

**Direct Access Plan
to fulfill
Education Commissioner's Regulation 90.3
Sections (a) through (d) (4)

Four County Library System**

Approved : Four Library System Board of Trustees , Sept. 21, 2011

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, in the case of its outreach and bookmobile programs. 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 four counties served by the system. Non-residents who pay a suitable "non-resident fee" will be eligible for services at member libraries up to the limits and criteria established by local libraries and/or this plan.

d. System Residents:

Individuals residing *within* the boundaries of the Four County Library System, i.e., within one of the four counties, but *not within* any member library's chartered-to-serve area. These individuals are eligible to apply for a library card at any Four County 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 paying a fee for services from a member library, and System residents.

Additionally, all member libraries have a Contract of Membership signed with 4CLS which requires compliance with the provisions of CR 90.3. (Appendix 1)

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:
Four County Library System services, such as Outreach and Bookmobile services, will be offered to System residents of withdrawn member libraries' chartered service area under the same conditions as those offered to local residents and System residents.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, including its branches, 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 four 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. Excessive is defined below in paragraph 4.

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 high-demand materials to non-residents or System residents of high-demand materials, as defined by CR9O.3(d)(2)(ii), reaches 10% of the total circulation of such materials,

OR

- (b) the circulation of all materials to non-residents or System residents reaches 5%.

The data for such a determination will be made from:

- (a) statistical reports from the automated circulation system operated by the Four County Library System for prior year's borrowing (in the case of online libraries), or
- (b) by sampling counts of circulation (in the case of non-automated libraries).

5. Unserved and underserved populations:

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

The unserved are those some 56,000 plus individuals as defined by CR9O.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. Our 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.*

(a) Unserved: The Four County Library System will continue to provide Bookmobile service to those communities that do not have a library. Such service requires a 50% match of local (usually county) funds to support the program.

Notwithstanding the definition in CR 90.3(a)(10), all other residents have public library service through direct access in nearby communities.

(b) Underserved: 4CLS continually works with the boards of member libraries to seek additional funds from local officials.

On request of a member library, 4CLS will offer to assist the library in its efforts to expand the availability of library services to the unserved and underserved. The Four County Library System does, and will continue, to conduct workshops relating to ways to better serve 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 Four County Library System.
 - (b) Issue of the underserved: Board of Trustees of member libraries listed above in paragraph 5(b) and Board of the Four County 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 Four County Library System, and after appropriate notification of the member libraries of the Four County 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 paragraphs 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 paragraphs three and four above.
 - (b) With the prior approval of the Commissioner for requests falling outside of this plan and after specific approval by 4CLS Board and of a majority of the member libraries:
 - i. The member library will provide documentation to 4CLS Board of Trustees indicating the serious inequities and 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 paragraph 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 Four County Library System
- vi. The waiver requested will be forwarded by the Four County 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.

Additionally, all member libraries have a Contract of Membership signed with 4CLS which requires compliance with the provisions of CR 90.3.

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

free direct access.

- In conjunction with revising the 4CLS Plan of Service for 2012 – 2016, DLD required all public library systems to revise their Direct Access Plan.
- The 4CLS Administration was charged with reviewing the existing free direct access plan.
- 4CLS Administration contacted DLD concerning the existing plan and any possible problems with the current plan. DLD informed 4CLS administration that the existing plan was viewed as a model and often recommended to others when revising their plan.
- Discussions concerning the components of the existing plan were held with member libraries during regional meetings in April and May, 2011.
- Issues relating to borrowing materials were discussed during an Electronic Resources and Advisory Committee meeting in April, 2011.
- System Services Committee of the 4CLS Board reviewed the revised plan and approved it being sent to the members for review and input.
- Revised 4CLS Plan was discussed at a Plan of Service review meeting in September, 2011.
- Suggested changes / revisions were forwarded to the 4CLS Board for consideration at the September 21, 2011 Board meeting.
- 4CLS Board approved the revised plan at the September 21, 2011 Board meeting and directed it be sent to the member library Boards for their review and vote on acceptance.

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