

North Country Library System
Free Direct Access Plan 2022 - 2026
to fulfill Commissioner's Regulation 90.3(a) through (d)(4) with
North Country Library System (NCLS) Responses

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

All North Country Library System member libraries receive state funding. In addition, a majority of our libraries receive money from ballot votes. Ballot-based and county funding is supported by taxpayers throughout the entirety of each area. Therefore, all persons within the North Country Library System service area contribute to the support of all libraries in the county and/or regional ballot votes and have a right to Free Direct Access to library services.

All libraries in the North Country Library System share a single library card, and patrons may apply for a card at any library. The requirements to receive a card may vary slightly between libraries. Patrons should visit their nearest public library to obtain a card which will give them access to all the libraries in the North Country Library System, plus many online library resources.

- 2. Describe how NCLS will assure that those persons living within the system boundaries in an area where a member library chooses to withdraw from the system, will be served by the system.**

Should a member library choose to withdraw from the System, patrons formerly served by that library will receive free service from all of the other libraries within our service area.

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

The North Country Library System will annually tabulate the local per capita support received by member libraries.

We shall discard from the calculation the two highest and two lowest local per capita support reports, so as not to skew the average obtained.

Any of our member libraries which have a local per capita support that is less than one-half of the average support of the other libraries in the North Country Library System service area will be deemed to be operating under a hardship. To address this hardship, the North Country Library System will conduct planning workshops to prepare trustees from those member libraries to approach their local funding sources. They need to raise awareness of their dire fiscal situation and build a consensus in the village/town/school district officials to increase the support of the library.

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

More than 20% of total circulation to patrons from outside a library's chartered service area would constitute excessive service. At this time, no member library has reported experiencing such a problem.

- 5. Describe the unserved and the underserved populations within the system.**

There are no unserved or underserved populations within the System Service Area. All

persons within our Service area have Free Access to any and all member libraries.

6. 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.

The Minimum Public Library Standards as defined by the Commissioner's Regulation 90.2 is used to determine the acceptable level of library services. All of our libraries meet those standards.

7. Describe the actions the system will take to expand the availability of library services to unserved and underserved individual residing within the boundaries of the system.

The North Country Library System and member libraries focus on publicity and informing the public of the free services offered. We know of no unserved or underserved individuals who are without library services, except by their own choice.

8. Provide a timetable for such actions.

We know of no unserved or underserved individuals who are without library services, except by their own choice.

9. Identify who will be responsible for carrying out these actions.

We know of no unserved or underserved individuals who are without library services, except by their own choice.

10. 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

While NCLS has no intention of making any modifications to the Free Direct Access Plan, certain modifications to the plan of unrestricted direct access may be made with the approval of the majority of member libraries and without approval from the Commission of Education. Conditions and restrictions to access, as referenced in Commissioner's Regulation 90.3, may include:

- Not supplying library services to jurisdictions with a population of over 10,000 that do not contract for library services or have their own library. Central or co-central libraries cannot impose this restriction.
- Placing restrictions upon the loan of library resources. These restrictions are limited to non-print materials and equipment and printed materials, less than one year from the acquisition date, purchased with local funds. Libraries must certify to the system that they are able to identify what materials are being purchased with various funding sources in order to determine what materials may be restricted.
- Placing restrictions upon attendance at library programs. Such programs must be supported entirely with local funds.

B. With the prior approval of the Commissioner of Education

Certain additional modifications to the plan for unrestricted direct access may be made for individual libraries with the approval of the majority of member libraries and with prior

approval from the Commissioner of Education. Such requests will be submitted in writing by the system board of trustees. The system board will not unnecessarily delay the submission of a member request for additional restrictions once the member libraries have approved the request to go forward. They will include, but not be limited to, the requirements detailed in Commissioner's Regulations 90.39 system plan guidance located at <https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/fda/guidelines.htm>.

11. 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.

If the North Country Library System is aware of a member library which does not comply with this Free Direct Access Plan, the North Country Library System will work with the board to discuss the importance of, and ensure their agreement with, this Free Direct Access Plan. If an agreement for compliance with this Free Direct Access Plan cannot be reached, all NCLS services will be eliminated for the library in question.

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

The North Country Public Library Directors Organization (NCPLDO) reviewed the Free Direct Access Plan at a meeting on August 18, 2021. The reviewed document was emailed to Directors and mailed to Board Presidents on August 19th, 2021.

Forty libraries voted to approve the Plan of Service. No dissenting votes were received. These votes were received between 8/19/21 to 9/29/21.

North Country Library System Board of Trustees approved the plan on 09/30/2021.