

Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System

Free Direct Access Plan

2022-2026

Overview

The Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS) has a service population of 215,222 in a geographic area of 2,415 square miles. CCLS is a cooperative library system made of up thirty-six member libraries.

Every member library makes resources freely 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's Regulations 90.3.

Commissioner's Regulations 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 as approved by the Board of Regents and on file with the department. For purposes of this section, the phrase "and its environs" or its 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

Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System

Free Direct Access Plan

2022-2026

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, school districts or special districts. These funds may be from the library's sponsoring municipality or from a non-sponsoring 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 are not limited to, a definition of what constitutes excessive borrowing of a library's resources by non-resident borrowers.

Unserviced means those individuals residing in geographic areas that are within the boundaries of a public library system but outside the boundaries of 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

Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System

Free Direct Access Plan

2022-2026

had identified as having an inadequate level of local income to support the delivery of acceptable library services.

CCLS Free Direct Access Plan

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

All residents of Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties are able to access the materials and services of any member library within the two counties. When joining CCLS, each member signed a contract to that effect. A system wide library card provides access to all individuals regardless of where they reside within the two counties. All member libraries provide free onsite use of library materials, computers, and access to the Internet. The Library System receives funding from both counties which is distributed to members specifically for the purchase of library materials. This funding helps to compensate member libraries for freely sharing materials and services to those living outside their chartered-to-serve areas. Access to digital collections, supported by CCLS and member library funding, is freely available to all residents of the two counties.

2. 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, or where a chartered and registered library was never a member of the system, will be served by the system.

Should a member library choose to withdraw from CCLS, the residents of that chartered-to-serve area will continue to be eligible to receive service at any other library within the System. All chartered and registered libraries in the CCLS service area are members of the System.

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

The System does not believe that any serious inequities and hardships exist within its area that would prevent one library from serving the entire System's population without restriction or limits. Traditionally, this System's members have always cooperated with one another. Members believe that service to all the residents of

Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System

Free Direct Access Plan

2022-2026

the System's area must be delivered on an equal footing inasmuch as all residents are subject to State and County taxes which support library services. A robust delivery system allows member libraries to share materials, and member libraries encourage their patrons to use other libraries if they cannot provide the needed service or materials. The System provides access to an online shared catalog and eBook database. All of the System's member libraries meet all of the State's standards.

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

There is no reason to believe that excessive out of chartered service area borrowing exists on the part of any member library because serving the entire population of the two counties has always been a condition of membership in the System.

5. A. Describe the unserved and the underserved populations with the system. 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. 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. D. Provide a timetable for such actions. E. Identify who will be responsible for carrying out these actions.

Underserved populations throughout the two counties include people who are blind or who have a physical disability, seniors, people who have a developmental or learning disability, people living in institutionalized settings, members of ethnic or minority groups in need of special services, people who are educationally disadvantaged, people who are unemployed or underemployed, and people who are geographically isolated. The Outreach Coordinator works directly with these populations and other organizations that serve these populations, and with member libraries to improve services to these populations. All residents of the two counties have free access to digital materials and are eligible to receive full services at any of the 36 libraries. CCLS uses a member library's ability to meet minimum library standards as detailed in New York State Education Law and Commissioner's Regulations to determine that a library is receiving adequate local support.

Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System

Free Direct Access Plan

2022-2026

The only significantly large area of unserved population exists in the Cherry Creek-South Dayton area, an area which closely matches the boundaries of the Pine Valley Central School District. Small overlaps exist with service areas of existing libraries, which is a barrier to forming a district library in this area. CCLS held meetings with the superintendent of the school district upon learning about the desire to form a library to help serve children after school hours. The Division of Library Development provided guidance that because of this overlap a library district should not be explored, so no timeline exists. It is possible that future service area changes at existing member libraries might make a library more feasible in the future and the options for serving these populations will continue to be explored. A digital library card was developed in collaboration with school teachers in this district to give children access to digital collections.

6. 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;* *b. With the prior approval of the Commissioner of Education.*

Because a requirement of System membership by all of its member libraries is free direct access for all residents there are no conditions either with or without the prior approval of the Commissioner of Education under which modification to this free direct access plan may be made, except by vote of the members.

7. 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.

Each member library will receive a copy of this plan following its approval by the System Board, a majority of the System's members, and the Education Commissioner. To maintain its membership in the System, it must comply with the plan. In the unlikely event that any member will not comply, the library will be reminded of the requirements for membership in the System, what benefits derive from that membership, and the consequences of losing its privileges as a member. Any member which after a warning delivered by the System Board fails to comply with the free direct access plan will be dropped from System membership.

Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System
Free Direct Access Plan
2022-2026

8. Describe how the system obtained member library input to the plan for direct access.

The plan was distributed to member libraries for comment following a strategic planning process guided by a Strategic Planning Committee, which was comprised of the CCLS Executive Director, a CCLS board member, member library directors, and member library board members.