Multiple case studies of public library systems in New York State: service decision-making processes

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MULTIPLE CASE STUDIES OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS IN NEW YORK STATE: SERVICE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

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Abstract

This research examined the functions and roles of public library systems in New York State and the services they provide for individual libraries and the public. The dissertation further studied the service decision-making processes at three selected New York State cooperative public library systems. Public library systems have played an important role in enhancing and expanding library services in the United States since the 1940s, but few existing studies on public library systems focus on their organizational processes.

It is the purpose of this research to fill this knowledge gap by conducting a two-stage study in New York State. Since establishing and funding public library systems is not a common practice across all states, it was best to focus the study on one state. This study selected New York State for its well-established public library systems. These public library systems ensure all populations and areas in New York State have access to high quality library services.

Stage I of the study used existing data collected by the New York State Library and information on its website to examine 1) the expected roles and functions of public library systems defined in the New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education; 2) the expressed roles and functions in public library systems’ organizational mission statements and five year Plans of Service documents; 3) the actual service features reflected in 2008-2009 public library systems’ annual reports.

Stage II of the study was multiple case studies on service decision-making processes. Three cooperative public library systems were selected based on findings at Stage I of the study. Interviews were conducted at each public library system with staff members, members of boards of trustees or directors of member libraries.

Findings from Stage I of the study identified differences across three different types of public library systems in New York State in the way their expressed roles and functions corresponding to the law and regulations. Variations of service activities exist across all public library systems and are correlated to the “size” of the public library system and its member composition. Public library systems with small and poor member libraries tend to provide more direct support services; public library systems with rich and large member libraries tend to provide more coordinated services. Stage II of the study found that service decision-making processes at each public library system varied based on service contents and organizational capabilities of both the public library system and its members.

Findings from this study will add knowledge and information about public library systems, their services and decision-making processes. Findings can also add to the research topic of organizational decision-making processes. Public library systems can use this information to improve their service decision-making processes. Policy makers can use this information to make informed policy and funding decisions to facilitate public library systems’ service decision-making processes. Information and library professionals can understand public library systems’ service decision-making processes better to participate in the process and to advocate for better services.
Chapter I: Introduction

Cooperation is a common practice among libraries for sharing resources and enjoying economies of scale. Cooperation reduces duplications of acquisition resources and increases users’ satisfaction by offering them accesses to more resources and services. Furthermore, library cooperation can provide opportunities for bulk purchasing and therefore lower the cost for material acquisitions at individual libraries. Library cooperation is especially important when libraries face budget cuts while still trying to meet increasing customer requests. Nowadays it is rare for a library to provide services based solely on its own resources.

Library cooperation is not free and it happens with costs to participating libraries. The cooperation needs to be coordinated and the activities need to be carried out and services paid for and delivered. The cooperation can happen in many different ways at different levels and in different areas. Cooperation can happen voluntarily at the discretion of participating libraries and can be self-supporting; or it can happen according to laws and regulations and can be supported by public funds. Cooperation can involve only the same type of libraries, or it can involve multiple types of libraries. Such cooperation can happen at international, national, and regional levels. Cooperation can happen in the areas of library operations, user services or library administration.

Library cooperation that is specified in law and regulations and mainly funded by public sources is the research focus of this dissertation. Not all states in the United States specify the establishment and funding of regional library cooperation activities in their laws and regulations. Compared to other types of library cooperation, public funded
library cooperation includes missions that not only aim to facilitate resource sharing and to enjoy economies of scale but also aim to expand statewide library service and increase service qualities to all population. New York State is one of those states that has specified in state law and regulations the establishment and funding of regional library cooperative activity.

State-funded library cooperation in New York State started in the 1950s; it was specified in New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. The organizations receiving state funding are called library systems. There are school library systems, public library systems and 3Rs library systems (Reference and Research Library Resources Systems). School library systems and public library systems coordinate a single type of libraries; 3Rs library systems coordinate multiple types of libraries. New York State public library systems are the focus of this dissertation research. This decision was made based on a previous study done by this researcher on New York State public library systems, and on the intention to finish the study with reasonable time and effort.

Over the past several years, state funding to public library systems has been either stagnant or reduced. Individual public libraries in New York State hold different opinions toward public library systems’ structure and funding: some support the idea of system mergers for efficiency; others object it for bureaucratic reasons. Since the operation of state funded library cooperation is mostly geared toward individual libraries, library users rarely have any knowledge of library cooperation and library systems. All together, these conditions pose challenges for public library systems’ continuing existence and development in New York State.
In New York State library cooperation is encouraged and supported by the state to provide services to individual libraries and help individual libraries to serve their communities. State funding is provided to public library systems that are responsible for coordinating library cooperation among libraries located in adjacent counties. The expected missions for public library systems include not only facilitating library cooperation, but also expanding and improving statewide library services. In New York State, public library systems enjoy great autonomy on what services to provide. It is the interest of this dissertation to gain knowledge about what services have been provided by public library systems to individual libraries and the public as well as how they make their service decisions.

Most previous studies have been focused on the cost and effectiveness of library cooperation activities; very little research has been done on those organizations that coordinate library cooperation: what they do and how they make decisions. This dissertation focused on these organizations and their decision-making processes. New York State public library systems were selected for this study. The state law and regulations, the organizational mission statements and annual reports, the five year Plans of Service documents from all public library systems were used to learn about the services provided. Based on the results, public library systems that have different service features were categorized into different clusters. Three public library systems were selected for further study, one from each cluster, based on their different service features and their different organizational characteristics. The purpose is to conceptualize decision-making processes and to identify the factors that affect the decision-making processes at each organization.
Research findings from this dissertation will fill the knowledge gap on state-funded library cooperation activities. As a common practice among libraries, library cooperation cannot be understood well enough without the knowledge of those organizations that coordinate it. Research findings from this dissertation can also contribute to the research field of organizational decision making. They can also be useful for policy makers and the public to gain knowledge about such organizations, and help them making informed decisions when considering advocating for or funding such organizations.

The following section provides background information on the research topic of this dissertation – public library cooperation in the United States and public library systems in New York State.

**Background**

Public libraries are important for fulfilling the American democratic ideal of providing the general population equal access to information and library services. In the United States, the public library is a tax-supported public service; its operation is greatly limited to local governments’ jurisdiction areas and populations. Due to different local policies and community situations, not all populations and areas in the United States have the same level of access to information and professional library services. This gap is evident when looking into the following statistics. In the National Center for Education Statistics (Chute, 2006) fiscal year 2004 public library statistical report, there were 9,207 public libraries in the 50 states and the District of Columbia (Joeckel & Winslow, 1948; Long, 2005a). In the 2007 United States Census, there were 89,476 local governments
including different types (e.g., county, town, special purpose district). Clearly not all the local governments support public library services to their residents. A graphic example from New York State can illustrate this gap of public library services even better (Appendix A): it shows the areas and populations in New York State which do not have public library services. According to the data from NCES (2004) and the U.S. Census Bureau (2007), New York State has 3,403 local governments and 756 public libraries.

Public library systems are organizations that were designed to bridge the above-mentioned gap by taking advantage of economies of scale. They pursue their mission by facilitating resource sharing among individual public libraries and providing services to individual public libraries to strengthen their services to communities and expanding services to those underserved and unserved areas and populations within their jurisdictional service areas.

The emergence of public library systems in the United States started during the 1940s and 1950s. In 1948, the American Library Association issued “A National Plan for Public Library Services” which called for larger units of public library service as well as systematic coordination of existing library resources and functions (Sager, 1992). The purpose of developing public library systems is to do more with less. The public library system program was also supported by President Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society initiatives that emphasized education, especially books and libraries (Long, 2005a).

Public library systems play a very important role in serving their individual member public libraries and those populations having no access to public library services

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1 Areas unserved by public libraries in New York State: [http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/pldtools/plsmaps/state.gif](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/pldtools/plsmaps/state.gif)
within their jurisdiction areas. System services usually focus on library development such as training, continuing education and consulting services; economies of scale projects such as joint purchasing and centralized processing; resource sharing projects like shared automation systems and interlibrary loan; and catalyst projects in which the public library system acts as a change agent or pilot site for developing new service ideas for its members (Long, 2005a). These services provided by the public library systems cover the areas of member libraries’ operation, service and administration. Services provided by public library systems change along with changing technological, social, political and economic environments. There are challenges from advancing technology, changing service demands, stagnant budgets, social changes, member needs and competition from commercial vendors or other organizations. These challenges influence the decision of what service to provide in public library systems. Knowledge about service decision-making processes in public library systems, and how those challenges mentioned above influence these decision-making processes can help our understanding of the accountability of public library systems.

There is no standard method of organizing public library systems in the United States. Different states have different ways of organizing public library systems. Therefore, to study public library systems, it is best to focus on their development within a specific state. New York State is one of those states that built relatively complete public library systems early on. These public library systems continue and serve almost all public libraries in New York State. This study specifically focused on service decision-making processes in three public library systems in New York State using multiple case studies.
The following section will describe the research problem posed and research questions asked and the research methods for this study. The significance of the study will be discussed next. The last section of this chapter summarizes the content and structure of this dissertation.

**Research Problems**

There are currently 23 public library systems in New York State. In fall 2005, the New York Library Association (NYLA) Public Library Section (PLS) conducted a survey of its mailing list subscribers to seek their opinions about potential public library systems mergers. In the survey, there were questions about what systems services provided by public library systems were valued most by their member libraries, and what services member libraries thought they would lose if there was a potential system merger. Based on the response rate (12%), findings from this survey study could not be generalized and used to make a definite policy decision, but the responses reflected both strong *for* and *against* opinions of the potential mergers of public library systems among the respondents (Ren & Andersen, 2008).

Contemporary public library systems, as many other public organizations, face increasing accountability requirements, stagnant budgets, fast-paced technology changes and increasing service demands from users; these challenges affect the operation of the public library systems in every aspect. It is not uncommon to read stories from newspapers or journals about topics such as budget cuts in public library systems, reductions in public library systems’ services and their impacts on member library services, the emergence of new services, cost-efficiency and effectiveness of services, and public library systems mergers.
Although public library systems’ services greatly enhance local individual libraries’ service levels and as a consequence local users’ library using experiences, library users do not have much awareness of public library systems during their library using processes; neither do they have much knowledge about public library systems. Most current research focused on how public library systems’ services affect individual library service levels, rather than what kind of organizations they are and how they come to decisions of what services to provide.

The above-mentioned survey and above mentioned issues about public library systems inspired the research in this dissertation to further study public library systems in New York State, especially to study their decision-making processes regarding service provision. It is not the purpose of this study to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of public library systems’ services or to give policy suggestions about public library system services. This study looks at public library systems from the perspective of organizational studies, especially focusing on their decision-making processes in providing services.

**Research Questions**

Public library systems strengthen and expand individual member libraries’ capability by providing services to them and coordinating resource sharing activities among member libraries. There have been inquiries about the accountability and efficiency of public library systems and their service delivery. Most inquiries were answered by studies looking at this issue from cost and effectiveness measurement and focusing on how much member libraries' service levels are affected by the existence of public library systems (Chilers, 1988; C. A. Seavey, 1988). Very few organizational studies have been conducted on public library systems to explore how public library
systems make decisions about service provision and how this knowledge of decision-making processes in public library systems will help the public and policy makers assess public library systems’ accountability and efficiency. Organizational decision making involves decision content, decision-making processes and environmental factors. These factors influence decision quality; decision quality and the following decision implementation will influence the organizational performance thereafter. It is the purpose of this research to study the service decision-making processes in public library systems and to build more organizational knowledge about public library systems. This knowledge will be useful to understand public library systems and to improve their operating performance. However, this research does not intend to study the relationship between organizational decision making and public library system performance.

In brief, this dissertation provides a picture of current services in New York State public library systems and examines decision-making processes concerning what services to provide in public library systems. Content analysis was used to study the relevant documents on public library systems’ services. Qualitative coding and analysis was applied to analyzing interview transcripts for emergent themes about decision-making processes in public library systems. The rational choice model and the garbage can model were referred to in directing data collection and analysis. There are also “muddling through (Lindblom, 1959)” and “bounded rationality (Simon, 1979)” of decision making. By applying the above models to this study, it seeks to understand service decision making in New York State public library systems.

This research is intended to the answer following research questions:

1. What is the current state of public library systems’ services in New York State?
a. What is the current state of public library systems’ services reflected in Five-year Plans of Service documents and annual reports?

b. What do public library systems’ mission statements say about services?

c. What services are specified by New York State Education Law and Regulations?

d. Does current service reflect the mission statement, Education Law and Regulations?

2. What are the decision-making processes in public library systems when they decide what services to provide? (general decision-making practice)

   a. What are these service decisions that public library systems need to make?

   b. Who is involved in service decision making in public library systems?

   c. What methods are used in making service decisions in public library systems?

   d. How do public library systems use information in their service decision-making processes?

   e. What are the challenges faced by public library systems in their service decision-making processes?

   f. What are the factors that influence public library systems in their service decision-making processes?

3. How do decision-making processes found in these systems conform to theoretical decision-making models?

**Research Methodology**

This dissertation was a two-stage study. Stage I of the study used content analysis to study public library systems’ services through documents; Stage II of the study adopted multiple case studies. The case study approach provided the researcher with an opportunity to look deep into the issue to obtain original information on the subject from multiple sources – documents, observations and interviews (Yin, 2003). New York State public library systems were used as the population for this study. There are three different
types of public library systems in New York State based on the way the public library system was established and funded. They are consolidated, cooperative and federated public library systems. This dissertation used cooperative public library systems, the largest group, in order to control for system type as one of the influences on organizational decision-making processes.

Stage I of the study focused on existing documents such as the law and regulations, annual reports, five year (2007-2011) plans of service and mission statements from all public library systems in New York State. Content analysis was used to analyze these data and find the current state of services provided by public library systems and how well they meet specifications in the state law and regulations. Stage II of the study was case studies of three selected public library systems. Three purposefully selected cooperative public library systems were contacted and their consents were given to the researcher for this study. Data were collected through interviewing relevant system decision makers.

**Purpose of the Study**

It is the purpose of this study to describe services provided in New York State public library systems and to explore how much they correspond to the specifications in the New York State law and regulations on establishing and funding public library systems. It is also the purpose of this study to understand how public library systems decide to provide these services. The aim is to conceptualize this process and to understand the challenges and affecting factors in their service decision-making processes.
Significance of the Study

The research findings from this study make both academic and practical contributions. They fill the above-mentioned gap of organizational knowledge about public library systems and add knowledge to the fields of library and information science in general and decision making in public organizations in particular. They also provide useful information for the public and policy makers with regard to the operation of public library systems and their accountability and transparency. Public library systems can have a clear picture of their decision-making processes and can improve their processes. Since this is a multiple case studies, the research findings from selected public library systems are certainly very useful for those public library systems which have similar characteristics and service features with the selected cases. Findings from New York State also can provide meaningful information for library cooperation activities in other states. The same research design could be used to study public library systems in other states and findings from two states could be compared. Findings from this study can also be used to develop questions in survey questionnaires to quantitatively study more public library systems.

The research findings from this study also contribute to the research area of organizational decision-making processes. Organizational decision making is a process of convolution and variety; multiple elements are involved in this process which is rarely a linear process. There are a variety of organizations, decision topics and settings. All these make constructing a simplifying yet inclusive decision-making processes framework formidable. Conflicting findings are not uncommon in this research area. By studying organizational decision-making processes in public library systems, findings from this
dissertation can be compared to previous research of decision-making processes in public organizations, and add new data to validate or modify existing theories, or develop new theory.

The next chapter of this dissertation is the literature review of public library systems and organizational decision-making studies. This literature review positions this study in context and underpins the research. Chapter 3 introduces the research design of this two-stage study. The data collection and analysis methods at each stage are presented. Chapter 4 reports the data collection, analysis and findings at stage I. This chapter examines the current state of services provided by public library systems in New York State and compares service provision to requirements in the law and regulations. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present three individual case studies. They were purposefully selected to further study organizational decision-making processes. Chapter 8 compares and contrasts these three case studies and reports the findings across them. Chapter 9 presents overall conclusions.
Chapter II: Literature Review

The literature review of this study is divided into two sections. First, it looks at the origins of public library systems, focusing on systems throughout the United States, and in particular on their establishment, services, service issues, and evolution. It then looks to library systems in New York State, focusing on their establishment, funding, organizational structures, services, and development. The review ends with a discussion of organizational decision-making processes studies which can be applied to public library systems in this project.

Previous studies on public library systems include topics of public library systems’ cost-effectiveness, service evaluation, and subsequently discussion of library system mergers. Some studies have explained public library systems’ decision making, and leadership styles. Nonetheless there is a clear lack of examination of the actual decision-making processes within public library systems when they make decisions on what services to provide. The purpose of this project is to fill in this gap through multiple case studies of selected public library systems in New York State.

Public Library Systems

In the United States, myriad societies arose before the Civil War to encourage self-education and mutual improvement, and to attain education after the conclusion of conventional schooling. Books, libraries, sundry societies and formal schools were the means for acquiring liberal education (Kett, 1994). As one of the important means for working people to acquire knowledge, public libraries embody the spirit of the country which allows its people to freely pursue knowledge and truth. They provide universal accessibility and openness to knowledge at the community level (Billington, 1998).
Public library systems in the United States are unique and the most developed in the world, as such systems either do not exist or are less developed in most other nations (Sager, 1992). American public library systems have evolved out of the need and purpose to enhance and extend services provided by individual public libraries to their communities and to provide services to the underserved and unserved populations and areas. With an increasing demand on public organizations for accountability and effectiveness, all existing public library systems unavoidably face questions and inquiries about their roles, functions and effectiveness to justify funding from local, state and federal sources.

For understanding public library systems, it is important to know that there is no universal way to establish and operate public library systems in all 50 states in the United States. Great variation exists in terms of public library systems. Some states have public library systems which include only individual public libraries as members; others states have multi-type library systems in which public libraries, academic libraries and special libraries are all parts of the same library system; and some states have no public library systems at all. For those states which do have public library systems, the practice of system structuring and funding varies greatly as well. As one of the states that established complete public library systems in the early 1960s, and also as the focus of this study, New York State will be given as an example to help understand its specific practices with public library systems.²

² See http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/brochurp.htm for more information about New York State’s public library systems
Public library systems will be included as well. The second part will present a specific example of public library systems’ developments in New York State.

**Public Library Systems in the United States**

Public libraries help to fill a gap in education, and particularly adult education in the United States, where it has been noted that the education program is weakest at the adult level (Joeckel & Winslow, 1948). Myriad societies arose before the Civil War to promote self-education and improvement. In the 1920s, adult education provided self-improvement with the prolongation of formal education and establishment of sequential (uninterrupted) schooling (Kett, 1994). Public libraries became a means of acquiring liberal education outside of conventional schooling and were an instrument of personal-realization and an organ of social democracy (Joeckel & Winslow, 1948).

1. **Establishment of public library systems**

   Historically, public libraries in the United States were established and supported by local governments. If a local government wants a public library, it will establish one through whatever legal mechanisms have been put into place by the individual state. As a result, public libraries might exist in some areas while not in other areas. Libraries remain independent of each other, and there is no formal structure for cooperation (Long, 2005b).

   American public library systems were born in efforts to extend library services to unserved or underserved areas and populations, to generate economies of scale, and to enhance and strengthen the level of library services provided by an individual library to its community. In 1948, the American Library Association (ALA) issued *A National Plan for Public Library Services* which called for “larger units of public library service” as
well as systematic coordination of existing library resources and functions (Joeckel & Winslow, 1948). President Lyndon Johnson’s “Great Society” initiatives also emphasized libraries and books for education and resulted in money for new programs in public libraries (Sager, 1992). The passage of the federally funded Library Service Act (LSA) in 1956 and its successor, the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA 1964), made it possible for independent libraries to act cooperatively for a specific purpose and to extend the service to rural libraries (Childers, 1988; Kirks, 1989). In 1967, ALA published *Minimum Standards for Public Library Systems, 1966* to provide guiding principles and standards for system services.

The practices of establishing public library systems and funding those systems are different from state to state (Long, 2005b). There also has been wide variation in system structure nationwide. From the early 1960s, Illinois established 18 public library systems to support its over 500 public libraries. The whole state was divided into 18 regions and each was served by a library system headquarter and topped by four research and reference centers that would provide backup to these 18 library system headquarters (Weech 2002). In Wisconsin, under the provisions of a revision of the Wisconsin State Library Law between 1970 and 1980, 15 public library systems were created (Seavey, 1988). In Florida, the state legislature appropriated funding for cooperative library activities for the first time in 1984 (Sager, 1992). In some states such as Tennessee and Kentucky, library systems are quasi-state operated, and state funds are provided for specific local functions. In Hawaii, the library system is operated entirely by the Hawaii State Library (Summers, 1999).

There were only eight library systems serving 13 counties plus Watertown
Regional Service Center in New York State in 1956 (Cade, 1987). In the late 1950s, the establishment of public library systems was stated in the *Education Law* in New York State. Governance and funding were described in *Regulations of the Commissioner of Education*.\(^3\) To help equalize and improve the quality of services, New York State established 23 public library systems funded primarily through state aid.\(^4\) (See Appendix B for the list and the map of the 23 public library systems in New York State.) These systems work in partnership with the New York State Library to provide resources and services to local libraries to increase the number and quality of library services offered to the public. These 23 public library systems include all 62 counties and serve almost all the state’s area and population and all 756 public libraries except Hillview Free Library\(^5\) in Diamond Point, which is the only public library that is not a member of a public library system.

2. **Evolution of public library systems in the United States**

The roles and relationships of public library systems and their member libraries were questioned during the 1990s. Service demands from their member libraries became hard to meet under the state of technology upgrades and tightening funding. In 1994, for example, after a two-year study carried out in Indiana to re-evaluate the relationship of its regional library networks and State Library, library systems merged into a single entity (Laughlin, 1996).

There has been a trend toward multi-type library systems since the 1980s based on technology advances. The development of telecommunication networks allowed

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\(^3\) Regulations of the Commissioner of Education pertaining to library, library system, trustee and librarian [http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/excerpts/regulations.htm](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/excerpts/regulations.htm)

\(^4\) New York State’s public library systems [http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/brochurep.htm](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/brochurep.htm)

\(^5\) See [http://adirondackminute.com/hillview-free-library](http://adirondackminute.com/hillview-free-library) for more information on Hillview Free Library.
interconnection between different library computer systems adopted in public libraries, academic libraries, school libraries and special libraries to cooperate to serve the community. The maturity of the library bibliographic automation makes it possible to view both library holdings and circulation status (Kohl & Sanville, 2006). Instead of single-type library systems which only include a specific type of libraries as members, there are regional consortia or networks including different types of libraries and enabled by advanced network and computer technology, created for resource sharing and library cooperation in a geographic area.

Library consortia began to flourish in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s. The basic idea of resource sharing was a strong feature. In this period, the concept of multi-type library cooperation became common. Libraries of different types banded together to form a cooperative entity, usually for a very specific purpose such as book purchasing or cataloging. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, library automation was a leading factor for library cooperation. This period also saw many major national and international utilities such as OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) and RLG (Research Library Group), which provided substantial support for resource sharing in the United States (Bostick, 2001).

The consortia had one overarching purpose: economies of scale. Some consortia were developed for little more than “buying clubs” for their members, but many consortia provided services to the staff of their member libraries. It is not unusual for a library to become a member of several consortia at the same time.

There are both opportunities and challenges for these regional resource-sharing activities from perspectives of funding sources, governance structures and technological
standards adopted by individual libraries. There are stories of both success and failure involving regional cooperation activities. Illinois State, for example, developed its first consortium known as the Illinois Library and Information Network (ILLINET) with its 18 public library systems in 1965. By 1985, seven of the 18 public library systems in Illinois State had voted to convert to multi-type library systems and include academic, school and special libraries. This network served the state of Illinois for nearly 20 years. But in the mid-1990s, financial and technical developments led to the dissolving of their regional resource-sharing consortium (Weech, 2002).

Compared to the single-type library systems, multi-type library systems reflect more regional information needs as different libraries have different resources. Multi-type library cooperation can help to meet diverse user information needs with more efficiency and less expense than a stand-alone library service. Statewide cooperative systems have advantages since there are common governing policies and agencies for library activities and shared common funding sources. Libraries in the same state can also share a common social and cultural basis. Therefore, statewide cooperation makes sense for public institutions in the U.S. (Potter, 1997).

To summarize, American public library systems have existed for several decades and have evolved along with technology advances and social changes. Their unique mission and operation require evaluations of system services from both the systems and their members’ perspectives. As a contact point between state libraries and local public libraries, public library systems have to be attentive to changes of environment and members’ need. Studies focusing on decision making for what service to provide are important for policy makers and decision makers to optimize public library systems
management and acquire the best outcomes with the least resources.

3. Services of public library systems

The services provided by library systems to their member libraries can be categorized into the following three areas: services related to serving patrons, such as reference and information backup, and access to materials; services related to member libraries’ operations, such as material acquisition, or central processing; and services related to member libraries’ administrations, such as fund raising, staff training, and outreach (Childers, 1988). Public library systems also provide some direct services to the public through bookmobiles.

Services provided by public library systems change over time to accommodate new challenges arising from the improvement in technology, and economic and social changes. As time goes by, some services are phased out, while new services emerge. These challenges include advances of telecommunication networks and computer technology, changing funding sources, and the movement of the population from urban to suburban and to rural counties. These all require public library systems to reconsider their missions and services. For example, it was not the original purpose of public library systems to cooperate on electronic resource sharing, but advances in union catalogs, library automation systems, integrated library systems, and network connections led the public library systems and other types of library systems such as multi-type library systems, or academic consortia to cooperate widely on electronic resources (Potter, 1997).

