspicuously indicated on the list. Each state agency as defined in subdivision four of this section that maintains a website shall post its current list on its website and such

posting shall be linked to the website of the committee on open government. Any such agency that does not maintain a website shall arrange to have its list posted on the website of the committee on open government.”

(Note: Not all listed records are available pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law [FOIL]).

Items below and other records maintained by the Southern Tier Library System are subject to the System’s Records Retention Policy.

Subject Matter List

Board

- Annual Reports/Plans of Service
- Bylaws
- Charter
- Conflicts of Interest Reports
- Meeting Agendas
- Meeting Minutes
- Organizational Amendments
- Records of Motions
- Resolutions
- Strategic Plans
- Whistleblower Reports

Financial Records

- 990(s) Current and Past Years – Current and Previous Year Filing
- Accounts Payable Records
- Accounts Receivable Records
- Annual Update Document(s) – Current and Previous Year Filing
- Assigned Reserve Records
- Audit Work Papers, Reports, and Files
- *Bank Reconciliations
- *Bank Statements
- Cash Activity Reports
- *Depreciation Schedules
- List of Monthly Warrants – Paid, Reviewed, and Board Approved
- Planning and Budget Documents
- Receipt and Deposit of Funds Records/Logs
- Year to Date Reports/Trial Balances/General Ledger/Balance Sheets
- Year-End Financial Statements

Contracts/Purchasing Records

- Bidders' Proposal Files
- Contract Files
- Requisition Form/Purchase Order Files (Non-Contracts)
- Sales Tax Exemption Information

Employment Information

- Employee Contracts or Agreements
- Employee Summary Service Records
- Employee Travel Authorizations and Expense Files
- Job Descriptions
- Payroll Records
- Timesheets

Policy Manuals

- Policies: External Policy Manual/Internal Employee Handbook

Program Service Files

- Central Library Expenditure Files
- Correctional Facility Expenditure Files
- Outreach Services Expenditure Files
- Services to Member Libraries

Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on July 16, 2024.

STLS POLICY MANUAL

FREEDOM TO READ POLICY

American Library Association - The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions

apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend.

We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to

read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on September 16, 2008
Reaffirmed by the Board of Trustees on September 19, 2017; October 18, 2022***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

GIFT ACCEPTANCE POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees, STLS Staff

REFERENCES: STLS Conflict of Interest Policy
STLS IT Procurement & Vendor Selection Policy
STLS Materials Selection Policy
STLS Plan of Service
Guidelines for Implementing Gift Acceptance Policy

The mission of the Southern Tier Library System is to “connect, empower, and advocate for all Southern Tier public libraries” within the five-county service area. To this end, STLS will accept gifts with the following considerations:

1. STLS will accept new or used library materials, such as books, electronic media, etc. if they are in good physical condition and if, in the opinion of the System staff responsible for

selection they meet objective criteria for the selection, of library materials as specified in the STLS Materials Selection Policy.

2. Although donors are encouraged to make gifts of monies, personal property, real property, securities, or equivalent to The Foundation for Southern Tier Libraries, gifts of this sort may be accepted by STLS. STLS will convert gifts of real property and securities to cash in a timely manner.
3. Cash gifts in memory or honor of individuals will be accepted by STLS and will be used to enhance System resources.
4. All forms of gifts or donated properties may be subject to review prior to acceptance as noted in the attached implementation guidelines. STLS will seek the advice of legal counsel in matters relating to the acceptance of gifts, when appropriate.

In accordance with the STLS Conflict of Interest Policy, in no case shall a Southern Tier Library System Trustee or staff member accept personal gifts, gratuities, or favors from any person, firm, or corporation doing business with, or seeking to do business with STLS that might appear to influence their actions affecting the Southern Tier Library System.

GIFT ACCEPTANCE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

The President of the STLS Board of Trustees will review all restricted gifts and gifts over \$5,000 in value prior to presentation to the Board of Trustees for the normal approval process. Trustees are not permitted to accept gifts on behalf of STLS without prior Board approval.

The Southern Tier Library System (STLS) will seek the advice of legal counsel in matters relating to acceptance of gifts, when appropriate. Review by counsel is recommended for:

- Gifts of securities that are subject to restrictions or buy-sell agreements.
- Documents naming STLS as trustee or requiring STLS to act in any fiduciary capacity.
- Gifts requiring STLS to assume financial or other obligations.
- Transactions with potential conflicts of interest.
- Any gift of property which may be subject to environmental or other regulatory restrictions.

GIFTS GENERALLY ACCEPTED

- **CASH GIFTS.** Acceptable by check, money order, or online payment.
- **MARKETABLE SECURITIES.** In some instances, marketable securities may be restricted, for example, by applicable securities laws or the terms of the proposed gift; in such instances the

decision whether to accept the restricted securities shall be made by the Board of Trustees. Marketable securities may be transferred electronically to an account maintained at one or more brokerage firms or delivered physically with the transferor's endorsement or signed stock power (with appropriate signature guarantees) attached. All marketable securities will be sold promptly upon receipt.

- **BEQUESTS AND BENEFICIARY DESIGNATIONS.** Donors may make bequests to STLS under trusts, life insurance policies, commercial annuities and retirement plans. (see below.)
- **CHARITABLE REMAINDER TRUSTS.** STLS will accept designation as a remainder beneficiary of charitable remainder trusts, which receive the assets of a trust when the donor dies.
- **CHARITABLE LEAD TRUSTS.** STLS will accept designation as an income beneficiary of charitable lead trusts, which will allow STLS to receive income from a trust until the donor dies
- **LIFE INSURANCE.** STLS will accept gifts of life insurance where STLS is named as both beneficiary and irrevocable owner of the insurance policy. The donor must agree to pay, before due, any future premiums owing on the policy.
- **TANGIBLE PERSONAL PROPERTY.** The STLS Board of Trustees shall review and determine whether to accept any gifts of tangible personal property in light of the following considerations:
 - Does the property hold financial value and further the mission of STLS?
 - Is the property marketable?
 - Are there any unacceptable restrictions imposed on the property?
 - Are there any carrying costs for the property for which STLS may be responsible?
 - Is the title/provenance of the property clear?
- **REAL ESTATE/REAL PROPERTY.** All gifts of real estate are subject to review and approval by the STLS Board of Trustees. Prior to acceptance of any gift of real estate STLS shall require an initial environmental review by a qualified environmental firm. In the event that the initial review reveals a potential problem, the organization may retain a qualified environmental firm to conduct an environmental audit. Criteria for acceptance of gifts of real estate include:
 - Does the property hold financial value and is it useful for STLS' purposes?
 - Is the property readily marketable?
 - If there are structures on the property, has a safety inspection been performed by a licensed inspector?
 - Are there covenants, conditions, restrictions, reservations, easements, encumbrances or other limitations associated with the property?
 - Are there carrying costs (including insurance, property taxes, mortgages, notes, or the like) or maintenance expenses associated with the property?
 - Does the environmental review or audit reflect that the property is damaged or otherwise requires remediation?

***Adopted by STLS Board of Trustees April 17, 2012
Revised by the Board of Trustees on November 17, 2020; December 19, 2024***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

GRANT FUNDS POLICY

Federal and New York State grant funds issued to STLS, or passed through STLS to member libraries will be managed in accordance with applicable Federal and New York State laws, and policies and procedures approved by the STLS Board of Trustees. Grants from local governments and non-profit organizations shall be managed in accordance with the grantors' requirements and standard business practices.

Grant funds designated for member libraries shall be passed on to them in a timely manner following receipt of the funds by the library system. Member libraries that participate in grant programs administered by the library system, and where delayed funding is expected should be prepared to begin the project with their own institutional funds at their own risk, or wait until STLS has received the grant funds.

The Executive Director is charged with general oversight of all library system grants in partnership with the Business Office, and other STLS staff members or divisions responsible for administering grant funds. All grant projects and proposals intended to benefit the operations of STLS must be authorized by the Executive Director before a grant application is submitted. Criteria for pursuing grant projects, and submitting their applications shall consider (1) the library system's Plan of Service, (2) strategic priorities of an STLS Division, and (3) the Essential Functions of the STLS staff member administering the grant project.

STLS staff who are authorized to submit a grant proposal are responsible for all elements of administering the grant, and ensuring its overall success from start to finish. As part of the authorization process, staff are required to present a succession plan that addresses how the project will be administered in the unforeseen absence of the staff member. Staff are responsible for all other Essential Functions within their job description as part of any grant project. The Executive Director is responsible for the success of any grant administered by the Executive Director.

In some instances, the library system is required to make advance payments to qualify for specific grants, or to efficiently administer grants. The Executive Director is responsible for working with the Business Office and STLS Board of Trustees to ensure library system cash reserves allow for advance payment while maintaining regular business operations.

The Business Office will maintain an accounting schedule of all open grant projects. A schedule shall be made available for inspection during the library system's annual independent audit, and at the request of the STLS Board of Trustees.

Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on September 21, 2010

Revised by the Board of Trustees on November 21, 2017; April 18, 2023

STLS POLICY MANUAL

INFORMATION SECURITY POLICY

Applies To: Southern Tier Library System, Library System Staff and Member Libraries

References: STLS Purchasing Policy

Policy: The STLS Information Security Policy defines guidelines, standards and practices for computing and networking related to usage, security, identification, and STLS maintained domains.

Guidelines, Standards & Practices

STLS guidelines outline specific requirements or rules that must be met. In the information/network security realm, guidelines will be point-specific, covering a single area. For example, an "Email Policy" statement covers the rules and regulations for appropriate use of a STLS Division of IT service.

STLS standards are a collection of system-specific or procedural-specific requirements that must be met by everyone. For example, the Personal Computer Operating System standard is Microsoft Windows 10.

STLS practices are typically a collection of system specific or procedural specific "suggestions" for best practice. They are not requirements to be met, but are strongly recommended. An example of this would be Password Construction Guidelines.

Email Policy

The Southern Tier Library System (STLS) provides each staff person at member libraries with an email account upon the request of the library director, manager or board of trustees. All STLS staff also receive an email account. The STLS email system, currently IPSwitch IMail, is made available for the purpose of conducting business and communicating with other member libraries and STLS.

1. STLS email accounts (@stls.org, @pypl.org) are provided to member library staff (full or part time) for the purpose of facilitating communication between and among library staff within a library and between libraries and STLS.
 - a. Email accounts may be provided to member library trustees upon request of the library Director.
 - b. Email accounts may not be provided to members of Friends groups, volunteers or any other individual or organization.
2. Requests for email accounts must come from library directors or board presidents.
3. In the case of a newly appointed library director or manager, the request may come from the library's board of trustees or the interim director.
4. Requests for email accounts are to be made to the STLS IT staff.
5. When a STLS staff person or member library staff person leaves the employment of a member library it is the responsibility of the library director or board to notify STLS, in writing or email, that the account should be suspended. If STLS does not receive written notification, the account will remain active. The suspension request should indicate which of the following actions should be taken:
 - a. The email account will be set to the status of "disabled," which prevents the account receiving any emails and will not allow anyone access to the account; or
 - b. The password for the account will be changed and provided to the library director or so the account can remain active and be monitored. Once it is determined that all relevant activity has been transferred to other active accounts, the account will be deleted.
 - c. Inactive accounts, those where no login has been made in three (3) months and then deleted.
6. The STLS email service is setup to automatically delete emails that are older than 60 days in the "Trash" folders.
7. STLS email accounts should be used primarily for conducting business on behalf of the member library; personal communication is permitted on a limited basis. In particular, STLS email accounts should not be used to purchase goods or services intended for personal use.
8. STLS email accounts and their contents are the sole property of STLS and the member library, not the employee.
9. Employees should be aware that they do not have a right to privacy as related to the email account or its contents.
10. All STLS email content is treated as a business record. Emails are subject to Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests and may be the subject of a law enforcement subpoena or warrant.

11. STLS may authorize access to a member library email account in a number of circumstances including, but not limited to:

- a. Situation involving the health or safety of people or property;
- b. Possible violations of STLS or member library regulations and policies;
- c. Other legal responsibilities or obligations of STLS or member libraries.

12. The STLS email system shall not to be used for the creation or distribution of any disruptive or offensive messages, including comments about race, gender, disabilities, age, sexual orientation, pornography, religious beliefs and practice, political beliefs, or national origin. Employees who receive any emails with this type of content from any STLS or member library employee should report the matter to their supervisor immediately.

13. All email users with a STLS provided account must participate at least annually in Security Awareness Training made available by STLS twice per year.

Password Protection

A password should be used to protect access to any staff or user account. Examples include e-mail accounts, domain accounts, web site admin accounts, file storage access accounts, and patron accounts.

Password Construction

Passwords should be constructed as a passphrase using a minimum of 16 characters that include lower and upper case letters, a number and a special character. An example of this Blu3GatorButterP#p. See <https://xkcd.com/936/> for more information.

When a password is expired a new password should be created by changing more than 1 or 2 characters. Password expiration periods may be different for certain resources.

Remote Access

Defined as connecting to the organization's network from any host or network external to STLS.

1. A password following STLS Password Guidelines is required.
2. Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) should be utilized.
3. A Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection is required for all access to patron data.
4. Web browser access should use https: sites.
5. The remote device should have all Operating System (OS) and application security patches installed.
6. The SysAid Help Desk agent should be installed for patch management that is performed on a scheduled basis.

