

Document of Understanding Between the Monroe County Library System and Its Member Libraries

January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2027

New York State created library systems to expand the resources of local libraries, enabling them to more effectively utilize local tax revenues to offer quality library services and collections for the benefit of the region served by the library system. This document sets forth the understanding of the relationship between the Monroe County Library System (henceforth “the System” or “MCLS”) and its member libraries.

This document outlines required, essential, and value-added services provided by the System to its member libraries and the requirements placed upon member libraries in order to participate in the System.

I. Required Services

Under New York State Education Law and the Regulations of the Commissioner, the following services and responsibilities are required to be provided by the Monroe County Library System and member libraries, respectively:

A. System Services & Responsibilities

1. The System will maintain and operate a union catalog to support resource sharing among member libraries. (§90.3(4)(h))
2. The System will provide outreach services. (§90.3(m))
3. The Central Library of the System will support the residents in the System Service Area. (§90.4)
4. The System will develop and submit a Plan of Service to the New York State Education Department every five years. (§272) Through the MCLS Directors’ Council and joint committees, a means will be provided for making policy, service, and financial recommendations for the development and implementation of the System’s Five-Year Plan of Service. An annual Directors Retreat will be held in January where work priorities drawn from the Plan of Service will be evaluated for the prior year and set for the coming year.
5. The System will develop and retain a current Direct Access Policy to establish and ensure the borrowing rights of residents in the geographic area served by the System and its members. (§90.3)

B. Member Library Services & Responsibilities

1. Member libraries will provide privileges to patrons of other member libraries in the System in accordance with the MCLS Direct Access Policy. (§90.3; see Appendix B, “Direct Access Policy”)
2. Member libraries will submit an Annual Report for Public and Association Libraries by the deadline set by the System. (§11.4) Member libraries may be asked to submit additional information to the System to help inform strategic and operational directions, as well as assist other members in decision making.

II. Essential Services

Essential services are services or resources jointly shared and supported between the System and its member libraries. Essential services require a fee or charge to the members, known as the cost share (Appendix C). Members agree to pay an annual cost share to the System as specified in Appendix B. Pending increases in funding beyond the minimum required to support the System, the System will reserve additional funds in the System fund balance or distribute additional funds after the majority approval of member library directors and final approval of the MCLS Board of Trustees. The System fund balance will be used to support system services as needed in future budget cycles.

The System collects revenue via online fine payments. Such revenue, minus transaction charges, is redistributed by the System Finance Office to member libraries twice annually to the fine-charging library. This distribution is typically done at the same time as cost share billing. The following services and responsibilities are deemed essential by the Monroe County Library System and its members:

A. Network

1. **Priority Support:** The System will provide access to and support of an Integrated Library System (ILS), the telecommunications infrastructure that supports circulation and patron database management, public catalogs, internet, the System website, ePortal, email, reports, and other functions and services as agreed to by the members.
2. **Equitable Access:** The System and its member libraries will cooperate in an effort to ensure equitable and fair access to the network, internet, and email services among the members.
3. **Bandwidth:** the System will monitor digital transmission bandwidth and will distribute monthly reports to the member library directors. Library Automation Services (LAS) has discretion to increase bandwidth based on its monitoring of digital transmission services. Bandwidth will be increased based on capacity in the current digital transmission contract and available System operational funding.
4. **Opt-In Technology Infrastructure:** the System will identify opportunities for technology infrastructure to provide additional public broadband access, such as community wireless access. Member libraries may opt to participate in technology infrastructure upon agreement to adhere to minimum requirements or standards identified by Library Automation Services and System administration to maintain safe, efficient, and full functionality of the infrastructure.
5. **Services to Small Libraries:** Library Automation Services (LAS) will provide selected services to member libraries which have up to 19 computers on their local area network and a population of fewer than 10,000 residents. Routine maintenance, updates, and weekly backups of small library computers will be set up to run automatically for Windows, spyware, and virus definitions. LAS will have remote access to all computers. System services provided to small libraries include:
 - a) Assistance with the installation of imaged computers and installation of printers, if compatible with the operating system.
 - b) Installation of all proprietary software such as CARL and PCRes. LAS will only support software installed on the base image.

