

## Finger Lakes Library System Direct Access Plan 2012-2016

### Definitions for the purposes of this Plan:

#### a. Direct Access:

Services provided to all active cardholders of a library and to the cardholders of the system via outreach services. This typically includes the authorization to checkout library materials and use the subscription services offered by that library.

#### b. Local Residents:

Individuals residing or owning property upon which taxes are paid *within* a library's chartered-to-serve area. These individuals are eligible to apply for a library card at their local library without paying any fees.

#### c. Non-residents:

Individuals residing *outside* of one of the five counties served by the system. Non-residents are eligible to apply for a library card at any Finger Lakes Library System member library, subject to the requirements imposed by that library for individuals residing outside its chartered-to-serve area.

#### d. System Residents:

Individuals residing *within* the boundaries of the Finger Lakes Library System, i.e., within one of the five counties, but *not within* any member library's chartered-to-serve area. These individuals are eligible to apply for a library card at any Finger Lakes Library System member library, subject to the requirements imposed by that library for individuals residing outside its chartered-to-serve area.

### 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.*

All member libraries offer direct access and on-site use to all local residents, non-residents, and System residents subject to the requirements imposed by the individual library and Commissioner Regulations. 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.

### 2. *Describe how the system will assure that those patrons 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.*

#### (a) Member library that withdraws from membership:

Finger Lakes Library System services will be offered to System residents of withdrawn member libraries' chartered service area under the same conditions

as those offered to local residents and System residents.

In accordance with Commissioner's Regulations, the services of the Central Library will be available to these local and System residents.

- (b) Chartered and registered library that was never a member of the system (currently none exist):

The system and member libraries will serve the residents of this library's chartered service area under the same conditions they serve all other System residents of the five counties.

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 occur when the circulation of materials to non-resident borrowers and System residents is excessive and significantly deprives local residents the borrowing of materials in a reasonable period. This condition may also apply when attendance at library programs, such as story hours, is excessive by non-residents and System residents, to the extent that local residents are precluded from attending.

The condition may also apply when municipalities refuse to fund library service thus creating 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 borrowing occurs in a member library when:

- (a) the circulation of materials to non-residents or System residents as defined by CR90.3(d)(2)(ii), reaches 10% of the total circulation of such materials.

The data for such a determination will be made from:

- (a) statistical reports from the automated circulation system operated by the Finger Lakes Library System for two years prior borrowing.

5. Unserved and underserved populations:

- (a) *Describe the unserved and underserved populations within the system.*

The unserved are 75,135 individuals as defined by CR90.3(a)(10): “unserved means those individuals residing in geographic areas that are within the boundaries of a public library system, but outside the boundaries of a chartered service area of a library which is a member of that system.”

Color-coded maps developed by the Division of Library Development serve to define the unserved area.

The underserved are those individuals as defined by CR90.3(a) (11) and (b) below. There are no underserved populations because all libraries currently meet Minimum Standards of the State of New York.

*(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.*

- i. The criteria for determining an adequate level of support is the member library’s ability to comply with minimum standards contained in New York State Education Law and New York State Commissioner’s Regulations as reported by member libraries on their annual report to the state.

**6. *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 effort to secure better funding is ongoing, and system assistance is available in exploring options, developing strategies, and planning presentations.

Member libraries are automated and provide to the public via Finger Lakes Library System a system wide library catalog of member library holdings. The System with its members is working towards the implementation of one library card for the System. Cayuga with the exception of Seymour Library (Auburn), Cortland, Tompkins and Seneca Counties have implemented cards that can be used throughout their counties. Tioga County is in discussion to implement one card for the county. It has been noted by our members that a common card is a tangible product of cooperation and collaboration. The above maximizes service to Finger Lakes Library System residents. In addition for the following:

- (a) Unserved:** The Finger Lakes Library System, working in cooperation with member libraries, strives to strengthen library service and expanding charters to include those unserved. The System encourages funding through school and special district referenda. In areas where school or special district appropriations are inappropriate or unachievable, the Finger Lakes Library System will assist libraries in exploring other options for library funding.