7. For mobile devices, the Meraki Systems Manager should be configured to provide mobile device management.

Server Security & Backup Procedures

Virtual Servers (VMs) are backed up using a Unitrends Backup Appliance software with a daily, weekly or monthly schedule depending on the resource type. These backups are kept up to a year with a daily for a week and weekly for a month, then monthly for a year schedule.

Virtual Server Storage Repositories (SRs) are replicated to Four County Library System on a daily basis.

Technology Equipment Disposal

Outdated technology equipment must be properly disposed of with a qualified electronics recycler. All storage devices must be removed and destroyed to prohibit the release of private data.

Data Breach Response

In the event of a data breach, STLS Division of IT will inform STLS administration of the specific time the breach took place, the resources affected, implications of the breach, individuals/institutions impacted, and the best way to remedy the situation.

IT staff will communicate with any appropriate 3rd party IT vendors that were involved in the breach or have the ability to help further minimize the breach's impacts. STLS IT staff are authorized to work within STLS' Purchasing Policy and any existing contracts with 3rd party IT vendors to recover or protect library system, member library or library patron data. STLS IT is also authorized to enter into contracts with a new 3rd party IT vendor to recover or protect data by following STLS' Purchasing Policy.

STLS will inform member libraries and library patrons if a data breach has occurred, and provide all pertinent and necessary details to verify professional or personal accounts have not been compromised. Information will be shared as soon all details are made available to STLS administration and the details are confirmed as true and accurate.

STLS administration will conduct an internal investigation following proper remedies of the data breach to determine its causes, responsible parties along with next steps to prevent future breaches. A full report of this breach will be issued to the STLS Board of Trustees and library system member libraries.

Information Logging and Standard

Access to private resources is logged in that particular resource. An example is WorkFlows access to the ILS data where staff access and patron transactions are logged in the ILS.

STLS network and server resources are logged in the Meraki dashboard or Network Performance Monitor for software changes, firmware updates, online status and other metrics.

Disaster Recovery Plan

STLS Division of IT will immediately inform STLS administration in the event a natural or technological disaster occurs preventing STLS from performing daily computing and networking operations. STLS IT will share the specific time the event occurred, the resources affected, implications of the event, individuals/institutions impacted, and the best way to remedy the situation.

IT staff will communicate with any appropriate 3rd party IT vendors that have been affected by the event or have the ability to minimize its impacts. STLS IT staff are authorized to work within STLS' Purchasing Policy and any existing contracts with 3rd party IT vendors to reinstate daily computing and networking operations. STLS IT is also authorized to enter into contracts with a new 3rd party IT vendor if existing vendors are not able to help.

STLS will inform member libraries and library patrons, if appropriate, in such an event, and provide all pertinent and necessary details. Information will be shared as soon all details are made available to STLS administration and the details are confirmed as true and accurate.

STLS administration will conduct an internal investigation following such an event to determine its causes, responsible parties along with next steps to prevent future instances. A full report will be issued to the STLS Board of Trustees and library system member libraries.

STLS currently partners with other library systems to backup library system data and IT-specific operations. The library system does not negotiate with outside parties as a result of criminal activity.

Wireless Access Policy

The goal of this policy is to protect the Southern Tier Library System technology-based resources from unauthorized use and/or malicious attack that could result in loss of information, damage to critical applications.

Supported Technology and Configuration

STLS supports the 802.11b through 802.11ax protocols as its wireless network standards, transmitting in the 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz radio frequency spectrums, with the intention of delivering speeds of up to 100 Mbps to mobile and wireless devices.

In order to provide WiFi access, cloud managed access points are installed inside and outside of STLS public libraries.

Non-supported access points may not be installed on the STLS managed library local area network. Those "rogue" access points are devices that are installed without the knowledge or permission of the STLS are security risks and will be blocked from access when discovered.

Separate WiFi networks may be configured for public (guest) access, staff (private) with WorkFlows access, staff (private) without WorkFlows access and Internet of Things (IoT) access. WiFi networks should use WPA2 encryption and a minimum of an eight-character passphrase for access.

Policy and Appropriate Use

1. Staff WiFi networks may not have public devices connected to them.
2. Staff WiFi with WorkFlows access networks may not have staff mobile devices connected to them.
3. Cameras, thermometers, sensors and other IoT devices may only be connected to a specific IoT WiFi network that cannot communicate with other staff or public devices.
4. The access points continuously conduct sweeps of the wireless network to ensure there are no rogue access points present.
5. The STLS Division of IT reserves the right to turn off any access point connected to the network that appears to put the systems, data, and users at risk.
6. Access point broadcast frequencies and channels are auto set.
7. All computer equipment and devices used to connect to the library network must display reasonable physical security measures. Wireless access users agree to acceptable use policy.
8. Guest WiFi access may use a captive portal or splash page.
9. WiFi usage statistics are provided monthly and annually.

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees January 15, 2013
Revised by the Board of Trustees on September 21, 2021***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

IT PROCUREMENT AND VENDOR SELECTION POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees and STLS Staff

REFERENCES: STLS Purchasing Policy
STLS Gift Acceptance Policy

STLS Division of Information Technology (IT) supports STLS staff and member libraries in developing, maintaining, and repairing necessary Information Technology (IT). Services include the Integrated Library System (ILS), internet connections, online collaboration platforms, email accounts, website hosting, wireless technologies, data warehousing, and hardware and software.

This service includes purchasing necessary hardware and software for STLS staff and member libraries. STLS' general *Purchasing Policy* provides guidelines for purchasing transactions. The *IT Procurement & Vendor Selection Policy* is a separate policy establishing guidelines for STLS IT staff to inventory and ethically purchase IT-related equipment for STLS and its members.

Procurement for STLS Staff and ~~On Behalf of~~ Member Libraries

STLS purchases hardware, software, and subscribes to various online collaboration platforms that allow staff to conduct routine work functions within the organization. STLS also makes similar purchases on behalf of its member libraries.

The STLS' *Technology Service & Support Agreement* or *Virtual Server Hosting Agreement* provide guidelines for purchasing decisions made on behalf of member libraries. Both agreements define the type of equipment STLS purchases for its members, the services provided to support the equipment, responsibilities of both STLS and its members, and associated costs. Agreements require administrative signatures of the member library and STLS prior to any purchase or installation of equipment.

Acknowledgement Form as Part of Procurement Process

The Division of Information Technology follows guidelines established in the STLS *Purchasing Policy* for all IT procurement. In addition to these guidelines, IT staff are required to sign off on all equipment purchased for its members. The *Equipment Detail and STLS IT Acknowledgement Form* section of the *Technology Services and Support Agreement*, which is an addendum to this policy, serves as documentation that IT staff and member libraries received all equipment and software specified in an *STLS Purchase Order*, a *Technology Service & Support Agreement*, or a *Virtual Server Hosting Agreement*.

The Acknowledgement Forms are required documentation of all procurement.

Member Library Signoff

Library directors, board presidents, or member-designated paid staff members

are authorized to verify STLS IT installation. The member library representative should verify that the equipment installed by STLS IT staff reflects the equipment specified in corresponding *Technology Service & Support Agreement* or a *Virtual Server Hosting Agreement*. STLS IT staff will sign the *Acknowledgement Form* section of the agreement, which then becomes part of the retained *Purchase Order* for this member's purchase.

STLS Staff Signoff

STLS division heads or a staff member within their division, who is receiving IT-related equipment as specified in an STLS *Purchase Order* are authorized to sign off on IT installation. The division head or staff member should verify that the installed equipment reflects all documentation in the original *Purchase Order* including records of quotes/bids, price analysis, packing slip and invoice. A signed packing slip becomes part of the retained *Purchase Order*.

Inventory

The STLS Assistant Director - Head of IT is responsible for working with IT staff to maintain an ongoing inventory of all active IT-related equipment purchased for STLS staff and member libraries. This inventory shall be maintained electronically, and may be furnished in print format for inspection as required. This inventory will also serve as a financial schedule for the STLS Business Office to calculate assets and depreciation. The Assistant Director - Head of IT must review this schedule annually for accuracy with the Accounting Specialist and the Executive Director is responsible for review and approval.

Vendor Selection

The STLS *Purchasing Policy* and *Gift Acceptance Policy* both outline the economic, legal, and ethical practices required for vendor selection. It is important to note all *Acknowledgment Form sections of the Technology Services and Support Agreement* reaffirm that IT staff are committed to the values and mission of Southern Tier Library System with each transaction. This includes competitive bidding, adherence to local, state, and federal purchasing laws, and avoiding as well as disclosing all conflicts of interest.

STLS IT may maintain vendors from year to year. This process of relationship building allows the organization to purchase equipment and software efficiently, while securing competitive pricing. The vendor relationship should be reassessed as needed to support competitive markets and ensure competitive pricing for STLS and its members.

STLS and the Division of Information Technology recognize all vendor relationships are professional. STLS IT staff will reject any equipment, software, or services a vendor offers for free or at a discounted rate to the organization or staff member. This includes

IT staff rejecting free equipment, software, or services from a vendor whether or not there is an established STLS contract.

***Adopted by the STLS Board of Trustees on January 21, 2020
Revised by Board of Trustees on January 20, 2026***

Appendix to Policy

Technology Service and Support Agreement

Service Overview

The goal of this Technology Service and Support Agreement between the Southern Tier Library System (“STLS”) and the undersigned member library is to provide our membership with support for and access to secure, cost-effective technology to fulfill the needs of their communities. To that end, we use our expertise to procure and support their hardware and software purchases and licensing as requested. This agreement details the services that will be provided for all technology products purchased through the Southern Tier Library System. New equipment that is not purchased through STLS is eligible for service and support upon pre-approval from the STLS Information Technology Department on a case-by-case basis.

*Cost

For any purchase where STLS is acting on behalf of the member library, the member library will be responsible for the cost of the equipment. The additional cost for support and maintenance of this equipment will be invoiced to the member library at the following rates:

- Per Desktop computer: \$750/5 years of service and support provided by STLS from the installation date.
- Per Laptop computer: \$750/5 years of service and support provided by STLS from the installation date.
- A Flat Discount of \$75 per device will be applied for Contracts Paid in Full.
- For all contracts not paid in full, yearly billing (\$165 per year, per device) in which the discount will not be eligible.

- Printer (desktop and receipt): 1 desktop and receipt printer installation/setup per purchased PC will be included in the initial cost.

**Current pricing through Dell for similar support and maintenance is \$200 - \$390 per computer per year. STLS is \$50 below the lowest level pricing when a member pays in full, and \$35 below this pricing when a member makes yearly payments.*

What’s Included

Procurement consultation and purchase planning is a core service of STLS and we will not charge for this service. As part of the Technology Service and Support Agreement STLS will:

- Purchase equipment to fulfill the specific need of the member library in a timely manner.
- Install purchased equipment at the member library.
- Troubleshoot and service supported operating systems, software, applications, and approved peripherals for a period of 5 years from the device’s installation date, remotely and on-site.
- Manage any cases that fall under manufacturer warranties on behalf of the member library.
- Support installation, reinstallation, upgrade, performance, administrative, and configuration assistance on hardware and software.

STLS reserves the right to deny support for devices that are older than 5 years from the installation date if it is deemed cost ineffective. Any device outside of the 5 years from the installation date after which the device will no longer be eligible for technical service or support provided by STLS. These devices will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

What’s Not Included

- Service and support for previously used and donated equipment.
- Service and support for equipment older than 5 years.
- Service for any printers outside of the initial installation and setup.
- Support or service for any self-inflicted, malicious, or willful sabotaging of equipment.

Supported Products

The list of supported products will change over time and the following list is not meant to be exhaustive. Due to the fluctuating prices of technology equipment, STLS will provide members with a quarterly selection of equipment and prices to choose from. STLS will not support any downloadable game not listed in the **Supported Products** section.

Hardware	Software
Dell products	SirsiDynix Workflows
Apple products	Games: Minecraft, etc.
Hewlett-Packard products	Microsoft Office
Receipt printers	Web browsers: Google Chrome; Mozilla Firefox; Internet Explorer
Barcode scanners	Operating systems: Windows 10 Pro/Enterprise; Windows Server 2016; Mac OS X
Chrome OS devices	Adobe Reader

Device Security and Software Updates

STLS will periodically update any equipment purchased through the agreement in order to fulfill its obligation to member libraries to maintain the security and integrity of its IT network and infrastructure.

Member Library Responsibilities

- Authority to grant access: the undersigned member library grants permission to STLS designated employees to access client locations necessary to fulfill the terms of this agreement, to perform physical inventory of equipment previously purchased through the agreement, and has the authority to allow STLS this permission.
- Cooperate with STLS IT staff: the undersigned member library will assist STLS IT staff with the maintenance and support of devices purchased through this agreement.
- Security Notification Policy: the undersigned member library must report any damaged or compromised equipment purchased through this agreement to STLS via the STLS Help Desk either by phone or designated email. It is the responsibility of the member library to ensure all security issues are reported in a timely manner.

Equipment Details & STLS Acknowledgement Form:

Agreed and accepted by:

Signature

Date

Name of authorized signer

Title (Director or Board President)

Library

Signature

Date

Brian Hildreth
Executive Director
Southern Tier Library System

Please Choose a Payment Option Below:

I, _____, state that I agree to pay my STLS Contract in Full, for which I will receive a \$75 discount per device as stated above.

