

# Minimum Standards for Public Libraries in New York State

## Effective January 1, 2021

All public libraries in New York State must comply with a set of standards encoded in the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. These standards cover a variety of topics. Some are scaled to reflect the capacities of smaller libraries. If a library falls out of compliance with their minimum standards, the repercussions can be severe.

### The Standards (new language in green)

1. is governed by written bylaws which **define the structure and governing functions** of the library board of trustees; **reviewed and re-approved at least once every five years or as required by changes in law or regulation;**
2. has a **community-based,** board-approved, written long-range plan of service **developed by the library board and staff;**
3. **provides a board-approved, written** annual report to the community on the library's progress in meeting its **mission,** goals and objectives, **as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service;**
4. has board-approved written policies for the operation of the library, **reviewed at least every five years or as required by law or regulation;**
5. **annually prepares and publishes a board-approved, written budget, which enables the library to address the community's needs, as outlined in the library's** long-range plan of service; to meet or exceed these standards and to carry out its long-range plan of service
6. periodically evaluates the effectiveness of the library's **programs, services and collections to address community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service**
7. Is open the following scheduled hours: (see reverse)
8. maintains a facility **that addresses community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service,** including adequate space, lighting, shelving, seating, **power and data infrastructure,** and **a public** restroom;
9. **provides programming to address community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service; (NEW)**
10. **provides a circulation system that facilitates access to the local library collection and other library catalogs; provides equipment, technology, and internet connectivity to address community needs and facilitate access to information**
11. **provides access to current library information in print and online, facilitating the understanding of library services, operations and governance; information provided online shall include items referenced under standards one through five**
12. Employs a paid director in accordance with the provisions of Commissioner's Regulation 90.8 (see reverse).

13. **provides library staff with annual technology training, appropriate to their position, to address community needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service; (NEW)**
14. **establishes and maintains partnerships with other educational, cultural or community organizations which enable the library to address the community's needs, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service. (NEW)**

### Waivers

Compliance with the minimum standards is mainly gauged by self-reporting on NY State Annual Reports. If the state identifies a library that is out of compliance, the library will be required to request a waiver. The waiver request must include specific steps the library will take to come into compliance. The waiver request must be approved by the system board as well as the NY State Library.

### Further Information

More information on minimum standards can be found on the NY State Library's webpage:

- [Helpful Information For Meeting Minimum Standards](#)
- [List of Minimum Standards](#)

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

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