- c) LAS staff will provide training on routine computer maintenance for small library directors as necessary.
- d) With help from LAS, small libraries will negotiate an hourly rate for tech help from an outside vendor for computer work that is outside the scope of work listed in this contract.

B. Delivery

- 1. The System will provide delivery service five days a week, Monday-Friday, for interlibrary and System distribution of materials.

C. Staff Development & Consultation

- 1. The System will provide or arrange training and consulting to member libraries, staff, and boards on relevant library issues. The System will be available for consultation with member library boards and staff members on relevant library issues and issues pertaining to general management.

D. Advocacy & Communication

- 1. In coordination with state and national professional organizations, the System will provide guidance on national, state, and regional issues.
- 2. The System will form ad-hoc committees to address specific advocacy issues as needed.
- 3. The System will provide outreach and scheduling support for advocacy meetings with State officials across the System's service area.

E. Consortial Collections

- 1. Member libraries will spend a minimum % of their materials budget on shared content for OverDrive. The percentage to spend on e-content for the following year will be reviewed on an annual basis at the March Directors' Council meeting. The System will fund the platform fee for Overdrive.

III. Additional Responsibilities & Expectations

A. System

- 1. The System budget options for the upcoming calendar fiscal year will be shared in draft form with the members at the April Directors' Council meeting each year. Member input on the budget will be incorporated into the final product, which will be brought to the May Directors' Council meeting for endorsement and to the MCLS Board of Trustees for approval in May.
- 2. The System Director will share monthly board reports with the member directors.
- 3. The System will inform members of New York State grant opportunities and administer any grant applications received from member libraries as well as provide support for appropriate grant programs.
- 4. The System will ensure that system policies, procedures, meeting minutes, and frequently asked questions are added to the System ePortal and are kept current.

B. Member Libraries

- 1. Through the MCLS Directors' Council (see Appendix D – Directors Council By-Laws), member library directors will participate in System planning for services and funding. Member library directors meet in a retreat each January to review the previous year and plan for the next year.

2. The System Internet Policy will serve as the standard for filtering in Monroe County. Member libraries will display the policy and have computer users acknowledge they have read it before using library computers. This requirement keeps the system in compliance with e-rate funding regulations. Members will also develop their own Internet Safety Policy and have the most up-to-date copy on file with the System (See Appendix E, MCLS Internet Access Policy)

IV. Insurance & Liability

1. Member Libraries shall provide their own insurance as each deems necessary.
2. The System shall be named as an additional insured or shall otherwise recover any damages to equipment owned by the System. The System and the member libraries shall defend, indemnify, and hold each other harmless, including officers and employees, from all liability, loss, damage, attorney's fees, or claims of any character brought because of any injuries or damage received or sustained by any person, persons, or property because the operations of the System or the Library, or because of any act or omission of the System or the Library, or from any Claim under the Workers' Compensation Act.

V. Changes & Amendments

Changes to this document and Appendix B shall require the approval of 2/3 of the boards of the member libraries and the System board. Such changes will be discussed, and language finalized by the Directors' Council, after which it will be presented to member library boards. If the member library board approves the changes, that Board President shall sign the amended document. Following the receipt of the amended and signed document of 2/3 of the member library boards, it will be presented to the System board for their approval and signature.

VI. Effective Date & Termination

By signing this document, each member library is renewing membership in Monroe County Library System with all benefits, privileges, and responsibilities as outlined above. This DOU shall become effective January 1, 2025, and will expire December 31, 2027. This is a three-year agreement with the option to renew at the set terms.

It may be terminated by either party upon written notice to the other, no later than nine (9) months prior to the end of any calendar year. Any member failing to sign this document by March 31 of the calendar year forfeits its System membership.

Member Library

President, Member Library Board of Trustees

(Signature) President, Member Library Board of Trustees

Date

President, MCLS Board of Trustees

(Signature) President, MCLS Board of Trustees

Date

Appendices:

Appendix A – MCLS System Structure & Governance

Appendix B – Direct Access Policy

Appendix C – Cost Shares

Appendix D – Directors Council By-Laws

Appendix E – MCLS Internet Access Policy