In the 1970s, centralized computer systems grew to solve the problems of inefficient and overburdened local manual systems. As technology advanced, the advent
of less expensive network services and smaller computers made it affordable for individual libraries, and there were more options of services provided by other vendors on the market as well. Many small and medium-sized libraries have been strengthened by available technology (Sager, 1992). In the 1980s, there was a variety of local, regional, and special-purpose networks linked and enabled by the capacities of computers and telecommunications networks. These networks allowed multiple libraries to share their acquisition, cataloging, and circulation activities (Smith, 1986). Thus, library systems were greatly challenged by other vendors and regional networks, and they changed to provide financial and technical assistance, and reference services (Bly, Gattin, Kalinoski & Ward, 1986).

In 1997, the implementation of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) (as a replacement for LSCA 1964) changed the emphasis of federal grants for libraries. Although some priorities under LSCA such as services for the underserved and to rural areas continue under LSTA, LSTA has an emphasis on technology and supports activities that incorporate all types of libraries to serve the user’s need. The types of libraries that are funded under LSTA have been expanded from public libraries to include all other types of libraries. Another major change from LSCA to LSTA is the shift of funding on construction of physical buildings to the construction of technological infrastructure (Gregory, 1999).

4. **Issues in public library systems**

Along the path of public library systems’ evolution there have been many issues which emerged and bear important implications for the existence of American public library systems today. These issues have been studied by librarians, academic
researchers, and policy makers to help decision making and policy making related to public library systems.

One of these issues is the evaluation of system performance. The accountability and effectiveness of public library systems started to be questioned when they were no longer the only organization that individual public libraries could count on for strengthening their services. Technology developments made it possible for individual libraries to strengthen their services rather than counting on public library systems; multiple service options were also made available by other vendors to public libraries. Public library systems have to justify their existence and receipt of funding from local, state and federal sources (Holt & Elliott, 2003). With the increasing demand for more accountability, it is common and necessary to evaluate public library system services between systems and their members, and the evaluation results can be used to recalibrate mission and directions.

Studies have been carried out to measure the impact of public library systems on levels of individual public library services. Seavey (1988) reviewed changes in the levels of library services in Wisconsin from 1970 to 1980 and their relationships with the establishment of some federated and consolidated library systems. Levels of library services were measured by circulation per capita, library expenditure per capita, turnover rate, fulltime employees per 10,000 populations served and finally a Library Service Index (LSI) which was a combination of those four measures. The study found that there was a significant rise in the level of library services measured by expenditure, full time employees per 10,000 populations and a substantial but non-significant rise in circulation per capita. These increases were all affected by systems and thus attributed to the
significant increase of LSI to systems as well. Seavey further tried to test the relationship between the different systems factors such as early/late adoption of systems, systems providing circulation services and direct financial support to members, the size and the administration of systems and their effects on this rise of levels of library service. The study did not demonstrate a statistically significant effect of any of these system factors. Childers (1988) explored the cost and effectiveness between libraries belonging to federated library systems\(^6\) versus non-system libraries in 66 Pennsylvania counties and found there was an effect of belonging to a federated system of public libraries. Effects appeared most clearly in the area of user services, and less strongly in the areas of library resources and library operations. No clear cost differences were found. Shisler (1995) examined the cost-effectiveness of consolidated county libraries in large metropolitan areas of the Midwest and compared it to the cost-effectiveness of large city libraries which share services to the county with other large public library systems in the area. Consolidation has been an often-proposed and much used solution when libraries face declining financial resources and increasing costs. But there are mixed opinions regarding its efficiency. By surveying library directors in 26 Midwest cities with populations over 100,000 about the facts of the effectiveness and costs of libraries, Shisler demonstrated that it costs the consolidated county libraries less to circulate an item (cost) and they also circulated more items for each person in the population they served (effectiveness). Therefore county-wide consolidation makes sense in both fiscal and service terms.

\(^6\) There are three different types of public library systems: cooperative, federated and consolidated public library systems. Cooperative systems allow individual members the greatest autonomy and have loosest organizational scheme; consolidated systems are the tightest organizations which unite individual members into a single administrative authority; federated systems are between the two extremes: members retain their autonomy while relinquish some responsibilities to system administration (Childers, 1988).
Studies like this one have implications for those considering the merger of several libraries into a consolidated system.

In 2005, the State of California carried out several focus group studies to evaluate its cooperative public library system services. General questions were asked in the focus group studies about what worked and what did not work well in cooperative library services; what was most valuable to member libraries and what were their desired changes. The summarized responses ranged from funding and programs to the structure and organization of library systems. It also included recommendations of outcome-based assessment, and conducting statewide user assessment and programs for public awareness of systems. These results have been used to improve and make changes to system services (Sullivan & Hildreth, 2006).

Contrary to these continuous efforts focusing on studying system services and their cost and effectiveness in public library systems, other studies focusing on public library systems are rather sparse. Mandell (1991) studied the process of allocating new books acquisition among 15 branch libraries in a hypothetical public library system. Models have been developed to identify the trade-off between effectiveness and equity that results from allocating services resources among different service delivery sites. The indicator of effectiveness used was book circulation; and the equity indicators were the new book acquisition per capita in each service area being equal (input equity); and book circulation per capita in each service area being equal (output equity). The optimal allocation of resources will depend on the trade-off between effectiveness and equity policy makers would like to make. For the public library system to be successful, the system and its member libraries have to develop a comprehensive and well-designed
strategic plan. This plan has to actively involve participation and buy-in from member libraries and must be shared and discussed with all library staff members to ensure understanding and acceptance (Alexander, 1999). Moore (2004) reported the study of the application of the facilitative leadership principles advocated by Roger Schwarz in the Wake County public library system to reach better decisions, learn from mistakes, and gain better communication.

Public Library Systems in New York State

New York State is one of the first states that established relatively complete public library systems in the early 1960s. Practice of public library systems in New York State can be a specific example for understanding the evolution and operation of public library systems in the United States. The discussion is focused on New York State public library systems practices in following sections.

The development of public library systems in New York State reflects both the similarity to and the divergence from the general public library systems in the United States. They started in the 1960s under the national environment that advocated library cooperation; they experienced the challenges of technology advances and social changes. And they carried out studies to evaluate the effectiveness of their services and adapted themselves to changing environments and community needs. Overall public library systems in New York State serve as a good and specific example to understand the various public library system practices in the United States – their history, current situation and future development.

To understand the development of public library systems in New York State, it is necessary to start from its public libraries, since they are the member libraries for which
public library systems were designed to provide services. The New York State Constitution grants home rule power to local governments. County, town, city and village are the “general purpose” local governments. There are also school districts, fire districts and other special legislative forms of administrative divisions. All these municipalities, districts and legislatures can individually or jointly create a public library, and levy and collect taxes to support libraries for the quality of life of their residents. This characteristic of local governments in New York State greatly influenced the formation of its public libraries.

1. Public libraries in New York State

In New York State, the Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education stipulate the establishment and funding of public libraries and public library systems. In New York Education Law, “public library” is defined as “a library, other than professional, technical or public school library, established for free public purposes.” It can be established by a majority vote held by municipal and district governments or legislatures which levy and collect taxes. It can also be established by the vote of boards of a municipality, district or special legislatures, individually or jointly. Depending on the method of establishment and different funding mechanisms, there are four different types of public libraries in New York State – association, municipal public, school district public, and special legislative district public. An association library is established by association members, and the board of trustees is elected by these members. Although an association library is not created by the local government, it might receive appropriations

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8 New York State Education Law Section 255
9 New York State Education Law Section 253 (2)
from local governments and may also request public funding through a proposition. A municipal library is initially created by the municipal board or by a petition or a referendum. A municipal library serves the boundaries of the municipality. Two or more municipalities or school districts can create a joint public library. The municipal library is governed by the board of trustees appointed by the municipal leaders or municipal board. A municipal library’s annual funding request is reviewed and approved by the municipal board. It can also request public funding via proposition. A school district public library is created by a majority vote on a referendum placed by a petition of 25 or more voters. This public library is governed by a board of trustees elected by school district voters, and its budget is approved by the voters. In a school district, a separate tax is levied for library purposes. A special legislative district public library is created by the state legislature and the voters in that district. The board of trustees is elected by voters and a separate tax is levied for public libraries. Like the other three types of public libraries, it can request funding via proposition.

All public libraries in New York State are eligible for local taxes that are approved by voters, municipal boards or school boards. All these public libraries are chartered by the Board of Regents, registered by the State Education Department and eligible for local and state funds. New York State currently has 756 public libraries, and these libraries are funded mainly through local taxes.

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10 New York State Education Law Section 253 (2), 255
11 New York State Education Law Section 255
12 New York State Education Law Section 255
13 New York State Education Law Section 255
2. Establishment of public library systems in New York State

More than half of the 756 New York State’s public libraries serve communities of less than 7,500 people, and 368 libraries do not employ certified librarians. One million New Yorkers do not live within the boundaries of local public libraries.\(^\text{(14)}\) With the establishment of 23 New York State public library systems, all 62 counties are included and almost all the state’s area and population are served.

There are three types of public library systems in New York State – consolidated, federated and cooperative. The consolidated library system maintains administrative control over services, staff, and finances of member libraries. The federated library system is based on coordination and voluntary cooperation with little or no control over member libraries’ services, staff or finances. The cooperative library system is similar to the federal library system except that it is established by cooperative agreement among multiple libraries while a federated library system is established by municipal or district governors (Bly et al., 1986).

There are three consolidated public library systems, all of which are located in New York City – \textit{New York Public Library}, \textit{Brooklyn Public Library}, and \textit{Queens Borough Public Library}. Each of these systems is also an association library and is incorporated by the New York State Board of Regents as a single entity under the board of trustees named by the city council. New York City provides the local public funding.\(^\text{(15)}\)

There are four federated library systems: \textit{Buffalo-Erie County Public Library}, \textit{Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System}, \textit{Onondaga County Public Library} and \textit{Monroe}

\(^{14}\) New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness public library services (09/07)\text{http://www.nyslocalgov.org/commission_briefings.asp}\n
\(^{15}\) New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness public library services (09/07)\text{http://www.nyslocalgov.org/commission_briefings.asp}\n
County Library System. These are created by the county governing boards and incorporated by the Board of Regents. Counties appoint the board of trustees and provide local public funding. Member libraries are autonomous, and public and association libraries join systems by choice. The funding of federated public library systems is balanced between state aid and local public aid.

There are 16 cooperative public library systems. Cooperative public library systems are created by the agreement of boards of member libraries and incorporated by the Board of Regents. The board of trustees is elected by the board members of member libraries. Cooperative public library systems are funded almost entirely by state aid. Member libraries are autonomous and join the system by choice.

In addition to public library systems, the state also has two other types of library systems. There are 41 school library systems based in the Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and the Big Five Cities (Buffalo, New York, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers) that provide services to elementary and secondary public and nonpublic school libraries. There are 9 reference and research library resources (3Rs) systems that provide services to libraries of higher education and other specialized libraries. The 3Rs library system is a multi-type library system in New York State. The membership of the 3Rs library systems includes academic institutions, public library systems and school library systems in their service areas as well as special libraries.  

3. Funding for public library systems

Public library systems in New York State work in partnership with the New York State Library to provide resources and services to local libraries that increase the number

16 New York State Education Law Section 272 (2) (c)
and quality of services to the public. Each public library system is chartered by the Board of Regents, and is eligible to receive state financial aid when it meets the standards established by the Commissioner of Education and when its Plan of Service is approved by the Commissioner of Education. The standards established by the Commissioner of Education relate to collections, circulations, and services.\textsuperscript{17} Public library systems are supported by a combination of state aid and supplementary local taxes. A formula was established for state aid for the systems in 1966, which takes into account population, area served, and local initiatives. The “area served” by a public library system means the geographical area covered by the public library system’s services in its Plan of Service. The served populations are determined by the most recent federal census.\textsuperscript{18}

Under section 272 of the \textit{Education Law} in New York State, public library systems are qualified for state aid if their Plans of Service\textsuperscript{19} get approved by the Commissioner of Education in New York State. The Commissioner can revoke this approval if the requirements are not met during the implementation of the Plans of Service. In 2007, the State provided $75 million annually in permanent public library service aid. Most of the $75 million in state public library aid is for the operation of public library systems. In 2007-2008, the state provided an additional $5 million in one-time supplemental funds for public library systems.\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} New York State Education Law Section 272 (1) h
\item \textsuperscript{18} New York State Education Law Section 272 (1) b, d
\item \textsuperscript{19} See a sample of a plan of services from 2006 to 2011 at \url{http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/pos/elements.pdf}
\item \textsuperscript{20} New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness public library services (09/07) \url{http://www.nyslocalgov.org/commission_briefings.asp}
\end{itemize}
4. Organizational structure of public library systems

The public library system usually includes a board of trustees, a group of member libraries, a headquarters with director and staff, and a central reference library which is also a member library. In the board of trustees of a public library system, ideally, one-fifth of board member terms will expire annually; and no trustee member shall hold office consecutively for more than two full terms. The board of trustees meets no less than six times a year. The New York State Library provides services, facilities and staff to cooperative public library systems.

5. Services provided by public library systems

Public library systems in New York State are essentially free, within broad guidelines; they can establish any services the trustees and members feel are most needed. This “local autonomy” feature of public library systems in New York State is both a strength and a weakness (Cade, 1987). Some public library systems provide services on a no-fee basis, while some public library systems provide a combination of fee-based and no-fee-based services. Some systems provide services based on their local conditions (Cichanowicz & Chen, 2004). It is the interest of this study to find out what services have been provided by New York State public library systems and how these organizations make their service decisions.

A general description of services provided by public library systems can be synthesized from the template of New York State public library systems’ five-year Plan of Service. Public library systems use this document to plan services every five years. The most recent five year plan is from 2006 to 2011. Services provided by public library

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21 New York State Education Law Section 260 (3)
22 Public library systems Plan of Service: [http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/pos/sect5pls.htm](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/pos/sect5pls.htm)
Accessed at 10/02/2009
systems range from collective purchasing and centralized processing, to consulting and training services. Beside managing interlibrary loans and handling delivery, public library systems also support a central library for research with additional hours of service.\textsuperscript{23}

Public library systems also coordinate special outreach service programs for special targeted population that may have difficulty in using local library services\textsuperscript{24} (e.g., people who are disabled, aged, incarcerated or residing in institutions).

The list that follows is only a general description of the service topics. Specific services provided in each area can be different from system to system.

\textbf{1) Resource sharing}

Resource sharing services provided or coordinated by public library systems for their members can include cooperative collection development, an integrated library system, delivery service, and interlibrary loan services. System union catalogs and shared integrated library systems allow members to share resources among themselves. The state and regional networks such as New York State Inter-Library Loan (NYSILL) allow library users to request items from other libraries out of their systems. OCLC is used to access library collections out of the state.

\textbf{2) Special client groups}

Public library systems provide services to support member libraries on adult literacy and youth services. Services to areas which are too sparsely populated to support a permanent library and to special populations such as people in correctional facilities, and nursing homes are also included here.

\textsuperscript{23} New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness-public library services (09/07)\url{http://www.nyslocalgov.org/commission_briefings.asp}

\textsuperscript{24} New York State Library Division of Library Development Public Library Systems \url{http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/brochurp.htm}
3) **Professional development and continuing education**

Public library systems ensure the availability of a range of continuing education opportunities for member library staffs and trustees.

4) **Consulting and development support**

Through phone calls, emails or field visits, public library systems assist and advise member libraries with their issues and concerns ranging from administration and operation to their services to patrons.

5) **Coordinated services**

Examples of coordinated services include coordinated ordering and purchasing. The library system acts as a central purchasing agent and gets discounts for its volume buying which individual libraries would not get. Some public library systems also maintain central processing sections for ordered materials including cataloging and labeling.

6) **Awareness and advocacy**

Public library systems market system services to members, the public and legislators in the region.

7) **Communication among member libraries**

Resource sharing and cooperation among member libraries are important for the public library systems’ existence. Maintaining an open channel for member libraries to communicate can mean holding regular meetings, publishing newsletters and maintaining an online forum for discussion.

Public library systems in New York State adapt their services and respond to the challenge or change to serve their member libraries’ needs through the years. As an
example, in the Suffolk Cooperative Library System in New York State, based on member libraries’ requests for services to satisfy the information needs of increased immigrant populations speaking foreign languages, and based on their literacy statistics and library visits, the system decided to add live-chat reference services in foreign languages; to subscribe to databases in foreign languages and to create a portal web page in foreign languages such as Chinese and Portuguese. The system also provided training opportunities for librarians or staff members who had interests in these foreign languages (Chichanowica & Chen, 2004). This work posed technological and language challenges to individual libraries. The system provided an efficient and economical way to provide the required service system-wide.

Another example of how public library systems serve their members’ needs in New York State is in the Mohawk Valley Library System and one of its member libraries. With the unwillingness of its community to continue paying taxes for library services, this village public library turned to the Mohawk Valley Library System for help. The Library System applied for a three-year federal funding under LSTA for a project and cooperated with stakeholders in the community to explore community information needs and increased their awareness of the role of the public library. Based on the project, this member library adjusted its collections and programs to meet the need of local farmers on agriculture, and the library survived (Hodge & Tanner, 2003).

6. Issues in New York State public library systems

As with the general public library systems in the United States, public library systems in New York State face the increasing requirements of accountability and have the need to adapt to changing environments. Using statistical methods, employing cost
measurements and seeking various points of view, *King Research, Inc.* studied the library systems in New York State and published a research report in 1989. The report concluded that it would cost member libraries at least 3.5 times more at the time to provide the services offered by the library systems. The report further emphasized the need for more democratic decision making within systems and greater attention to efficiency, accountability and changing needs. The report also pointed out the problems with the governance of the library systems such as bureaucracy issues and recommended greater involvement of trustees and directors of member libraries in system work (Griffiths & King, 1989).

In 2004, members of the Public Library Section of the New York Library Association (NYLA) posed a series of questions about the place of public library systems in the 21st century. A survey was conducted by NYLA Public Library Section (PLS) in 2005 and the analysis of survey responses revealed concerns and issues from member libraries of different sizes toward the potential public library system merger. Small rural libraries which rely on systems very much for acquiring critical resources and skills for their operations and services tended to object the system merger for considerations of distance and level of attention from the system, while large urban libraries which have more resources and personnel tended to emphasize system mergers for better efficiency (Ren & Andersen, 2008). The survey results could not be generalized and applied to all public library systems in New York State due to the limitations of its self-selected sample and low response rate (12%). Thus future studies are necessary for making and implementing policies on public library systems in New York State.

These concerns and discussions around public library systems in New York State
provide an appropriate context for understanding the relevance of this dissertation topic. Library cooperation is not new in the United States. Some organizations were formed voluntarily while others were mandated. Some of them involve only a single type of libraries, while others involve multiple types of libraries. Despite these differences, most of them share the common purposes of fostering resource sharing among individual libraries and taking advantage of economies of scale. These organizations consider individual libraries as their customers. Services provided by them have evolved over time due to the advancement of technologies and changing needs.

One thing that differentiates public library systems from the rest of library cooperative organizations is that public library systems have as their mission to extend library services to areas and populations that have been unserved or underserved for equalizing the public’s access to information and library services. Public library systems are selected to be studied in this dissertation, for their existence is not only meaningful to fostering library efficiency, but also important for public access to information and education.

Most research attention has been focused on evaluating the cost and effectiveness of these organizations’ services and their impact on individual libraries’ service capacities. It should not be taken for granted that library cooperation will necessarily lead to efficiency and effectiveness for individual libraries. Most literature reviewed did find that library cooperation could positively affect individual libraries’ service on one area or another depending on research questions asked. Except for this, very little research has been done to known about the organization that provides such services and coordinates library cooperation, although the effectiveness of such services has much to do with the
organization that provides them. The focus of this dissertation is thus on public library system services. Rather than evaluating their impacts on their members, this study looks at system services from the perspective of service providers: what services have been provided and how did public library systems make decisions about what services to provide. Decision making is the most important activity in organizations, and decision-making outcomes and their implementation affect organizational effectiveness and success. Having looked at the history of and services provided by public library systems, the next section will review studies on the organizational decision-making processes.

**Organizational Decision-making Processes**

This section of the literature review is about organizational decision-making processes research. The decision-making process is an important organization function which can affect the organization’s objectives and goals (Giesecke, 1994). The way used to make decisions and the structure of decision-making processes influences decision outcomes and the strategies the organization follows (Cray, Mallory, Butler, Hickson & Wilson, 1988). Organizational context, the content of the decision, and the decision-making processes together can influence the decision outcome; the organizational context and the decision content can also influence the decision-making processes. Therefore the organizational decision making is a process of convolution and variety; multiple elements are involved in this process which is rarely a linear process. There are a variety of organizations, decision topics and settings. All these make constructing a simplifying yet inclusive decision-making processes framework formidable. For example, there are different demands put on public and private organizations and these differences will affect their organizational decision-making processes. Public organization depends on
oversight bodies for resources based on formulas. Appropriation is often divorced from market mechanisms, allowing public organization to avoid efficiency and effectiveness consideration. Decision-making tactics that work in private organizations might not be successful in public organizations (Nutt, 1999). Therefore most researchers focus their studies on case studies or concentrating on a few aspects of decision-making processes (Cray et al., 1988).

This literature review also includes many decision-making studies called “strategic decision-making studies.” The definition of “strategic decision” can be different in different industries (Hickson, 1986). Some focus on crucial but infrequent decisions made by top management to select a core business that offers competitive advantage; some think strategic decisions having long term effects, demanding considerable resources and setting precedents (Nutt, 2008). To decide what service to provide is a strategic decision made by public library systems since it is the mission of public library systems to provide service, and deciding what service to provide will set precedent for the system and influence the following resource allocation. Therefore studies on strategic decision-making processes are also reviewed here.

Many studies on the strategic decision-making process describe it as a sequence of steps or phases; other studies focus on decision-making processes’ dimensions such as rationality, comprehensiveness and formalization. There are also studies that focus on factors that influence the decision-making processes’ dimensions including specific decision characteristics, management characteristics, context characteristics and organizational characteristics (Papadakis, Lioukas & Chambers 1998). In the following paragraphs, relevant studies examining decision making are described in depth.
Decision-making Process Phases

Studies of decision-making processes as a series of steps list intelligence gathering, directions, solution, evaluating and implementation with different tactics to carry out each step. The Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret study made a major contribution by identifying major phases of decision-making processes and external factors that influence this process (Mintzberg, Raisinghani, & Theoret, 1976). These phases include:

- **Recognition**;
- **Diagnosis**;
- **Development (in the form of design or search)**;
- **And selection**.

Due to the limited number of cases used in their study, Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret’s study does not probe more subtle characteristics such as subphases and tactics.

In 1984 Nutt identified decision-making stages as:

- **Formulation**;
- **Concept development**;
- **Detailing**;
- **Evaluation**;
- **And implementation**.

And each stage includes the steps of search, synthesis and analysis (Nutt, 1984). Nutt further defines the decision process as a stream of action-taking steps that begins with claims by stakeholders drawn from signals that seem important and ends when a decision has been adopted (Nutt, 1993).

Using 136 cases of strategic decision making drawn from 30 organizations, Cray
et al. found three distinct types of decision-making processes:

- *Sporadic;*
- *Fluid;*
- *And constricted processes.*

These processes were characterized on five aspects,

- *Scrutiny;*
- *Interaction;*
- *Flow;*
- *Duration;*
- *And centrality.*

and their associated variables (Cray et al., 1988). These studies make a major contribution by identifying major phases in decision-making processes. Nutt (2000) identified the unique characteristic of decision-making processes in public organizations and the correspondent decision-making approaches used, which can be well applied to understand public library systems’ decision-making processes. The public organization decision-making process requires a complex mechanism to address public desires and expectations toward the delivery of services, confusing goals and a lack of authority and flexibility. Nutt found that for a public organization to succeed in its decision making, the cyclical search for alternatives is the best approach. In general, these findings of public organization decision-making processes can be directly applied to understand public library systems decision-making processes.

**Decision-making Process Dimensions**

Beside studies of decision-making processes’ phases and steps, studies of decision-making processes also include process dimensions of rationality, formalization
and comprehensiveness. The classical normative model of decision-making processes is rational choice model which calls for knowledge of all the alternatives and the consequences that will follow on each alternative; it calls for certainty in decision makers’ evaluation of these consequences and the ability to compare the consequences (Simon, 1979). The classical decision model does not often describe what actually happens in organizations. Given the limited capacity of decision makers and the uncertainty of the environment, the actual description of the decision-making processes is described as “muddling through” (Lindblom, 1959) or bounded rationality (Simon, 1979). Muddling through posits that policy makers and administration actually use a successive and incremental process to solve complex problems rather than the normative process. Bounded rationality is a concept that addresses why decision makers can be only somewhat rational about their choices. The garbage can model (Cohen, et al., 1972) fits the concept of “bounded rationality” very well.

The garbage can model of organization choice is a model describing decision making within organized anarchy. It can be applied to the organization which has inconsistent or ill-defined goals; unclear technology and fluid participation. These characteristics are easily observed from public, educational and illegitimate organizations. Unlike the linear decision-making processes suggested by classical rational decision-making model, the garbage can model states that a decision can be an outcome or interpretation of several independent streams within an organization. These streams are problem, solution, participant and choice opportunities. Active decision makers and problems track each other without solving the problems. The garbage can model represents organizational decision making by means of three elements: problems,
solutions, and choice opportunities. If problems meet their solutions at the right choice opportunity, a rational choice is made (Cohen et al., 1972).