OR:

I, _____, state that I agree to pay yearly on my STLS Contract, making the contract ineligible for the \$75 discount per device as stated above PO #: _____

Make/model/serial number:

Purchase date:

Installation date:

Make/model/serial number:

Purchase date:

Installation date:

Make/model/serial number:

Purchase date:

Installation date:

Make/model/serial number:

Purchase date:

Installation date:

Make/model/serial number:

Purchase date:

Installation date:

Make/model/serial number:

Purchase date:

Installation date:

INTERN AND VOLUNTEER POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Trustees, Staff, Interns, and Volunteers

REFERENCES: STLS Authority of the Board Policy
STLS Internship Application Form
STLS Volunteer Application Form

An STLS intern or volunteer is anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of STLS staff. Interns and volunteers are a valuable resource to STLS, its staff, and its Board of Trustees. STLS supports the engagement of interns and volunteers where possible. Interns and volunteers providing services to STLS must comply with STLS policies and procedures.

All candidates must submit an Intern or Volunteer Application Form. Appropriate STLS staff will then interview prospective interns and volunteers to assess their interest in and suitability for available opportunities. Volunteers under the age of 18-years must obtain Parental/Guardian Consent

Volunteers are defined as any member of the public who wish to support the mission of STLS by completing routine, non-clerical and non-professional task which benefit the organization as a whole. Examples of work might include, but are not limited to making photocopies, stuffing mailers, shelving materials, organizing files, preparing crafts, assisting with events, and shelf reading.

Interns are defined as anyone enrolled in a higher education institution and working towards the completion of a degree. In addition to completing the Intern Application Form, prospective interns should provide detailed information about the requirements of their internship from their educational institution. Details should include required tasks, projects, outcomes, institutional contacts, deadlines, and STLS reporting requirements. There is an understanding that internships are timebound with a

specific start and end date. STLS can work with the intern and educational institution to develop a program that meets the internship’s requirements.

STLS reserves the right to decline an intern or volunteer if the library system believes the candidate does not possess the basic knowledge, skills, abilities, and general interest to complete a project or position requirements. STLS may also release an intern or volunteer from assignment if they do not execute the required responsibilities as agreed upon at the start of their internship or volunteerism, or if they do not adhere to STLS policies and procedures.

Adopted by STLS Board of Trustees on March 19, 2013

Revised by the Board of Trustees on September 17, 2019; January 16, 2024; March 17, 2026

**Internship Application Form
Southern Tier Library System**

Applicant Information

- Full Name: _____
- Primary Phone Number: _____
- Email Address: _____
- Current Address: _____

Educational Background

- Current Institution: _____
- Degree / Program: _____
- Year of Study: _____
- Expected Graduation Date: _____

***Internship Details**

- Preferred STLS Division: _____
- Desired Internship Period: _____
- Availability (days & hours): _____
- Total Number of Hours Required: _____

*Please attach specific internship requirements from your educational institution including the name and contact information of your internship program coordinator. This information will help us facilitate your internship if approved.

Skills & Experience

- Relevant Skills (e.g., cataloging, IT, customer service):

- Previous Work / Volunteer Experience (if any):

Motivation Statement

- Why are you interested in an internship at STLS?

References (Please provide contacts for two individuals)

- Reference Name: _____
- Relationship: _____
- Phone: _____
- Email: _____

- Reference Name: _____
- Relationship: _____
- Phone: _____
- Email: _____

Declaration

I hereby declare that the information provided above is true and accurate. I understand that submitting this application does not guarantee placement as an intern.

- Applicant Signature: _____
- Date: _____

**Volunteer Application Form
Southern Tier Library System**

Applicant Information

- Full Name: _____
- *Date of Birth (if under the Age of 18 at time of application): _____
- Primary Phone Number: _____

- Email Address: _____
- Home Address: _____

***If under the Age of 18, please have the Parent/Legal Guardian Authorization Form completed.**

Emergency Contact

- Name: _____
- Relationship: _____
- Primary Phone Number: _____

Availability

- **Days Available (check all that apply):**
 Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday
- **Preferred Time(s):**
 Morning Afternoon Evening
- **How many hours per week can you volunteer?** _____

Areas of Interest (check all that apply)

- Working with library materials
- Events & workshops
- Administrative support
- Other: _____

Skills & Experience

- Relevant skills or experience (library, customer service, education, etc.):

Interest

- Why would you like to volunteer with STLS?

References (Please provide contacts for two individuals)

- Reference Name: _____
- Relationship: _____

- Primary Phone: _____
- Email: _____

- Reference Name: _____
- Relationship: _____
- Primary Phone: _____
- Email: _____

Additional Information

- Do you require community service hours? Yes No
- If yes, number of hours needed: _____
- Are you a student? Yes No
- Are your volunteer activities part of a school requirement? Yes No
- If you answered, "Yes" to school requirement, please provide school name and school coordinator.
 School Name: _____
 School Coordinator Name/Email Contact: _____
- Do your volunteer hours need to be reported to any other agency or organization?
 Please provide agency or organization contact information including: organization name, contact, person, phone number, and email address:

Agreement

I certify that the information provided is true and accurate. I understand that submitting this application does not guarantee placement as a volunteer.

- Signature: _____
- Date: _____

**Parent/Legal Guardian Authorization Form
for Volunteers Under the Age of 18 at Time of Application**

Parent/Legal Guardian Information

- Full Name of Parent/Legal Guardian: _____
- Relationship to Volunteer: _____
- Primary Phone Number: _____ Email: _____
- Home Address: _____

Authorization and Consent

I, the undersigned parent or legal guardian, give permission for the child named above to participate as a **volunteer** at the Southern Tier Library System.

I understand that:

- Volunteer duties may include, but are not limited to, shelving materials, assisting with programs, and general support activities under staff supervision.
- The child will not be considered an employee of STLS and will not receive wages or benefits.
- STLS will provide reasonable supervision; however, I acknowledge that participation involves normal risks associated with volunteer activities in a nonprofit office setting.

Release and Acknowledgment

I release and hold harmless Southern Tier Library System, its governing board of trustees, employees, and volunteers from liability for injuries or damages arising from the child's participation, except where caused by gross negligence or willful misconduct as defined by law.

I certify that the information provided is accurate and complete.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

STLS POLICY MANUAL

INTERNET SAFETY POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees
STLS Employees
STLS Member Libraries

REFERENCES: NYS DLD Achieving Digital Equity in New York: An Outline for Collaborative Change
Consolidated Laws of New York State: N Y Civil Practice Law and Rules, Section 4509.
www.ftc.gov. (Federal Trade Commission Website, 2012)
Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA); *Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act (NCIPA)* US Congress 2000.
STLS' Information Security Policy, and Information Technology Plan

INTRODUCTION:

Southern Tier Library System (STLS) supports the goals and objectives of the New York State Division of Library Development's "Achieving Digital Equity in New York: An Outline for Collaborative Change Initiative". This initiative is multifaceted, and many of its components are addressed through STLS' current Plan of Service and Information Technology Plan. The library system's Internet Safety Policy is intended to address specific elements regarding how information resource sharing takes place through an Integrated Library System (ILS), and how internet connectivity is administered across a cooperative group of member libraries.

STLS performs the following activities to maintain patron privacy and a safe space for online information resource sharing:

- operates an Integrated Library System (ILS), that allows member libraries to participate in a shared patron database and the shared online catalog (STARCat) as well as to circulate materials electronically;
- provides member libraries with technical assistance on the use of hardware, software, and peripherals used to access the STLS automated network;
- maintains a wide-area network that provides access to the Internet for libraries that have no other high-speed access, and connects libraries to the STLS ILS for sharing of library resources.

PRIVACY:

Southern Tier Library System will take reasonable and prudent measures to protect the privacy of data provided by patrons and generated by the system and its member libraries when using the system's Integrated Library System (ILS) and the shared wide-area network. The contents of the STLS wide-area network and ILS are confidential; unauthorized users are prohibited from attempting to gain access to the network, or to store information. STLS uses firewall equipment, software, and other means to protect the confidentiality of library records. However, there is no absolute guarantee of the privacy of personal information stored on STLS network servers and no absolute guarantee of the privacy of information and communications, including e-mail, that travels across the STLS wide-area network. STLS maintains personal information only as long as needed to conduct library business. Library records are legally confidential under New York State law:

New York Civil Practice Law & Rules Section 4509 Library Records.

Library records, which contain names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of public, free association, school, college and university libraries and library systems of this state, including but not limited to records related to the circulation of library materials, computer database searches, inter-library loan transactions, reference queries, requests for photocopies of library materials, films or records, shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except that such records may be disclosed to the extent necessary for the proper operation of such library and shall be disclosed upon request or consent of the user or pursuant to subpoena, court order or where otherwise required by statute.³

³ Civil Practice Laws and Rules, Sec. 4509. Consolidated Laws of New York State. NYS Code website 2012.

INTERNET ACCESS:

The Internet is a global electronic network, mostly unregulated, on which anyone may place any content or communicate any content. STLS and its member libraries do not endorse and do not assume responsibility for any content found or any communications made on the Internet.

STLS maintains an Internet filtering mechanism for use on all computers at STLS and in its member libraries. The filtering mechanism will, at a minimum, block access to the three categories of visual depictions specified by the Federal Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA)—visual depictions of material deemed child pornography, obscene, or any material deemed harmful to minors.⁴ The filtering mechanism can be disabled on individual computers as needed by local libraries. STLS evaluated various filtering mechanisms before choosing the most appropriate method; however, the System does not guarantee the effectiveness of Internet filtering.

It shall be the responsibility of the member libraries on the STLS wide-area network to supervise and monitor the usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy and the Children’s Internet Protection Act.

ACCESS BY MINORS:

The valuable information, opportunities for learning and interactions available on this world-wide network far outweigh the possibility that users may obtain information that is not consistent with the educational and research goals of this service.

Parents or legal guardians must assume responsibility for deciding which library resources are appropriate for their own children, guiding their children in the use of the Internet, and informing them of materials they should not use.

While STLS affirms and acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians to monitor and determine their children’s access to materials and resources, including those available through the Internet, the System has taken certain measures designed to assist in the safe and effective use of these resources by all minors.

1. To address the issue of safety and security of minors when using e-mail and other forms of direct electronic communications, as well as the unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors, STLS urges minors and their parents or guardians to keep in mind the following safety guidelines:
 - a. Never give out identifying information such as home address, school name, or telephone number.
 - b. Let parents or guardians decide whether personal family information such as age, marital status, or financial information should be revealed.

⁴ www.fcc.gov. Children’s Internet Protection Act, 2012

- c. Never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone via the computer without parents' or guardians' approval.
 - d. Never respond to messages that are suggestive, obscene, threatening, or make one uncomfortable. Tell a parent, guardian or library staff member if you receive such a message.
 - e. Have parents or guardians report an incident to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children via www.cybertipline.com or call 1-800-843-5678 if they become aware of the transmission of child pornography.
 - f. Remember that people online may not be who they say they are.
 - g. Remember that not everything they ~~one~~ reads online may ~~not~~ be true.
 - h. Don't open e-mail, files, or website pages sent to you by people or organizations that you don't know or trust.
2. To address the issue of unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking" and other unlawful activities by minors online, minors and all other users of STLS member libraries are hereby advised that any unlawful activity is strictly prohibited.
 3. Assisting member libraries in creating and posting an introductory web page "splash" for wireless Internet access requires a patron to verify that they accept the library's terms for using that access. Unless the patron agrees to this verification, they will be blocked from using the library's wireless Internet connection.

PROHIBITED LIBRARY ACTIVITY:

All users of electronic STLS services in any location is strictly prohibited from all illegal activity or unlawful purposes, including but not limited to:

1. hacking;
2. harassing or invading the privacy of other users;
3. attempting to degrade the network or disrupt its performance;
4. using the network for unlawful commercial purposes;
5. sending "spam" or unsolicited advertising of any kind;
6. violation of copyright law, including downloading copyrighted works without authorization by the copyright owner.

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on May 14, 2003
Revised by the Board of Trustees on June 15, 2004; June, 19, 2012; April 16, 2024***

INVESTMENT POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees

REFERENCES: STLS Finance Policy
STLS Authority of the Board Policy
NYS General Municipal Law, Section 11

It is the policy of the Southern Tier Library System to invest funds in a manner that will maximize the security of principal, satisfy cash flow demands, and use approved methods to provide the highest possible return. All investments will conform to applicable laws and regulations of New York State.

Investments shall be made with judgment and care, under circumstances then prevailing, which persons of prudence, discretion and intelligence might exercise in the management of their own affairs.

Primary Objectives of the System's financial investments:

- **Preservation of Capital:** The preservation of capital is the foremost objective of the investment program. At no time should the safety of the System's funds be impaired or jeopardized. All investments shall be undertaken in a manner that first seeks to preserve capital and secondly attempts to fulfill other investment objectives.
- **Liquidity:** The System's funds are to remain sufficiently liquid to enable the System to meet anticipated operating requirements.
- **Return on Investment (Yield):** The System's investments should generate the highest available return without sacrificing the first two objectives.

Delegation of Authority

The Finance & Facilities Committee shall be responsible for the oversight of the investment program and the establishment of investment procedures, including adequate internal controls to provide a satisfactory level of accountability, consistent with this Policy. No person may engage in an investment transaction except as provided under the terms of this Policy and the established procedures.

Authorized and Suitable Investments

In accordance with NYS General Municipal Law Section 11, the following investments are deemed to be suitable for inclusion in the System's investment program.

- U.S. Treasury Bills and notes for which the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government is pledged for the repayment of principal and interest. Bills are short term (one year or less) obligations issued and sold at a discount. Notes have fixed coupon rates with original maturities of between one and five years.

