

UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM

Free Direct Access (90.3)

(Final)

INTRODUCTION

Upper Hudson Library System (UHLS) serves the counties of Albany and Rensselaer. It has a service population of 447,222 in a geographic area of 1,178 square miles. Every member library of UHLS makes resources available to the residents of the two counties. These resources are available through on-site use and through direct access in accordance with the New York State Commissioner of Education regulations 90.3.

CR 90.3 (a) DEFINITIONS

Public Library System means a library established by one or more counties, a group of libraries serving an area including one or more counties in whole or in part, a library of a city containing one or more counties, or a cooperative library system established pursuant to the provisions of section 255 of the Education Law.

Approved plan of service means a plan of library service submitted by a public library system board of trustees in accordance with section 272 of the Education Law that has been approved by the Commissioner pursuant to the provisions of this section. The plan of service defines the mutual commitments, responsibilities and obligations of the public library system and its members in meeting the service needs of the area served and statewide library service goals.

Direct Access means the ability of an individual, who resides within the boundaries of a public library system and who has a valid borrower's card issued by the system or any member library in the system, to borrow materials for home use directly from the premises of any library that is a member of the public library system on the same basis as that specified for cardholders in each individual library.

Chartered service area means the geographic area served by a library as stated in charter documents approved by the Board of Regents and on file with the department. For purposes of this section, the phrase "and its environs" or equivalent as contained in any charter document will not be recognized by the commissioner as a valid part of the library's chartered service area. For purposes of this section, the commissioner will not recognize areas served by the library under contract as a valid part of a library's chartered service area.

Resident borrower means an individual who resides within the boundaries of the chartered service area of a public or association or Indian library as defined in section 253 of the Education Law and who is a library cardholder at that library.

Non-resident borrower means an individual who resides outside the boundaries of the chartered service area of a public or association or Indian library as defined in section 253 of the Education Law and who is a library cardholder at that library or at another member library of the public library system who is a system cardholder.

Library resources means the print and non-print materials owned by the library and any other services provided by the library to the resident borrowers of the library's chartered service area.

Local income means funds supplied by local taxing agencies which may be municipalities or special districts. These funds may be from the library's sponsoring municipality or from a nonsponsoring municipality in payment for library services.

On-site use means the ability of an individual to use library resources on the premises of a library.

Serious inequities and hardships means those conditions which adversely affect resident borrowers of member libraries. Such conditions are defined in accordance with the free direct access provisions contained in each system's approved plan of service and may include, but not limited to, a definition of what constitutes excessive borrowing of a library's resources by non-resident borrowers.

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.

Underserved means those individuals residing in geographic areas that are within the chartered service area of a member library and which the public library system had identified as having an inadequate level of local income to support the delivery of acceptable library services.

THE PLAN

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

Individuals residing within the boundaries of the system but outside a member library's chartered service area will receive library services via:

- Free direct and onsite access at any member library
- Central Library Services provided by the Albany Public Library
- Through the UHLS website and online catalog
- UHLAN library card
- Books by Mail

1. *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, will be served by the system.*

See answer to question 1

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

The system considers "serious inequities and hardships" to be:

When 20% of total materials circulated from the collection of a member library are to residents of communities outside a library's chartered service area.

When 10% of total materials circulated from the collection of a member library are to residents of a single community outside a library's chartered service area.

When an unserved community has a population over 10,000 and has no fair and equitable contract for library services.

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

See question 3

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

The following are unserved populations:

- Guilderland 400
- Coeymans 50
- New Scotland 75
- Knox 2,661 (under contract with the Altamont library)
- Green Island 2,490
- Schaghticoke 6,696
- Schodack 11,389 (under contract with Castleton, Nassau and East Greenbush libraries)

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

The median per capita support for the libraries in the Upper Hudson Library System is \$9.00.

The following libraries receive less than \$9.00 per capita:

Berlin, Berne, Brunswick, Cohoes, Grafton, Hoosick Falls, Nassau, Poestenkill, RCSC, Rensselaer, Rensselaerville, Schaghticoke, Stephentown, Troy, Watervliet and Westerlo

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 system will encourage the expansion of member library's chartered service areas; encourage the establishment of new libraries in areas presently unserved; promote books by mail, services to outreach sites, and provide inservice training to develop skills to facilitate efforts of library staff and trustees to solicit additional funding from municipalities.

d. ***Provide a timetable for such activities***

Ongoing

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

System and member libraries will be responsible for carrying out these actions

1. *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 can document to the satisfaction of the system that 20% of total materials circulated from the collection of a member library are to residents of communities outside a library's chartered service area.

When a library can document to the satisfaction of the system that 10% of total materials circulated from the collection of a member library are to residents of a single community outside a library's chartered service area.

When a library can document that an unserved community has a population over 10,000 and has no fair and equitable contract for library services.

That library may restrict the following materials

- Non-print materials and equipment
- Printed materials that are less than one year old from acquisition date (fiction, non-fiction books and periodicals)
- Attendance at library programs may be restricted to local residents first.

These restricted programs and materials must be supported entirely from local funds.

If a single unserved community is over 10,000, and a library proves hardship, the library may choose to restrict all but on-site use of library materials.

A library choosing to restrict must notify the system in writing. The system will immediately notify the other libraries of such restrictions.

a. *With prior approval of the Commissioner of Education*

A library may request a waiver for restrictions beyond those mentioned in this plan if a majority of the other member libraries agree to support such a waiver. This appeal will be in writing and include the following:

1. Documentation of the serious inequities and hardships affecting the resident borrowers of the member library making the request
2. The proposed modifications to unrestricted direct access that will be implemented and a description of the anticipated impact on resident and non-resident borrowers
3. Recommendations for remedying the underlying inequity with a proposed timetable for action

1. *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*

Quarterly survey of members regarding compliance. Review of monthly borrower reports generated by DRA.

2. *Describe how system obtained member library input to plan for direct access?*

January 1999 revised 90.3 regulations, with new definitions and memo was sent to all member library directors and board presidents.

February 1999 topic was discussed at a meeting of the Director's Association

March 1999 topic was discussed at a meeting of the Director's Association

March 1999 discussion at UHLS Services Committee

April 1999 topic was discussed at a meeting of the Director's Association

April 1999 discussion at UHLS Services Committee

August 1999 interim report sent to State Librarian as required

September 1999 draft plan circulated to membership for discussion

September 1999 discussion at Director's Association meeting. Subcommittee formed to refine plan.

October 1999 subcommittee met with Jim Farrell, from Library Development

October 1999 subcommittee met to refine draft and prepare a document to be circulated.

November 1999 document will be discussed at Director's Association

December 1999 document will be submitted to State Librarian.