An organization is a collection of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they might be aired, solutions looking for issues to which they might be the answer, and decision makers looking for work (Cohen et al., 1972, P.2).

In the garbage can model proposed by Cohen, March and Olsen (1972), solutions are used to formulate problems because decision makers do not know what they want until they see what they can get. In the garbage can model, decision making is determined by the timing of events or by chance.

Overall, organizational decision-making processes are complex and there are multiple variables and factors influencing this process including organizational characteristics, decision content and environment factors. Although it is hard to make an inclusive framework of organizational decision-making processes, theories and models have been developed from previous studies to simplify and illustrate this issue. Chapter 9 will discuss how carefully selected models and theories can be used to shed a light on service decision-making processes in public library systems.

Public library systems have existed in the United States for many decades. But little is known today about decision-making processes in public library systems. Research interests have been focused on evaluating impacts of services provided by public library systems rather than how decisions have been made to provide these services. Organizational decision-making research provides important theories and models to be applied to understand decision making within public library systems. The previous
research findings on organizational decision making identified different decision-making processes and corresponding activities connected with these processes. Once the decision-making processes can be identified, appropriate decision-making strategies can be suggested to public library systems. On one hand, this knowledge is important for the public and for policy makers to understand how public library systems make decisions; on the other hand, this knowledge is necessary in order for public library systems to make accountable and effective service decisions since different decision-making processes require different decision-making strategies.

Having discussed both the history of public library systems and a variety of decision-making models that might shed light on systems’ administration, Chapter 3 discusses the methods used for data collection and analysis for this research.
Chapter III: Research Design

Studies on public library systems have in general focused on evaluating the impact of system services on individual public libraries’ performance (Childers, 1988; Seavey, 1988; Shisler, 1995). Although this is important for verifying presumed benefits of public library systems, research has failed to look at the issue from the perspective of those service providers – the public library systems themselves. The realization of benefits of public library systems depends upon these organizations which are service providers, and many organizational factors within public library systems can influence the effectiveness of system services and the subsequent realization of benefits. This research fills the gap by identifying existing services provided by New York State public library systems and by gaining organizational knowledge of how they make service decisions. The success of public library systems depends upon the success of their services; the success of system services is directly influenced by the decision-making process and the implementation of the service decision. Decision making is the most critical activity in organizations. This study looks at the organizational decision-making processes public library systems used to make service decisions. Limited by the time and resources available to the researcher, the decision implementation and the subsequent decision outcome is left for future research.

The establishment and the operation of public library systems in the United States is not a standard practice. Different states have established and funded public library systems differently. Public library systems in many states have been merged or reduced since their establishment (Laughlin, 1996; Weech, 2002). But in New York State, since their founding in the 1950s, public library systems keep providing services to individual
public libraries and their existences have been stable. Therefore, New York State
provides a sound context for studying public library systems. Additionally, the consulting
work (Ren & Andersen, 2008) this researcher did (with Professor Deborah Andersen, at
the request of Jeffrey Cannel, then the director of Albany Public Library, Albany, NY) in
2005 built a connection between the researcher and the public library systems, gaining
entry to these organizations so as to conduct the research.

This dissertation study was conducted in two stages, using both quantitative and
qualitative methods. Stage I aimed to identify current system services by collecting
statistical information about the 23 New York public library systems from their 2008
annual reports, and text data related to system and system services from the New York
State Library website.\textsuperscript{25} The statistical information was analyzed using descriptive
statistical analysis; the text data were synthesized based on themes. The purpose of Stage
I of the study was to provide a sketch of the current system services provided by all
public library systems in New York State before investigating the service decision-
making processes in these organizations.

Stage II of the study was multiple case studies which focused on three selected
public library systems in New York State to study how they make service decisions.
Semi-structured interviews were conducted at these three sites complemented with
observation notes and other written documents supplied by these organizations.
Qualitative coding and analysis was used to analyze these qualitative data. The purpose
of Stage II of the study was to take a closer look at these public library systems and their
service decision-making processes, first individually and then collectively, and to

\textsuperscript{25} New York State Library website: \url{http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/}
conceptualize the service decision-making processes in public library systems. The
classic organizational decision-making theories were also applied to see how they could
be used to explain the decision-making practice in public library systems. Overall this
research was designed to:

- Describe the current services provided by public library systems in New York
  State;
- Identify service patterns and characteristics among 23 public library systems;
- Demonstrate and explain service decision-making processes in three selected
  public library systems in New York State using the lens of decision-making
  theories; and
- Identify factors and challenges these public library systems have when they make
  services decisions.

Stage I – Public Library System Services

In order to study the organizational service decision-making processes of New
York State public library systems, the first step was to gain knowledge of New York
State public library systems and current services provided by them. The following
questions were asked at this stage:

- What are the current services provided by New York State public library systems?
- How do New York State law and regulations specify public library systems’
  services?
- How do public library systems’ mission statements, plans of service describe their
  services?
- What are service patterns and characteristics of the 23 New York State public
  library systems expressed in their 2008-2009 annual reports?

Data Collection – Stage I

To answer these questions, information was collected from different sources in
order to present a comprehensive picture. These sources were:
• *The New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education*

These two documents are the governing documents for the establishment and functioning of public library systems in New York State. The establishment of public library systems was authorized in the New York State Education Law in the 1958. The Regulations specify the governance and function of public library systems in New York State.

• *Public library systems’ mission statements*

The mission statement describes the purposes of public library systems.

• The most recent five year (2007-2011) *Plans of Service*

The five year Plan of Service is a planning document and an agreement between the state and each public library system. An approved Plan of Service is required for any public library system to receive state aid.

• *New York State Library Division of Library Development website*

The New York State Library Division of Library Development is a unit working in partnership with library systems. It contains rich information about public library systems.

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27 Mission Statements can be found in the most recent five year Plan of Services [http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/pos/pos-url.htm](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/pos/pos-url.htm)
28 Links to Approved Library System Plans of Service on New York State Library website: [http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/)
Public library systems annual reports

The annual report collected several different categories of data from public library systems:

1. General system information
2. Personnel information
3. System membership, service points and governance
4. Service transactions and collections
5. System services
6. Operating fund receipts
7. Operating fund disbursement
8. Capital fund receipts
9. Capital fund disbursement

Under the New York State Education Law sections 215 and 263, and Regulations of the Commissioner 11.4, all public library systems must submit an annual report each year.

Member libraries’ information

Member libraries’ information can be found through New York State Library, Division of Library Development. The information collected includes annual budget, population served and professional staff.

Most data needed for Stage I of the study are available online. Table 3.1 provides a schedule of the data collection process. The law and regulations that were related to public library systems were saved and printed out from New York State Library website; the Plans of Service were downloaded for each public library system from the New York State Library website; mission statements were included in each Plan of Service document; the annual report in excel format was acquired from the New York State Library.

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30 2008 Annual report is acquired from New York State Library in Excel format.
Library, Division of Library Development by contacting Maria Hazapis through email. Maria Hazapis\textsuperscript{31} is the contact person listed on the New York State Library Division of Library Development webpage for “Budget Application and Annual Report for Library Systems.”

Table 3.1. Data Collection Schedule at Stage I of the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/2010</td>
<td>2007-2011 Plan of Services (text)</td>
<td>Downloaded from New York State Library website: \textit{<a href="http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/pos/pos-url.htm%7D">http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/pos/pos-url.htm}</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mission Statement (text)</td>
<td>Included in the five year Plan of Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 01/22/2010 | 2008 Annual report (excel)                     | First phone contact New York State Library Division of Library Development and received the following documents:  
|            |                                                | • System Report Instructions 2008-2009.doc                            |
|            |                                                | • System Report 2008-2009.doc                                        |
|            |                                                | • Public Library System Data 2008 07-29-09.xls                        |
| 02/2010    | The Education Law and Regulations (text)       | Saved from New York State Library website: \textit{http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/excerpts/index.html} |
| 01/2011    | Member libraries’ information                  | Collected from Bibliostat connect\textsuperscript{32} through New York State Library website: \textit{http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/index.html} |

Data Analysis – Stage I

The data analysis in Stage I of the study was a process of iterative analyzing and cross checking. Text data were coded thematically, and descriptive statistics were applied to numerical information. The purpose of the analysis at this stage was to identify the current state of public library systems’ services and how current services provided by each public library system reflect the New York State Education Law, Regulations of the

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/sarbit/index.html}  \textsuperscript{32} Bibliostat connect provides online access to public library statistics in the nation. To access New York data, use new york as the User ID and pals as the Password to connect to: \textit{http://connect.informata.com/}

- 50 -
Commissioner of Education, their mission statements, and Plans of Service. The text analysis was further compared with findings from the statistical analysis for a complete story of public library systems and their services. The data analysis is described below and the results of the data analysis are reported in Chapter 4.

First, concepts in the law and regulations about public library systems’ expected roles and service requirements were identified; public library systems’ mission statements were then coded by these concepts. The five year Plans of Service were examined for service themes and their relationship with the previously identified concepts. These concepts and service themes and other public library systems demographic variables were compared to identify potential patterns in system services and to observe how public library systems’ services reflected their expected roles and service requirements defined by the state. To ensure the reliability of the study, this coding process was repeated a second time by the researcher after approximately one week days in order to ensure the consistency of the coding results. A second coder was also involved when coding mission statements and the Plans of Service documents. The inter-coder agreements were computed and the result is reported in section 2 of Chapter 4.

The excel data file of annual reports was used as the basis for a descriptive statistical analysis. The demographic data and service data were used for understanding the trends among 23 public library systems. The purpose was to identify the service patterns and their relationship with system demographic variables or organizational characteristics.
As mentioned earlier, there are three different types of public library systems in New York State with different funding sources and governance. For consolidated public library systems and two federated public library systems, due to their special structure, when it came to report the funding, number of certified librarians, holdings and registered users in their annual reports, it includes all the statistics from their branch libraries. But for all cooperative public library systems and two federated public library systems that have no branch libraries, the reporting data was only for the public library system headquarters. Therefore there is a substantial difference between certain numbers in the 2008 New York State public library systems’ annual reports for consolidated public library systems, two federated public library systems and the rest of public library systems. In Chapter 4, in order to present the data more clearly, data describing public library systems and their services was disaggregated by public library system types.

The final step in data analysis at this stage included applying factor analysis and cluster analysis techniques on selected quantitative annual report demographic and service data of all 23 public library systems and those 16 cooperative public library systems. The purpose of this step was to identify the underlying system service trends and system characteristics. Since data reported by consolidated public library systems and two federated public library systems included not only system activities but also branch libraries’ activities, factor analysis and cluster analysis would readily identify the difference between them and the rest of public library systems. Therefore a second factor analysis and cluster analysis was applied to only 16 cooperative public library systems. Selecting only cooperative public library systems also provided a controlled sample since any service differences found would not be contributed to the type of public library
systems. These 16 cooperative public library systems appeared to be a better choice also because they provided a bigger pool from which to observe the same type of public library systems with different features. Factor analysis and cluster analysis categorized 16 public library systems into different clusters based on their similarities on factors of service activities and organizational characteristics. SPSS was used to perform the descriptive statistical analysis, factor analysis and cluster analysis.

Factor analysis was used to identify the common factors underlying service and demographic variables included in annual reports. The identified factors were then used to cluster the 16 public library systems into different groups based on their similarities on these factors. Factor analysis reduced the number of the variables included in the annual report. The original 2008 annual report data from New York State Library includes nearly 200 variables. Cluster analysis helped to identify cooperative public library systems that were similar to each other on the identified factors. Service and organizational demographic patterns across different clusters were then identified. This part of the data analysis is reported in section 3 of Chapter 4.

The Stage I analysis also built a basis for State II of the study, since Stage II was multiple case studies designed to examine service decision-making processes across different public library systems. Using one library system from each cluster was the best way to ensure that cases selected were different from each other in their service activities and organizational characteristic. Additionally, selecting the same type (cooperative) of public library systems for multiple case studies avoided attributing any differences to library systems themselves when the differences were due to library system types (consolidated, federated or cooperative).
The threshold chosen for the determinant was greater than 0.00001 in SPSS when conducting factor analysis. If the determinant was less than this value, it meant there were highly correlated variables. If the majority of the significance was greater than 0.05, this meant there was a problem of singularity and multicollinearity. The threshold value for KMO as characterized by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin\textsuperscript{33} in factor analysis was set to be greater than 0.80 in this study. KMO is a measurement between 0 and 1. When it is closer to 1, it means the variables are measuring a common factor. 0.70 is a middling value that means the factor explains a fair amount of the variance rather than a substantial amount. And the Bartlett’s test\textsuperscript{34} should be less than 0.001 to be significant. These measures were to make sure factor analysis was appropriate for the data. The scree plot and these test values were both used to decide the number of factors.

Comparing to factor analysis, cluster analysis does not assume the underlying distribution of the data. The groups created by applying cluster analysis can be different from one researcher to another. In order to get a sound cluster analysis result, several tests were applied to test the soundness of the clusters and the effect of different variables that differentiate one cluster from another. Each cluster contains public library systems that are similar on the factors clustered on. Cluster members’ service activities were compared to the demographic variables to further identify the relationship between public library systems’ demographic features and their service activities. This analysis is also reported in section 3 of Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{33} The KMO measurement of sampling adequacy tests whether the partial correlations among variables are small. -- from the SPSS online help
\textsuperscript{34} Bartlett’s test of sphericity tests whether the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, which would indicate that the factor model is inappropriate. -- from the SPSS on-line help
Stage II – Multiple Case Studies of Service Decision-making Processes

The Stage II of this study focused on the service decision-making processes in three selected cooperative New York State public library systems. Contrary to previous studies (Childers, 1988; Shisler, 1995) which focused on evaluating cost and effectiveness of providing system services, this study looks at system services from the provider’s perspective and studies how these systems make service decisions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted at selected public library systems. Observation notes were taken and complementary documents were acquired after the interview through emails. Qualitative coding and analysis were used to analyze the qualitative data about service decision-making processes in public library systems. The rational choice model, the garbage can model (Cohen et al., 1972) and bounded rationality (March & Simon, 1958) were applied to the data to explain decision-making processes in public library systems. This analysis is reported in Chapter 9.

The selection of the three cases reflects the variation of service activities and contextual factors in these 16 cooperative public library systems in New York State. These selected cases provide contrasting environments for comparing service decision-making processes in different public library systems, and therefore for investigating these factors’ influence on service decision-making processes and subsequent services decisions. The findings in Stage II were also connected to findings in Stage I, identifying the potential connection between service patterns, system demographic features and service decision-making processes. This discussion is also presented in Chapter 9, the discussion and conclusion of the dissertation.
Organizational decision-making practice is a complex phenomenon considering the variation of the organizational context and the decision content, and the variation of the decision-making processes. For public library systems where decision-making practice has not been widely studied and well documented, the case study was the appropriate research method to accumulate knowledge. The case study was selected also because it answers “how” question and studies the phenomenon that is hard to separate from its context most appropriately (Yin, 2003). Case studies provided opportunities to get a full picture of the decision-making processes in public library systems in New York State. According to Yin, multiple case studies are also almost always good for reliability of the case study since they provide different contexts for comparing findings.

**Data Collection – Stage II**

No matter how many underlying factors were identified in the SPSS program through running factor analysis, Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS) and Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) always end up in two distinctive clusters in the subsequent cluster analysis using those factors. This has to do with the fact that CCLS is the cooperative public library system that serves the least populations and provides most direct services to the public; while SCLS is the largest cooperative public library system in New York State. So with both “size” factor and “system service features” factor, these two organizations were always differentiated from each other. Based on this result, this research selected Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System, Suffolk Cooperative Library System and Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) as three cases to study their services decision-making processes. The Mid-Hudson Library System was purposively selected from the third cluster since the researcher could gain easy access to
this system and it is geographically close to where the researcher studies. The Mid-Hudson Library System was the first case the researcher studied. The system staff at MHLS helped the researcher to connect with CCLS and SCLS for conducting the subsequent case studies at these two public library systems.

The unit of data collection in this study was those individuals who participated in system service decision-making processes in these three selected public library systems. The unit of data analysis was the service and service decision-making processes in these three selected public library systems. The data collection method was semi-structured interviews. This method allows for adaption to each interviewee and to the context. The interviews were conducted in their natural environments. During this study, one group interview, six face-to-face interviews and two phone interviews were conducted across three public library systems. Each interview lasted from 45 minutes to one hour and was audio recorded. The transcripts of the interviews yielded a total of 163 pages of 1.5 spaced texts. People who participated in system service decision-making processes were interviewed for their retrospective accounts of both processes and influential factors. Relevant documents were reviewed to understand processes and the factors that influenced processes in public library systems. Field notes were kept for further reference. Multiple interviewees from different positions of the public library system were interviewed so that their stories could be corroborated and therefore enhanced the reliability of the study. The relevant information from Stage I of the study about services and public library systems were also compared to the interview data. See Chapter 8 for this portion of the analysis.
A qualitative research method was used to study the three selected cases. The data collected from the three cases included the interview transcript, visiting notes, system websites, photos taken and the email communications between the researcher and the interviewees at each system. These data were further coded and categorized according to both predefined and emerged codes and themes about the service decision-making processes. Before the research began, the proposed research plan and the research protocol were submitted to the Institutional Review Board of State University of New York at Albany for approval. The approved IRB document is attached in Appendix C.

The director of the Mid-Hudson Library System was contacted with help from Professor Deborah Lines Andersen; the MHLS system director is also an adjunct faculty member at the Department of Information Studies at University at Albany. The interview site and time were soon decided after several email communication between MHLS director and this researcher. The key interview questions were sent to the interviewee the day before the meeting and the interview was recorded and transcribed afterward. See Table 3.2 for a synopsis of interview dates, contacts and notes.

The first interview was conducted as a group interview based on the suggestion of the MHLS director. Beside the director, three more staff members from MHLS also participated in the interview. All the participants were informed of the IRB requirements before the interviewing session began and their permissions and signatures were obtained for the interviewing and its recording. The group interview lasted for approximately two hours. After the interviewing session, the researcher was given a tour by the MHLS director. After the interview and tour, the researcher took interview notes.

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35 See Appendix E for the interview protocol
At the end of the onsite visit in MHLS, the researcher asked for the director’s help in contacting the other two selected cooperative public library systems. The director agreed to provide help. The MHLS director connected the researcher and the directors from the two other library systems - the contacting email from the researcher was sent to the director of the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System and to the director of the Suffolk Cooperative Library System. As with the previous interviewing, the key questions were sent to the interviewee the day before the interviewing meeting. The second site was at the Suffolk Cooperative Library System. The director was the only person in SCLS the researcher made an appointment with. Upon arrival, the director was already waiting in his office. The IRB permission process was explained and his signature was obtained before the session started. The interviewing session went on for approximately an hour. The director also arranged for the researcher to meet with the technology administrator at SCLS who is responsible for the Integrated Library System (ILS). The technology administrator was given a short introduction of the research purpose and her signature was asked to express the interviewee’s willingness to be interviewed and to be audio recorded during the session. After the interview, the technology administrator gave the researcher a tour of SCLS; pictures of SCLS were taken during the tour.

The trip to the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System was a drive of about 6 hours one way from Albany, where the researcher lives. Similar to the situation at SCLS, here, the only person contacted was the system director. The key interview questions were sent to the director the day before the interview took place. The study was explained and the signature of the interviewee was asked for to indicate permission to conduct the
interview and to record the audio session. The interview session lasted for approximately one hour. At the end of the interviewing session, the director gave a tour of the library system building and then arranged two meetings for the researcher with the training staff and the outreach service staff. These two staff members were interviewed separately. Each session lasted for 25 minutes. Their permissions were collected before conducting the interviews and recording the audio sessions. They were both given a short introduction of the study and what were expected from them.

After the interview with the system staff in each public library system, the researcher then asked the interviewees to recommend other participants involved in system service decision-making processes. These recommendations often led to member libraries’ directors and system board members. The researcher conducted a face-to-face interview with a MHLS member library’s director and two additional phone interviews with a SCLS member library’s director and a previous CCLS Board member. There is a sizable distance from CCLS and SCLS to where the researcher studies, phone interviews were more feasible for the researcher.

The data collection activities reflected in Table 3.2 show an iterative pattern. The interviewees were repeatedly contacted for missing pieces of information; the websites were repeatedly visited for online documents kept by public library systems; the public library systems staff was contacted for clarifying and providing additional information. This process continued throughout the whole research process.
Table 3.2. Data Collection Schedule at Stage II of the Study

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<td>03/16/2010</td>
<td>Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS)</td>
<td>One onsite interview with four MHLS staff members</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/17/2010</td>
<td>MHLS</td>
<td>Email with URLs linking to information of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Directors Association and Advisory committee information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• MHLS Plan of Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/17/2010</td>
<td>MHLS</td>
<td>Email with URLs linking to information of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Current progress of 2007-2011 Plan of Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Continuing education topics on demand</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Advisory Committee Description</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• MHLS member libraries’ size information and other comparative statistics.</td>
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<td>MHLS</td>
<td>Email with URLs of MHLS 2009 budget summary</td>
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<td>MHLS member library</td>
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<td>04/13/2010</td>
<td>Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS)</td>
<td>Two on site interviews</td>
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<td>Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS)</td>
<td>Three on site interviews</td>
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<td>SCLS member library</td>
<td>Email answer to interview questions</td>
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<td>05/05/2010</td>
<td>SCLS member library</td>
<td>One phone interview</td>
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<td>05/10/2010</td>
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<td>05/17/2010</td>
<td>CCLS Board member</td>
<td>One phone Interview</td>
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<td>05/18/2010</td>
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<td>• SCLS 2010 proposed budget information</td>
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<td>• Summary document of SCLS member support</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Meeting minutes of SCLS Adult Services Advisory Committee, Resource Sharing Advisory Committee and Youth Services Advisory Committee</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• A letter from SCLS Director to the President of Public Library Directors Association of Suffolk County about a number of significant revisions to the structure and charges of the SCLS member library advisory committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/16/2010</td>
<td>MHLS</td>
<td>Email communication with MHLS staff on Integrated Library System</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
See Appendix D for the template of the contacting email to these selected public library systems’ directors. Appendix E includes the interview consent form and the interview protocol.

**Data Analysis – Stage II**

The transcribed interviewing data, the field notes, and the documents received after interviews were coded and categorized by using qualitative emergent coding and analysis. Codes and categories emerged during the coding process. The first step was open coding; the second step was categorizing the similar codes and reducing the codes to main categories. And these categories were used to organize data in this study. These categories were further synthesized into themes. Five themes are reported in Chapter 8.

Data analysis at Stage II of the study also included comparing and contrasting data from different public library systems, and observing similarities and differences and providing useful information for understanding public library systems’ decision-making processes in New York State and the factors that influence this process. This portion of analysis is reported in the summary section of Chapter 8.

**Strengths and Limitations of Research Design and Data Collection**

The strength of this research project is based on the appropriateness of the selected research methods and the research objects. Since there is a lack of information and knowledge about public library systems and their service decision-making processes, a case study approach proves to be the most justified methodology to study the topic. This research project employed multiple case studies to further strengthen the research

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36 Open coding is the part of the analysis concerned with identifying, naming, categorizing and describing phenomena found in the text.
design. Purposefully selected multiple cases at stage II of the study captured adequately the heterogeneity in the population. It was used to establish particular comparisons to illuminate the reasons for differences between settings.

**Strengths of the Study**

Multiple case studies can provide more substantial results compared to a single case study. If common or contrasting conclusions can be drawn, especially when under varied circumstances, the results represent a strong start toward theoretical replication and also support the external validity of findings.

This research project also adopted multiple methodologies in order to gain a comprehensive picture of research objects – public library systems in New York State. There were two stages in this research project. Stage I focused on secondary qualitative and quantitative information and focused on selecting appropriate cases for the Stage II of the study. Stage II focused on the service decision-making process at selected cooperative public library systems.

Using available secondary data from the New York State Library saved the researcher time and resources required for collecting such demographic information from each public library system. The New York State Library collects annual report data from all public library systems, and such data included demographic, service and funding information. Using these quantitative data and descriptive statistical techniques, a general profile of all 23 public library systems was created.

Stage II of the study focused on three selected cooperative public library systems and their service decision-making processes. Multiple cases were selected to reflect various settings. Interviews were used to collect retrospective information about
decisions made at each public library system. Interview data may contain bias or inaccuracy since interviewees were asked to describe their previous decision-making activities (Nutt, 2008). Harrison and Phillips (1991) mentioned in their study of strategic decision making: interviews are more apt to find more structured-rational behavior than direct observation. Therefore in this study, interviewing data were complemented with observation and following-up email messages between the researcher and interviewees. Information such as organizational charts, and system websites also served as sources to verify and corroborate stories told by interviewees. Multiple interviewees from each public library systems were selected in and out of the public library system, and from different positions when in the system, in order for them to provide different perspectives on service decision-making processes. Their transcripts were compared and contrasted as well. The disadvantage of collecting data from multiple sources is that it requires more skills and extra time and efforts from the researcher.

**Limitations of the Study**

Limited by the available time and resources, this research has its inherent limitations in the design and the following data collection and analysis. The first and foremost limitation of this study is the inability to generalize findings from this study to the population of public library systems in New York State, or to all public library systems in the United States. Given the substantial differences seen across these three cases, one might expect equal variation across the other 20 public library systems. The methodological approach also produces the challenge of mapping the qualitative data to the rational choice model and the garbage can model, and identifying decisions as results of such processes.
Another limitation of this study related to using existing data, since the data were not created by the researcher. They could not be forced to fit the need of this study. Some information deemed important by the researcher was not available while other information not related to this study was collected. For example, the researcher was interested in knowing not only if a public library system was providing a certain service but also how such service was provided and funded. This kind of detailed information was not available in the existing data. When the purpose was to look at system expenses according to different service activities, the expense data that were reported by funding sources were almost useless for this purpose. Part of these limitations was balanced in Stage II of the study where this researcher conducted interviews to fill in information gaps about library systems. But limited by the interview time, not all the detailed information was collected.