- Demand deposit accounts (such as checking accounts and savings accounts) established with local financial institutions.
- Certificates of Deposit (CD'S) issued by local financial institutions.

Designation of Depositories

The banks and trust companies authorized for the deposit of monies will be designated at the annual Organizational Meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Collateralizing of Deposits

In accordance with the provisions of NYS General Municipal Law, Section 10, all deposits, including Certificates of Deposit and special time deposits, in excess of the amount insured under the provisions of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act shall be secured:

1. By a pledge of "eligible securities" with an aggregate "market value", or as provided by NYS General Municipal Law, Section 10, equal to the aggregate amount of deposits.
2. By an eligible "irrevocable letter of credit" issued by a qualified bank other than the bank with the deposits in favor of the government for a term not to exceed ninety days with an aggregate value equal to 140% of the aggregate amount of deposits and the agreed upon interest, if any. A qualified bank is one whose commercial paper and other unsecured short-term obligations are rated in one of the three highest rating categories by at least one nationally recognized statistical rating organization or by a bank that is in compliance with applicable Federal minimum risk-based capital requirements.

Reporting

The Finance & Facilities Committee shall provide the STLS Board of Trustees with monthly financial investment reports which clearly provide current information such as the types of investment, depository institutions, principal balances, rates of return and maturities.

All participants involved in the investment process shall refrain from personal business activity that could conflict with proper execution of the investment program, or which could impair their ability to make impartial investment decisions.

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees July 20, 2010
Revised by the Board of Trustees September 16, 2014; May 17, 2022***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

American Library Association - Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948, by the ALA Council; amended February 2, 1961; amended June 28, 1967; amended January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 24, 1996.

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on September 16, 2008
Reaffirmed by the Board of Trustees on July 18, 2017; October 18, 2022***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees

REFERENCES: STLS By-laws
STLS Authority of the Board Policy

The Southern Tier Library System will hold an annual organizational meeting to elect officers of the Board and take the necessary actions to ensure the proper management of STLS for the coming fiscal year. This annual organizational meeting will be held on the third Tuesday of January each year. In the

event the organizational meeting is cancelled due to unforeseen circumstance, the Executive Committee will reschedule the meeting per Open Meetings Law for a time in the same month.

The current President will call the meeting to order, swear in new trustees, and administer their Oaths of Office. The chair of the Nominating Committee will conduct the election of new officers before turning the meeting over to the newly elected President. The meeting will then be conducted by the newly elected President.

The Board of Trustees will then:

- Appoint the STLS Financial Clerk, Internal Auditor and Alternate Auditor of the Board, External Auditor and Attorney;
- Authorize the Executive Director to certify payroll and make grant applications;
- Authorize the Executive Director to certify payments of a fixed nature without prior audit upon submission to the Treasurer of a voucher. This should include credit card, and utility bills, insurance premiums, mortgage payments, payroll deductions, taxes and fringe benefit expenses.
- Establish the business mileage reimbursement rate for the current year based on the published IRS rate for business mileage;
- Designate the official Bank Depositories and Newspaper;
- Designate Authorized Signatories for Checks;
- Establish Treasurer and Internal Auditor surety coverage for the year;
- Establish the calendar and locations for Board Meetings for the next twelve months.
- Complete and submit signed Disclosure of Interests forms.
- Take any other such organizational actions as may be necessary.

The Board will conduct its general business following the approval of its annual meeting action items.

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on June 21, 2011
Revised November 21, 2017; December 20, 2022***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees
General Public

The Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees incorporates an opportunity for Public Comment during its regular board meetings in accordance with New York State's Open Meetings Law. Residents of the library system's service area may use this time to verbally address the board. The Library System Board reserves the right to determine the manner in which public comments are received in order to

maintain a fair, respectful, and well-managed meeting. The following Rules and Procedures apply to the Library System’s Public Comment section of the meeting Agenda:

Rules and Procedures for Public Comment

- Participants must sign in and identify community of residence
- Participants must be a resident of Allegany, Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, or Yates counties
- Residents will be recognized in order of sign-in
- Residents will be allotted a maximum of 3-minutes to speak
- A resident can only speak once, and can only use *their* 3-minutes to speak
- Residents must limit their comments to library system-related matters
- A designated library system trustee will preside over the meeting
- A designated library system trustee will introduce each resident and keep track of the time
- The Library System Board may limit the total amount of time allowed for Public Comment
- The Library System Board may choose only to listen to residents during Public Comment
- The Library System Board may choose not to address an issue, or answer questions during Public Comment
- The Library System Board may not vote upon any issue raised during Public Comment unless specified on the agenda

Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on June 18, 2024

STLS POLICY MANUAL

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

APPLIES TO: Southern Tier Library Board of Trustees, Employees and Volunteers

REFERENCES: Authority of the Board Policy
Organizational Meeting Policy
Trustee Job Description
Disaster Preparedness Policy
Ethical Behavior Policy
Social Media Policy
STLS Website (www.stls.org)

The Board of Trustees acknowledges public relations is important to the mission of the organization. Every person of the organization, paid or unpaid, is charged with positively representing STLS to our community.

Official statements to the public and media will be made by the Executive Director or the Board President in consultation with the Executive Director. If it is necessary for anyone other than the Executive Director or Board President to provide the public with information, such information will be reviewed and approved by the Executive Director and Board President prior to its release. The Assistant Director-Director of Librarianship may act in the Executive Director's place when the Executive Director is not available within a timely manner.

Social media platforms, including mass email communication services, play an important and active role in STLS communications to the public and its members. The Engagement Consultant, in consultation with the Executive Director and Assistant Director-Director of Librarianship, manages overall social media content. Library system staff will adhere to the board approved *Social Media Policy* when sharing information or images.

Regarding print media, the STLS Board of Trustees will designate the official newspaper to be used for all public announcements at its annual Organization Meeting in January.

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees November 20, 2012
Revised by the Board of Trustees on July 21, 2020; November 18, 2025***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

PURCHASING POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees; STLS employees

REFERENCES: NYS Municipal Law, Article 5 (A) Section 103 and Section 104-b
STLS Authority of the Board Policy
STLS Conflict of Interest Policy

STLS is a cooperative library system. It is neither a political subdivision nor a district thereof and is not subject to General Municipal Law except when purchasing for a member library that must comply with NYS statutes.

It is the policy of the Southern Tier Library System (STLS) to obtain the maximum practical value when purchasing goods and services required for the effective operation of the organization consistent with the provisions of this policy, standard business practices, and in accordance with applicable laws and statutes. STLS requires competitive bids for certain items and services to keep costs at a minimum; to give interested, qualified suppliers an equal opportunity to supply goods and services to STLS; and to guard against favoritism, extravagance, fraud, waste and abuse. This policy sets forth the provisions to ensure compliance with applicable NYS General Municipal Law and STLS policies.

Purchased Items - Purchased items include all goods and services obtained using STLS funds except the following: postage, travel, utilities and loans. All purchasing actions over \$100 (one-hundred dollars) in value will require a purchase order issued by the STLS Business Office. Insurance, legal and professional services do not require issuance of a purchase order but will follow competition guidelines.

Authorization to Commit Funds and Sign Purchase Orders – The authorization to commit funds is described in the STLS Authority of the Board Policy, Commitment of Funds Section. Purchase orders may be signed by the Executive Director or their designee.

Competition Guidelines –

Formal Bids – When STLS executes procurement actions for member libraries that are required to comply with New York State Purchasing regulations, all purchasing actions will be in accordance with applicable New York State Municipal law.

When STLS executes procurement actions for itself or member libraries that are not required to comply with New York State Purchasing regulations, the following shall apply. All contracts for public works involving an expenditure of more than \$35,000.00 (thirty-five thousand dollars) and all purchase contracts involving an expenditure of more than \$20,000.00 (twenty thousand dollars) will be awarded

based on best value resulting from responses from responsible suppliers to a written Request for Proposal. STLS will issue a Request for Proposal as needed for awards for professional services and insurance. Exceptions to the requirement for a formal bid or proposal are the same as described in Section 103 of NYS Municipal Law Article 5 (a).

Other Purchases – Purchases up to \$3,000 (three thousand dollars) may be justified by catalog/retail pricing. Purchases from \$3,000 (three thousand dollars) to \$10,000 (ten thousand dollars) require quotes from at least two qualified suppliers. Purchases over \$10,000 (ten thousand dollars) require quotes from at least three qualified suppliers in response to a formal written request for proposals issued by the library system specifying the type of product or work required, and the timeline for delivering such goods and services. Purchases may not be fragmented to avoid higher approval authorities.

Single and Sole Source Purchases – Single source purchases are allowed. Single source purchases are those in which other qualified sources may be available but competition would not be beneficial because of prior agreements, professional association, or technical considerations. Sole source purchases are those in which there are no other qualified suppliers. In the absence of competition, reasonable attempts to negotiate fair and reasonable pricing are required.

Purchase Order Documentation - A file that includes a copy of the purchase order, records of quotes/bids, price analysis, packing slip, invoice, vendor claim form and approval stamp, and check or voucher number will be established for each purchase order issued and filed in accordance with established procedures. If it is a sole or single source procurement, or the low bidder is not chosen, justification for the price paid is required.

Receipt of Goods and Services – Receipt of goods and services will be verified in writing by a staff person other than the originator of the purchase. Email confirmation addressed to the originator of the purchase will suffice for online purchases that represent non-physical items (software, licenses, platform fees).

Inspection and Monitoring – To ensure compliance with purchase order requirements, goods and services received will be inspected or verified by the originator of the request and results documented in the purchase order file. Services provided will be monitored by a staff person to ensure that contractual agreements are met.

Supplier Qualification – Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure suppliers providing goods and services to STLS are qualified and reputable. It is STLS policy to purchase goods and services from qualified local sources when prices are fair and reasonable.

Sales Tax Exemption – STLS is not required to pay New York State and local sales tax on purchased items. However, STLS will pay New York State sales tax for meal expenditures for staff travel if it is inconvenient for a retail establishment to accept and process a sales tax-exempt form.

Ethical Practices and Conflict of Interest - Individuals purchasing goods and services must conduct business in a professional manner and qualified vendors must be given an equal opportunity to compete for STLS business. Purchasing decisions should be made with integrity and objectivity, free from any personal bias or benefit. The STLS Conflict of Interest Policy provides specific guidelines regarding gifts, ~~and~~ gratuities, services, and conduct for STLS persons holding interests in suppliers doing business with STLS. Employees who would benefit from a given prospective supplier selling goods or services to STLS may not participate in the supplier selection process.

Sustainability- STLS strives to be a responsible steward of its resources, including decreasing its impact on the environment. Toward that end, STLS shall, wherever practicable and efficient, endeavor to use sustainable and environmentally sound procurement practices in purchasing supplies and equipment. The following should be taken into consideration when making purchases, although this is not an exhaustive list:

- Recyclability of the items
- Amount of post-consumer recycled content in the items and packaging
- Disposal of items such as batteries and hardware
- Transportation distances and impacts for delivery of the items
- Ability for an item to be repaired or repurposed rather than repurchased
- The environmentally friendly practices of the vendors under consideration.

Nothing in this policy shall prohibit STLS from considering a product or vendor that is more suitable for the intended use and/or available at a more competitive price that does not meet these aspirational standards.

Unauthorized Purchases – No individual may commit STLS funds without proper authorization.

Responsibility – The Executive Director, or acting director, of STLS has overall responsibility for purchasing for STLS and for implementing effective procedures that comply with the requirements of this policy and which demonstrate effective internal controls.

***Adopted by the STLS Board of Trustees September 20, 2011
Revised by the Board of Trustees September 17, 2015; September 17, 2019; September 19, 2023;
November 19, 2024***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

RECORDS RETENTION & DISPOSITION POLICY

The purposes of the Policy include (a) retention and maintenance of documents necessary for the proper functioning of the Southern Tier Library System as well as to comply with applicable legal requirements; (b) disposition of documents which no longer need to be retained; and (c) guidance for library system administrators, the Board of Trustees, staff, and other stakeholders with respect to their responsibilities concerning document retention and disposition.

Administration

Executive Director and Assistant Director – Director of Librarianship shall be the administrators (“Administrator”) in charge of implementing this Policy in partnership with the Division of Administration staff. The Administrator’s responsibilities shall include supervising and coordinating the retention and destruction of documents pursuant to this Policy and particularly the Document Retention Schedule included below. The Administrator’s shall also be responsible for documenting the actions taken to maintain and/or destroy organization documents and retaining such documentation. The Administrators may also modify the Document Retention Schedule as necessary to comply with law and/or to include additional or revised document categories as may be appropriate to reflect updated organizational policies and procedures. Modifications must be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Privacy

It shall be the responsibility of the Administrators to determine how privacy laws will apply to the organization’s documents from, and with respect to, employees and other constituencies; to establish reasonable procedures for compliance with such privacy laws; and to allow for their audit and review on a regular basis.

Electronic Documents and Records

Electronic documents will be retained as if they were paper documents. Therefore, any electronic files that fall into one of the document types on the Document Retention Schedule will be maintained for the appropriate amount of time. Backup and recovery methods will be tested on a regular basis.

Emergency Planning

STLS records will be stored in a safe, secure, and accessible manner, in fire- and water-resistant organizers, and where appropriate stored electronically.

Document Destruction

The Administrators are responsible for the ongoing process of identifying records which have met the required retention period and for overseeing their disposition. Disposition of financial and personnel-related documents will be accomplished by shredding. Document disposition will be suspended immediately upon any indication of an official investigation or when a lawsuit is filed or appears imminent. Disposition will be reinstated upon conclusion of any investigation or lawsuit.

