

# Minimum Standards for New York's Public Libraries

The New York State Library is committed to improving public library services and works with libraries, library systems, trustees and other library advocates to help assure equivalent levels of access to library services and resources through Minimum Standards for Public Libraries in New York State.

**All public and association libraries in New York State must meet 11 minimum standards of service according to [Section 90.2](#) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. These standards support improved public library services for the people of New York and are intended to:**

- **promote quality local public library service in all communities within New York State,**
- **empower libraries to strengthen community relations and promote public support for quality library services, and**
- **support a culture of transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.**

## **New York's 11 Minimum Standards for Public Libraries**

- (1) The library is governed by board-approved written bylaws which outline the responsibilities and procedures of the library board of trustees;
- (2) The library has a board-approved, written long-range plan of service;
- (3) The library presents an annual report to the community on the library's progress in meeting its goals and objectives;
- (4) The library has board-approved written policies for its operation;
- (5) The library presents annually to appropriate funding agencies a written board-approved budget which would enable the library to meet or exceed these standards and to carry out its long-range plan of service;
- (6) The library periodically evaluates the effectiveness of the library's collection and services in meeting community needs;
- (7) The library is open the following scheduled hours:

<b>Population</b>	<b>Minimum Weekly Hours Open</b>
Up to 500	12
500 - 2,499	20
2,500 - 4,999	25
5,000 - 14,999	35
15,000 - 24,999	40
25,000 - 99,999	55
100,000 and above	60

- (8) The library maintains a facility to meet community needs, including adequate space, lighting, shelving, seating, and restroom;
- (9) The library provides equipment and connections to meet community needs including, but not limited to telephone, photocopier, telefacsimile capability, and microcomputer or terminal with printer to provide access to other library catalogs and other electronic information;

(10) The library distributes printed information listing the library's hours open, borrowing rules, services, location and phone number;

(11) The library employs a paid director in accordance with the provisions of [Section 90.8](#) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education:

	Minimum Education Requirements	
Population	Member of a Public Library System	Not a Member of a Public Library System
Below 2,500	No requirement.	No requirement.
2,500 to 4,999	2 academic years of study at an approved college or university.	A bachelor's degree from an approved college or university.
5,000 to 7,499	A bachelor's degree from an approved college or university.	A public librarian's professional certificate.
7,500 or more	A public librarian's professional certificate.	A public librarian's professional certificate.

### **When Must a Library Meet the Minimum Standards?**

All of the minimum standards for public libraries must be met at the time of application for a library charter or [registration](#). Education Law requires that a library be chartered and registered in order to legally receive local and State funds. See [Chartering a Public Library in New York State](#) for further information.

### **What if a Library Cannot Meet Minimum Standards?**

If a library cannot meet one or more of the minimum standards, the director or board president should contact the library system to discuss available options. [Education Law](#) and [Commissioner's Regulations](#) provide a process for libraries that cannot meet a particular standard because of circumstances beyond the library board's control.

### **How do Public Library Systems and the State Library Help Libraries Meet the Minimum Standards?**

The Public Library System Directors Organization (PULISDO) and the New York State Library work together in a strong partnership to help public and association libraries meet the minimum standards. See [Helpful Information for Meeting Minimum Public Library Standards](#) for further information.

**For more information on Minimum Standards for New York's public libraries, contact your public library system, visit the New York State Library web site or contact the Division of Library Development**



*The University of the State of New York • The State Education Department  
New York State Library • Division of Library Development  
Cultural Education Center, Room 10B41, Albany, NY 12230-0001  
Telephone: (518) 474-7890; <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/>*

*Revised 03/03/16*

## New York State Public and Association Libraries And Minimum Standards *Comparison Chart 2015*

Minimum Public Library Standards <sup>1</sup>	2015 Libraries Responding <sup>2</sup>		Changes from 2014 to 2015	Percentage Meeting Minimum Standards
	Yes	No		
1: Bylaws	756	0	0	100%
2: Plan	754	2	+2	99.7%
3: Community Report	756	0	+1	100%
4: Policies	756	0	0	100%
5: Budget	756	0	0	100%
6: Measures Collection	756	0	0	100%
7: Hours Open	756	0	+3	100%
8: Facilities				
a: space	753	3	+2	99.5%
b: lighting	756	0	+1	100%
c: shelving	755	1	+2	99.8%
d: seating	753	3	+2	99.5%
e: restroom	756	0	0	100%
9: Equipment				
a: telephone	756	0	0	100%
b: photocopier	756	0	0	100%
c: microcomputer or terminal	756	0	0	100%
d: printer	756	0	0	100%
e: Facsimile capability	756	0	0	100%
10: Printed Information	756	0	0	100%
11: Paid Director meeting CR 90.8	752	4	+5	99.5%

<sup>1</sup> Standards as approved by the Board of Regents, *Commissioner's Regulations 90.2* effective 1/29/99.

<sup>2</sup> Data for these elements are current as of December 2015, based on information provided by the public library systems, updating information from the 2014 annual reports.



The University of the State of New York • The State Education Department  
New York State Library • Division of Library Development  
Cultural Education Center, Room 10B41, Albany, NY 12230-0001  
Telephone: (518) 474-7890; <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/>

Revised 03/03/16