Using interviews to collect research data on service decision-making processes posed challenges. Compared to observation or log reading, this method has the advantage of time saving and efficiency by being able to collect relatively more information in a relatively short time range. But there are disadvantages of using interview as a data collection method on service decision making. This study offers a number of conclusions about how to improve decision making in public library systems. However, there are several limitations to the study that call for care. This study collected interview data to study service decision-making processes; the use of retrospective data is the best way to get close to the phenomenon of interest in this case, but retrospective data can have the problem of self-justification, memory lapses and logical inconsistencies (Bartlett, 1954). The retrospective data might not fully correspond to the true events, as Harrison and
Philips noted (1993), interviews are apt to find more structured-rational behavior than direct observation; therefore the description might become more tidy and rational than the real decision. Social desirability and sensitive information may limit what is said. The complex nature of decision-making processes as a research topic also places limitations on this study. To cope with this limitation, multiple cases were selected and multiple interviews were conducted. Triangulating responses from multiple interviewees helps to improve reliability of the study.

This study does not include the decision outcome as a factor for further investigating. Therefore it is difficult to decide which decision-making process actually works best or most effectively. This limitation was inherited from the fact that the purpose of the study was to discover and document the current service decision-making process in these three public library systems. Also, qualitative study cannot collect information and test correlations between decision content, context and the decision-making process, and the final outcome. All types of system decisions cannot be covered in such a short interview time.

Summary

The organization of public library systems has not been widely studied in the United States. The two-stage design of this study has the advantage of using the findings from State I to select cases for Stage II of the study. Therefore the Stage I of the study built knowledge for the Stage II of the study.

One advantage of this two-stage study lies in the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, and its collecting data from multiple sources in different formats. Data collected by different approaches in a different format from different sources were
used to cross check and corroborate stories and to increase the reliability of the study.

Applying multiple case studies research methods on service decision-making processes in public library systems provides the opportunity for looking into the issue deeply and thoroughly. Using qualitative research enables the researcher to explore the complex factors that affect the decision-making processes in public library systems. Multiple case studies allow the comparison and contrasting of decision-making processes in three different public library systems and understanding of how the difference influences this process. Multiple case studies display a more complete picture of the decision-making processes of public library systems in New York State compared to a single case study. The comparative analysis of these data is found in Chapter 8.

The next chapter presents the detailed information of data analysis and findings at Stage I of this study.
Chapter IV: Stage I - New York State Public Library Systems and System Services

The purpose of the Stage I analysis was to identify expected functions, roles and services of public library systems prescribed by New York State in the Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, and to look at how public library systems reflect these prescribed functions, roles and services in their mission statements and their most recent Plans of Service documents (2007-2011), and in their actual service activities in annual reports (2008-2009). The overall purpose was to gain knowledge of public library system services and how they reflect the relevant law and regulations.

To do this, the first step was to examine the text related to public library systems’ roles, functions and services in New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, and the relevant content on the Division of Library Development’s website. Based on the analysis result of these texts, themes were extracted which described expected public library systems’ functions and services and corresponding roles. The second step was to go through public library systems’ mission statements and their most recent Plans of Service documents (2007-2011), and to compare these extracted themes to the subjects identified in these two documents. Third step was the analysis of the 2008-2009 New York State public library systems’ annual reports which report the actual service transactions carried out by public library systems. All these steps of analysis provide a picture of New York State public library systems in relation to what they are expected to do, what they plan to do and what they actually did. The final step of the analysis was to apply factor analysis and cluster analysis on selected

37 http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/ New York State Library Division of Library Development
variables from all 23 public library systems’ annual reports in general and 16 cooperative public library systems’ annual reports in particular. Factor analysis helped to identify the underlying factors in the annual report, and cluster analysis allowed the researcher to divide public library systems into different clusters based on the identified factors. These findings were used to select cases for further study at the Stage II of the study.

New York State Public Library Systems’ Expected Functions, Services and Roles

New York State’s 23 public library systems are state-funded programs designed to support over 1000 public libraries and neighborhood branches. The New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education are two documents underlying the establishing and state funding of the public library systems. The Division of Library Development is a major unit of the New York State Library which administers grants and aid programs to library services and programs. This analysis extracts relevant text from the Law and Regulations, along with the relevant information found on the website of the Division of Library Development in order to develop themes to represent public library systems’ expected functions, services and roles.

The Law and Regulations

The Education Law authorizes the establishment of public library systems. Regulations of the Commissioner of Education establish the systems’ governance and function. These two documents established the conditions upon which public library systems receive state aid and the apportionment of the state aid. State aid is provided to public library systems to realize their expected functions and roles. A public library
system may be approved for state aid under sections 272 and 273 of the Education Law and the provisions of Section 90.3 in Regulations.

There is basic state aid which is simply calculated based on a system’s population, area and the number of counties served. There is also categorical state aid which is provided to public library systems for specific service purposes. Although the Law and Regulations do not list specific service requirement other than broad goals, this categorical state aid can be a source to understand what services public library systems are specifically expected to provide. The following analysis first looks at sections 255 and 272 of the Education Law followed by section 90.3 of Regulations to identify conditions for establishing cooperative public library systems and the conditions for all public library systems to receive state aid.

### 1. The role and function of public library systems

The Education Law specified the establishment of cooperative public library system. The other two types of public library systems are libraries established by counties (federated public library systems) or New York City (consolidated public library systems). All these public library systems can receive state aid as long as they meet the conditions specified in the Law and Regulations. These conditions are listed here with the categorical state aid listed, if there is any.

### 1) The condition for establishing cooperative public library systems

- The Law and Regulations
  - the establishment of a cooperative library system will result in improved and expanded library service to the area (§255(2))
2) *The conditions for library systems receiving state aid*

- **To ensure all system populations having access to library services**
  - The Law and Regulations
    - System population definition (§272(1)(b))
    - The prevention of unreasonable discrimination among the persons served by such public library system (§272(1)(k)(1))
    - To assist the various economic, cultural, civic and age groups by qualified personnel in deriving maximum benefit from library resources (§90.3(e))
    - To identify, contact and serve persons who are educationally disadvantaged, members of ethnic or minority groups in need of special library services, unemployed and in need of job placement assistance, living in areas underserved by a library, blind, physically disabled developmentally or learning disabled, aged or residents of institutions (§90.3(l))
    - To analyze the library resources available to unserved and underserved populations residing within the system's boundaries (§90.3(d))
  - The available state aid
    - Coordinated outreach service (§273(1)(h)(1))
    - Adult literacy grants (§273(1)(h)(2))
    - Family literacy grants (§273(1)(h)(3))
    - New York State Talking Book and Braille Library (§273(8))
    - State aid for summer reading programs (§273(10))
    - State aid for cooperation with correctional facilities (§285(1)) (§90.14)
    - State aid for services to county jail facilities (§285(2))

- **To provide direct access to all library resources within system**
  - The Law and Regulations
    - Member libraries are obligated to permit the loan of books and material among each other for use on the same basis permitted by the library which owns or controls them (§272(1)(g))
    - Direct access by all individuals residing within the boundaries of the public library system, to the library resources within the system (§90.3(d)(ii))
  - The state aid
• Automation program to support bibliographic control and interlibrary sharing (§273(1)(d)(2)) (§90.3(h))

• To meet the standard of adequate services required by the Commissioner

  o The Law and Regulations

    ▪ The commissioner provides the standard of service with which a public library system must comply. Such regulations relate to the total book stock; the diversity of such book stock with respect to general subjects and type of literature, annual additions to book stock; circulation of book stock; maintenance of catalogues; number and location of libraries or branch libraries; hours of operation and number and qualifications of personnel, necessary to enable a public library system to render adequate service (§272(1)(h))

    ▪ For full approval of the Plan of Service, each system shall add annually at least 4,000 titles not previously held by the system (§90.3(g)(i))

    ▪ Each system shall provide a means of location of materials added in the libraries of the system (§90.3(h))

  o The state aid

    ▪ Material funds (§273(1)(d)(1))


• To use public funds efficiently

  o The Law and Regulations

    ▪ The desirability for the integration of existing libraries and new libraries into systems serving a sufficiently large population to support adequate library service at a reasonable cost (§272(1)(k)(8))

    ▪ The need for the economic and efficient utilization of public funds (§272(1)(k)(9))

Overall, the New York State public library system is a state program in order to ensure that all populations have access to quality library services. Such purposes can be

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43 §90.3 Approval of Public Library Systems
44 These requirements are addressed to those public library systems that are also libraries
best met with individual libraries cooperating with each other and sharing resources and with public library systems coordinating such activity. The state does not provide direct financial aid to public libraries, but there is aid available to a public library if it is a member of a public library system.45

2. The apportionment of state aid to library systems

1) Basic aid (calculated by system population, areas, number of counties served) (§273(1)(a)(c)(e)) 46

2) Local library service aid (state aid to member libraries distributed through public library systems) (§273(1)(f)(1))

3) Local services support aid (part of this aid is calculated based on the number of unserved population within system area) (§273(1)(f)(2)) (§90.10) 47

4) Local consolidated services aid (for consolidated public library systems only) (§273(1)(f)(3))

5) Material reimbursement (§273(1)(d)(1))

6) Automation program to support bibliographic control and interlibrary sharing (§273(1)(d)(2)) (§90.3(h)) 48

7) Central book aid / central library development aid (Central Book Aid is a flat sum to each of the public library systems for use at the central and/or co-central library. Central Library Development Aid is based on population; CLDA funds are for the improvement of the central library’s function as a major reference, information, interlibrary loan and electronic resource in the system) (§273(1)(b)) (§90.4(b)) 49

8) Serving special populations
   a. Coordinated outreach library service aid (§273(1)(h)(1))

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45 §90.9 Local Service Support Aid
46 § 273 Apportionment of state aid to libraries and library systems
47 §90.9 Local Service Support Aid
48 §90.3 Approval of Public Library Systems
49 §90.4 Standards for Central Libraries
b. State correctional facilities aid (§285(1)) (§90.14)\(^{50}\)
c. Service to county jails aid (§285(2))\(^{51}\)

9) **State funded competitive grants**

a. Adult literacy (§273(1)(h)(2)) (§90.3(n))
b. Family literacy (§273(1)(h)(3)) (§90.3(m))
c. Conservation/preservation

10) **State aided program**

a. Construction for public libraries aid (public library systems need to review and approve the application from member libraries and make recommendation to the Commissioner) (§273-a)\(^{52}\) (§90.12)\(^{53}\)

The Division of Library Development

The Law and Regulations only provide broad goals for establishing public library systems; the Division of Library Development website contains rich and specific information about public library systems and their services. Some samplings of public library system services can be found on this website.\(^{54}\)

1. **The public library system service samplings**

Public Library Systems provide a wide range of direct support services to public libraries and neighborhood branches, enabling them to serve their communities better. These services are:

1) **Resource sharing and direct access**

- Interlibrary loan, daily delivery and other resource sharing services
- A program of free direct access to resources and services of all system member libraries

2) **Support and strengthen member libraries**

- Support for a central library that provides extended public hours and a strong research and reference collection

\(^{50}\)§90.14 State Aid for Cooperation with Correctional Facilities  
\(^{51}\)§285 State Aid for Cooperation with Correctional Facilities  
\(^{52}\)§273-a State Aid for Library Construction  
\(^{53}\)§90.9 State Aid for Library Construction  
\(^{54}\)http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/brochure.htm Brochure: New York State’s public library system
• Creating and maintaining web sites for the system and member libraries
• Professional development and training for library staff and trustees
• Staff expertise in areas such as library law, library budgeting and management, technology, collection development, youth services and outreach
• Cooperative grants administration and grant writing assistance
• Marketing, public relations and printing services
• Centralized purchasing, ordering and processing of library materials
• Operation of computer networks for managing circulation and access to online catalogs of resources, reference requests, interlibrary loan, electronic databases and access to the Internet
• Support for the latest technologies and telecommunication services including the New York Online Virtual Electronic Library (NOVELny), Internet and full-text electronic journals, newspapers and e-books

3) Outreach services

• Outreach and literacy services for individuals and groups in need of services such as job and educational information, educational programs, adaptations for people who are disabled, aged, incarcerated or residing in institutions
• Access to books and print library materials in large print and non-print formats; assistance with registration and service from the NYS Talking Book & Braille Library (Upstate); The New York Public Library's Andrew Heiskell Braille & Talking Book Library or the Long Island Talking Book Library (NYC and Long Island)
• Annual statewide summer reading programs in coordination with the New York State Library
• Programs that assist local communities without libraries to obtain library services

4) Other services

• Government documents depository

The division’s website emphasizes the service of public library systems through strengthening member libraries, and thus improving member libraries’ capability to serve their communities better. Public library systems also coordinate member libraries to serve a bigger population than their own communities with more resources, and to gain the advantage of economies of scale by acting as a united group. Public library systems are also leaders for library advocacy and awareness in New York State.
2. The template of the Plan of Service

The template of the Plan of Service (see Appendix G) listed on the Division of Library Development’s website is a standard document used by all library systems to develop their five year Plans of Service. The system Plan of Service integrates current ongoing services and plans for the next five years. There are predefined services in this document, which provides sources with which to look at the services requirements that public library systems are expected to fulfill. 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. The major recommended roles\(^55\) for library systems on the website of the Division of Library Development are to:

- Support and strengthen member libraries
- Facilitate equitable access to library services and resources directly to patrons/customers
- Facilitate resource sharing among libraries
- Provide leadership for improving library services for all

The Division of Library Development provides a template file of Plan of Service for public library system. There are different service elements listed in the template for public library systems to address, they are:

**Element one** – Resource sharing
  a. Cooperative collection development
  b. Integrated Library System
  c. Delivery
  d. Interlibrary Loan

**Element two** – Special client group
  a. Adult literacy
  b. Coordinated outreach

c. Correctional facilities
d. Youth services

**Element three** – Profession development and continuing education  
**Element four** – Consulting and development services  
**Element five** – Coordinated services  
**Element six** – Awareness and advocacy  
**Element seven** – Communication among member libraries and/or branch libraries  
**Element eight** – Cooperative effort with other library systems  
**Element nine** – Construction  
**Element ten** – Central library services  
**Element eleven** – Direct access

**Expected System Purposes and Services in New York State**

The expected purposes and services of public library systems can be synthesized from these above relevant texts:

1. **System functions**

Based on the extracted text from the Law and Regulations, several subjects stand out. The first one is the emphasis on free direct access to all library resources for all residents in system area. Both the Law and Regulations require public library systems to obligate member libraries to permit such access to all residents in system area at the same service level as resident borrowers from each library, although member libraries are allowed to set conditions when such direct access causes difficulty and hardship on their local users. The existence of such means is a basic condition for the approval of public library system’s Plan of Service by the Commissioner. The second subject is the equal treatment of different populations in providing library services regardless of their economic status, culture, civic and age and to prevent unreasonable discrimination among populations served by such public library system. The third one is to expand library services and to serve unserved and underserved population within system area. The
fourth one is to improve and strengthen library services. The last one is to unite member libraries into one unit in order to enjoy economies of scale and to advocate and promote public library services.

These subjects reflect a common theme that is to serve all New York State populations with equal access to quality public library services in a most cost efficient way. The principle obligation of each public library is its local community. By coordinating the existing library services to serve a large population at a reasonable cost with strengthened quality, public library systems are seen as the way to overcome boundaries of individual public libraries and to do what the individual library cannot do alone or would not be inclined to do. Corresponding state aid is therefore given to public library systems to enhance these public goods.

Public library systems achieve their required missions through serving member libraries, coordinating member libraries and uniting member libraries. Member libraries also benefit from the existence of public library systems. Public libraries in New York State are established and supported by local authority or local people. They are independent from each other and focus on their own community. Library collaboration is seen as a way to deal with stagnant budgets and increasing requirements for library service, and to enjoy economies of scale. Collaboration has costs and takes effort. State-funded public library systems in New York State therefore coordinate resource sharing activities for members, and thereby motivate public libraries to become system members. Membership in a public library system is also a condition for public libraries to receive Local Library Service Aid.
The last reason for establishing public library systems is to improve library services. According to the New York State Education Law section 255 (2), before the Commissioner of Education call a joint meeting for the purpose of determining whether a cooperative library system shall be established, it has to be appear to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that the establishment of a cooperative library system will result in improved and expanded library service to the area and that the area is suitable.\textsuperscript{56}

Overall the grand purposes for which public libraries systems exist are:

- To ensure all populations within system area receiving equal library services;
- To ensure free access to all library resources within system area;
- To ensure adequate and quality library services within system area; and
- To use public funds efficiently.

The ultimate purpose for establishing public library systems is overall to accomplish such missions that individual public libraries cannot do alone or would not be inclined to do, and to accomplish bigger library service goals from the state perspective.

2. System services

System services identified from the Division’s website and from the template of the Plan of Service can be organized according to these purposes assumed by public library systems in New York State.

1) To serve all population within system area
   a. To serve special client groups

2) To ensure access to all library resources within system area
   a. Direct access
   b. Resource sharing
   c. Cooperative effort with other library systems
   d. Maintain open communication among members

3) To provide adequate library services if they are also libraries, or to support and help member libraries to serve their communities
   a. Central library service

\textsuperscript{56} New York State Education Law §255 (2) Establishment of a public library
b. Professional development and continuing education
c. Training and consulting
d. Construction
e. Awareness and advocacy

4) To use public funds efficiently
   a. Coordinated services
   b. Resource sharing

3. System roles

In order to fulfill their functions, public library systems assume different roles and provide many services. As mentioned in previous sections, public library systems in New York State enjoy great freedom in deciding what services to provide and how to fulfill their purposes. They can be direct library service providers for those who do not reside within the boundaries of a member library or they can coordinate member libraries and support them to serve those population; they provide services to their member libraries to improve and strengthen their services; and coordinate resource sharing activities among them. They also assume leadership to improve public library services within the system area, engage in library advocacy and explore new service trends. Thus, they serve as

- Service providers,
- Coordinators, and
- Leaders.

Table 4.1 is a summary of the results of this analysis. The next analysis step focused on public library systems’ mission statements and current Plans of Service to examine how those two documents reflect these identified concepts and what were the themes expressed in those two documents compared to these predefined concepts.
Table 4.1. New York Public Library System’s Expected Functions, Services and Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System functions</th>
<th>System services</th>
<th>System roles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) To serve all population within system area</td>
<td>1) To serve all population within system area</td>
<td>1) Leader</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) To ensure access to all library resources within system area</td>
<td>• Special client group</td>
<td>2) Provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) To improve the quality of library services or to provide adequate library services</td>
<td>2) To ensure access to all library resources within system area</td>
<td>3) Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) To use public funds efficiently</td>
<td>• Direct access</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Resource sharing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• ILL/delivery</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Maintain open communication among members</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Cooperate with other agencies in the area on resource sharing and serving all the residents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) To improve the quality of library services or to provide adequate library services</td>
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<td>• Central library service</td>
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<td>• Professional development and continuing education</td>
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<td>• Coordinated services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Resource sharing</td>
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Mission Statements and the Current Plans of Service (2007-2011)

The Division of Library Development provides a link to the current approved Plans of Service of 23 public library systems. The mission statement for each public library system is listed in the Plan of Service document. Public Library Systems’ mission

57 [http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/pos/pos-url.htm](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/pos/pos-url.htm) Links to Approved Public Library Systems’ Plans of Service
statements can be analyzed to infer what they hold as their primary reason for existence. The Plan of Service defines the mutual commitments, responsibilities and obligations of the public library system and its members in meeting both the service needs of the area served and statewide library service goals. One major reason for this analysis is to check how mission statements reflect those state requirements and how Plan of Service items correspond to mission statement and those requirements.

Analysis first looked at the mission statement texts of the 23 public library systems to identify subjects reflected in the text. Then Plans of Service documents were coded by identifying the presence of service themes.

**Mission Statements Analysis**

The predefined themes about public library systems’ purposes from the previous section were used to code their presence across the 23 organizations’ mission statements. Since there are large variations in mission statements text contents from general to specific, this analysis only identifies those subjects at a general level in order to see the trends of the subjects across all systems. The following table shows the presence of identified general concepts in public library systems’ mission statements.
Table 4.2. Coding Public Library Systems’ Mission Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLS</th>
<th>Equal service</th>
<th>Direct access</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Cost-efficiency</th>
<th>Direct service</th>
<th>Serving members</th>
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<td>Consolidated</td>
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<td>Federated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo - Erie</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEF</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCLS</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCLS</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nioga</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCLS</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLS</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>SALS</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STLS</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCLS</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UHLS</td>
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<tr>
<td>WLS</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These categories\(^{58}\) developed to code the mission statement text were applied by this researcher and another independent annotator. Before the actual coding, the definition and examples of each category were communicated between the two annotators in order to reach a common understanding of these terms. The original

\(^{58}\) See Appendix F for coding table
categories were developed from the researcher’s familiarity and understanding with the part of the Law and Regulation related to public library systems in New York State. The coding was done independently. Although a percentage agreement rate of 80% looks quite good, Cohen’s Kappa is considered more appropriate here for it takes into consideration merely chance agreement (Krippendorff, 2004). The K value was .59 (p < .001), which indicates the agreement between two annotators was moderate.

Across all the 23 public library systems, the first three subjects that were mentioned in their mission statements most often were:

1. To improve public library services (representing code: quality)
2. To ensure all populations within the system receive library services (representing code: equal service)
3. To coordinate resource sharing and other activities / to serve members (representing codes: direct access / serving members)

A closer look at the frequency table showed a variation of themes across different types of public library systems. The results from the annotation were then displayed by the different type of public library systems in Table 4.3. Within each type of public library systems themes were ranked according to the frequency of their being mentioned in mission statements.

The most often mentioned subject in the three consolidated public library systems’ mission statements was to provide direct library services to people. Consolidated public library systems are very different from cooperative public library systems since they are big city libraries serving the public directly. Also due to their unique funding and governance, consolidated public library systems do not have member libraries. New York Public Library, as one of the consolidated public library system, also
expressed a very different mission statement from the rest in that it is a research library, to seeking advance knowledge.

Table 4.3. Frequency Ranking of Subjects in Mission Statement Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Library Systems</th>
<th>Consolidated (3)</th>
<th>Federated (4)</th>
<th>Cooperative (16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Direct services (3)</td>
<td>1. Direct services (3)</td>
<td>1. Improving public library service quality (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Equal service (1)</td>
<td>2. Improving public library service quality (2)</td>
<td>2. Equal services (8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Serving members (2)</td>
<td>3. Direct access (8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Equal services (1)</td>
<td>4. Serving members (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Cost-efficiency (1)</td>
<td>5. Cost-efficiency (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Direct access (1)</td>
<td>6. Direct services (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three of the four federated public library systems expressed the intent to serve people within their service areas. The next two equally popular subjects among federated public library systems were to improve public library service quality and to serve members. Two out of four federated public library systems have not only member libraries but also branch libraries, bookmobiles or reading centers, which means they too, provide a variety of direct library service to users.

Fourteen of all 16 cooperative public library systems expressed their missions as “improving library service quality within system area.” The second most popular subject among cooperative public library systems’ mission statements was to ensure that all populations within the system area receive library services equally and to coordinate
resource sharing activities. Compared to the other two types of public library systems, it is not common for cooperative public library systems to claim serving public directly. They focus more on helping local libraries to provide better service, and to coordinate local libraries for cost-efficiency.

Overall cooperative public library systems’ mission statements reflected more of the prescribed functions and services themes in the Law and Regulation compared to the other two types of public library systems. This might be due to the fact that most of the consolidated and federated public library systems were established by New York City or specific counties prior to the Education Law and Regulations. A variation in themes across the different type of public library systems exists, with consolidated public library systems emphasizing direct services to users and the cooperative public library systems emphasizing coordinated resource sharing and improved library service. The emphasis of federated public library systems is somewhere in the middle with some mention of direct service and improving public library services.

Current Plans of Service (2007-2011)

While mission statements identified areas and roles that New York State public library systems intend to act upon, the five year Plans of Service documents provided information about specific services plans at each public library system.

1. Public library systems’ background information

The template of the Plan of Service can be considered as a survey questionnaires with closed- ended and open-ended questions. The example of closed-ended questions is the background section. It includes the establishment year of each system, numbers of system advisory councils and if the system service is provided free of charge or based on
a fee. A quick check of the background information showed that all three consolidated and three out of four federated public library systems were established before the late 1950s when the State Legislature and Governor authorized the establishment of public library systems in Education Law and started to fund them. Only one federated public library system (Onondaga County Public Library) was established in the 1976. All cooperative public library systems were established according to the Education Law after the late 1950s. This fact corresponded with previous findings from coding the mission statement texts that expressions in cooperative public library systems’ mission statements are closer to the law and regulations.

The three consolidated public library systems are all big city libraries; they do not have any autonomous member libraries. Four federated public library systems have autonomous members; among them Buffalo-Erie County Public Library System and Onondaga County Public Library are also two libraries with branches. For these public library systems which are libraries, the system headquarters also act as the central library for the system. Compared to the rest of public library systems, they have more system collections and provide more direct services for the public. The other two federated public library systems and all cooperative public library systems are not libraries themselves, although some of them also choose to provide direct services to the public through such means as bookmobiles, or reading centers.