Compliance

Unauthorized modifications to or removal of records from STLS is not permitted. Disposition of records not in accordance with the Schedule below is prohibited.

Document Retention Schedule

<u>Document Type</u>	<u>Retention Period</u>
Accounting and Finance	
Annual Financial Statements and Audit Reports	Permanent
Cash Disbursements	Permanent
Cash Receipts	Permanent
Canceled Checks – special (e.g. taxes, loan payment)	Permanent
Chart of Accounts	Permanent
Depreciation Schedules	Permanent
General Journal	Permanent
General Ledger	Permanent
Payroll records (NYS Retirement Recommendation)	55 years
Time cards and employee absence records	7 years
Accounts Payable Ledger and Schedules	7 years
Accounts Receivable Ledger and Schedules	7 years
Bank Reconciliations	7 years
Bank Statements, Deposit Books & Deposit Slips	7 years
Canceled Checks – routine	7 years
Check Copies/Stubs	7 years
Claim Sheets (Vouchers) and supporting bills	7 years

Division of Library Development Aid & Grant Statements	7 years
Employee Requests for Leave	7 years
Invoices to Customers/Member Libraries	7 years

Budget

Annual budget official copy when not included in minutes	Permanent
Budget status report (Cumulative)	7 years
Mid-Year budget revisions	Permanent
Preliminary or tentative budget	7 years
Special budget filed with State or Federal agency	Permanent

Grants Received and Disbursed

Grant Applications, Proposal Agreement, Narrative, Evaluation, and Annual Report for Approved Grants	7 years after close of grant
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Corporate and Exemption

Agendas and Other Board Meeting Documents	7 years
Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes	Permanent
Bylaws and Amendments	Permanent
Charter	Permanent
Disclosure of Interest Forms	7 years
Employer Identification (EIN)	Permanent
IRS Exemption Determination Letter	Permanent
Licenses and Permits	Permanent
SAM.gov Account and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)	Permanent
Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Certification	7 years
State Exemption Determination Letter	Permanent

Correspondence and Internal Memoranda

Correspondence and internal memoranda important to the organization or having lasting significance	Permanent, subject to review
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Electronic Mail (E-mail) to or from the organization

Electronic mail (e-mails) relating to a particular topic otherwise addressed in this Schedule should be retained for the same period as the topic to which they email relates, but may be retained in hard copy form with the document to which they relate.

E-mails considered important to the organization or of lasting significance should be printed and stored in a central repository.	Permanent, subject to review
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Employment, Personnel and Retirement

Employment Applications	3 years
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Employee Benefit Plans	Permanent
Personnel Records (NYS Retirement Recommendation)	Permanent
Retirement/Pension records (NYS Retirement)	Permanent

Insurance

Accident Reports and Insurance Claims Records	7 years
General Liability Insurance Policies	Permanent
Property, D&O, Workers' Compensation and Disability	7 years

Legal and Contracts

Contracts, related correspondence and other supporting documentation (still in effect)	Permanent
Legal correspondence	Permanent
Contracts, related correspondence and other supporting documentation (expired)	7 years after termination

Management and Miscellaneous

Annual Statistical Report of Member Libraries	Permanent
Member Libraries Annual Reports to Education Department	Permanent
NYS Public Library Construction Aid	7 years after close of grant
Policies and Procedures Manual	Current version with revision history
Strategic Plans	7 years after expiration
Summary of Library System Cost Share Schedules	7 years after termination

Property – Real and Personal

Personal Property Leases	10 years after termination
Property deeds and purchase/sale agreements	Permanent
Property Tax	Permanent
Real Property Leases	Permanent

Purchasing

Purchase Order, or similar record, used to obtain materials, supplies, or services.	7 years
Purchase request, estimate or similar record, used to make purchase.	7 years
Performance guarantee or written warranty for products or similar record.	7 years
Invoice statement or similar notification by vendor.	7 years
Packing slip, shipping ticket, or similar record used to verify receipt of materials or supplies	7 years
List or abstract of purchase orders, claims or contracts	7 years
Standing order file, used for purchase of materials/supplies received on a regular basis	7 years

Survey Records

Completed survey forms	0 after survey results prepared
Survey results, including official copy of survey form	7 years after completion

Tax

Annual information returns (W2, W3, 1099 etc.)	Permanent
IRS Rulings	Permanent
Tax returns and worksheets – federal & state	Permanent

***Approved by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees September 16, 2003;
Reviewed and revised April 16, 2019; April 8, 2025***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY

REFERENCES: New York State Labor Law Section 201-g(1)(b)

Introduction

Southern Tier Library System (STLS) is committed to maintaining a workplace free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of workplace discrimination. STLS has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of sexual harassment, and all library system stakeholders are required to work in a manner that prevents sexual harassment in the workplace. This Policy is one component of Southern Tier Library System's commitment to a discrimination-free work environment.

Sexual harassment is against the law. All employees have a legal right to a workplace free from sexual harassment, and employees can enforce this right by filing a complaint internally with STLS, or with a government agency, or in court under federal, state, or local antidiscrimination laws.

Policy:

1. Southern Tier Library System's Policy applies to all employees, applicants for employment, interns, whether paid or unpaid, trustees, contractors and persons conducting business with STLS including member libraries and their community members.
2. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Any employee or individual covered by this policy who engages in sexual harassment or retaliation will be subject to remedial and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
3. Retaliation Prohibition: No person covered by this Policy shall be subject to adverse employment action including being discharged, disciplined, discriminated against, or otherwise subject to adverse employment action because the employee reports an incident of sexual harassment, provides information, or otherwise assists in any investigation of a sexual harassment complaint. STLS has a

zero-tolerance policy for such retaliation against anyone who, in good faith complains or provides information about suspected sexual harassment. Any employee of Southern Tier Library System who retaliates against anyone involved in a sexual harassment investigation will be subjected to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Any employee, paid or unpaid intern, or non-employee working in the workplace who believes they have been subject to such retaliation should inform a supervisor, manager, or Executive Director. Any employee, paid or unpaid intern or non-employee who believes they have been a victim of such retaliation may also seek compensation in other available forums, as explained below in the section on Legal Protections.

4. A non-employee is someone who is (or is employed by) a member library, contractor, subcontractor, vendor, consultant, or anyone providing services in the workplace. Protected non-employees include persons commonly referred to as independent contractors, “gig” workers and temporary workers. Also included are persons providing equipment repair, cleaning services or any other services provided pursuant to a contract with the employer.

5. Sexual harassment is offensive, a violation of our policies, unlawful, and subjects Southern Tier Library System to liability for harm to victims of sexual harassment. Harassers may also be individually subject to liability. Employees of every level who engage in sexual harassment, including managers, supervisors, or the Executive Director, or who knowingly allow such behavior to continue, will be penalized for such misconduct.

6. Southern Tier Library System will conduct a prompt, thorough and confidential investigation that ensures due process for all parties whenever management receives a complaint about sexual harassment, or otherwise knows of possible sexual harassment occurring. Effective corrective action will be taken whenever sexual harassment is found to have occurred. All employees, including managers, supervisors and the Executive Director, are required to cooperate with any internal investigation of sexual harassment.

7. All employees are encouraged to report any harassment or behaviors that violate this policy. STLS will make available to all employees a complaint form to report harassment and file complaints.

8. Managers and supervisors are **required** to report any complaint that they receive, or any harassment that they observe, to the Executive Director.

9. This policy applies to all employees, paid or unpaid interns, trustees, and non-employees and all must follow and uphold this policy. This policy must be posted prominently in designated work locations and be provided to employees upon hiring.

What Is “Sexual Harassment”?

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is unlawful under federal, state, and (where applicable) local law. Sexual harassment includes harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and the status of being transgender.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome conduct which is either of a sexual nature, or which is directed at an individual because of that individual's sex when:

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, even if the complaining individual is not the intended target of the sexual harassment;
- Such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting an individual's employment.

A sexually harassing hostile work environment consists of words, signs, jokes, pranks, intimidation or physical violence which are of a sexual nature, or which are directed at an individual because of that individual's sex. Sexual harassment also consists of any unwanted verbal or physical advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements or sexually discriminatory remarks made by someone which are offensive or objectionable to the recipient, and cause the recipient discomfort or humiliation, which interfere with the recipient's job performance.

Sexual harassment also occurs when a person in authority tries to trade job benefits for sexual favors. This can include hiring, promotion, continued employment or any other terms, conditions or privileges of employment. This is also called "quid pro quo" harassment.

Any employee who feels harassed should complain so that any violation of this policy can be corrected promptly. Any harassing conduct, even a single incident, can be addressed under this policy.

Examples of sexual harassment

The following describes some of the types of acts that may be unlawful sexual harassment and that are strictly prohibited:

- Physical assaults of a sexual nature, such as:
 - Touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, brushing against another employee's body or poking another employees' body;
- Rape, sexual battery, molestation or attempts to commit these assaults.
- Unwanted sexual advances or propositions, such as:
 - Requests for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning the victim's job performance evaluation, a promotion or other job benefits or detriments;
- Subtle or obvious pressure for unwelcome sexual activities.

- Sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks, jokes or comments about a person’s sexuality or sexual experience, which create a hostile work environment.
- Sexual or discriminatory displays or publications anywhere in the workplace, such as:
 - Displaying pictures, posters, calendars, graffiti, objects, promotional material, reading materials or other materials that are sexually demeaning or pornographic. This includes such sexual displays on workplace computers or cell phones and sharing such displays while in the workplace.
- Hostile actions taken against an individual because of that individual’s sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and the status of being transgender, such as:
 - Interfering with, destroying or damaging a person’s workstation, tools or equipment, or otherwise interfering with the individual’s ability to perform the job;
- Sabotaging an individual’s work;
- Bullying, yelling, name-calling.

Who can be a target of sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment can occur between any individuals, regardless of their sex or gender. New York Law protects employees, paid or unpaid interns, and non-employees, including independent contractors, and those employed by companies contracting to provide services in the workplace. A perpetrator of sexual harassment can be a superior, a subordinate, a coworker or anyone in the workplace including an independent contractor, contract worker, vendor, client, customer or visitor.

Where can sexual harassment occur?

Unlawful sexual harassment is not limited to the physical workplace itself. It can occur while employees are traveling for business or at employer sponsored events or parties. Calls, texts, emails, and social media usage by employees can constitute unlawful workplace harassment, even if they occur away from the workplace premises or not during work hours.

What is “Retaliation”?

Unlawful retaliation can be any action that would keep a worker from coming forward to make or support a sexual harassment claim. Adverse action need not be job-related or occur in the workplace to constitute unlawful retaliation.

Such retaliation is unlawful under federal, state, and (where applicable) local law. The New York State Human Rights Law protects any individual who has engaged in “protected activity.” Protected activity occurs when a person has:

- filed a complaint of sexual harassment, either internally or with any anti-discrimination agency;

- testified or assisted in a proceeding involving sexual harassment under the Human Rights Law or other anti-discrimination law;
- opposed sexual harassment by making a verbal or informal complaint to management, or by simply informing a supervisor or manager of harassment;
- complained that another employee has been sexually harassed; or
- encouraged a fellow employee to report harassment.

Reporting Sexual Harassment

Preventing sexual harassment is everyone's responsibility. STLS cannot prevent or remedy sexual harassment unless it is reported. Any employee, paid or unpaid intern, trustee, or non-employee who has been subjected to behavior that may constitute sexual harassment is encouraged to report such behavior to their immediate supervisor or Executive Director in confidence. Anyone who witnesses or becomes aware of potential instances of sexual harassment should also report such behavior to their immediate supervisor or Executive Director in confidence. An employee who suspects the Executive Director is involved in behavior that may constitute sexual harassment is encouraged to take his or her concerns directly to the President of the Board of Trustees.

Reports of sexual harassment may be made verbally or in writing. A form for submission of a written complaint is attached to this Policy, and all employees are encouraged to use this complaint form. Employees who are reporting sexual harassment on behalf of other employees should use the complaint form and note that it is on another employee's behalf.

Employees, paid or unpaid interns, trustees, or non-employees who believe they have been a victim of sexual harassment may also seek assistance in other available forums, as explained below in the section on Legal Protections.

Supervisory Responsibilities

All supervisors and managers who receive a complaint or information about suspected sexual harassment, observe what may be sexually harassing behavior, or for any reason suspect that sexual harassment is occurring, are required to report such suspected sexual harassment to the Executive Director.

In addition to being subject to discipline if they engaged in sexually harassing conduct themselves, supervisors and managers will be subject to discipline for failing to report suspected sexual harassment or otherwise knowingly allowing sexual harassment to continue.

Supervisors and managers will also be subject to discipline for engaging in any retaliation.

Complaint and Investigation of Sexual Harassment

All complaints or information about suspected sexual harassment will be investigated, whether that information was reported in verbal or written form. Investigations will be conducted in a timely manner, and will be confidential to the extent possible.

An investigation of any complaint, information or knowledge of suspected sexual harassment will be prompt and thorough, and should be completed within 30 days. All persons involved, including complainants, witnesses, and alleged perpetrators will be accorded due process to protect their rights to a fair and impartial investigation.

Any employee may be required to cooperate as needed in an investigation of suspected sexual harassment. Employees who participate in any investigation will not be retaliated against.

