


New Minimum Standards for New York’s Public and Association Libraries

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Updated Minimum Standards

- The following standards need to be in place at all libraries in New York State by January 1, 2021.
- Updates reflect changes in library governance, technology, and use.
- Updates include 3 new standards (#9 Programming, #13 Technology Training for Library Staff, #14 Community Partners).
- Libraries must provide annual assurance that all standards are met via the Annual Report to New York State.
- If a library cannot meet a standard it must apply for a variance through its library sy 

- Libraries must meet all standards to receive local and state funding (NYS Education Law, Section 254)


Standard #1: Written Bylaws

Written bylaws of the board of trustees; reviewed and re-approved at least every five years.

- Bylaws define the structure of the Board of Trustees, set procedures, and ensure continuity.
- Bylaws need to be reviewed and re-approved every 5 years.
 - If your board has not reviewed your bylaws in the past five years, you will need to add it as an agenda item for a board meeting before January 1, 2021.
- Follow the amendment procedures in your bylaws if an item needs to be updated.
- Include "Reviewed" or "Approved" dates on the bylaws.
- To be in compliance with Standard 11, your bylaws need to be posted to the library's website.
- For sample bylaws, you can refer to page 90 of the Trustee Handbook.
- Click here for helpful information in meeting this standard.

Standard #2: Long-Range Plan

A community-based, board-approved, written long-range plan of service developed by the board and staff.

- A library's long-range plan should be designed to help with decision-making, communicating the library's intentions in the community, and pointing the library in a direction.
- The long-range plan will clarify the library's role in the community, evaluate the quality of library services, and establish funding priorities.
- Most plans cover 3-5 years.
- Plans should be specific and measurable.
- To be in compliance with Standard 11, your long-range plan will need to be posted to the library's website. 

- [Click here for helpful information in meeting this standard.](#)


Standard #3: Report to the Community

A board-approved written annual report to the community on the library's progress in meeting its mission, goals and objectives.

- The Annual Report to the Community reviews the previous year.
- It provides quantitative and qualitative measurements on the library's progress toward goals written in its long-range plan.
- It provides transparency and accountability to the general public, community partners, and current and potential funders.
- Include statistics, notable projects and partnerships, visuals/infographics, and pictures.
- To be in compliance with Standard 11, your annual report to the community will need to be posted to the library's website by the end of the year
- [Click here for helpful information in meeting this standard.](#)

Standard #4: Written Policies

Written policies for the operation of the library, reviewed at least every five years.

- Policies provide information for staff to do their jobs and lay out expectations for the community.
- Policies must be in writing and adopted by the Board in an Open Meeting.
- Policies need to be reviewed every 5 years.
 - If your board has not reviewed your policies in the past five years, you will need to update them before January 1, 2021.
- Be sure to add "Reviewed" or "Approved" dates to your policies.
- To be in compliance with Standard 11, your external policies will need to be posted to the library's website by the end of the year.
- For a recommended policy checklist, you can refer to page 114 of the Trustee Handbook 

- [Click here for helpful information in meeting this standard \(includes a list of mandatory policies by the state\).](#)

Standard #5: Written Budget

An annual, board-approved budget designed to address community needs as defined in the long range plan.

- Written budgets ensure fiscal accountability and transparency.
- The budget should reflect the priorities that are outlined in the library's long-range plan.
- Drafting the annual budget should be a joint project between the Board and Director.
- Use the previous year as a guide but forecast known and possible changes to avoid shortfalls.
- To be in compliance with Standard 11, your annual budget will need to be posted to the library's website.
- [Click here for helpful information in meeting this standard.](#)

Standard #6: Evaluating Effectiveness

Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the library's programs, services and collections

- Libraries must demonstrate an organized, ongoing effort to survey the community about their collection and services.
- Data collection can include questionnaires, focus groups, 1-on-1 interviews, and observation.
- Library staff, library users, non-library users, community leaders, and other stakeholders should all be included in surveying efforts.
- Data should be evaluated and used to develop new service objectives to meet community needs, support advocacy efforts, and justify budget decisions.
- [Click here for helpful information in meeting this standard.](#)



Standard #7: Hours

Maintain hours of service according to a schedule based on population served:

Population	Minimum Weekly Hours Open
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

- The above chart represents the *minimum* number of hours a library must be open each week.
- Libraries are not obligated to open on legal holidays or Sundays.
- Libraries should be open 52 weeks a year.
- Library hours should be fixed.
- Morning, afternoon, and evening hours should be included to ensure community access.
- Hours should be posted on the building, printed, and online.
- [Click here for helpful information in meeting this standard.](#)

Standard #8: Maintaining a Facility to Meet Community Needs



Maintain a facility which meets community needs, as outlined in the library's long range plan; including adequate space, lighting, shelving, power and data infrastructure, and a public restroom.