All consolidated and federated public library systems as well as six cooperative public library systems provide all services to the public and members free of charge. The other ten cooperative public library systems provide both free and fee-based services for members. Among these ten cooperative public library systems, the only common service
that all of them charge for is providing and maintaining a centralized integrated library
system. Other fee-based services differ from system to system: some of them charge
members for providing printing services; some of them charge members for such items as
centralized material processing.

Each public library system has several advisory groups to advise the system board
or council; all 23 of them have an Outreach Advisory Committee which is required by the
Education Law for them to receive the categorical state aid on coordinated outreach
service. An exception is Queens Borough Public Library which is a consolidated public
library system. All of them also have either a Director’s Advisory Council or a Member
Advisory Council except the Queens Borough Public Library and Clinton-Essex-Franklin
Library System. The latter is a federated public library system. The Director’s or Member
Advisory Committee provides member inputs for the system board or council. Fifteen out
of the 23 public library systems have a Central Library Advisory Committee. The Central
Library Advisory Committee is advising system board for system-wide central library
services to both public and members.

2. Coding Plans of Service text

Except for the background information about public library systems, the Plan of
Service document also includes open-ended questions on public library systems’ goals in
different services which they expect to achieve within five year. Text analysis procedures
were applied to analyze these open-ended questions. The issue that needs to be kept in
mind regarding the open-ended questions is that not all responses are expressed at the
same level with the same style; one system might produce far more information than
another system. The other issue is that these Plans of Service existed prior to this research.
Therefore these data had all the disadvantages that come with using secondary information. The researcher did not create these questions, and thus had no original input to interpret these questions in order to reach higher agreements among respondents regarding their understanding of the questions.

The original elements in the standard template of Plan of Service were used to organize the text analysis. The Plan of Service template was provided on the New York State Library website. Some of the coding themes were selected from this template; others emerged from the responding text.

Within each element the service themes were identified from responding text if they were present or absent. Both prior and data-driven themes were used to code these open-ended questions. Subthemes were also identified if they were present, but the analysis focused on the theme level and the subthemes were used to provide complementary information for the discussion. For example, if the service theme “ILS” was identified; ILS features such as “self-service” and “online pay” were identified and coded as the subthemes for ILS. Since some public library systems chose to report the subtheme level information while others chose not to, the frequency of such information was not used to report the existence of actual services across public library systems.

To avoid over interpretation, themes were identified when they are obvious and specific. A second coder was asked to code one of the 23 Plans of Service documents. An inter-coder agreement between the researcher and the second coder was calculated for this practice to ensure the coding was reliable. The K value was .70 (p < .001), which indicates agreement between two annotators was moderate.

59Sections and Elements of Five-Year Public Library System Plan of Service: http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/pos/sect4pls.htm
Although these elements are common among all 23 public library systems, there are differences in public library systems’ services and the way these services are provided. Not all public library systems provide the same services, or provide the same service in the same way. The same service can be provided centrally or be coordinated among member libraries; but such information is not always expressed clearly in these texts. It can be left out or placed in different places by different public library systems. Findings from analyzing such documents should be read with this situation in mind.

3. Reporting coding results

From the coding results, services all 23 or most public library systems reportedly provide in their Plans of Service documents are listed in the Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Services Provided by All Public Library Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service themes</th>
<th>Service activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct access</strong></td>
<td>1. Access to system wide collection and e-Resources (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Integrated Library System (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Inter Library Loan (ILL) (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Delivery (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Cooperation with Other Library System (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Communication (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality</strong></td>
<td>1. Continuing education and training (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Consulting (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Construction (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Serving members</strong></td>
<td>1. Advocate (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equal services</strong></td>
<td>1. Special client groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adult (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Youth (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inmate (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Coordinated Outreach Population (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost-efficiency</strong></td>
<td>1. Coordinated services (23)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A missing theme here was “direct service.” This does not mean there is no such service. It only means that it is not a service that almost every public library system provides. Although most or all 23 public library systems claim to provide the aforementioned services, the actual service features in each theme can be different from system to system. For instance, all 23 public library systems provide a centralized ILS; some provide it for free, some charge service fee. Another example is the availability of electronic resources in all 23 public library systems: some systems coordinate member libraries to purchase such resources; other systems purchase such resources by using central library aid and make it available throughout the system.

Here we can see, comparing the information to mission statement text coding results, these all 23 public library systems emphasize the expected service purpose themes prescribed by the state law and regulations. This can be explained by the fact that the mission statement was created at the organization’s establishing time, some were before 1950s, and others were after 1950s when the law and regulations were in existence; while the Plan of Service document has a standard template for all 23 public library systems and the content is updated every five years.

The Plans of Service documents coding results will be discussed and summarized in the following paragraphs using each element in the template.

1) **Element one – Resource sharing**

This element of the Plan of Service document corresponds to the service theme of “direct access” synthesized from the previous section. It contains several themes in it: cooperative collection development, delivery and interlibrary loan (ILL), and Integrated Library System (ILS). It is a service which corresponds to the public library systems’
expected function of fostering and coordinating resource sharing among member libraries, and making sure all residents in the public library systems’ service areas will have equal, free and direct access to all system materials. All public library systems provide such resource-sharing services.

Consolidated public library systems have no autonomous members. Therefore resource sharing services are not as primary as they are to the other two types of public library systems. This is also reflected in the fact that “resource sharing” is an absent subject in consolidated public library systems’ mission statement text analysis compared to “direct service” and “equal service.” Collection development in the whole system is done centrally. The ILS is implemented and maintained centrally as well. Consolidated public library systems are actually big libraries themselves. ILL mostly refers to out-of-system ILL. Within the system, most material requests from system residents are filled by system central libraries.

Federated public library systems also provide cooperative collection development, ILL, delivery and ILS services. Federated public library systems have autonomous member libraries. Two federated public library systems have branch libraries. Federated public library systems promote cooperative collection development activities among members by making policy and guidelines, but it is not totally centrally done by the system. The interlibrary loan activities include these requests filled both in and out of system. Not all member libraries use the same ILS maintained by each federated public library systems.

Cooperative public library systems coordinate cooperative collection development among members, and provide ILL, delivery and ILS services. Some public library
systems also provide system collection to supplement members’ collections and provide
digitization and preservation services for members.

2) **Element two – Special client groups**

The special client groups served by public library systems are: adult, youth,
coordinated outreach populations and correctional facilities. Consolidated public library
systems provide direct services to those populations with materials, programs and library
services. This corresponds to their mission statement subjects “direct service” and “equal
service.”

Two federated public library systems have branch libraries, and the other one
operates a bookmobile. Buffalo-Erie and Onondaga are two public library systems with
branches; they provide direct service to adults, coordinated outreach populations, and
inmate populations in county jails and state prisons. Clinton-Essex-Franklin runs a
bookmobile. It also provides direct services to adults, coordinated outreach populations
and inmate populations. All federated public library systems provide support to
member/branch libraries in their service to youth population.

Most cooperative public library systems focus on providing direct services to
coordinated outreach populations and inmate populations. They choose to support their
members’ effort in serving adult and youth populations. This emphasizes public library
systems’ roles in ensuring that all populations receive quality library services, and in
supporting members in doing this.

3) **Element three – Profession development and continuing education**

The professional development and continuing education provided by consolidated
public library systems focuses on the areas of “technology,” “customer service” and
“leadership.” New York Public Library also provides information literacy training to the public. The training and continuing education opportunity provided by federated public library systems focuses on the same areas as those provided by consolidated public library systems. These provided by consolidated public library systems target mostly system staff members, while the training and continuing education provided by federated and cooperative public library systems target mostly member staff members and trustees. Buffalo-Erie, Onondaga, Clinton-Essex-Franklin, and Westchester Library System also provide public training services.

4) **Element four – Consulting and development services**

All 23 public library systems provide consulting service to members. The consulting subjects range from library operation to customer services including “technology support,” “grant application,” and “customer services.” The consulting can be provided through phone, email or field visits.

5) **Element five – Coordinated services**

Coordinated services include centralized system services and coordinated system services. Centralized system services include: cataloging, processing, and bindery. They are in-house services provided by the system centrally. Coordinated services require the involvement of member libraries for activities such as consolidated purchasing and system-wide programming.

For consolidated public library systems, the only coordinated service listed in the Plans of Service is centralized collection development. Compared to consolidated public library systems, federated and cooperative public library systems provide more coordinated services for members. Applying the collective buying power among
members is one coordinated service provided by federated public library systems. Public library systems also coordinated system-wide marketing initiatives and system-wide accesses to electronic resources. Centralized services such as acquisition, cataloging and processing are widely provided among cooperative public library systems as well.

6) **Element six – Awareness and advocacy**

Public library systems’ role in promoting awareness and advocacy is reflected in their contacting elected officials and community leaders and their efforts to publicize library services to the community and residents through media, marketing and advertisement. For federated and cooperative public library systems, they have one more theme in this category which is to provide training and support to member libraries in their local advocacy and publicity activities.

7) **Element seven – Communication among member libraries and/or branch libraries**

The purpose of communication among member libraries and/or branch libraries is to disseminate information, fostering communication and involving members or branches in the system decision-making process. Consolidated public library systems emphasize disclosing information to staff. Federated and cooperative public library systems emphasize cooperation and information sharing among members.

8) **Element eight – Cooperative efforts with other library systems**

Public library systems cooperate with other library systems in order to provide better services, or to participate in regional coordinated projects and efforts. The three consolidated public library systems cooperate with each other to provide unified city-
wide services, and on cataloging and acquisition. Federated and cooperative public library systems coordinate with other library systems in training and programming efforts.

9) **Element nine – Construction**

For consolidated public library systems, their plan is to construct new building and to renovate current buildings. For federated and cooperative public library systems, their role is to assist member libraries in applying for state construction grants and using the money for member library construction projects.

10) **Element ten – Central library services**

Central libraries of public library systems provide materials, programs and library services that are complementary to member libraries or branches. In consolidated public library systems and two of the federated public library systems (Onondaga County Public Library and Buffalo-Erie County Public Library), the system itself is also the central library. They provide service, collections and programs to the community; fill requests from system residents; and provide reference services. Central libraries of the two other federated public library systems (Monroe County Library System and Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System) and the rest of the cooperative public library systems provide reference services to members and residents; they also provide staff training and complementary collections. Most cooperative public library systems’ central library also coordinates the purchase of electronic resources and non-fiction collections for system-wide use.

11) **Summary**

Consolidated public library systems are libraries themselves. One of their major missions is to provide services to the public. They also need to deliver support and
services to their branch libraries. Since branch libraries are not autonomous members, the coordination and cooperation in consolidated public library systems are not as primary as in the other two types of public library systems. Most of the system services are centrally provided and implemented; there are not many coordinated services in consolidated public library systems.

Two of the four federated public library systems (Onondaga County Public Library and Buffalo-Erie County Public Library) have branch libraries, a third one (Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System) is running a bookmobile. These three federated public library systems provide many direct public services. Federated public library systems also have autonomous members; therefore coordination among members is necessary. Federated public library systems provide direct library services to the public on one hand, and provide services to members on the other hand in forms of support and coordination.

All 16 cooperative public library systems do not have branches; some have bookmobiles, reading centers or other forms of stations to serve users directly. They provide direct library services to those populations who are not residing in a community library’s service area or who have difficulties in using regular library services. Otherwise, their focus is on supporting members. Some public library systems provide a variety of centralized in-house system services for members to avoid duplication of efforts in member libraries or to ensure an equal level of service quality. Examples of such central services include but are not limited to printing, cataloging, and equipment loan. Such services are usually funded and operated by systems and can be provided to members either free or based on a fee. In providing such services, public library systems are direct
service providers. There are some systems services coordinated by the system for member libraries in order to enjoy collective bargaining power or to facilitate resource-sharing activities. Such services require members working together and systems playing coordinating roles in order to enjoy the benefit of economies of scale and resource sharing. Examples of services include maintaining and operating a system-wide ILS, collection development activity including material acquisition, database purchase or negotiation, collective advocacy and marketing activities. Public library systems are service coordinators in providing such services.

The coding results of the Plans of Service documents show that all 23 public library systems are meeting their expected functions by coordinating services, supporting members/branches and by serving special client groups. But based on the facts of their different structures, the actual service activities are different across different types of public library systems.

**Annual Reports (2008-2009)**

The annual report is required by the Education Law\(^60\) in a format prescribed by the Commissioner of Education to receive information about public library systems. It contains system demographic information, system service transactions and funding information for the reporting year. Each public library system submits an annual report in order for the Commissioner of Education to evaluate the progress of the public library systems’ claimed service goals in the five year Plan of Service. The following paragraph first presents a general profile of the 23 public library systems, and summarizes the differences across the three types of public library systems; then the focus moves to

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\(^{60}\) §215 Visitation and Reports
analysis of the 16 cooperative public library systems. It is clear that service differences exist across the three types of public library systems, but does service variation exist among the same type of public library systems and if so what are the variations? To answer this question, these 16 cooperative public library systems were selected for further study.

Public Library Systems in New York State

Table 4.5 presents averages of numerical information on system features, services and funding across the three types of public library systems in New York State. We have discussed the differences among these three types of public library systems in their funding sources and services from the text analysis. The numerical values from the annual reports provide specific information about such differences.

Consolidated public library systems do not have member libraries; they provide direct services to system residents. Compared to the other two types of public library systems, consolidated public library systems have much more certified librarians, more service outlets, and larger user populations. Federated and cooperative public library systems serve relatively smaller populations with a smaller number of service outlets. Two of the federated public library systems (Onondaga County Public Library and Buffalo-Erie County Public Library) are libraries; therefore federated public library systems have a relatively higher average number of certified librarians and service outlets than cooperative public library systems.
Table 4.5. Public Library Systems: Averages Across System Types for 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System Features</th>
<th>Consolidated (3)</th>
<th>Federated (4)</th>
<th>Cooperative (16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chartered Area (square miles)</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>1,739</td>
<td>2,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chartered Population</td>
<td>2,669,426</td>
<td>578,401</td>
<td>540,898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branches</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Outlets</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Librarian</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Funding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local funding</td>
<td>$99,200,000</td>
<td>$9,330,000</td>
<td>$115,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Aid</td>
<td>$13,564,647</td>
<td>$2,123,701</td>
<td>$2,020,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Source</td>
<td>$1,659,851</td>
<td>$48,543</td>
<td>$28,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$5,175</td>
<td>$612,525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Operation Funds</td>
<td>$143,000,000</td>
<td>$12,200,000</td>
<td>$3,250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Borrowers</td>
<td>1,632,204</td>
<td>105,992</td>
<td>2,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Circulations</td>
<td>20,398,436</td>
<td>993,149</td>
<td>32,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Holdings</td>
<td>21,346,353</td>
<td>1,273,351</td>
<td>83,807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Catalog Holdings</td>
<td>6,127,830</td>
<td>2,129,320</td>
<td>2,289,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total ILL</td>
<td>30,884</td>
<td>114,256</td>
<td>63,061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Consulting</td>
<td>172,862</td>
<td>18,918</td>
<td>21,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Sessions</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Participants</td>
<td>5,854</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>1,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total References</td>
<td>5,295,287</td>
<td>115,398</td>
<td>623</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consolidated and federated public library systems receive most of their funding from local sources while cooperative public library systems receive most funding from New York State. Consolidated and federated public library systems have higher average operating funds than cooperative public library systems. Cooperative public library systems also have the highest average receipts from providing contracted library services.

Cooperative public library systems provide, on average, fewer direct library services than consolidated and federated public library systems. They have the least number of registered system borrowers, system holdings and system circulation and
reference transactions among these three types of public library systems. The average numbers of reference and circulation transactions in consolidated public library systems are much higher than the other public library systems. Since two federated public library systems are also libraries, compared to cooperative public library systems, federated public library systems also have a relatively larger average number of direct service transactions in reference and circulation.

The differences across the three types of public library systems were seen after applying a cluster analysis on the binary data from the coding result of Plans of Service documents (2007-2011). See Chapter 3, section 1 for a discussion of the method and data analysis as well as sections below. Cluster analysis does not require an assumption about the underlying distribution of the data. The cluster membership is shown in following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Cluster membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Consolidated Public Library Systems (3/3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Federated Public Library Systems (1/4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Buffalo-Erie County Public Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cooperative public library systems (16/16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Federated public library systems (2/4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Federated Public Library System (1/4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Onondaga County Public Library</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This cluster membership table shows that consolidated and cooperative public library systems are in two different clusters while federated public library systems memberships are found across all three clusters. Two federated public library systems (Monroe County Library System and Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System) that are not libraries are in the same cluster with all cooperative public library systems. For those two
federated public library systems that are also libraries, one is in the same cluster with consolidated public library systems; the other is a cluster by itself.

**Analyzing Annual Reports**

The annual report includes multiple categorical data and continuous data. There are 177 variables in the excel data file. In order to reduce the number of variables and to uncover the underlying factors that can explain the common variances across variables, factor analysis was used. Once an underlying factor was found, it was used as a clustering variable to cluster the 23 public library systems. The cluster membership based on the factor can indicate how these clusters were different from each other on the factor.

For a factor to be acceptable, the determinant for the correlation matrix among different variables should not be less than 0.00005 in order to avoid multicollinearity. The Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin (KMO) test measures the strengths of the relationship among variables. This measure varies between 0 and 1, and values closer to 1 are better. A value of .6 is a suggested minimum. The KMO value in this research was set to be greater than .70. The Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity should be significant (<.001). This test is the statistic associated with factor analysis. It is used to examine the hypothesis that the variables are uncorrelated in the population. In other words, the population correlation matrix is an identity matrix; each variable correlates perfectly with itself (r = 1) but has no correlation with the other variables (r = 0).

All continuous data was imported into SPSS for factor analysis. Half of each pair of variables that are highly correlated (> .90) was deleted in order to avoid multicollinearity. Variables that did not correlate well with others also were deleted.
(<.20). In the end, a single factor was derived from the process and met all the required conditions mentioned above.

The factor was named “public library system size.” Variables of system population, system areas in square miles, total holdings in system union catalogs and the LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) funding each system received from federal source loaded on this factor. Except for system area, the other three variables loaded positively on the factor. The determinant for this analysis was 0.42, the KMO value was equal to 0.815, and the Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant.

Table 4.7. Public Library Systems Cluster Membership on Size Factor Based on Annual Reports (2008-2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Cluster membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1       | Consolidated Public Library Systems (3/3)  
          Cooperative public library systems (2/4)  
          1. Nassau Library System  
          2. Suffolk Cooperative Library System |
| 2       | Cooperative public library systems (5/16)  
          1. Mid-Hudson Library System  
          2. Nioga Library System  
          3. Ramapo Catskill Library System  
          4. Upper Hudson Library System  
          5. Westchester Library System |
|         | Federated public library systems (3/4)  
          1. Buffalo-Erie County Public Library  
          2. Monroe County Library System  
          3. Onondaga County Public Library |
| 3       | Cooperative public library systems (9/16)  
          1. Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System  
          2. Finger Lake Library System  
          3. Four County Library System  
          4. Mid-York Library System  
          5. Mohawk Valley Library System  
          6. North Country Library System  
          7. Pioneer Library System  
          8. Southern Adirondack Library System  
          9. Southern Tier Library System |
|         | Federated Public Library System (1/4)  
          1. Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System |
As seen in Table 4.7, this factor was used to organize the 23 public library systems into three clusters. The number of clusters was decided by the researcher based on a method involving the observation of cluster changes based on the number of clusters chosen. In cluster analysis, there are several ways to decide how many clusters to choose. One consists using the clustering coefficient; the other is looking at the dendrogram graph. Although the selection of three clusters was decided by the researcher, it was also the best option as indicated by coefficient and the dendrogram graph.

This “size” factor clustered the 23 public library systems into three clusters, with cluster one including consolidated public library systems and two large cooperative public library systems. These public library systems have large populations and relatively small areas; cluster three included public library systems that have smaller populations but large land area; and cluster two is somewhere in the middle. All consolidated public library systems and most federated public library systems were clustered into separate clusters. Only cooperative public library systems had membership in all three clusters. This is because cooperative public library systems have the largest numbers of organizations among all three types of public library systems and have the biggest variations of organization sizes.

This portion of the analysis was to (1) better understand all New York State public library systems and (2) select public library systems for Stage II of the study - multiple case studies. In Table 4.6, when using Plans of Service coding data to cluster all 23 public library systems, cooperative public library systems are all in one cluster; but in Table 4.7, when using size factor to cluster all 23 public library systems, cooperative public library systems spread out across all three clusters. This shows that the type of
public library systems affects system services provided by public library systems. In order to find out if the size factor affected the services provided at public library systems, the researcher chose cooperative public library systems for further analysis. The rationale for this is based on the fact that different types of public library systems have different service features, in order to control for the “size” factor, only one type of public library systems should be selected. In this case, cooperative public library systems were the most appropriate subset, in that the constituent systems were found across all “size” clusters.

After selecting cooperative public library systems, another factor analysis was applied to these 16 cooperative public library systems in order to find the factors underlying service variables. Therefore all system demographic variables were removed in this factor analysis. By repeating the same step as in the previous factor analysis, two factors were found after this analysis. One factor was most heavily weighted on variables that were related to “system direct service;” the other factor could be described as “system capacity.” The first factor was underlying service variables of “the number of ILL requests handled by system,” “number of system circulation,” “number of system outlets” and “number of books owned by system.” These four variables all reflect the direct services provided by systems. The second factor was underlying service variables of “number of certified system librarians” and “total number of items in system Union Catalog.” The first variable represented the professional capacity of system; the second variable represented the resource size in the whole system area, including both system and member library resources. All conditions were met for these two factors to be acceptable. The determinant value for the correlation matrix was .01, the KMO value was .701, and the variances accounted for by these two factors were 82%.
By applying these two factors in the following cluster analysis, the 16 cooperative public library systems were divided into three clusters. Again this number is also the best option based on observation of the coefficients values and the dendrogram graph. The following table shows the cluster membership among cooperative public library systems.

Table 4.8. Cooperative Public Library System Cluster Membership on Service Factor Based on Annual Reports (2008-2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Cluster membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>• 12 Cooperative Public Library Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>• Nassau Library System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Suffolk Cooperative Library System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Westchester Library System</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Chautauqua – Cattaraugus Library systems (CCLS) was mainly identified by the first factor “direct system service”. The second factor was instrumental in determining membership in cluster three, and included the three largest cooperative public library systems in New York State. Cluster two memberships consisted of the bulk of cooperative public library systems, whose service profiles were not differentiated by heavy weighting on either of the two factors used in this part of the study.

Although cluster membership is based on service factors, the membership also reflects the system demographic pictures. In cluster one; CCLS is a cooperative public library system that serves the smallest population. The three cooperative public library systems in cluster three serve the largest populations among cooperative systems. The Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) is the biggest cooperative public library system. The cluster two memberships represent the rest of cooperative public library systems, lying somewhere between the two extremes.
CCLS and SCLS were selected cases for the Stage II of the study. The decision was based on the previous analysis results. CCLS and SCLS are two typical different types of cooperative public library systems; they are not only different in their service factors, but also very different in their demographic information. Another case selected from cluster two was Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS), primarily because the researcher had ready access to this organization. Otherwise any other cooperative public library systems from cluster two would also have been qualified.

The Stage II analysis further looked into each of these three cases to study their system services. Chapter 5 focused on Mid-Hudson Library System, Chapter 6 on Suffolk Cooperative Library System and Chapter 7 was about Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System. In each chapter, the organizational structure, the website, and funding and services were described in detail.
Chapter V: Case I - Mid-Hudson Library System

They (member libraries) would love to have a consensus, as long as everybody does what they want (MHLS-1-03/16/2010).

You know you get 40 people in a room; you start to deal with personalities. I guess in my mind that’s kind of where the difficulties coming in, because you are no longer making a decision yourself, you are working with all these other people (MHLS-2-03/25/2010).

The Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) resides in a three-floor white building on Market Street in downtown Poughkeepsie. The city of Poughkeepsie serves as the county seat of Dutchess County. MHLS was created in 1959. Today it is one of 16 cooperative public library systems in New York State and serves the staff and trustees of its 66 public library members in the five counties of Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Putnam and Ulster in the southeastern region of New York State. The area chartered to serve by MHLS is 2,937\(^{61}\) square miles and the population to serve is 627,046.\(^{62}\) Figure 5.1 shows the general location of the MHLS service area in New York State. Figure 5.2 provides a detailed map of the five counties served by MHLS.

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\(^{61}\) MHLS 2007-2011 Plan of Services
\(^{62}\) MHLS 2007-2011 Plan of Services
Figure 5.1. The Mid-Hudson Library System in New York State\textsuperscript{63}

\includegraphics{figure51.png}

Figure 5.2. Area Served by the Mid-Hudson Library System\textsuperscript{64}

\includegraphics{figure52.png}

\textsuperscript{63} The MHLS map was copied from New York State Library, Division of Library Development website: http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/publibs/plstmhls.gif

\textsuperscript{64} The MHLS service area map was saved from its website: http://midhudson.org/admin/system_map.htm
Table 5.1 contains information about the five counties served by MHLS. Dutchess County and Ulster County had the biggest populations in the 2000 U.S. census; they also had the largest numbers of member libraries. About 60% of the member libraries are in these two counties. According to the 2000 census, Putnam County has the highest income per capita among these five counties, while Greene has the lowest income per capita. The MHLS office and its central library -- Adriance Memorial Library are located in Dutchess County.