Investigations will be done in accordance with the following steps:

- Upon receipt of complaint, the Executive Director will conduct an immediate review of the allegations, and take any interim actions, as appropriate. If complaint is oral, encourage the individual to complete the “Complaint Form” in writing. If they refuses, prepare a Complaint Form based on the oral reporting. The STLS Board of Trustees President will conduct an immediate review of the allegations in the event a complaint has been lodged against the Executive Director.
- If documents, emails or phone records are relevant to the allegations, take steps to obtain and preserve them.
- Request and review all relevant documents, including all electronic communications.
- Interview all parties involved, including any relevant witnesses.
- Create a written documentation of the investigation (such as a letter, memo or email), which contains the following:
 - A list of all documents reviewed, along with a detailed summary of relevant documents;
 - A list of names of those interviewed, along with a detailed summary of their statements;
 - A timeline of events;
 - A summary of prior relevant incidents, reported or unreported; and
- The final resolution of the complaint, together with any corrective actions action(s).
- Keep the written documentation and associated documents in the employer’s records.
- Promptly notify the individual who complained and the individual(s) who responded of the final determination and implement any corrective actions identified in the written document.

- Inform the individual who complained of their right to file a complaint or charge externally as outlined below.

Legal Protections and External Remedies

Sexual harassment is not only prohibited by Southern Tier Library System but is also prohibited by state, federal, and, where applicable, local law.

In addition, from the internal process at Southern Tier Library System, employees may also choose to pursue legal remedies with the following governmental entities.

New York State Division of Human Rights (DHR)

The Human Rights Law (HRL), codified as N.Y. Executive Law, art. 15, § 290 et seq., applies to employers in New York State with regard to sexual harassment, and protects employees, paid or unpaid interns and non-employees regardless of immigration status. A complaint alleging violation of the Human Rights Law may be filed either with DHR or in New York State Supreme Court.

Complaints with DHR may be filed any time within one year of the harassment. If an individual did not file at DHR, they can sue directly in state court under the HRL, within three years of the alleged discrimination. An individual may not file with DHR if they have already filed a HRL complaint in state court.

Complaining internally to Southern Tier Library System does not extend your time to file with DHR or in court. The one year or three years is counted from date of the most recent incident of harassment.

You do not need an attorney to file a complaint with DHR, and there is no cost to file with DHR.

DHR will investigate your complaint and determine whether there is probable cause to believe that discrimination has occurred. Probable cause cases are forwarded to a public hearing before an administrative law judge. If discrimination is found after a hearing, DHR has the power to award relief, which varies but may include requiring your employer to take action to stop the harassment, or redress the damage caused, including paying monetary damages, attorney's fees and civil fines.

DHR's main office contact information is: NYS Division of Human Rights, One Fordham Plaza, Fourth Floor, Bronx, New York 10458, (718) 741-8400 [appropriate other contact info], www.dhr.ny.gov

Contact DHR at (888) 392-3644 or visit dhr.ny.gov/complaint for more information about filing a complaint. The website has a complaint form that can be downloaded, filled out, notarized and mailed to DHR. The website also contains contact information for DHR's regional offices across New York State.

United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

The EEOC enforces federal anti-discrimination laws, including Title VII of the 1964 federal Civil Rights Act (codified as 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq.). An individual can file a complaint with the EEOC anytime within 300 days from the harassment. There is no cost to file a complaint with the EEOC. The EEOC will investigate the complaint, and determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that discrimination has occurred, at which point the EEOC will issue a Right to Sue letter permitting the individual to file a complaint in federal court.

The EEOC does not hold hearings or award relief, but may take other action including pursuing cases in federal court on behalf of complaining parties. Federal courts may award remedies if discrimination is found to have occurred.

If an employee believes that he/she has been discriminated against at work, he/she can file a “Charge of Discrimination.” The EEOC has district, area, and field offices where complaints can be filed. Contact the EEOC by calling 1-800-669-4000 (1-800-669-6820 (TTY)), visiting their website at www.eeoc.gov or via email at info@eeoc.gov

If an individual filed an administrative complaint with DHR, DHR will file the complaint with the EEOC to preserve the right to proceed in federal court.

Local Protections

Many localities enforce laws protecting individuals from sexual harassment and discrimination. An individual should contact the county, city or town in which they live to find out if such a law exists. For example, employees who work in New York City may file complaints of sexual harassment with the New York City Commission on Human Rights. Contact their main office at Law Enforcement Bureau of the NYC Commission on Human Rights, 40 Rector Street, 10th Floor, New York, New York; call 311 or (212) 306-7450; or visit www.nyc.gov/html/cchr/html/home/home.shtml

Contact Local Law Enforcement

If the harassment involves physical touching, coerced physical confinement or coerced sex acts, the conduct may constitute a crime. Contact local law enforcement.

Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on November 20, 2018

Revised by the Board of Trustees on November 21, 2023

Complaint Form for Reporting Sexual Harassment
(An Addendum to the STLS Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy)

New York State Labor Law requires all employers to adopt a sexual harassment prevention policy that includes a complaint form for employees to report alleged incidents of sexual harassment.

If you believe that you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you are encouraged to complete this form and submit it to the Executive Director of STLS. Once you submit this form, your employer must follow its sexual harassment prevention policy and investigate any claims.

You are welcome to submit your complaint verbally based on STLS Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy.

COMPLAINANT INFORMATION

Name: _____
Home Address: _____
Work Address: _____
Home Phone: _____
Work Phone: _____
Job Title: _____
Email: _____

SUPERVISORY INFORMATION

Immediate Supervisor's Name: _____
Title: _____
Work Phone: _____
Work Address: _____

COMPLAINT INFORMATION

1. Your complaint of Sexual Harassment is made against:

Name: _____
Title: _____
Work Address: _____
Work Phone: _____

Relationship to you (circle one): Supervisor Subordinate Co-Worker Other _____

2. Please describe the conduct or incident(s) that is the basis of this complaint and your reasons for concluding that the conduct is sexual harassment. Please use additional sheets of paper if necessary and attach any relevant documents or evidence.

3. Date(s) sexual harassment occurred: _____

Is the sexual harassment continuing (circle one)? Yes No

4. Please list the name and contact information of any witnesses or individuals that may have information related to your complaint:

The last two questions are optional, but may help facilitate the investigation.

5. Have you previously complained, or provided information (verbal or written) about sexual harassment that occurred within Southern Tier Library System? (circle one) Yes No

If yes, when and to whom did you complain or provide information?

6. Have you filed a claim regarding this complaint with a federal, state or local government agency? (circle one): Yes No

Have you instituted a legal suit or court action regarding this complaint? (circle one): Yes No

Have you hired an attorney with respect to this complaint? (circle one): Yes No

I request that Southern Tier Library System investigate this complaint of sexual harassment in a timely and confidential manner as outlined above, and advise me of the results of the investigation.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on November 20, 2018
Revised by the Board of Trustees on November 21, 2023***

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees
STLS Employees
STLS Member Libraries
General Public and Contractors

A. PURPOSE

Southern Tier Library System (STLS) uses social media to engage with the community and promote system services, literacy, learning, and library news. STLS social media sites encourage the exchange of information and ideas between STLS, member libraries, and community members.

The purpose of this Social Media Policy is to outline acceptable practices for the use of social media platforms by STLS staff and associated individuals. This policy aims to ensure that all social media interactions support the STLS mission, values, and operational guidelines while maintaining a respectful and safe environment for all users.

B. DEFINITION

Social media is defined as any web application, site, or account registered to STLS that facilitates the sharing of information and ideas about library-related subjects, community events, or library system services. Social media formats include: blogs, listservs, websites, social networks, and any other digital platforms that facilitate information exchange.

C. MONITORING AND MODERATION

STLS is represented by STLS staff. Site administrators are responsible for monitoring and responding to comments and questions.

STLS reserves the right to edit, and remove any content on its social media sites created by either STLS staff, member libraries, or community members. Content is comprised of posts, comments, messages, and all other forms of written, visual, or audio content.

STLS strives to foster a positive, creative, and healthy social media experience. Anyone who interacts with social media formats in ways contrary to this belief will be blocked from use. Content containing the following is against STLS policy and will be removed:

- Posts or conversations that promote, foster, or perpetuate discrimination and/or harassment on the basis of race, creed, color, age, gender, marital status, religion, national origin, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, ancestry, or any other protected category
- Slanderous, libelous, threatening, or defamatory statements
- Inappropriate, obscene, or off-topic posts, images, or comments
- Specific and imminent threats
- Copyrighted or trademarked material
- Spam

- Content not related to the STLS mission, programs, events, resources, or materials
- Advertising or sale of merchandise or services
- Charitable solicitations
- Political campaigning
- Duplicated posts from the same individual

STLS encourages member libraries and community members to comment on or share library system posts. The sharing of ideas about related subjects, resources, and programs is also permitted. Comments or postings by member libraries or community members do not indicate STLS endorsement.

Member libraries and community members are responsible for their own content and should be aware they may be held liable for commentary that is defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libelous by any offended party, not limited to STLS. By choosing to comment on STLS social media sites, member libraries and community members agree to these terms.

D. PRIVACY

STLS does not collect, maintain, or otherwise use personal information stored on any third-party social media sites other than to communicate with users. Users should be aware that third party sites have their own privacy policies and should proceed accordingly.

STLS may occasionally refer to public comments made on social media. However, it will not collect, sell, or knowingly transfer to any third party any personally identifiable information related to social media engagement.

E. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees who contribute to STLS social media accounts shall present content in a professional manner, check facts, cite sources, avoid copyright infringement, present balanced views, acknowledge and correct errors, and check grammar and spelling before posting. STLS employees shall not discuss confidential, work-related matters through social media.

Content that is posted on STLS-sponsored social media sites is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and records retention requirements.

- STLS staff are public employees and are cautioned that content shared pursuant to official duties is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed a violation of STLS policy or procedure.

Staff shall consider the following when representing STLS via social media:

- Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of STLS
- Identify themselves by name as STLS personnel, when appropriate
- Refrain from making statements about patrons, or posting, transmitting, or otherwise disseminating confidential information in violation of the STLS Confidentiality Policy

- Refrain from representing postings as official STLS opinion or policy unless the posting has been approved by the Executive Director of STLS
- Abstain from political activities or personal business
- Observe and abide by all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions in posting materials to social media

***Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on October 16, 2018
Revised by the Board of Trustees on October 17, 2024***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

The Board of the Southern Tier Library System believes that in order to fulfill our mission to “connect, empower and advocate for all Southern Tier public libraries,” our organization must adopt the “Triple Bottom Line” mindset of sustainability as defined by the American Library Association’s Resolution for the Adoption of Sustainability as a Core Value of Librarianship: “To be truly sustainable an organization or community must embody practices that are environmentally sound AND economically feasible AND socially equitable.”

The Board of Trustees pledges its commitment to support sustainable principles that follow the triple-bottom line methodology to contribute to a resilient, sustainable community and library system for all residents.

Environmentally Sound

STLS is committed to reducing our environmental footprint and promoting environmental stewardship at all levels of our organization. Our goal is to minimize our organization’s impact and maximize future generations’ ability to live, work, and play in our shared natural environment, with equal access to clean air, clean water, and natural resources.

STLS staff are encouraged to participate in procedures and programs in our organization that strive to minimize pollution and waste, conserve energy and water, protect habitat, and support renewable energy resources. Staff is encouraged to buy environmentally friendly products, and encourage environmentally preferable transportation.

Economically Feasible

STLS is committed to using public and private dollars in ways that most effectively support our organization’s mission. Our goal is to leverage state and member funds to the maximum benefit of the communities served by our member libraries, while honoring our commitment to environmental stewardship and equity, diversity, and inclusion. This commitment will be reflected in our fiscal policies.

Socially Equitable

The Board of Trustees strives to govern the system in a way that promotes equity, diversity, and inclusion as core values. STLS is committed to a culture of inclusion and mutual respect that welcomes the differences and variety of backgrounds, perspectives, interests, and talents represented by the members served and those of our staff members. These efforts will extend to contractor and supplier relationships.

Employee awareness and engagement are essential to the implementation of our sustainability policies. All employees will receive a copy of this policy and will have access to education about our organization's efforts to dedicate our work to creating a more equitable society and improving our environmental performance. Employees at all levels of the organization will be involved in supporting these goals.

Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on April 16, 2024

STLS POLICY MANUAL

TRAINING POLICY

APPLIES TO: Library System Staff and Member Libraries

REFERENCES: STLS Sustainable Libraries Policy Statement

Professional development is a core value of librarianship and is a fundamental service of the Southern Tier Library System in partnership with member libraries. In accordance with the guidelines included in the American Library Associations' *Library Bill of Rights*, *Freedom to Read*, and *Freedom to View Statements*, STLS offers a wide variety of learning opportunities for member libraries as well as individuals and agencies within the field of librarianship.

This policy is intended to set guidelines for how library system staff work with member libraries to provide consistent and relevant learning opportunities that consider current trends, assist with acquiring new skills, and empower member libraries to contribute effectively to the library system's mission while considering STLS' commitment to economic, environmental, and social sustainability.

Participants: Member library employees, directors, trustees, volunteers, friends of the library, advocates, and other individuals or agencies within the library field.

Types of Training: The library system seeks to offer a wide variety of training opportunities on topics that are most relevant to member libraries based on work taking place in the field. Topics consider current trends, best practices, and foundational approaches that have been objectively proven to strengthen public library services. Training may involve diverse approaches that support participants' desired forms of learning, including one-to-one consultations, group presentations, experiential workshops, meetings, self-directed tutorials, print or electronic publications, or live and recorded online learning.