- The library's long-range plan of service will help determine space needs and layout of library facilities.
- The Board/Facilities Committee needs to regularly evaluate the library's facilities.
- The Board should gather input regarding the library's facilities from staff and community members.
- Having a Master Facility Plan will help plan for an expansion/renovation, regular maintenance, safety/security updates, workflow, ADA compliancy, and sustainability.
- [Click here for helpful information in meeting this standard.](#)

Standard #9: Programming

Provide programming to address community needs.

- Providing regular programming positions the library as a valuable community partner.
- Programming attracts new users, creates positive publicity, and increases service metrics (door count, circulation, etc).
- When planning programming, review what has worked, what has not worked, and what the community wants/needs.
- Establish programming goals and objectives to help evaluate their effectiveness.
- Publicize and promote programs.
- [Click here for helpful information in meeting this standard.](#)

Standard #10: Technology to Meet Community Needs



Provide a circulation system that facilitates access to the local library collection and other library catalogs as well as providing equipment, technology, and internet connectivity to address community needs and facilitate access to information.

- Libraries must provide a integrated library system (ILS) that facilitates resource sharing by the tracking of items owned by a library, as well as library users' borrowing, returning and requesting activities.
- Libraries must provide access to technology hardware including computers, printers, scanners, etc.
- Libraries must provide access to high-speed wifi.
- It is best practice to keep a master list of hardware inventory, usernames and passwords, software licensing keys, and vendor/support contact information.
- [Click here for helpful information in meeting this standard.](#)

Standard #11: Provides Access to Current Library Information

Provide access to current library information in print and online to facilitate the community's understanding of library services, operations and governance. Information provided online shall include items 1-5.

- Libraries must provides access to current library information in print and online.
- Include all library contact information, hours of operation, and programming schedules.
- Describe the library, its services, and available programming.
- Information should be clear, up-to-date, and contain consistent branding.
- Libraries must make available draft Board meeting minutes within two weeks of meeting.
- To be in compliance with the updated Minimum Standards, libraries must post Bylaws, Long-Range Plan, Annual Report to the Community, Policies, and Budget on the library's website.
- [Click here for helpful information in meeting this standard.](#)



Standard #12: Employs a Paid Director

Employ a paid director with qualifications based on population served. The minimum education qualifications for library director as established in Commissioner's Regulation § 90.8 are as follows:

POPULATION	Minimum Education Requirements	
	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.

- A paid Director ensures consistent, quality service to the library community.
- The Director should be compensated based on education and experience.
- Include health insurance, paid sick leave, and paid vacation in the Director's benefit package.
- A retirement plan and continuing education opportunities are strongly recommended.
- [Click here for helpful information in meeting this standard.](#)

Standard #13: Technology Training for Staff

Provide library staff with annual technology training appropriate to their position, in order to address community needs.

- Regular training ensures staff keeps pace with changing technologies.
- A well-trained staff provides better service to the community.



- The Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State recommends 1% of the library's budget is dedicated to staff and trustee training.
- Training can include a Professional Development Day, regular Staff Meetings, webinars/online courses, conferences, and library system workshops.
- [Click here for helpful information in meeting this standard.](#)

Standard #14: Community Partners

Establish and maintain partnerships with educational, cultural or community organizations which will enable the library to address the community's needs; as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service.

- Libraries must demonstrate active partnering with educational, cultural, and/or community organizations.
- Partnerships create community ties, programming opportunities, and sustainability.
- Partnerships should have a goal or objective.
- Partnerships present opportunities for the library to gain new resources, new services, and new users.
- [Click here for helpful information in meeting this standard.](#)

Minimum Standards Comparison Chart

- [New York Public and Association Libraries Minimum Standards Comparison Chart](#)

Laws and Regulations

- [Laws and Regulations Pertaining to Minimum Public Library Standards](#)

Additional Resources



- Updates to NYS Minimum Standards: What You Need to Know for 2021 (presentation slides)
- Handbook for Library Trustees for New York State
- Helping All Trustees Succeed (HATS) webinar series
- NYS Department of Library Development