Table 5.1. Five Counties Served by the Mid-Hudson Library System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Population (2000)</th>
<th>Area (Square miles)</th>
<th>Income per Capita</th>
<th>Number of Member Libraries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dutchess</td>
<td>280,150</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>$23,940</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulster</td>
<td>177,749</td>
<td>1,126</td>
<td>$20,846</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putnam</td>
<td>95,745</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>$30,127</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>63,094</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>$22,265</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greene</td>
<td>48,195</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>$18,931</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average population served by a MHLS member library is 9,038; the average operating funds per library are about $374,867; the average operating funds per capita are $49 and the average number of full time employees of each member library is five. Table 5.2 provides disaggregated information about the 66 MHLS member libraries by the population served, annual receipts and the number of the fulltime employees (FTE). The raw data are from MHLS webpage of Library System Statistical Report 2009.65 The Microsoft Excel 2007 PivotTable feature is used to analyze the data.

Among the 66 member libraries, 29 of them serve a population less than 5,000, and 26 of these 29 member libraries have staff members of not more than three people

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and with annual operating receipts less than $200,000. There are nine member libraries serving populations of more than 15,000. Five of these nine member libraries are from Dutchess County. The other 28 member libraries serve populations somewhere between 5,000 and 15,000. MHLS defines member libraries with three full time employees or less as small libraries. Among the 66 MHLS member libraries, there are 28 small libraries, which is about 42% of all member libraries. Six member libraries have more than nine staff members, serve populations more than 20,000, and have annual receipts more than $500,000. When Table 5.2 is further disaggregated by county, it is notable that almost all member libraries in Columbia County are small libraries according to MHLS’ definition, and there is no small library in Putnam County.

MHLS is mainly funded by New York State and it does not provide any direct service to the public. It encourages the public to go to their member libraries. In its 2008 annual report, MHLS received total operating funds of $3,211,293. $2,671,684 was from state aid.66 In 2009, the total operating funds declined to $2,867,177, of which $2,274,915 was from state aid.67 MHLS also receives other state funding through grant applications or special legislative grants. The state budget cuts affect what services MHLS can provide as well as its service decision-making processes. This effect will be further discussed later in this chapter.

66 MHLS 2008 Annual Report
67 2009 New York State public library systems’ annual reports
Table 5.2. The Mid-Hudson Library System Member Libraries’ Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FTE*</th>
<th>1-4999</th>
<th>5000-9999</th>
<th>10000-14999</th>
<th>15000-19999</th>
<th>20000-25000</th>
<th>25000+</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*FTE (the number of fulltime employees)

The MHLS building is located in downtown Poughkeepsie beside Adriance Memorial Library. Adriance Memorial Library is the central library responsible for
providing reference support and training to MHLS member libraries and it has the largest collection of books and audio-visual materials in the system. New York State provides each public library system with Central Library Development Aid (CLDA) and Central Book Aid (CBA) in order to develop its central library so it can serve its member libraries. The MHLS auditorium is right next to MHLS. Inside the MHLS building, the first floor is used for delivery, reception and meeting space; the second floor houses the cataloging and various service sections; the servers and the automation department are on the third floor.

**Mid-Hudson Library System’s Organizational Structure**

*Mid-Hudson Library System acts to ensure the public’s rights of free access to information, facilitate economical resource sharing, and promote professional library services while working in partnerships with the independent public and free association libraries in the designated service region (MHLS Mission Statement).*

As stated in the mission statement, MHLS is to serve member libraries in order for them to provide quality services to the public. The establishment of the cooperative library system has been stipulated in the New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. The law specifies the electing of the MHLS board of trustees, the employment of system director and certified public librarians and the appointment of an advisory council for coordinated outreach services. At MHLS, in

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68 New York State Education Law 255 (2)
69 Regulations of the Commissioner of Education 90.3 (f) /NYCRR Title 8- Education.
70 Regulations of the Commissioner of Education 90.3 (l)(2)
addition to the system office and the board of trustees, there are several advisory groups involved with the system.

Departments\textsuperscript{71}

MHLS has 17 full-time and eight part-time staff members. These staff members work at the departments covering three major areas: administration, public services and technological services. Figure 5.3 is the MHLS organizational chart. It shows the three areas and the departments within each area.

Figure 5.3. The Mid-Hudson Library System’s Organizational Chart

\textsuperscript{71} MHLS Department information is mainly from the Library System’s Department webpage: http://midhudson.org/department/main.htm
The administration area includes the MHLS administrative department and the business department. The administrative department is in charge of the operation of the MHLS. It is responsible for managing information pertaining to the MHLS board of trustees as well as trustees of the member libraries; arranging MHLS annual meetings; maintaining the bulletins; conducting personnel evaluation; and planning MHLS tours and orientation. The business department is responsible for the administrative services of the organization and administering reimbursement to member libraries. This department is responsible for accounting and bookkeeping for MHLS. Its other duties include personnel administration, and telephone answering for the MHLS building.

The public services area includes the library growth and sustainability department; the outreach and education services department; and the youth services department. The library growth and sustainability department helps member libraries to improve in the areas of management, governance, funding, marketing and facilities. This department publishes a weekly MHLS bulletin and quarterly newsletter “Across the Board,” the latter is for the trustees of member libraries. This department provides consulting help for member libraries’ directors, trustees and friends, and maintains member libraries’ information.

The MHLS outreach and education services department includes both outreach programs and continuing education programs. Outreach programs and services are offered free by MHLS through its member libraries. Outreach services are mandated by the New York State Department of Education as a way to provide library services to
target populations who are most in need and who often are not regular library users. This includes service to the following eight user groups.\textsuperscript{72}

1. Blind/ Physically handicapped
2. Aged
3. Residents of institutions
4. Educationally disadvantaged
5. Developmentally or learning disabled
6. Unemployed & in need of job placement assistance
7. Living in areas underserved by a library
8. Members of ethnic or minority groups in need of special library services

The continuing education program offered by MHLS focuses on training in support of the needs of library staff and member library trustees. It provides training and workshops, and has training-on-demand opportunities that will go to member libraries. It also maintains a professional collection which has many titles on library issues.

The MHLS interlibrary loan department falls under the department of outreach and continuing education. It is responsible for helping member library staff fill patron requests for items that are not in Millennium\textsuperscript{73} or SEAL.\textsuperscript{74} The department receives over 9,000 requests annually.

The youth services department provides member libraries with resources, materials and support to meet the expectation of the youth, children and teens in Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Putnam and Ulster counties.

\textsuperscript{72} Regulations of the Commissioner of Education (90.3)(L)(1)
\textsuperscript{73} The Integrated Library System used by MHLS and its members
\textsuperscript{74} Southeastern Access to Libraries: the Gateway for library catalogs in Southeastern New York; the libraries included are members of Southeastern New York Library Resources Council (SENYLRC) which is one of the 3Rs library systems in New York State. 3Rs stands for Reference and Research library Resources System. According to New York State Education Law 272 (c) (3), the membership of 3Rs Library System should include approved public and school library systems which are within the region served by the 3Rs systems. Section 255 (3) (a) of the law specifies that the Board of Trustees of 3Rs system shall include at least one representative of each constituent public library system.
Automated systems and bibliographic maintenance, computer operations and technical support, delivery and media services are the three departments in the technical services area. The technical services team at MHLS is responsible for projects and issues pertaining to automation, technology and telecommunications, as well as the online catalog. The automated systems and bibliographic maintenance department is responsible for the maintenance of the reciprocal patron and item database, the Millennium circulation system and the MHLS union catalog. The department of computer operations and technical support is responsible for the system's network and computer maintenance. This department offers technology services, recommendations and consultations for member libraries that request it. The delivery and media services department provides videocassette, CD and DVD cleaning and repair for member libraries. They also provide the duplication of videocassettes when copyright allows. Member libraries can also borrow media equipment at a fee from this department. The delivery department of MHLS is responsible for the delivery and pick-up of library materials being shared throughout the system between member libraries in the five-county region served. MHLS subcontracted with an outside company for a driver and truck to provide delivery for its members. There are five delivery routes for the region served by MHLS, and member libraries receive deliveries from one to seventeen times a week Monday through Saturday.

**Director’s Association**

MHLS established the director’s association in order to address the needs and concerns of member libraries. Its ultimate responsibility is to establish, review and

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75 MHLS Director’s Association Bylaws: [http://www.midhudson.org/mhls/Directors_Association_Bylaws.pdf](http://www.midhudson.org/mhls/Directors_Association_Bylaws.pdf)
modify policies and procedures for its library system automation. It is a forum for the member libraries to exchange information and forward recommendations to MHLS and the MHLS board of trustees on issues of collective agreements or cost sharing for services. The director’s association meets monthly and consists of the designated director/manager of each member library. Any MHLS staff can attend these meetings as a non-voting member. One member of the director’s association acts as a liaison to the MHLS board of trustees. Twenty members must be present at a meeting in order to be considered a quorum and decisions by the director’s association require a minimum of 20 votes or a simple majority, whichever is greater. The director’s association has four advisory committees. Each advisory committee has seven library directors or assistant directors as members. Three members are from counties of Columbia, Greene and Putnam with one from each; four members are from Dutchess and Ulster Counties, two from each, one from a small library and one from a larger library. Committee membership terms are four years.

These committee members are appointed by the directors from each county to research, report, and draft statements on issues of relevance and make recommendations to the director’s association. They prepare the agenda and reports for the monthly director’s association meeting. They are the central library/collection development advisory committee; continuing education/professional development advisory committee; marketing and program advisory committee and the resource sharing advisory committee.

MHLS Advisory Committee: [http://midhudson.org/mhls/committee/advisory.htm](http://midhudson.org/mhls/committee/advisory.htm)
1. Central library/collection development advisory committee

The central library/collection development advisory committee is to oversee central reference services as well as ensure that system-wide collections and resources are comprehensive and responsive to patron needs. This committee’s suggested activities include the following:

- Review and recommend approval of Central Library Development Aid application & budget,
- Develop the Central Reference Service Plan,
- Review and recommend measures to enhance system-wide collection development and resource sharing,
- Examine system-wide holdings and material needs,
- Evaluate and recommend electronic resources,
- Assess website content needs of members, and recommend parameters of resources to meet those needs,
- Review and recommend measures to enhance the delivery of reference services system-wide.

2. Continuing education/professional development advisory committee

The continuing education/professional development advisory committee is to oversee the creation and promotion of methods of professional development for library staff and trustees, to ensure they have the skills and knowledge necessary to provide quality library service to their communities. The activities of this committee are to:

- Assess continuing education/professional development needs of members, and recommend resources that meet those needs,
- Assist in planning and review of workshops,
- Ensure the ability of member libraries to benefit from regional and statewide resources,
- Review and facilitate the resolution of shared concerns.
3. Marketing and program advisory committee

The marketing and program advisory committee is to oversee the creation and communication of resources for member libraries to use in promoting libraries and providing programming. This committee’s activities include:

- Assess program needs of members, and then recommend parameters of resources that meet the needs for standard and currently popular program topics,
- Enable sharing of ideas, programs and successes to strengthen library services,
- Promote multigenerational library services for area residents, including groups traditionally underserved by libraries,
- Review grant funded MHLS projects,
- Develop resources that members can use to tailor library services and facilities to their communities,
- Assess marketing and publicity needs of members, and recommend parameters of resources that help libraries to enhance public recognition and support.

4. Resource sharing advisory committee

The resource sharing advisory committee is to coordinate the provision of access throughout the region to all library holdings and to review and recommend the enhancement of resource sharing and information resources for area residents. The suggested activities for this committee are:

- Coordinate automated circulation policies and issues,
- Review and resolve bibliographic and patron database issues,
- Coordinate interlibrary loan policies and issues,
- Examine technology issues,
- Assess resource sharing needs of members, and provide support to meet those needs,
- Make related recommendations to the director’s association.
Roundtables, User Groups and Other Advisory Committees

There are also several roundtables and user groups in the Mid-Hudson Library System. These user groups and roundtables are designed to focus on a specific group of people or service issue, for example small library roundtables are the platform provided by MHLS for small library members to meet regularly and exchange information or discuss issues affecting them specifically. Similarly there are also a teen outreach roundtable and a roundtable for new directors. A complete list of roundtables, user groups is the following one.

- Millennium users group,
- SAM\textsuperscript{78} users group,
- Adult programmer's users group,
- Teen outreach roundtable,
- Children’s services roundtable,
- Roundtable for new directors,
- Small libraries roundtable,
- Friends support group.

Beside the departments in MHLS, the director’s association and its four advisory committees and roundtables and user groups, MHLS is mandated by New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education\textsuperscript{79} to coordinate a correctional facilities committee and an outreach advisory committee. These committees discuss services provided to the special clients and libraries in correctional facilities and prisons. According to the New York State Education Law section 273(1) (h) and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education section 90.3 (L) (2), the law specifies the

\textsuperscript{77}MHLS Committees and Groups: [http://midhudson.org/mhls/committee/main.htm](http://midhudson.org/mhls/committee/main.htm)

\textsuperscript{78}SAM is the acronym for Smart Access Management. This software manages the public access computers for accessing Internet, word processing and other operations.

\textsuperscript{79}New York Education Law section 273(h)(1)
Regulation of commissioners 90.3 (L)(2)
apportionment of state aid to public library systems for providing coordinated outreach services, and regulations define the eligibility criteria that public library systems should meet in order for them to get state aid for coordinated outreach services. One requirement is public library systems should appoint an advisory council which shall be composed of one director of a member library, representatives of agencies who serve the target population groups, and persons from the eight target population groups. The advisory council will advise the public library system and assist in the evaluation of activities in the coordinated outreach program. Although it is not under the requirements of the New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education for public library systems to have a committee on their services to state correctional facilities, MHLS has a correctional facilities committee which involves MHLS staff, and facilities librarians and staff to discuss the budget and service to the inmate populations.

**Board of Trustees**

The board of trustees is entrusted with the government of MHLS. It adopts bylaws, a Plan of Service, establishes policies to ensure the achievement of the system’s objectives, employs the system director, and supervises the expenditure of the system’s fund. The number of trustees in the MHLS board is 15, three from each of the five counties served by MHLS. Trustees are nominated and elected at the annual membership meeting by member libraries represented. The annual membership meeting is held in October or November of each year; the meeting elects trustees and hears the report from the president of the board, treasurer and the executive director of the system. A term of office of a trustee is five years. The MHLS board of trustees includes two liaison

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members designated annually by the board of trustees of MHLS central library and the director’s association. The liaison members do not vote on issues presented to the board but they provide a written report to the board pertaining to issues relevant to the central library and to the director’s association. The board of trustees establishes committees to carry out specific activities or responsibilities. Committee members are appointed by the president of the board every year. The committees and their responsibilities are described here.

- Audit committee reviews matters related to financial statements, the systems of internal controls and compliance, and the annual independent audit process.
- Finance committee reviews the system budget for the forthcoming year, makes modifications to the current year, and monitors financial performance.
- Bylaws, policy and procedures committee reviews the MHLS bylaws and presents a report and recommendations at the board of trustees meeting.
- Executive committee includes the elected officers and immediate past president, if still seated on the board.
- Incentives committee is responsible for the continuing review of the MHLS grants program. It presents its recommendations for the following year's grants program to the board prior to the review of the next year's budget.
- Nominating and elections committee presents a list of candidate officers for the following year's board of trustees.
- Planning and personnel committee works to prepare and review the system’s formal long-range Plan of Service. Also sets goals for the system and monitors the progress being made by the system in connection with such plans and goals.
- Trustee services committee oversees staff initiatives to support trustees of member libraries and the system board.

Mid-Hudson Library System Website Structure and Content

The Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) website is designed for its member libraries rather than for the general public. With over 1200 pages, it contains detailed information about MHLS, its services and activities. Member libraries can download

materials from the website or participate in listserv groups and exchange information with MHLS staff or their peers.

Figure 5.4 shows that the website’s main page is divided into three columns with the middle column much wider than the two side columns. Each side column has eight subject tabs for a total of 16 tabs. At the top middle of the page is the MHLS logo with a subtitle of “Serving the staff and trustees of public libraries in Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Putnam and Ulster counties.” Throughout the whole website, the graphic MHLS logo is used as a link back to the homepage. The middle column lists the current MHLS activities, information and registration for upcoming MHLS workshops and user groups; as well as a link to downloadable audio book and spotlight subjects. On the bottom of the main page there are banners that link to sub pages containing tools for a public library vote toolbox, and tools for member libraries to connect with their communities. There are links to several forms used by MHLS on the lower part of the main page. These include the form member libraries use to update their contact information and to request material from MHLS.
The eight tabs on the left column of the MHLS main page focus on content and information of MHLS. These are MHLS public library catalog, calendar, contact, service, weekly newsletter, member libraries, MHLS board of trustees; and the MHLS website index.

- **Public library catalog**

  This sub page contains the shared catalog among MHLS and its members. This is used for interlibrary loan among MHLS member libraries.

- **Calendar**

  The calendar sub page lists the schedule of events for the workshops and meetings.

- **Contact**

  Under the contact tab, MHLS contact information is organized by MHLS departments and by the problem solving services directory. It also directs member

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83 This screenshot was saved on June 22, 2010.
libraries’ staff, trustees and friends to the appropriate MHLS consultants. Member
libraries’ contact information is organized by county and type. This subpage also includes
the contact information for the MHLS board of trustees, correctional facility libraries, and
MHLS area legislators. The MHLS listserv is also listed under contact page.

- Service

The service sub page contains a page of the 2007-2011 Plan of Service and its
development process.

- Weekly newsletter

The weekly newsletter sub page contains the most recent MHLS bulletin as a full
text online publication along with archived pages.

- Member libraries

The member libraries’ information sub page contains the list of member libraries
arranged alphabetically and linked to their own websites.

- MHLS board of trustees

The MHLS board of trustees’ webpage introduces the board members and
committees, bylaws, manual and other information.

- Website index

The website index is a very detailed list of the website content. It serves a quick
and easy way to locate information besides the main tabs on the homepage.

The other eight tabs in the right side column reflect the information and content
provided by MHLS for its member libraries. This information includes administration
and management, resource sharing and Millennium, resource and collection development,
programming, professional development, marketing, advocacy and funding, youth services and trustee resources.

- **Administration and management**

  The administration and management sub page contains the information on public library budgeting and finance, facility resources, human resources/personnel, planning and evaluation, small libraries roundtable, standards, values and principles, and technology.

- **Research sharing and Millennium**

  The resource sharing and Millennium tab leads to a sub page that displays the information on MHLS resource sharing standards, delivery, and interlibrary loan and other catalogs.

- **Resource and collection development**

  The resource and collection development sub page discusses MHLS member libraries’ database access, copyright issues, providing references and collection development.

- **Programming**

  The programming tab opens a page that lists ideas for library programs, planning and promoting of library programs, as well as support materials for library programming.

- **Professional development**

  The professional development sub page lists upcoming regional workshops and training events, online tutorial for member libraries and training-on-demand. It also provides information about library job competence, along with professional organizations and publications.
• **Marketing, advocacy and funding**

The marketing, advocacy and funding sub page includes information on marketing, advocacy and funding. The marketing section provides tools for marketing and public relationship for MHLS member libraries. The advocacy section provides the legislators’ addresses, current legislation impacting public libraries, and tools for public libraries to advocate at the local, state and federal levels. The fundraising section contains information on book sales, grant writing and capital campaigns.

• **Youth services**

The youth services tab displays a sub page that discusses collection development for young adult/teen, and children along with any upcoming workshops and ongoing programs.

• **Trustee resources**

The trustee resources tab displays a sub page to help MHLS member libraries’ boards of trustees understand their roles and responsibilities, and the policies, regulations and laws in public libraries in New York State.

**Mid-Hudson Library System Services**

In order to understand the services provided by public library systems, it is important to first understand what responsibilities public library systems are expected to take on when they are established in New York State. Public library systems are established to coordinate resource sharing among individual libraries, to take advantage of economies of scale, and to set up a stronger image and voice for library advocacy. Public library systems are also established to provide direct support to member libraries to enhance and extend their service quality and capability.
Often, public library systems assume the role of service coordinator to facilitate resource sharing among members with member libraries pooling resources together to build a bigger and collective service. Such services include maintaining a union catalog and providing interlibrary loan service, bulk purchasing, subscription to multiple databases, and centralized marketing and advocating. Public library systems also provide a platform to encourage communication among individual libraries. By serving as coordinators for member libraries to share resources, public library systems help member libraries to save cost and expand the individual library’s serving capability to its community. Public library systems also provide direct services to member libraries such as centralized pre-processing, training, consultation, and website hosting. The purpose of these services is to support individual libraries’ service capability and quality, and to reduce member libraries’ operation costs.

**Categorizing Public Library System Services**

The services provided by public library systems can be categorized in the following different ways based on the service cost, area, impact, rationale and providing methods. Services can be categorized differently based on these different factors. Below is a list of different factors and the different service categories under each factor.

1. **Service cost**

   Depending on if member libraries need to pay to the library system for services received, system services can be categorized into free service and paid service.
2. Service area

The services provided by public library systems to their members can cover the areas of professional activity, administration, and operation, and user service at member libraries.

3. Service impact

Some system services focus on member libraries’ long-term development. Other services affect member libraries’ daily operations. There are system services affecting library users, and services affecting only the libraries’ staff members. Some services are system-wide, while others only affect one or several member libraries depending on their individual needs. Training and professional development are examples of long-term services, while day-to-day operation of the ILS and union catalog are examples of immediate services. A lot of short-term services are also services that affect library users directly. Long-term services focus more on library staff, providing professional development training and education. Most of the public library system services are system-wide, but depending on an individual member library’s need, public library systems also attend to their individual needs.

4. Service rationale

The New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education specified conditions under which public library systems can receive state aid. There are mandated services for public library systems. Except for mandated services, public library systems also provide services to their members based on additional needs.
5. Service providing methods

In public library systems, there are different ways to sponsor and provide services for member libraries. Some system services are solely sponsored by the public library system and provided centrally by public library systems staff within the system building, such as printing and pre-processing, training, consultation and delivery. Member libraries can use services they need and might pay a service fee to the library system depending on the library system’s policy. Some services require participation from member libraries in order to be realized, for example, the operation and maintenance of the Integrated Library System, subscriptions to databases, and the union catalog. For these kinds of services, member libraries either help to pay for part of the cost of the service or they will contribute to the service by pooling materials or other resources.

Categorizing system services helps to understand library systems and their services. Categorizing system services from different perspectives sheds lights on service overlap as well as variety. A service can be mandated and free, and shared among member libraries. Depending on the different categorizations of system services, service decision-making processes can be different. Therefore, it helps to first have knowledge of what services MHLS is providing and how they are provided in order to understand how this system makes service decisions.

Mid-Hudson Library System Services

Most of the MHLS services have been provided free for years. But the 2010 budget cut required a paid service plan during 2010. As one MHLS staff put it during the interview, “in the past until 2010, they (MHLS member libraries) didn’t really pay for anything. They didn’t pay for the delivery, that’s part of state’s subsidy. We charge a
little fee here and there but overall system services are paid for by state funding” (MHLS-1-03/16/2010). The MHLS services are listed here by funding source. When another service category can also be applied to the same service and helps to understand the service topic, the service is also discussed under other categories.

1. State funded services

According to the New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commission of Education, MHLS is required to provide some mandated services. It can also choose to provide some services in order to receive some categorical state aid. These services are funded primarily by New York State funds.

1) Online union catalog

Under NYCRR 90.1, each library system will provide a means to locate materials added to the libraries in the system. The union catalog is the service coordinated by MHLS to help patrons locate the material in all member libraries. It is a shared catalog with collection information from MHLS and all its member libraries.

2) Interlibrary loan and delivery services

MHLS provides interlibrary loan service for member libraries for materials outside of the MHLS union catalog, and through the SEAL catalog, which is the shared catalog among members of the Southeastern New York Library Resources Council. MHLS also provides delivery services to its member libraries.

3) Training, continuing education and consultation

MHLS provides training in support of the needs of library staff and member library trustees. All the trainings and consultations provided by MHLS are free of charge, customizable and can be brought to member libraries at their convenience. The training

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84 New York Codes, Rules and Regulations (NYCRR)
and consultation topics cover administration, reference and collection development, youth service, resource sharing and technology. MHLS has an incentive program which rewards those member libraries’ staff members attending conferences at regional and national levels, and those pursuing a MLS or MSIS degree.

4) **Central library and reference service**

Adriance Memorial Library is the central library of MHLS. It has the largest collection of books and audio-visual materials in the system, and provides a variety of services to other member libraries. MHLS uses Central Library Development Aid (CLDA) and Central Book Aid (CBA) for further developing its central library. The purpose of the state aid is to help member libraries with reference services and enhance system collection development. At MHLS, HOMEACCESS is the service that provides member libraries remote access to databases and helps them answer reference questions. This is partially funded through CLDA.

5) **Outreach services**

MHLS provides free outreach programs and services through its local member libraries. This is a mandated service under the New York State Education Law. It is a way to provide library services to target populations who are most in need and who are often not the regular library users. Member libraries can apply to MHLS for devices and materials for patrons. MHLS provides a search interface of its catalog in Spanish, and supports member libraries’ ability to provide services to patrons.

6) **Online Integrated Library System**

MHLS uses the Millennium Integrated Library System (ILS) software which contains modules for acquisition, circulation and patron records. MHLS maintains the
central site operation and connectivity to the Internet. MHLS provides training and consultation to those members participating in this system. It also provides collective purchasing based on member libraries’ requests. Member libraries pay a license fee to the software vendor and an annual maintenance fee to MHLS. Each public library system in New York State receive a state subsidy if it provides an automation program to support bibliographic control and interlibrary sharing of information resources of member libraries, and to coordinate and integrate the automated system or systems of member libraries.

7) Grant applications

New York State funding also supports public library systems and their members to provide literacy programs for different user groups. MHLS applies for such grants to support member libraries’ programs and activities for users.

2. Other services

This section includes services that might still be funded through state aid but they are not specified in the New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, or services that are funded with sources other than state aid.