Environments: It is necessary that all training participants feel comfortable, included, safe, and valued during their training experiences. Library system staff will do their very best to meet these prioritized needs of member participants while managing the training environment and ensuring the intended training goals in accordance with the proposed training descriptions.

Resources: The library system will allocate financial resources annually to make ensure the goals of this policy are met. Library system staff will also seek resources, financial and in-kind, to leverage additional or supporting resources that enhance training opportunities for member libraries, as appropriate.

Locations: Library system trainings are in-person or online. The library system recognizes its mission statement calls for the *connection* of member libraries, which can be interpreted as bringing people together. This can be accomplished through in-person and online locations. Library system staff will consider the following factors when determining the location of training environments:

- Safety of participants and staff
- Need for in-person connection
- Economic, environmental, and social impacts
- Effective use of participants and staff time
- Appropriateness of location given type of training

Record Keeping: Library system staff will use available technologies to track training and inform member participants of their progress. Each staff member is responsible for training-related record keeping and for informing members about the training they lead. Record keeping is important for state and federal reporting, so accuracy of record keeping should be prioritized. It also assists the library system in securing financial resources that support this Training Policy.

Evaluation and Feedback: The library system will facilitate bi-annual learning surveys to help offer training opportunities most relevant to members. The survey will be distributed at the end of the operating year to gather information in time for the upcoming year. Library system staff will consider the data collected to form ideas about intended participants, types of training, training environments, resources needed, and locations.

Furthermore, staff may conduct surveys at the end of selected training sessions to gather feedback on the efficiency and effectiveness of training. Results from surveys may be made available to other library system staff who conduct similar training to establish an environment of best practices among colleagues.

Code of Conduct: The Southern Tier Library System holds professional conferences and meetings to enable its members to receive continuing education, build professional networks, and discover new products and services for professional use. To provide all participants – members and other attendees, speakers, exhibitors, staff, and volunteers – the opportunity to benefit from the event, the Southern Tier Library System is committed to providing a harassment-free environment for everyone, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, physical appearance, ethnicity, religion, or other group identity.

As an organization, STLS is strongly committed to diversity, equity, and the free expression of ideas. These values have been outlined in the *STLS Declaration Promoting Racial and Social Justice*.

Within librarianship's professional practices, critical examination of beliefs and viewpoints does not constitute hostile conduct or harassment. Similarly, use of sexual imagery or language in the context of a professional discussion *might not* constitute hostile conduct or harassment.

STLS seeks to provide a learning environment in which diverse participants may learn, network, and enjoy the company of colleagues in an environment of mutual human respect. We recognize a shared responsibility to create and hold that environment for the benefit of all.

In keeping with the STLS Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy, some behaviors are specifically prohibited:

- Harassment or intimidation based on race, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, appearance, or other group status.
- Sexual harassment or intimidation, including unwelcome sexual attention, stalking (physical or virtual), or unsolicited physical contact.
- Yelling at or threatening speakers (verbally or physically).

Speakers are asked to frame discussions as openly and inclusively as possible and to be aware of how language or images may be perceived by others.

All participants are expected to observe these rules and behaviors in all conference venues, including online venues, and conference social events. Participants asked to stop hostile or harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately. Participants seek to learn, network, and have fun, and are expected to do so responsibly and with respect for the right of others.

Adopted by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees on May 21, 2024.

TRAVEL, WORKING REMOTELY & CONFERENCES POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Employees

REFERENCES: Finance Policy
Purchasing Policy
Staff Organization Contract

Travel

STLS employees travel as an essential function of their duties. The specific nature of an employee's travel depends on the employee's job title and description. All necessary and job-related travel shall be communicated to an employee's direct supervisor and documented on the organizational calendar.

Each employee who visits a member library, or attends a meeting or conference within, or outside the STLS service region shall drive one of two STLS vehicles. Employees shall use their own vehicle if it reduces drive time relative to the travel location, the employee's home and STLS offices. An employee shall also use their own vehicle if an STLS vehicle is not available. In such cases, the employee will be reimbursed for mileage based on the current IRS rate.

Employees shall communicate among each other about the need and availability of STLS vehicles to minimize organizational travel expenses. Employees traveling the farthest on any given day have first access to STLS vehicles.

Working Remotely

Working Remotely is defined as an employee working outside of STLS offices for one or more days within an employee's normal work week. Examples of *working remotely* include member library site visits, local, regional or state meetings, and on occasion, the employee's home or another suitable location.

Each employee who indicates they are *working remotely* on the organizational calendar shall record all hours worked on their time sheets, and note the hours worked were remote. Employees are responsible for managing their schedules to stay within the hours allotted under a regular work week. This includes travel, meals and time at meetings.

Member Library Site Visits

Employees visit member libraries frequently. Employees shall document their time away from STLS offices on the organizational calendar by indicating the name of the library or libraries they are visiting, the time frame of the visit and the STLS vehicle they are using to drive there.

Meetings

Employees who attend meetings within and outside the STLS' service region shall document their time away from STLS offices on the organizational calendar by indicating the name of the library, libraries or agency they are visiting, the time frame of the visit and the STLS vehicle they are using to drive there.

Home or Another Suitable Location

Employees may work from home or another suitable location on occasion, so long as they can perform most of their essential duties *Working Remotely* within their regular work, and do not require accommodations that are already afforded through STLS offices. This option shall be exercised when it is most efficient to the job-related work of the employee.

As a general rule, full time employees are allotted two days per week for *Working Remotely*, and part time employees are allotted one shift per week for *Working Remotely*. All other work days should take place within STLS offices, member libraries, or locations specific to library system operations. Employees must obtain verbal approval from their direct supervisor prior to exercising this option.

Time worked away from the office shall be documented on the organizational calendar as *Remote* and the hours worked. The employee shall respond to phone calls and email as well as produce tangible work as defined by their direct supervisor while *Working Remotely*.

Conferences

The Executive Director establishes the conference budget annually. This budget is communicated to division heads. Employees shall communicate their interest in attending conferences to their direct supervisors. Conference expenses will only be paid for by STLS if an employee receives approval from their direct supervisor. An employee may register and make travel/lodging accommodations upon supervisor approval. Conference expenses are limited to: registration, travel, lodging and meals. The Executive Director establishes meal allowances prior to each conference.

All conference expenditures shall be realized through a purchase order or STLS issued credit card. Employees will not be reimbursed for conference expenditures if they use their own credit or debit card. Employees shall seek reasonable pricing for all conference expenses.

STLS vehicles are to be considered the primary means for conference transportation unless air travel is required. Use of a personal vehicle requires approval from the Executive Director. Employees shall coordinate the sharing of vehicles if more than one employee is attending the same conference.

Employees may also attend conferences which are job-related at their own expense if the STLS budget does not support participation. Conference attendance will be considered as a regularly scheduled working day, as approved by the Executive Director. Employees should record travel, meals and time spent at conference-related events on their time sheets.

***Adopted by the STLS Board of Trustees on May 15, 2018
Revised by the STLS Board of Trustees on May 17, 2022***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

TRUSTEE SELECTION AND ELECTION POLICY

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees

REFERENCES: STLS By-laws Article III Membership; Article IV Sections 1 and 3.

Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State by Jerry Nichols and Rebekkah Smith Aldrich
et.al.; STLS Trustee Job Description

In the event of a vacancy on the Board of Trustees, either by retirement or the departure of a Trustee before completion of an authorized period of service, the STLS By-Laws, Article IV. Board of Trustees, Section 3 establishes that the Public Relations Committee of the Board shall, in a timely fashion, canvass the library communities in each county where the vacancy exists to identify and nominate one or more candidates. All qualified candidates shall be presented to the member libraries for election at the STLS Annual Meeting. The Board of Trustees may appoint a candidate to fill an unexpired term vacancy, but the new Trustee must still be elected by the membership at the Annual Meeting.

Trustee duties are clearly spelled out in the referenced *Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State* and the STLS Trustee Job Description. Trustees must reside in the county served by that position on the STLS Board. Board members must be willing to devote the necessary time and energy to carrying out the duties and responsibilities of an STLS Trustee.

Prospective trustees will be contacted by a member of the STLS Board from the county to be represented for a personal introduction and given a copy of the Trustee Job Description. The Executive Director will also contact the prospective trustee to provide an overview of the organization as well as trustee duties and responsibilities. At that time candidates should submit a letter of interest. Candidates who express interest in writing will be placed on the ballot for election by the membership at the Annual Meeting, or on the next Board Meeting Agenda for appointment by the Board until the next Annual Meeting.

STLS offers an orientation session for each new Trustee with the Executive Committee of the Board and the Executive Director. This orientation may include a tour of the facility, an opportunity to meet key personnel and see STLS operations, as well as a question and answer period to further the new Trustee's understanding of the culture of the organization and get them current with respect to duties, responsibilities, issues and plans.

***Adopted by Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees January 17, 2012
Revised by the Board of Trustees on June 16, 2015; March 15, 2022***

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

Proposed STLS Tuition Reimbursement Policy

The current labor contract between the Southern Tier Library System (STLS) and the Staff Organization of Southern Tier Library System provides for tuition reimbursement. This policy document delineates the specific actions to be taken by STLS management and STLS employees to implement efficiently and effectively this tuition reimbursement commitment.

Employee Qualifications

All full time and part time employees, both members of the Staff Organization of Southern Tier Library System and non-members, qualify for the STLS tuition reimbursement after they have completed one year of continuous employment for full time employees, and two years for part time employees at STLS.

Qualifying Education Programs

Tuition reimbursement is available for courses that, in the judgment of the Executive Director of STLS, are job related. Where an employee is enrolled in a degree program that requires courses that are job related and non-job related, STLS tuition reimbursement is not available for those courses that are non-job related.

Qualifying Institutions

Tuition reimbursement is only available for studies at fully accredited educational institutions offering course work at a level higher than that of high school.

Amount of Reimbursement

Reimbursement policy is based on a conventional college program consisting of two semesters per year.

- (1) Employees who meet the requirements of the tuition program will be partially reimbursed for the tuition costs of courses they successfully complete with a final grade of an A or a B.
- (2) Reimbursement shall be available for up to six (6) credit hours of course work per semester. The total credit hours reimbursed in each calendar year shall not exceed twelve (12).

- (3) STLS grade-related tuition reimbursement shall apply to only that part of the tuition cost paid for directly by the employee after deducting tuition costs paid for by other reimbursement programs such as grants, scholarships, etc.
- (4) Qualifying course tuition costs paid for directly by the employee shall be reimbursed at a rate of seventy-five percent (75%) for a final grade of A and at a rate of fifty-percent (50%) for a final grade of B. Where the educational institution uses a grading system other than a letter grade the STLS Executive Director shall determine reasonable reimbursement percentages corresponding to the possible course outcomes.
- (5) The STLS reimbursement program is limited to tuition costs. Other potential educational costs, such as laboratory fees, the purchase of books and other educational materials, board and lodging, and transportation are not included in the STLS program.
- (6) Where a qualifying educational institution uses a trimester or quarter system reimbursement shall be provided at a rate of six credit hours per trimester or quarter, but shall not exceed twelve (12) credit hours per calendar year.
- (7) Where a school does not use the normal credit hour system of 3 to 4 hours per course, courses may be considered to be equivalent to 3 or 4 credit hours at the discretion of the STLS Executive Director.

Post Degree Requirement

Prior to tuition reimbursement approval, all employees must agree to and sign a *Post Degree Commitment Form* that requires a minimum of 24 months of service to STLS upon the date of degree attainment for full time employees, and 12 months of service for part time employees. Employees who voluntarily leave employment from STLS prior to 24 months of service, and for reasons other than to care for a family member as described under Paid Family Leave, or due to the geographic relocation of a legal partner are obligated to pay back in full their tuition reimbursement to STLS. Employees who are released from employment at the decision of STLS prior to 24 months (full time employees), or 12 months (part time employees) of service are also obligated to pay back in full their tuition reimbursement.

Employee Application Procedure

Prior to each semester, trimester, or quarter, the employee shall submit a request for consideration for tuition reimbursement for each course they plan to take.

- (1) The request shall include the following items documented, where appropriate, by material copied from the educational institution's course catalog or other documents.
 - (a) The name of the college or educational institution.
 - (b) Dates for the start and finish of the semester, trimester, or quarter.

- (c) The name of each course, the course description, the number of credits assigned to the course by the institution, the total cost of tuition, and the tuition reimbursement anticipated by the employee from sources other than STLS.
- (d) A written justification by the employee that the course or courses proposed for study should be considered as job related.
- (e) The relation of the proposed course or courses to a more general study plan (such as an associate or bachelor's degree) if appropriate.

(2) Upon receipt of the employee's application the Executive Director shall approve or disapprove the employee's application on a course by course basis. Approval of a planned course of study implies that STLS will provide tuition reimbursement in the amount specified in this policy after the employee successfully completes the course with an A or B grade and continues to satisfy the other requirements of this policy.

(3) After completion of a course approved for tuition reimbursement, the employee shall submit the following.

(a) A copy of an official transcript or other equivalent official document verifying completion of the course and grade awarded.

(b) A copy of a detailed statement by the educational institution's registrar of the tuition costs for the course including grants, scholarships, and other reimbursements not originating with STLS.

(c) A signed statement by the employee that the documents submitted are to his or her knowledge are complete and accurate.

(4) Upon receipt of the required documentation and verification of eligibility, STLS will reimburse that portion of the employee's tuition that conforms with the provisions of this policy.