- (b) **Underserved:** Finger Lakes Library System continually works with the boards of member libraries to seek additional funds via local and county support. Upon the request of a member library, Finger Lakes Library System will offer to assist the library in its efforts to expand the availability of library services to the unserved and underserved. Finger Lakes Library System does, and will continue, to conduct workshops relating to better and improved service to library populations.

7. *Provide a timetable for such actions.*

- (a) **Issue of the unserved:** This will be a continuing effort.  
(b) **Issue of the underserved:** Immediate on approval of this plan by the Division of Library Development.

8. *Identify who will be responsible for these actions.*

- (a) **Issue of the unserved:** Board of Trustees of member libraries and Board of the Finger Lakes Library System.  
(b) **Issue of the underserved:** Board of Trustees of member libraries and Board of the Finger Lakes Library System.

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

- (a) Without the prior approval of the Commissioner of Education, and upon sufficient and appropriate documentation submitted to the Finger Lakes Library System, and after appropriate notification of the member libraries of the Finger Lakes Library System, member libraries may: -
- i. Restrict loans of printed materials less than one-year old from acquisition date based on hardship, as defined in paragraphs three and four above.
  - ii. Restrict loans of non-print materials and equipment based on hardship, as defined in sections three and four above.
  - iii. Limit attendance at programs when local residents would be deprived of attendance at such programs.
  - iv. Restrict access to electronic resources based on hardship, as defined in sections three and four above.
  - v. The member library will propose a time frame for the beginning and end of the requested modifications. At the end of the modification time frame the library will review data as outlined in section three to see if a hardship still exists.
- (b) With the prior approval of the Commissioner for requests falling outside of this plan and after specific approval by the Finger Lakes Library System Board and

of a majority of the member libraries:

- i. The member library will provide documentation to Finger Lakes Library System Board of Trustees indicating the serious inequities and hardships affecting the residents of the library's chartered service area.
- ii. The member library will include in the documentation the proposed modifications it intends to make to address the serious inequities and hardships that differ from those in section 4 above.
- iii. The member library will also describe the expected impact on local resident and non-resident borrowing after the modifications are approved and implemented.
- iv. The member library will propose a time frame for the beginning and end of the requested modifications.
- v. The waiver request by the library has been approved by a majority of the member libraries of the Finger Lakes Library System
- vi. The waiver requested will be forwarded by the Finger Lakes Library System Board of Trustees to the Commissioner of Education for action.

10. *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.*

We shall distribute a copy of this Plan once it is approved by the Commissioner and hold a discussion at a System Meeting concerning details of the plan and compliance.

We shall also be responsive to any queries or complaints about possible non-compliance by our member libraries.

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

- In conjunction with revising the Finger Lakes Library System Plan of Service for 2012 – 2016, DLD required all public library systems to revise their Direct Access Plan.
- Finger Lakes Library System Administration contacted DLD concerning the existing plan and any possible problems with the current plan.
- Discussions concerning the components of the five year plan of service were

- held with member libraries during regional meetings in November 2011.
- The Finger Lakes Library System Administration and Department Heads reviewed the existing free direct access plan and proposed a draft plan. A revised plan based on these recommendations was submitted to the Finger Lakes Library System Board of Trustees.
  - The Finger Lakes Library System Board of Trustees reviewed the draft plan at the January 25, 2012 Board Meeting. The Finger Lakes Library System Board of Trustees approved the draft plan being sent to the members for review, input and an open comment period.
  - The draft Free Direct Access Plan was discussed during the February FALCONS Meeting.
  - Suggested changes / revisions were forwarded to the Finger Lakes Library System Board of Trustees for consideration.
  - Finger Lakes Library System Board of Trustees approved a revised plan based on feedback and directed it to be sent to the member library Boards for final acceptance and approval at the April 25, 2012 Board meeting.
  - The approved Free Direct Access Plan was submitted to the Department of Library Development as part of the Finger Lakes Library System's Plan of Service in September 2012.