1) Access to databases

MHLS provides its member libraries access to multiple databases. Part of these databases are funded through New York State Library NOVELny program\(^85\) which is supported with temporary federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The other parts of databases are funded through MHLS/Central Library Development Aid (CLDA). Member libraries also help to pay for part of the databases. At MHLS, each county can also provide funds

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\(^{85}\) New York Online Virtual Electronic Library Website: [http://novelnewyork.org](http://novelnewyork.org)
for their county libraries to purchase databases. Therefore there are some databases only accessible to residents in a certain county. MHLS also gets access to the Gale database of Virtual Reference Library through the Southeastern New York Library Resources Council which is a regional 3Rs library system in New York State. MHLS prepared centralized marketing materials for this shared service. Member libraries distribute materials to their patrons.

2) Centralized support for printing service

The MHLS designs bookmarks and brochures for member to promote their products and services. However, this service was cancelled in 2009 when the staff retired and the budget shortage prevented MHLS from filling the vacancy.

3) Repository of professional materials for the library

The MHLS professional collection contains materials that can assist member libraries with issues of library service, programming, advocacy, construction, administration, training, outreach and fundraising. The MHLS professional collection materials are owned by MHLS and can only be borrowed by member library staff and trustees. This is to ensure that the materials are available to member libraries when needed for professional education or programming.

4) Book club in a bag program

This is a collective effort of MHLS member libraries. Member libraries have pooled resources to create over 100 kits, each including ten copies of one title along with discussion questions. These kits are stored at MHLS for ease of distribution. The kits’ information is available in the MHLS OPAC where patrons can request them from their local public libraries. MHLS will then deliver the kit to the requesting libraries.
5) Library advocacy in the region

MHLS provides advocacy resources for its member libraries including information on legislator’s addresses, current legislation and tools for public library advocacy. MHLS also creates web graphics for member libraries to use on their websites, as well as an online petition page for member libraries and their patrons to use.

6) Communication

MHLS provides many different channels so that member libraries can communicate with each other. Beside the regular meetings of the director’s association and its advisory committees, MHLS created six listserv that allow member libraries to communicate with each other and with the system. They are MHLS main listserv, MHLS directors’ listserv, MHLS Millennium listserv, MHLS youth services listserv, MHLS friends and fundraising listserv, and MHLS advocacy network. Each listserv is established either for one specific user group among administration, staff or professionals, or for a certain issue of advocacy, Millennium and fundraising. MHLS publishes the newsletter both online and in print. MHLS also encourages member libraries’ communication by its incentive program to reimburse member libraries’ participation in system activities and meeting their peers at the county level.

7) Other funding opportunities

As a service to its members and in addition to state funding, MHLS also seeks out other funding opportunities for its members. Federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds are awarded to the New York State Library by the Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services. Several MHLS projects were funded through LSTA, and these funded projects allow MHLS to develop useful knowledge and toolkits for its

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86 Millennium is the integrated library system used in MHLS and its member libraries.
member libraries. 2022: The Shape of Library Services\textsuperscript{87} was a project funded in part by LSTA in program year 2002 and 2003. The purpose of this project was to identify the changes occurring in the Mid-Hudson area and to assist member libraries in responding to the changes. This project created planning tools for libraries. Your Library: Gateway to the Community\textsuperscript{88} was funded by LSTA in program year 2003 and 2004 and in part by the Mid-Hudson Library System. The purpose of this project was to facilitate MHLS member libraries serving the new members of their communities. MHLS created a public library vote toolkit as part of its 2005-2007 Getting to Yes (GTY)\textsuperscript{89} grant project. The toolkit contains knowledge and best practice advice for planning a successful library vote. The project in 2007-2008, Building Your Base (BYB)\textsuperscript{90} created a toolkit for member libraries to connect with their communities.

8) Support for programming

MHLS maintains a webpage on marketing and public relationship to help librarians find easy, inexpensive program ideas covering a wide range of topics, activities, and costs for users from infants to adults.

9) Others

MHLS member libraries can borrow equipments from MHLS or rent its space for programs based on a fee. MHLS also loans equipment, costumes and hats for use by member libraries in library programs. MHLS cleans and repairs CDs, DVDs and video tapes, and provides website maintenance and hosting for its member libraries.

\textsuperscript{87} 2022: the shape of library services project webpage: http://www.midhudson.org/mhls/2022/
\textsuperscript{88} Your library: gateway to the community project webpage: http://midhudson.org.gateway/
\textsuperscript{89} Getting to yes project webpage: http://www.midhudson.org/gty/main.htm
\textsuperscript{90} Building your base project webpage: http://midhudson.org/byb/
Mid-Hudson Library System Funding\textsuperscript{91}

About 80\% of the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) 2009 funding is from the New York state aid. MHLS also gets 0.3\% of its money from federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). The rest of 20\% comes from fees from providing contractual services, bank interests, services fees and reimbursements from member libraries for maintaining ILS system and for subscriptions to databases. Table 5.3 provides a summary of these funding sources.

State Funding

The first part of state funding is general state aid. General state aid includes basic system aid and Local Services Support Aid (LSSA). The basic system aid includes an annual grant, material reimbursement, automation aid. General state aid is provided to MHLS without specifying the specific use of the funds.

1. Basic system aid\textsuperscript{92}

The basic system aid formula in New York State Education Law is based on population, geographic area, and the number of counties served by the library system. Beside these, it also includes material reimbursement and automation aid.

- Material reimbursement\textsuperscript{93}

New York State also provides an amount that equals material expenditures by MHLS during the preceding fiscal year exceeding $0.48 per capita but not exceeding $0.68 per capita of the population served.

\textsuperscript{91} New York State Education Law section 273: Apportionment of state aid to libraries and library systems
\textsuperscript{92} New York State Education Law section 273 (a)(c)(e)
\textsuperscript{93} New York State Education Law section 273 (d)(1)
• Automation aid\textsuperscript{94}

Each public library system in New York State gets automation aid for its automation program in supporting bibliographic control and interlibrary sharing of information resources among member libraries, and for its coordination and integration of the automated library system or systems of its member libraries. The amount of the aid equals 7\% of the material reimbursement or $76,500, whichever is more.

Table 5.3. The Mid-Hudson Library System 2009 Funding Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MHLS Funding</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State funding</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General state aid - $1,737,690 (61%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Annual public library system basic state aid - $1,457,089</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Annual grant</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Material reimbursement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Automation aid</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Local Service Support Aid (LSSA) - $280,601</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Directed state aid\textsuperscript{*} - $5,034 (0.2%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Coordinated outreach</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Correctional facility program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• County jail - $5034</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass-through funds\textsuperscript{*} - $438,496 (15%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Central Library Development Aid (CLDA) - $181,316</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Central Book Aid (CBA) - $64,610</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Local Library Service Aid (LLSA) - $192,570</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Special legislative grant - $6,600 (0.2%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other state funding - $87,095 (3%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Federal funding</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) - $7373 (0.3%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other sources</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Contractual money - $417,725 (15%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gifts, endowments and fundraising - $72,025 (3%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Bank interest - $4,811 (0.2%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sale of equipment - $708</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Other miscellaneous - $89,620 (3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>$2,867,177 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Note}. Item inside the parenthesis means the percentage of the total income.
\textit{*}Directed state aid (funding based on formulas, with separate budget)
\textit{*}Pass-through funds (received from NYS and redistributed to member libraries)

\textsuperscript{94} New York State Education Law section 273 (d)(2)
2. **Local Service Support Aid (LSSA)**\(^95\)

Each chartered and registered public and free association library in New York State meeting standards of service specified by the Commissioner is eligible to receive annually $0.31 per capita designated at Local Library Services Aid. Local Library Service Aid is paid to a public library system for distribution to its member libraries. The Local Service Support Aid is paid to public library systems; it equals 66\% of Local Library Service Aid paid to member libraries plus an additional $0.31 per capita for people who do not reside within the chartered service area of a member library.

The second part of the state funding is from directed state aid which includes aid for specific service categories.

1. **Coordinated outreach service aid**\(^96\)

Each public library system which provides coordinated outreach services to persons who are educationally disadvantaged or who are members of ethnic or minority groups in need of special library services, or who are unemployed and in need of job placement assistance, or who live in areas underserved by a library, or who are blind, physically disabled, have developmental or learning disabilities, or who are aged or confined in institutions, is entitled to receive annually $43,000 and $0.13 per capita of the total population of the area. This aid must be used for these target populations.

2. **Correctional facility and county jail**\(^97\)

MHLS has seven state correctional facilities within its area of service. It is awarded an annual grant of $9.25 per capita for the inmate population of the facilities to make MHLS resources available.

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\(^95\) New York State Education Law section 273 (f)(1)(2)

\(^96\) New York State Education Law section 273 (h)(1)

\(^97\) New York State Education Law section 285(1)(2)
MHLS also receives an annual grant to serve county jails within its service area. The Commissioner is authorized to expend up to $175,000 annually to provide grants to public library systems operating under an approved Plan of Service for provision of services to county jails. The amount received by MHLS is calculated by the ratio of inmate populations in the MHLS area to the total number of inmates in New York State’s county jails.

The third part of the MHLS state funding is pass-through funds that MHLS receives from New York State and redistributes to its member libraries. Local Library Service Aid is one kind of pass-through funds in addition to the following items.

1. **Central Library Development Aid (CLDA)**

   The amount of CLDA is $0.32 per capita within the chartered area of MHLS service with a minimum amount of $105,000. It must be used to enhance the ability of member libraries to provide reference services.

2. **Central Book Aid (CBA)**

   MHLS also receives an additional $71,500 for the purchase of books and materials including nonprint materials for the central library. Ownership of library materials and equipment purchased with such aid is with MHLS.

   From time to time, MHLS also receives special legislative grants and other state funding.

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98 New York State Education Law section 273 (b)(1)
99 New York State Education Law section 273 (b)(2)
Federal Funding -- Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)\textsuperscript{100}

The second part of MHLS funding is from the Library Services and Technology Act, which is the federal program administered by the NYS Division of Library Development (State Education Department) to support NOVEL and summer reading in New York State. As previously discussed, the following MHLS projects have been funded through LSTA.

- 2022: the Shape of Library Services in our Future (system-wide community analysis)
- Your Library: Gateway to the Community (new residents)
- Getting to Yes (winning your library’s vote)
- Building Your Base (targeted marketing)

Other Sources

MHLS also receives fees from member libraries for providing technical support, webpage hosting, printing, equipment loans, and interlibrary loan. There is also bank interest. Reimbursements from member libraries for the subscription to databases are also sources for 2009 funding.

Mid-Hudson Library System Service Decision-making Processes

At MHLS, depending on the funding sources and provision methods, services can be categorized differently. These different services might involve different interest groups and have different decision-making processes.

Service Decisions

The most straightforward way to categorize MHLS services in order to understand its service decision-making processes is to see if the service is mandated or

\textsuperscript{100} Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Program in New York State
not. Mandated services are already decided by the law and regulations, while non-mandated services have a different process to identify service needs and implement the service decision.

1. Mandated services

Mandated services are required under the New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. In order for New York State public library systems to receive state aid, they have to provide mandated services such as a union catalog to facilitate resource sharing among member libraries, coordinated outreach services to target populations, centralized reference service at the central library, as well as serving state correctional facilities and county jails. These services are mainly funded through state funding and the decisions have already been made by the law and regulations to provide them.

2. Non-mandated services

Public library systems also provide services that are not mandated in order to meet member libraries’ needs. A public library system’s mission is to enhance resource sharing among member libraries, to support and assist member libraries’ development and to improve their service quality. Services provided by MHLS to its member libraries other than mandated services include continuing education and training, consultation, interlibrary loan program and delivery services, ILS central site maintenance and operation, database access, and downloadable audio books.

MHLS identifies the need for these services from a variety of sources. They can come from the issues that arise at the director’s association and its four advisory committees. The phone calls, emails and consultation requests that MHLS consultants
receive from its member libraries provide clues for providing services. MHLS also conducts surveys, focus group studies and needs assessments in order to collect information from member libraries regarding their satisfaction and needs for MHLS services. Ideas from professional journals and conferences can inspire MHLS services. Depending on whether member libraries pay for the service, whether the impact of the service is system-wide, or whether the service will affect the immediate operation of member libraries, the decision-making processes for providing these services not mandated under the New York law and regulations will be different at MHLS.

If MHLS member libraries do not need to pay for the services, or the services do not have impact on their service to their patrons, MHLS can make the service decision based on the available data, and member libraries’ input. If service costs are shared by member libraries, or they affect member libraries’ service to patrons and are applied system-wide, these service decisions will be made with more involvement of or influence from member libraries. If the services involve the issue of money, then the decisions should be brought to the system board and directors for discussions of affordability and funding issues such as “can we afford this service? How will we fund it?” The MHLS board members will not get into the discussion process. They only approve or disapprove the final decision. MHLS or the advisory committees will evaluate alternative options, research and make recommendations to the board. For example, if MHLS wants to add or drop a stop for the delivery service for member libraries, this decision can be made by MHLS staff with concrete data. But if MHLS considers adding an extra route, it then involves increasing expense and the decision needs to be made by the board and directors if member libraries will have to pay for the increased cost.
Member Libraries’ Participation in Service Decision-making Processes

“They (member library directors) make the decisions about things that either cost everyone money or end up being a rule that everyone has to follow. The majority of the rules are about how resources are shared; there they really have to do the voting. In those other areas, they are suggesting a direction that we then follow” (MHLS-1-03/16/2010).

Member libraries can participate in the MHLS’s service decision-making processes by their involvement in the director’s association and its four advisory committees. The director’s association meets monthly. Each of its four advisory committees also can make service decisions when it is in the committee’s territory and field. As mentioned in the previous section, at MHLS, when the service is a shared service among member libraries coordinated by MHLS, or when the service affects the member libraries’ operation such as providing services to their patrons, or is paid for by member libraries or the influence is system-wide, this service decision has to be made by the director’s association either by voting or by its advisory committees. The examples of these kinds of services include the automation system maintained by MHLS, the union catalog, and database purchases. These services affect all 66 public library members who have to make partial payment for the services. For those services solely funded and directly provided by MHLS, member libraries’ input will be sought, but they do not have to vote.

When voting, 20 members of the director’s association must be present at a meeting in order to be considered as a quorum. Decisions at the director’s association require a minimum of 20 votes or a simple majority whichever is greater for anything to pass. Any item requiring a vote by the director’s association must be introduced at least
one regularly scheduled meeting before being presented to the general membership for a vote. The four advisory committees also can make certain service decisions which affect member libraries in a certain area, and depending on the situation, they might bring the decision to the director’s association.

MHLS maintains and provides various discussion lists to facilitate communication and to help with information exchange among member libraries. Among others, member libraries can reach MHLS by phone, email, listserv or by having a face-to-face meeting to exchange information on service decisions. Information is also exchanged between MHLS and its member libraries by way of the weekly newsletter as well as any of the training sessions and consultations.

**Mid-Hudson Library System Service Decision Making**

At MHLS, the service decision-making processes mainly involve three different groups: the board of trustees, MHLS staff, and directors from each member library. The board of trustees approves the MHLS Plan of Service, passes the budget, passes system-wide policies and approves fee levels. MHLS staff coordinates the director’s association and advisory committees, identifies new trends in the library field, and develops and implements programs. The directors from member libraries create ILS standards, identify what services they need from MHLS, make recommendations to the board of trustees, and discuss issues of collective concerns and cost sharing.

One aspect of the MHLS service decision-making processes is based on whether member libraries are paying for the service or how much the service affects member libraries. If member libraries are not charged for services, MHLS will make the service
decision. Once MHLS charges its member libraries for services, its members become more significant in the service decision making, “because now it is their money” (MHLS-1-03/16/2010), the MHLS staff said during the interview. The impact of the service decisions on member libraries should be viewed from the number of the member libraries that will be affected by the decision, and the depth of influence of the decision on member libraries. The more the service affects all member libraries, the more they are involved in the decision. “So if we have to make a decision with three libraries, we would not necessarily go to the directors, we can make that decision for them” (MHLS-1-03/16/2010). During the service decision-making processes, MHLS staff is responsible for collecting the information needed for decision making and for developing and implementing decisions once they are made.

The MHLS service decision-making processes include identifying the service needs, having the different stakeholder groups discuss and make decisions at different levels and within different groups. During these processes it is important to understand who gets involved and how information is exchanged and decisions are made.

1. Identifying the service needs

At MHLS, other than mandated services that system has to provide according to the New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, most of its service needs can be identified by either the member libraries or by MHLS itself.

The most direct method for MHLS to identify service needs is from member libraries’ input and feedback. “Because the phone is ringing, saying I got this problem, I don’t know how I do this, whatever” (MHLS-1-03/16/2010). Based on this, corresponding
service programs are developed at MHLS to answer members’ needs. MHLS will further gather members’ feedback for services to either improve the current service or to develop new programs. This is a typical process MHLS used to identify and develop the library trustees training program. MHLS first developed the curriculum for the essential trustee training program which focuses on new trustees, helping them to understand their roles and responsibilities. Based on the feedback from training participants and input from the trustee committee of the MHLS board of trustees, MHLS developed an advanced curriculum for people who have been on the board at least a year. This advanced curriculum includes timely discussion topics such as how libraries are dealing with the economic situation or what ebooks mean for a library.

MHLS also identifies service needs by observing what is happening in communities. The changing social and technological environments affect the services MHLS can provide to its members. For example, in 1991 and 1992, IBM downsized tremendously, and in the big IBM facility in Poughkeepsie many people lost their jobs, so MHLS increased service to member libraries on unemployment issues. MHLS also provides more services for member libraries to serve their ethnic groups and seniors due to the changing characteristic of the population over the years. Another example is the change in technology. For example, MHLS used to purchase the Gale product “Price it! Antiques and Collectibles”. This service need first emerged when MHLS reference librarians were asked numerous questions about the worth of specific objects. MHLS made the decision to purchase the electronic product since there is a production lag in getting the hard copy. After several years, it became a lot easier to find out the value of an item by going on the Internet. Therefore the value of the “Price it!” decreased and it
was finally cut from MHLS service list. The service needs can also be identified by
MHLS professional staff looking at the trends reflected in the usage statistics and their
observations from their work.

MHLS also identifies new service ideas by staying ahead of the trends and paying
attention to information from professional publications and conferences. Here MHLS is
trying to forecast and stay abreast of the current service needs of its member libraries. For
example, MHLS currently uses the Millennium ILS software. Years ago, MHLS brought
up the issue of adding the AirPAC module to its member libraries. The AirPAC module
is designed to allow users using wireless mobile device to browse the library catalog,
check due dates, request materials, and view records. The member libraries were not
thrilled when they first heard about it, but several years later, they said they wanted it.
Another example is the LibraryThing. LibraryThing is an online service and a cataloging
application. Using LibraryThing, libraries can add a tag-based browsing function, the
ability to recommend books as well as rate and review features to their catalog. MHLS
brought this up to the member libraries. By staying ahead of the trends, MHLS explored
these trends out ahead of the curve until they become real service needs for member
libraries. Rather than only responding to member libraries’ immediate needs, MHLS also
provides new service ideas to member libraries.

2. **Service decision-making processes**

Once service needs are identified, depending on the cost and impact of the
services, the decision about providing the service might be made at several different
places and by involving different stakeholder groups at different levels.
Decisions on services that will cost member libraries money, or have an impact or be applied system-wide need to be voted on by member directors at MHLS director’s association. Before the final vote takes place, each decision is discussed in one of the directors’ association’s four advisory committees -- resource sharing, central library/collection development, and continuing education/professional developments, and marketing & program. The service issue is first brought up to the appropriate advisory committee, and then discussed among directors and MHLS staff member. The MHLS consultant who serves on the advisory committee prepares the information and data, and brings it to the meeting to help directors understand the service issues. The advisory committee will develop a recommendation about the service and report to director’s association monthly, and the vote will take place there.

The service decisions that do not need to be voted on by the directors’ association are made by the MHLS staff. These are services for which members do not need to pay, do not affect their immediate operation, or will not be applied system-wide. Decisions like what continuing education program to provide can be made by MHLS, although members’ input will be sought during the decision-making processes by discussion with the different advisory committees. Services like continuing education or training programs are free to member libraries, so members can decide either to participate or not without affecting their operations directly. MHLS also provides training services at the convenience of the location and time of the member libraries, or it can provide training-on-demand.

The funding sources also can affect who gets involved in some of the service decision making. For the categorical funds like the coordinated outreach fund, Central
Library Development Aid, Central Book Aid, correctional facility program and county jails funds, these categorical funds are targeted for specific populations in MHLS’ serving area and for a predefined purpose. To make service decisions for these populations and predefined purposes, MHLS follows the New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education to involve the target population in the decision-making processes. Coordinated outreach service decisions are discussed in the coordinated advisory committee. This committee is required under the law, and is made up of representatives from the targeted populations and their service providers. However, the final decision is made by MHLS with the input from this committee, from libraries and from the demographic information. Another special package of money is state correctional facilities program Fund. For this money the budget has to be voted and approved by the correctional officers and facilities’ librarians.

Overall the service decision-making processes in MHLS can be synthesized as a process that is driven by member libraries’ needs, by statistical data and information, and by available funding for the service.

3. The challenges in MHLS service decision-making processes

The New York State budget cut is a challenge in the MHLS service decision-making processes. Sometimes a service decision is made by the system budget. For example, in 2009, MHLS ended its printing service for members. One of the interviewees said: “we used to print and design for our members. We have designer. We have print and those people retired so…I say let’s save the money” (MHLS-1-03/16/2010). State budget cuts also prompt MHLS to consider the possibility of having members pay for part of the service if they want to keep certain service or to have a new service. This will
be a big change to MHLS in the near future. If members start to pay for the cost of MHLS services, they will have more say in the decision-making processes.

Another challenge in the MHLS service decision-making processes is to develop consensus among member libraries of different sizes, and populations with different local needs. “Resource sharing is the most conflicting decision to make” (MHLS-1-03/16/2010), as one MHLS staff said. “Everybody is very passionate about their own rules; they would love to have a consensus, as long as everybody does what they want” (MHLS-1-03/16/2010). In the monthly director’s association meeting not all the member libraries can participate due to such issues as driving distances or the lack of staff, so there are concerns that their needs are not being heard. There are also personality issues to consider. In discussion, some directors are more vocal while some directors hold back more. Some directors like to make service decisions cooperatively while others like “to make their decisions and then do it, not have to weigh all the pros and cons and listen to what everybody else says” (MHLS-2-03/25/2010). In MHLS, if there is no consensus on the service, it will not be introduced. The LibraryThing is an example of this. After more than one year’s discussion, MHLS members still did not reach a consensus on this product. The service decision was tabled. So the complexity of group decision making at MHLS will affect the services it can provide.

Yet another challenge for MHLS when making service decisions is the difference between short-term and long-term services. Short-term services are those services that affect member libraries’ operations right away. For example, the Millennium ILS, the catalog, interlibrary loan and delivery affect the patrons in member libraries immediately. Long-term services include continuing education and training services that develop and
strengthen member libraries’ capability. Among the MHLS member libraries, “some directors out there are very aware of this long-term decision, while other directors are lacking it” (MHLS-1-03/16/2010). If you ask them “do you want to pay for ILS or do you want to pay for youth services? Well they are going to say ILS because they need it every day” (MHLS-1-03/16/2010).

There is the confusion in the MHLS service decision-making processes. For example, it is not clear to member libraries which group is the decision maker. Is it the member library director or its board of trustees? In the future if MHLS wants to establish a more formal procedure for member libraries to participate in the decision-making processes, this is something that needs to be figured out.

This chapter introduced the case of the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) including its organizational structure, website contents, services, funding sources, and service decision-making processes. Chapter 6 will focus on the case of the Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS). It is the largest cooperative public library system in New York State. Compared to MHLS, SCLS serves a much larger population with more than half of its operating funds contributed by member libraries.
Chapter VI: Case II - Suffolk Cooperative Library System

We have to spend time with 54 different personalities, nine board members, never mind the 60 people who work in this building, but it’s fun, it’s fun (SCLS-1-04/13/2010).

The most obvious challenge is if something is going to charge a fee, you know more money to charge people. There are some libraries having no problem with money and there are some libraries that have no money (SCLS-2-04/13/2010).

Formal voting is the least employed method, as it most often needs not come to that. We discuss and debate at length, looking to come up with a group decision. The decision-making process is generally open, democratic, respectful and appropriately-paced (SCLS-3-05/05/2010).

The Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) is in Suffolk County on Long Island in New York State. Suffolk County occupies two-thirds of the land on Long Island which juts about 120 miles into the Atlantic Ocean. It is the easternmost county in the New York metropolitan area and in all of New York State. It is the leading agricultural county in New York State. Suffolk County has a cosmopolitan mixture of people and its population is still growing.\(^{101}\) SCLS was founded in 1961. In its 2007-2011 Plan of Service document, its service area is 911 square miles, and the population it serves is 1,419,369. It is the biggest cooperative public library system in New York State. Figure 6.1 shows the general location of SCLS in New York State. SCLS serves its 54 full membership public libraries in Suffolk County.\(^{102}\) In order to facilitate local communication among member libraries, SCLS divided member libraries into five geographic zones, each containing different towns in Suffolk County. Table 6.1 lists the zone information including the number of member libraries in each zone. Figure 6.2 gives a detailed map of these 10 towns in Suffolk County.

