

Finger Lakes Library System Free Direct Access Plan to fulfill Commissioner's Regulation §90.3(a) through (d)(4)

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

Public and association libraries chartered to serve municipalities within the counties of Cayuga, Cortland, Seneca, Tioga, and Tompkins counties shall serve all persons within these counties on the same basis as the residents of the library's chartered service area.

Free on-site use of the total resources of the system by all individuals residing within the boundaries of the system is a requirement of this regulation. Included in free on-site use is the use of computers and access to the Internet. Preference for such service may be given to local residents.

If any individual is restricted from access to a chartered library due to personal hardships, the Finger Lakes Library System shall serve such individuals either through reading centers or a "books-by-mail" library service now titled "Mail-It". Mail-It provides full library services including book and audio-visual loan, reference services, and interlibrary loan.

Personal hardships shall include, but not be limited to transportation limitations beyond the reasonable control of the individual.

Personal hardships do not include: delinquency at any library or abuse of privileges at any library.

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

Such persons shall be served in accordance to the guidelines specified in Article One.

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

"Serious inequities and hardships" to a member library shall be determined to be either one or both of the following:

1. Any percentage of the circulation of library materials to non-resident cardholders in excess of 10% of the total circulation of the library. The activity of non-resident cardholders may be determined by the percentage of such transactions during a sampling period. The sampling period must last no less than five business days.
2. Municipalities that have refused to fund library service shall be deemed as having created an economic hardship for a member library. Documentation of such refusal shall be forwarded to the Commissioner of Education.

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

Excessive out of chartered service area borrowing shall be determined by the any percentage of circulation greater than 10% of the total circulation of that library

5. a) Describe the unserved and the underserved populations within the system.

All persons may find library service within the counties of Cayuga, Cortland, Seneca, Tioga and Tompkins by one or more member libraries providing free direct access. The Finger Lakes Library System has 96,461 persons residing outside a chartered service area and approximately 10,000 persons residing in an area that does not contribute for library service from any municipality or school district.

b) Describe the criteria used by the system to identify libraries as having an inadequate level of local income to support the delivery of acceptable library services (underserved). List those libraries so identified.

Libraries in conformance with New York State Minimum Standards for library service shall be deemed as delivering acceptable library services. Funding below a level to support minimum standards shall be deemed an inadequate level of local income.

All libraries within the system that have met New York State Minimum Standards requirements and are therefore considered to be adequately funded.

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

The Finger Lakes Library System, working in cooperation with member libraries, has worked to strengthen library service and provide funding through school district referenda. In areas where school district appropriations propositions are inappropriate or unachievable, the Finger Lakes Library System will assist libraries in exploring other options for library funding.

d) Provide a timetable for such actions.

This plan of service shall be implemented upon thirty days of final approval of the plan.

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

Adherence to the Finger Lakes Library System's Plan of Service shall be the responsibilities of boards of trustees of the member libraries and the Finger Lakes Library System.

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

a) Without prior approval of the Commissioner of Education.

When a library meets the standards of serious hardships and inequities as specified in item three, libraries may place restrictions upon the loan of non-print materials and equipment and printed materials less than one year from the acquisition date of such print material. Libraries may restrict access to computer workstations and library programs when such services are fully in demand by residents of the library's area of charter and funding.

All restricted items must have been purchased with local funds. Libraries must certify to the system that they are able to identify materials bought through local funds.

b) With the prior approval of the Commissioner of Education.

In the event of serious inequities and hardships as defined by item three, at the request of the Board of Trustees of the affected member library and approval by a majority of member libraries of the Finger Lakes Library System, a waiver to restrict specific items shall be forwarded to the Commissioner of Education for approval.

Such restrictions shall remain in force until hardships shall have proven to have been alleviated by additional funding or contracts for service from affected areas.

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

Member libraries shall certify that they are complying with the system free direct access plan approved by a majority of member libraries. All certification statements shall be due thirty days after approval of the Plan of Service by the Commissioner of Education.

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

The plan of service was reviewed by the Directors' Advisory Council of the Finger Lakes Library System, the Board of Trustees of the Finger Lakes Library System, and meetings with the Boards of Trustees at county-wide meetings held prior to the plan of service vote at the annual meeting of October 20, 1999.