Adopted by the STLS Board of Trustees December 15, 2009
Revised by the STLS Board of Trustees June 18, 2019; October 15, 2024

STLS POLICY MANUAL

WHISTLEBLOWER and ETHICAL BEHAVIOR POLICY

REFERENCES: New York State Labor Law Chapter 31, Article 20-C666666f

The Southern Tier Library System requires trustees, employees, and volunteers to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. Employees and representatives of the organization must practice honesty, fair dealing, and integrity in fulfilling

their responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. The Board embraces the organization's values of integrity, honesty, ethical behavior, loyalty to the organization, courtesy, civility, respect for and co-operation among staff, trustees, member libraries, and vendors. Harassment, because of race, religion, color, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), parental status, national origin, age, disability, family medical history or genetic information, political affiliation, military service, or other non-merit based factors, whether conducted by, or affecting, an employee, vendor, client, volunteer, board member, or other individual connected with STLS is strictly prohibited. This policy applies to all employees, directors, officers, volunteers, and agents of the STLS, including the Executive Director and the Board of Trustees.

The objectives of the STLS Whistleblower and Ethical Behavior Policy are to establish standards of conduct and procedures for:

- The submission of concerns, on a confidential basis, regarding:
 - (a) Harassment and bullying, sufficiently severe or pervasive to create a hostile work environment, or resulting in a tangible change in an employee's employment status or benefits,
 - (b) Questionable accounting or auditing actions by employees, trustees, officers and other stakeholders of the organization,
 - (c) Wrongful conduct such as a violation of applicable state and/or Federal laws and regulations; a serious violation of STLS Policy; or the use of STLS property, resources, or authority for personal gain or other non-STLS purpose except as provided under STLS policy
- The receipt, retention, and treatment of complaints received by the organization regarding harassment, accounting, internal controls, auditing matters or other wrongful conduct
- The protection from retaliatory actions of trustees, employees, and volunteers reporting concerns.

Reporting Responsibility

Each trustee, employee, and volunteer of STLS has an obligation to report in accordance with this Whistleblower and Ethical Behavior Policy (a) harassment or bullying, (b) questionable or improper accounting or auditing matters, (c) violations and suspected violations of this policy and (d) wrongful conduct.

Authority of the Board of Trustees

All concerns submitted in writing will be forwarded to the President of the Board of Trustees in accordance with the procedures set forth below. The President is responsible for designating the appropriate committee to investigate and make appropriate recommendations to the Board of Trustees with respect to the following: (a) concerns that originate from trustees and other non-employees or (b) concerns submitted by employees that have not been resolved by the System Executive Director to the satisfaction of the complainant.

Reporting Procedures and Corrective Action for Employees

Employees shall first discuss their concern, in confidence, with their immediate supervisor. If, after speaking with their supervisor, the employee is convinced that their concern is unwarranted or that, in the opinion of the employee, the supervisor will take appropriate steps to resolve the employee's concern no further action is required by the employee.

- However, further action is required if the employee (a) continues to have reasonable grounds to believe the concern is valid and that the response of their immediate supervisor is not adequate or (b) the immediate supervisor recommends that the issue should be referred to a higher level in the organization. In this situation the employee shall write a formal complaint which the first level supervisor is obligated to take to the System Executive Director (or Acting System Director) in five working days.
- The Executive Director will promptly inform the employee of receipt of the complaint. A copy of the complaint will be forwarded to the President of the Board of Trustees. The Executive Director will investigate the circumstances of the complaint in a timely fashion and, where warranted, take disciplinary and other actions. At the completion of the investigation the Executive Director will provide the employee initiating the complaint and the President with a written summary of the action taken.
- Notwithstanding the procedure stated above, if the employee's supervisor is the subject of the employee's concern or is possibly involved, the employee may choose to discuss their concern directly and in confidence with the Executive Director and then write a formal complaint. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to investigate promptly the circumstances of the complaint in the manner stated in the previous paragraph.
- In extraordinary circumstances, and after due consideration, an employee who suspects or believes that the Executive Director is involved in unethical or illegal behavior may take their concerns directly to the President of the Board of Trustees using the procedure below entitled "Reporting Procedures for Trustees and Other Volunteers."

Reporting Procedures and Corrective Action for Individuals Not Employed by the System

System trustees, System volunteers, individuals in the Member Libraries of the System and members of the general public shall submit concerns in writing directly to the President of the Board of Trustees. If the President of the Board of Trustees is not available or is the subject of the concern, the complaint shall be directed to the Vice-President of the Board of Trustees.

- The President is responsible for designating an appropriate committee, as circumstances dictate, to investigate and make appropriate recommendations to the Board of Trustees, with respect to all concerns received in writing. The designated committee has the authority to retain outside legal counsel, accountants, private investigators, or any other resource deemed necessary to conduct a full and complete investigation of the allegations.
- The President will inform the originator of the receipt of the written complaint. All trustees of the System will be informed of the nature of the complaint with emphasis on maintaining the confidentiality appropriate for personnel issues.

- The Board of Trustees and its designated committee will resolve all complaints in a timely fashion and inform the individual submitting the complaint of the Board’s final action.
- If the concern, for any reason, is not dealt with by the Board of Trustees to the satisfaction of the complainant, they may request a review by the State Librarian.

Acting in Good Faith

Anyone reporting a concern must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates harassment or bullying, a questionable or improper accounting or auditing practice, a violation or suspected violation of this STLS Policy, or wrongful conduct.

The act of making allegations that prove to be unsubstantiated, and that prove to have been made maliciously, recklessly, or with the foreknowledge that the allegations are false, will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense and may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment or dismissal from the trustee or volunteer position.

Confidentiality

Reports of concerns and their investigations shall be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation. Disclosure of reports of concerns to individuals not involved in the investigation will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense and may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment, or dismissal from the trustee or volunteer position.

No Retaliation Provision

This Whistleblower and Ethical Behavior Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees, trustees, volunteers and others to raise concerns within STLS for investigation and appropriate action. With this goal in mind, no trustee, employee or volunteer who, in good faith, reports a concern shall be subject to retaliation or, in the case of an employee, adverse employment consequences. Moreover, an employee, trustee or volunteer who retaliates against someone who has reported a concern in good faith shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment or dismissal from the trustee or volunteer position.

*Approved by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees
Revised to incorporate STLS Policy on Maintaining an Ethical Environment
(Doc. #05-85, November 22, 2005).*

***Approved by the Southern Tier Library System Board of Trustees December 15, 2009
Updated by the Board of Trustees September 19, 2017; October 17, 2023***

WORKERS PROTECTION POLICY

Applies to: STLS Board of Trustees
STLS Staff

References: STLS Staff Association Contract
New York State Disability Benefits Law
New York State Paid Family Leave Act
New York State Workers' Compensation Law
New York State Paid Sick Leave
New York State Unemployment Insurance Program

New York State requires most employers to maintain Disability, Worker's Compensation and Paid Family Leave benefits. The Southern Tier Library System provides such insurance coverages as required by law for the long-term wellness and financial protection of all employees. Each benefit is unique and is administered as described below.

Disability

Disability benefits coverage is provided to all employees for an off-the-job injury or illness. These benefits provide temporary weekly cash benefits to replace, in part, wages lost due to injuries or illnesses that do not arise out of or in the course of employment. New York State Compensation Board sets and determines the maximum benefit allowed.

STLS obtains this coverage through a disability benefits insurance carrier who is authorized by New York State's Workers Compensation Board. This coverage is paid for entirely by the employer. Employees who seek disability benefits shall notify the STLS Account Clerk in a timely manner to file a claim. Employees will be asked to complete and submit a Notice and Proof of Claim for Disability Benefits form. The Workers Compensation Board is responsible for the review and approval of claims.

Workers Compensation

Workers Compensation coverage is insurance that provides cash benefits and/or medical care for workers who are injured or become ill as a direct result of their job duties. The New York State Compensation Board sets and determines the maximum benefit allowed. This coverage is paid for entirely by STLS, and is obtained through a disability benefits insurance carrier who is authorized by New York State's Workers Compensation Board.

Employees who are injured or become ill on the job shall seek medical attention immediately. The employee shall also notify their direct supervisor of the accident and how it occurred. The employee's direct supervisor is responsible for completing an STLS Accident/Incident Report Form immediately following the accident and notifying the STLS Executive Director. The STLS Executive Director and Account Clerk, or their designee, will file the accident form with STLS' insurance provider and file internally. Within 30-days of injury or illness, the employee will notify the STLS Account Clerk the accident in writing. STLS will work with the employee to complete and submit a Workers Compensation Board Claim Form (C-3).

Employees approved for benefits shall follow the required claims process. Partial use of sick time is allowed to bring compensation up to full normal pay. Employees do not usually accrue credit in the NYS Retirement System while receiving Workers Compensation benefits unless sick time is used. In that case, credit in the NYS Retirement System would be pro-rated. In any event, such credits are subject to the rules of the Retirement System. The Workers Compensation Board is responsible for the review and approval of claims.

Paid Family Leave

Paid Family Leave coverage provides employees with job-protected, paid leave to bond with a new child, care for a loved one with a serious health condition, or to help relieve family pressures when someone is called to active military service abroad. New York State sets and determines the maximum benefit allowed. This coverage is paid for entirely by the employee through bi-weekly payroll deductions. Deductions are set by New York State based on a percentage of the employee's weekly wage. STLS obtains coverage on behalf of the employee through a benefits insurance carrier who is authorized by New York State's Workers Compensation Board.

Employees who wish to apply for Paid Family Leave shall notify their direct supervisor and the STLS Account Clerk at least 30 days before leave will start when if it is feasible. The employee must complete a *Request for Paid Family Leave (Form PFL-1)* and submit it to the Account Clerk.

The STLS Account Clerk will complete the employer section of the form and return to the employee within 3 business days. The employee is responsible for submitting the form and all necessary documentation to STLS' Paid Family Leave insurance carrier as identified by the Account Clerk. The insurance carrier is responsible for the review and approval of claims.

Paid Sick Leave

Paid Sick Leave is afforded to all part- and full-time employees under the Contract between the *Staff Organization and STLS Board of Trustees*. This negotiated agreement meets the current requirements under New York State's Paid Sick Leave Program.

Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment Insurance provides temporary cash benefits to employees who have left, or been dismissed from STLS employment. STLS reserves the right to accept, or contest program benefits based on the circumstances surrounding an employee's leave or dismissal from employment. STLS will file all necessary paperwork required of the program in order for an employee to claim benefits if STLS believes the employee is entitled to benefits. In cases where STLS decides to contest a dismissed employee's benefits, the library system will file all necessary paperwork and supporting documents such as performance evaluations or written releases from employment to justify the reasons for contesting benefit claims. STLS will also retain legal counsel for all cases that require an Unemployment Claims Court determination.

The STLS Account Clerk will facilitate all claims under this policy, unless the claim is their own. In that case, the Executive Director will facilitate that claim.

***Adopted by STLS Board of Trustees on December 17, 2013
Revised by the Board of Trustees on April 17, 2018; November 19, 2024***

STLS POLICY MANUAL

WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The following policies are adopted to help ensure that Southern Tier Library System staff and visitors are afforded a safe and healthy workplace.

REFERENCES: Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy
STLS Staff Guide
Whistleblower & Ethical Behavior Policy

Smoking or Vaping –The Southern Tier Library System is a smoke and vape-free work area. Absolutely no smoking or vaping is permitted on BOCES property, or STLS premises, including buildings, parking lots, and outbuildings, or in STLS vehicles.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse – It is the policy of STLS to maintain a work environment that is free of substance abuse. This protects the safety of the public with whom we interact and the employees with whom we work. The manufacture, use, distribution, possession, sale, or purchase of illegal drugs on STLS property is prohibited. Being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol on STLS property is prohibited. The employment status of any person found to be in violation of this prohibition will be subject to a review by the Director and the Board of Trustees consistent with the provisions of local, State and Federal Law as a condition of continuing employment. While prescription drugs are not prohibited, their use during working hours should not render an employee unfit for duty.

Violence and Firearms in the Workplace – STLS is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for its employees. Consistent with this policy, acts or threats of physical violence, including intimidation, harassment, implicit or explicit bullying, passive aggressive behaviors, and/or coercion, which involve or affect STLS staff, or which occur on STLS property will not be tolerated. This includes acts or threats of violence that occur on STLS property, regardless of the relationship between STLS and the parties involved. Acts or threats of violence include conduct which is sufficiently severe, offensive, or intimidating to alter the employment conditions at STLS, or to create a hostile, abusive, or intimidating work environment for one or several employees. This includes any and all threats or acts of violence occurring off STLS premises involving someone who is acting in the capacity of a representative of STLS.

STLS prohibits the possession and/or use of any and all kinds of firearms or other weapons on all premises owned by the library system regardless of permit status.

Any employee found guilty of violating these prohibitions may face immediate disciplinary action and/or termination, and reporting to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Staff Guide – The board approved *Staff Guide for STLS Employment* references the above policies, and includes additional guidelines that promote and encourage a healthy workplace environment. The staff guide is provided to all STLS staff upon hiring. The guide is reviewed annually by the Executive Director, and prior to hiring a new employee to ensure information is current. Together, the Workplace Environment Policy and Staff Guide for STLS Employment are intended to serve as a function of a healthy workplace culture.

Staff are encouraged to use reporting mechanisms that are part of operations when they observe or experience any behavior that violates a safe and healthy workplace environment as described in this policy.

***Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Southern Tier Library System on September 21, 2010
Revised by the Board of Trustees on July 21, 2020; November 19, 2024***