\(^{101}\) Suffolk County Government Website: [http://www.co.suffolk.ny.us/](http://www.co.suffolk.ny.us/)

\(^{102}\) There are 56 public library districts in Suffolk County. Two of the libraries, the Baiting Hollow Free Library (population served 477) and the Fishers Island Library Association (population served 289), are not full members of SCLS. They do not pay member support and they receive limited SCLS services.
Figure 6.1. The Suffolk Cooperative Library System in New York State\textsuperscript{103}

Figure 6.2. Towns of Suffolk County\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{103} The SCLS map was copied from New York State Library, Division of Library Development website: http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/publibs/plstscls.gif

\textsuperscript{104} The SCLS area map was saved from: http://www.moyesii.com/SuffolkCounty.html
Table 6.1. The Suffolk Cooperative Library System Zone Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zones</th>
<th>Town(s)</th>
<th>Libraries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>East Hampton, Shelter Island, Southampton, Riverhead, and Southold</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Brookhaven</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Islip</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Huntington and Smithtown</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SCLS is the biggest cooperative public library system in New York State. The average population being served by one SCLS member library is 24,993; the average operating funds per library are about $3,500,000; the average operating funds per capita are $183 and the average number of full time employees is 36. Table 6.2 includes the disaggregated information of SCLS member libraries by budget, population served and number of full time employees. These raw data from member libraries were exported from the New York State Library, Division of Library Development website. The Microsoft Excel 2007 PivotTable feature was used to analyze the data.

Twenty eight of its 56 member libraries serve a population of more than 20,000, with a budget most often over one million dollars. There are 16 member libraries serving a population less than 10,000; most of them have a budget over 500,000 dollars. Eight SCLS member libraries serving a population less than 5,000 are in Zone One, six of them having a budget over 500,000 dollars, and the other two are the only two member libraries in the whole library system that have a budget under 500,000 dollars. If these data are further disaggregated by SCLS zones, it can be noted that all the member

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105 Bibliostat Connect provides New York data back to 1991 from the Annual Report for Public and Association Libraries and the latest data from the Federal State Cooperative System (FSCS) and the Public Library Data Service (PLDS) for all public libraries in the nation. The website is: [http://connect.informata.com/](http://connect.informata.com/). In order to access the website, use user name “new york” and password “pals”

106 These two libraries are also the two which do not have full SCLS membership.
libraries serving a population less than 5,000 are in Zone One. Most of the SCLS member libraries from the other four zones serve a population between 20,000 and 50,000. There are only six member libraries serving a population more than 50,000, four of them are from Zone Two.

Table 6.2. The Suffolk Cooperative Library System Member Libraries’ Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FTE*</th>
<th>1~4999</th>
<th>5000~9999</th>
<th>10000~14999</th>
<th>15000~19999</th>
<th>20000+</th>
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<tr>
<td>1~3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget ($)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1~$49,999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000~$199,999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4~6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,000~$1,000,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
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<td>7~9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,000~$1,000,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1,000,000+</td>
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<tr>
<td>9+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,000~$1,000,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*FTE (the number of fulltime employees)

The Patchogue-Medford Library is in Zone Two. It is the designated SCLS central library which supplies system-wide reference and collection evaluation services. SCLS is funded by both New York State aid and direct member financial support. The direct member financial participation was a response to SCLS’ support of the growing service programs at the member libraries and the lack of growth in state support for public library systems. The financial support for essential services beyond what is funded by New York State aid is contributed by the member libraries. In its 2008 annual report,

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107 SCLS document of direct member financial support
total SCLS income was $8,628,106 with only $3,961,143 from New York State aid. In 2009, the total operating funds increased to $8,972,616, but New York State aid declined to $3,899,052 compared to 2008. This financial situation has a big influence on the SCLS service decision-making processes, and it will be further discussed in a later part of this chapter. “It used to be state giving us four million dollars and member libraries gave us 200,000 dollars, and 15 years later, State gives us 3.25 million dollars, and member libraries give us two and half million” (SCLS-1-04/13/2010).

SCLS is located in a quiet location on North Sunrise Service Road in Suffolk County. “Not a lot of people in the County know we existed,” as the interviewee at SCLS described, “while we provide particularly backbone of a huge portion of what’s done around the county” (SCLS-1-04/13/2010). To the patrons, services are all from their home libraries. The one-level office has a large area housing various departments for delivery services, interlibrary loan, and cataloging. These offices are arranged along the four walls of the building. In the middle space of the building there is the reception desk facing the entrance, with the meeting room right beside the reception desk and the rest of the large space used for storing materials on shelves.

Suffolk Cooperative Library System’s Organizational Structure

The Suffolk Cooperative Library System exists to help local public libraries provide the best in traditional and innovative public library service to all the people of Suffolk County (SCLS Mission Statement).

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108 2008 New York state public library systems’ annual reports
109 2009 New York state public library systems’ annual reports
The Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) office includes the various departments, and the director and administrators who are responsible for the operation of the library system and providing services to member libraries. There are also advisory committees and the board of trustees. This section first introduces the SCLS office which includes the different departments and the administrators. Figure 6.3 is the SCLS organizational chart.

Figure 6.3. The Suffolk Cooperative Library System’s Organizational Chart
Departments

The Suffolk Cooperative Library System has 45 full-time employees and 18 part-time employees. Beside the system director, the administrators, and the business manager and assistant director, the rest of the employees work at different SCLS departments. Except those departments dealing with SCLS internal issues such as human resources, and reception desks, most departments focus on system service areas.

1. Computer services department

The computer services department provides SCLS and its member libraries with technical support, training and consulting services. This department addresses such issues as hardware and software purchase recommendations, basic and advanced computer training, deployment of networking and telecommunications structures, and ongoing service development. Technical support is provided seven days a week to member libraries for troubleshooting telecommunications, and for PALS services (Partnership of Automated Libraries in Suffolk). The computer services department also provides continuing education to member library staff including regular PC and Windows NT user group meetings, special workshops on computer technology, and library applications for the beginner and experienced user.

2. The Partnership of Automated Libraries in Suffolk (PALS)

The Partnership of Automated Libraries in Suffolk (PALS) is an integrated library automation consortium of 48 SCLS member libraries and SCLS itself. SCLS administers the operations of the consortium under the direction of the PALS executive board in

110 Department information is found in the SCLS website: http://suffolklibrarysystem.org/index.php/staff-list-and-contact-info.html
111 SCLS computer services: http://suffolklibrarysystem.org/index.php/About-SCLS/computer-services.html
112 This is the Consortium for Integrated Library Systems among SCLS and 48 of its members.
113 PALS http://suffolklibrarysystem.org/index.php/About-SCLS/pals.html
accordance with the PALS bylaws. The consortium pays SCLS an administrative fee and reimburses SCLS for operational expenses. The PALS consortium uses Innovative Interfaces, Inc. as its automation vendor.

The PALS board of directors comprises voting representatives appointed by the boards of trustees of the 48 participating libraries. SCLS is a non-voting member of PALS. The PALS executive committee manages the affairs of the consortium. The executive committee consists of seven members: president and a secretary elected by the entire PALS membership, and five representatives (one from each of the five SCLS geographic zones). The PALS executive committee includes the SCLS director, automation project manager, and a representative from non-PALS libraries serving as non-voting members. Beside the ad hoc committees, there are several permanent committees appointed by the PALS executive committee. One is different user groups of library coordinators, circulation, cataloging and acquisition/serials, public service and interlibrary loan. These user groups deal with PALS’ functional issues. Each participating library appoints a voting representative to each group. The other committee is the technology advisory committee. It advises the PALS executive committee on PALS technical issues. Its members include one representative from each user group.

3. Union catalog department\textsuperscript{114}

SCLS maintains and updates a union catalog containing the materials held by the member libraries as required by Regulations of the Commissioner of Education 90.3(h), and provides access to this catalog to the member libraries. The union catalog is maintained in compliance with Library of Congress authorities and cataloging policies.

\textsuperscript{114}SCLS cataloging and Union Catalog  http://suffolklibrarysystem.org/index.php/About-SCLS/cat-and-union-cat.html
Members of the PALS consortium sharing the Innovative Interfaces Integrated Library System must follow the PALS cataloging guidelines for their local policies. Libraries that are not members of the PALS consortium can only access the ILS for interlibrary loan and for cataloging information, but not for circulation. They share bibliographic records with PALS libraries. The union catalog department loads and updates patron records for these non-PALS libraries, if they agree to make their patron databases available. These loads are performed on a weekly basis to keep the ILS as current as possible.

4. **Youth services department**\(^{115}\)

The youth services department exists to help member libraries provide service to children, teens and their families. Through consultation, continuing education, and coordination of special projects, the department provides opportunities for staff in member libraries to strengthen their skills and to promote library service. The youth services consultant collaborates with SCLS adult services, the Suffolk County Library Association (SCLA)\(^ {116}\) young adult services division and other entities to provide coordinated training opportunities for all interested library staff. The monthly electronic newsletters of Children First, Teen Direct, and the monthly book review list are sent to all member libraries’ staff. Member libraries’ children's services department managers hold quarterly meetings as a forum for discussion of management and policy issues. An electronic bulletin board at SCLS highlights upcoming events of interest to member youth librarians. The youth services department maintains a web page: SCLS teen services. A professional collection of current materials relating to library service to

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\(^{115}\) SCLS Youth Services [http://suffolklibrarysystem.org/index.php/About-SCLS/youth-services.html](http://suffolklibrarysystem.org/index.php/About-SCLS/youth-services.html)

\(^{116}\) SCLA is an association serving librarians, library staff, trustees, lifetime and honorary members in Suffolk County on Long Island, New York. Source: SCLA website [http://scla.net/](http://scla.net/)
children, teens, and families is developed and maintained by the youth services department.

5. **Long Island talking book library**

Long Island talking book library (LITBL) is a free library service for individuals who cannot hold, handle, or see well enough to use regular print books. New York State Library is a regional talking book library which is a division of the Library of Congress that produces books and magazines in Braille, and recorded media for people with visual or physical disabilities. LITBL is a sub-regional library of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) in New York State. LITBL works with the public libraries across Long Island and serves patrons in both Nassau and Suffolk counties. Public libraries in both Nassau and Suffolk counties are involved with the talking book program in a variety of ways. Some libraries have a rotating collection of talking books. Many libraries have “back-up” equipment for patrons who need to replace a broken machine. Most libraries have informational materials and applications available. All libraries can be a drop off and pick up point for their patrons who use the program.

6. **Human resources office**

The function of the human resources office is to administer and maintain benefits for SCLS staff, to offer continuing education and training programs, and to administer payroll. The SCLS staff handbook, the CSEA (Civil Service Employees Association)/SCLS contract, and the building safety and security booklet are produced and updated by the human resources staff.
**Director and Administrators**\(^{117}\)

In SCLS, the director and the five administrators are responsible for the overall operation of SCLS. They are the administrators of outreach services, member services, technology services, business manager, and the assistant to the director. The director and administrators from the areas of outreach services, member services, and technology services offer direct consulting services to member libraries. Consultation topics include trustee relations, long range planning, personnel management, municipal finance, construction, public/media relations, library accessibility issues, legal issues, and all aspects of library automation. They also offer practical advice to librarians on civil service matters and legislative initiatives on the regional, state, and federal levels. The business manager serves in a similar advisory capacity to the member libraries by sharing expertise in areas such as telecommunications, facility maintenance, finance, employee benefits, bidding and procurement, insurance and risk management, and governmental regulations.

**Advisory Committees**

There are six advisory committees in SCLS. They are

- Adult service advisory committee,
- Resource sharing advisory committee,
- Technology advisory committee,
- Youth service advisory committee,
- Long range planning committee,
- Marketing & PR advisory committee.

Each of the six SCLS advisory committees comprises nine directors elected by member libraries. These nine directors should be elected in the following ways according to the SCLS bylaws:

1. One member to be elected, respectively, by a joint meeting of the trustees of the participating libraries in each of the towns of Babylon, Huntington and Islip;
2. One member to be elected, respectively, by joint meeting of the trustees of the participating libraries in each of the following groups of towns, each considered as a unit, (a) Riverhead and Southold; (b) Southampton, East Hampton and Shelter Island; (c) Islip and Babylon; and (d) Smithtown and Huntington;
3. Two members to be elected by the trustees of the participating libraries in the town of Brookhaven.

There is also a liaison member from the SCLS central library serving on each advisory committee.

**Board of Trustees**

SCLS is governed by a nine-member board of trustees. The board of trustees is elected by the joint meetings of the trustees of participating member libraries according to the same rules that were used to elect advisory committee members, board members geographically represent the same areas as the SCLS advisory committee does. The term of office of such trustees is three years; terms of one-third of the members of the board expire annually. Currently, the majority membership of the SCLS board of trustees comes directly from the boards of trustees of member libraries.

The board of trustees appoints the SCLS director, and holds monthly meetings. The quorum for board meetings is five trustees. It is the duty of the SCLS director to attend meetings of the board, including budget meetings, or public meetings where action may be taken affecting the interests of the system. The SCLS director has the right to

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119 From interview transcript of SCLS-1-04/13/2010
speak on all matters under discussion at board meetings, but does not have the right to vote.

**Suffolk Cooperative Library System Website Structure and Content**

The Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) website focuses on the programs and services it provides to member libraries. The homepage is divided into three columns. Figure 6.4 provides a snapshot of the SCLS homepage.

**Figure 6.4. Screenshot of the Suffolk Cooperative Library System’s Main Page**

Across the three columns, at the top of the webpage, there is the SCLS graphic logo. Under the logo, there is a bar with three tabs: About SCLS, BBTray Notices, and Library Closings.

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120 SCLS website [http://suffolklibrarysystem.org/](http://suffolklibrarysystem.org/)

121 This screenshot was saved on July 13, 2010.
• About SCLS

This is an introduction of SCLS.

• BBTray Notices

This is a real time message for the PALS system.

• Library Closings

The tab of library closings is the closing information for SCLS member libraries in different zones.

On the left side column, there are three main categories: Main Menu, Resources, and Login or Logout. There are six tabs under main menu:

• Home

This tab takes viewers back to the SCLS homepage.

• SCLS Guide to Programs and Services

Services and programs offered by SCLS are arranged alphabetically under this tab.

• Latest News

The third tab is latest news; its content is displayed in the middle column of the homepage.

• SCLS Services Statistical Information

Under this tab, statistical information such as the PALS circulation, acquisition and holding information can be found. SCLS annual report statistical summaries from previous years can also be found here.
- Marketing and Publicity

The marketing and publicity tab contains News Releases, Training Materials, system-wide service promoting graphics, and cooperative service efforts.

- Meeting Handouts

This tab contains meeting handouts, slides, and the related blog posts for meetings and workshops.

In the category of Resources, there are four sub tabs: Around the County, Suffolk County Public Libraries, SCLS Calendar of Events, and Long Island Talking Book Library.

- Around the County

Under tab of Around the County, there is one video from Cablevision's Neighborhood Journal featuring the Hampton Bays Public Library; there is an audio file in which the director of the Lindenhurst Memorial Library talks to author J.P. Cardone about his book.

- Suffolk County Public Libraries

This tab links to a list of SCLS member libraries. The page includes links to their web addresses, catalogs, maps and emails.

- SCLS Calendar of Events

SCLS Calendar of Events includes schedule information for both SCLS and its member libraries. Viewers can search the calendar for programs at SCLS or any of its member libraries.
- Long Island Talking Book Library

This tab leads to the Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library of New York Public Library.\(^{122}\)

The last category in the left column is Login or Logout which requires a user name and password to proceed.

The middle column of the webpage displays the content from the SCLS Latest News which is a tab under Main Menu. The right side column lists featured links that lead to the spotlight services provided by SCLS. These links connect to different websites created to feature the services of Answer 24×7, Suffolk Homework Help, SuffolkWeb mail, SuffolkWave, Suffolk Historical Newspapers, Topic Guides, Long Island History, and Literacy Suffolk. Answer 24×7 is an online reference service. Suffolk Homework Help is a service where real tutors are available to help with student’s homework, writing papers and tests. SuffolkWave is a website that contains downloadable audiobooks, ebooks, music and videos. Suffolk Historical Newspapers is a centralized, searchable online collection of Suffolk’s newspaper heritage. Topic Guides offers online research assistance, websites and useful resources compiled by Suffolk county librarians. These services are all based on cooperative efforts among SCLS and its member libraries. Literacy Suffolk was founded by SCLS and has been providing literacy services to adults in Suffolk County since 1978.

All these services have a separate URL and their own webpage. This is a characteristic of the SCLS website. It separates SCLS organization information from the service information for general residents in Suffolk County, by creating a separate page

\(^{122}\) [http://www.nypl.org/locations/heiskell](http://www.nypl.org/locations/heiskell)
for the latter. Only those services used by its member libraries are embedded inside the SCLS webpage, which means the SCLS website is geared toward its members rather than the general public. General Suffolk County residents would not recognize if the service they are using is supported by SCLS.

Suffolk Cooperative Library System Services

The Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) offers a variety of support to its member libraries. Through the years SCLS services and programs have been amended many times in response to the changing conditions and needs of its member libraries. The SCLS Plan of Service was amended in 2007 to reflect the growing level of cooperation among member libraries. The services and programs of SCLS are the results of a dynamic and responsive process that constantly strives to help its members provide quality library service to their patrons.

SCLS provides various services at different levels to meet its members’ needs. Some services are provided free of charge while some services are provided based on a fee. There are also shared services supported by both SCLS and its members.

Free SCLS Services

SCLS provides a number of free services:

1. **Union catalog**

   The SCLS union catalog is maintained in compliance with Library of Congress authorities and cataloging policies. Members of the PALS consortium sharing the ILS must follow the consortium cataloging guidelines for local policies.
2. Consulting

The consultation services provided by SCLS to its members cover the topics of library administration, reference service, and the application of technology. Among these services, the highest priority of SCLS is to assist member library administrators to respond effectively to the varied and complex management issues that public libraries face today. In addition to the administration of system operations, service programs, and financial affairs, SCLS management staff is an experienced library consulting team. Assistance and information is available on all aspects of public library service. Consulting topics include trustee relationship, long range planning, personnel management, municipal finance, construction, public/media relationships, library accessibility issues, legal issues, and all aspects of library automation.

The professional consultation includes adult service, and youth services. The consultant services for youth include collection development, programming, technology, and development of department policy and procedure. The youth services consultant designs training for staff serving youth in all member libraries and meets individually upon request to provide guidance in relevant service areas.

Visits by member library staff to the reference departments of the central library and SCLS provide an ongoing means of communication and consultation. Visiting staff can tour the facilities of SCLS and the central library and discuss reference questions and materials. SCLS and Patchogue-Medford librarians visit member libraries to discuss local reference, local history, e-Resources, and interlibrary loan concerns, and to foster the best use of SCLS and central library services.
3. Continuing education and training

SCLS conducts workshops in all areas of library administration and services. SCLS sponsors a series of six classes for new managers to help their transition into new positions. Classes are limited to 25 participants who are required to attend all six sessions. Upon completion of the coursework, participants receive a Stony Brook University certificate indicating 1.0 Continuing Education Units (CEU). Participants will earn an additional 0.8 CEU from SCLS. SCLS also partners with the Palmer Institute of Public Library Organization and Management to offer the public library administrator's certificate program to regional library managers and other interested library staff at a reasonable cost. This certificate program is a five-course, 15-credit graduate level comprehensive management training program for public library administrators that leads to an advanced certificate in public library administration recognized by the New York State Education Department.

SCLS also provides quality training in the areas of adult services, youth services, and computer services. Periodic full and half-day workshops are offered on issues of importance to staff serving children, teens, and families. Topics such as technology, programming, reference services, and collection development are presented in lecture, panel, and hands-on formats. Special professional events, such as graphic novel symposia, continuing education series workshops, and conferences such as a biennial children’s literature conference co-sponsored with the Children’s Librarians Association of Suffolk County, Inc., provide opportunities for youth services librarians to learn of innovative library service practices and develop professional skills.

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123 Information is found in SCLS’ website of Continuing Education http://www.suffolklibrarysystem.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=59&Itemid=65
Computer service continuing education includes regular PC and Windows NT user group meetings, special workshops on computer technology and library applications for the beginner and experienced user. Workshops on topics pertaining to reference services such as business resources, medicine, genealogy, and reader’s advisory and legal resources are offered regularly. Suffolk Cooperative Library System holds workshops and seminars to help library boards of trustees understand their roles and responsibilities, and run effective board meetings.

4. Reference service

SCLS provides specialized reference, referral, and research service in cooperation with the Patchogue-Medford Library. Skilled librarians answer telephone, faxed, or email inquiries from member libraries on behalf of patrons, or from walk-in requests. SCLS provides 24x7 online reference services. In the 1990s, SCLS worked with member libraries, and created an electronic core collection of reference resources, magazines, newspaper, and homework help databases called the virtual reference collection (VRC).

The Patchogue-Medford Library, as the central library of SCLS, provides specialized collection and services to SCLS member libraries and also to all Suffolk County residents. The Patchogue-Medford Library provides electronic access to its specialized collections, and partners with SCLS to provide reference services in all subject areas. SCLS reference specialists work at the Patchogue-Medford Library as part of the central library team providing reference service, collection consultations, and subject or database training. The central library supports a county-wide subscription to the Suffolk Homework Help by contributing 50% of the cost of this service. The central library’s reference collection is extensive, including reference books and online databases
in addition to those provided through Suffolk e-Resources. The periodical collection contains over 1,000 serial titles, including scholarly journals, and access to journal databases. The central library also has a comprehensive non-fiction collection selected to enhance member library collections, with special attention to the areas of law, genealogy, music, art, medicine and health, and auto repair.

5. **Answers24x7**

Answers24X7 is a cooperative effort of the public libraries in Suffolk County. It provides online reference service to residents of Suffolk County. Reference librarians are available to answer many types of questions using electronic resources or to provide assistance searching the internet.

6. **Outreach services**

Outreach services in SCLS offer informational materials and workshops on disability-related topics. SCLS provides services to the inmate population in the county jail. It also serves new immigrants by having developed a SCLS online catalog in the appropriate foreign languages for better access to foreign language materials. SCLS outreach services and the Long Island talking book library provide specialized resources, service, and information to educate and assist member libraries in understanding how to provide appropriate and accessible services to individuals with disabilities. Some of these resources, like talking books, are provided directly to patrons by mail and in person. Other materials, such as print books, videotapes, programming kits, and TTY are loaned through member libraries. In addition, outreach services are provided to member library administrators and staff with workshops, consultation and reference support relating to library services and employment practices for people with disabilities.

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124 TTY stands for text telephone; it is a telecommunication device for deaf individuals.
Outreach services also serves as a centralized resource for member libraries to obtain other specialized materials. An extensive collection of print books, pamphlets, videotapes, periodicals, and other materials about disabilities is maintained at SCLS. These materials are available to member libraries and their patrons through interlibrary loan.

7. Resource sharing

SCLS is responsible for the administration of the resource sharing code\textsuperscript{125} which governs cooperative lending and service agreements county-wide. This includes the maintenance of delinquency files and the administration of contracts for library service in the unserved areas of the county. SCLS resource sharing code specifies the member libraries’ and SCLS’ responsibilities on issues of direct access, interlibrary loan, and on the union catalog. Member libraries agree to make their collections accessible to residents in Suffolk County by direct access and by interlibrary loan while SCLS is responsible for delivering the materials.

8. Professional collection

The SCLS youth service department maintains an extensive professional collection of both print and electronic resources. This makes it possible to respond promptly to member library’s requests.

9. Communication

SCLS provides multiple channels to disseminate information and to share and exchange news with and among member libraries. These channels are listservs, wikis, blogs, and newsletters. There are 12 different listservs targeted for different purposes and

members. Four different newsletters are delivered via Internet and email. Four Wikis and 10 blogs are maintained by different departments.

10. ILL

The vast majority of interlibrary loans initiated by Suffolk County libraries are managed by computerized interlibrary loan services and delivered directly from one library to another by the SCLS delivery service. ILL staff at SCLS specializes in hard-to-locate requests. Using computer links to OCLC, they assist member libraries in searching throughout the world to better serve their patrons. Any ILL charges from out-of-county lending libraries are passed through to the member libraries requesting the item.

11. Pool collection

The SCLS pool collection is a group of over 350 book titles consisting of 15 or 20 paperback copies of each title. These are available for borrowing from SCLS for adult book discussion groups. Anyone can borrow these sets of books by requesting them from their public library.

12. Coordinated services

SCLS negotiates the contracts for purchasing databases in the virtual reference collections. It also coordinates orders of collections and supplies for member libraries. SCLS coordinates the purchasing of books, databases, services, and office products with discounts for member libraries.

13. Other services

SCLS supports its member libraries by offering web page hosting and domain name registry for them. Currently the majority of member libraries use SCLS for their
web pages. SCLS also provides email services for member library staff and the residents of Suffolk County.

Optional Fee-Based SCLS Services

1. Delivery service

The daily delivery of materials among member libraries is one of the most visible services offered by SCLS. This is a critical element in the cooperative effort to provide library services to the people of Suffolk County. More than one million items are transported annually, including books, videos, CDs, DVDs, tapes, exhibits, and other library materials.

2. Telecommunications network

SCLS has installed and now manages one of the largest educational telecommunications networks in the Northeast United States. Member libraries are connected to each other and the world at large by over 110 private, high-speed digital lines. SCLS staff oversees the installation and management of this network on a day-to-day basis.

3. Other services

The Suffolk Cooperative Library System provides assistance to unserved areas seeking to establish public library services. It also provides disk checking service for cleaning and resurfacing of DVDs and CDs.

Shared Services

Shared Services are services that both SCLS and its member libraries support.

126 SCLS Internet and Telecommunications
1. **PALS**

The Partnership of Automated Libraries in Suffolk (PALS) is an integrated library automation consortium of 48 member libraries and SCLS itself. SCLS pays for the software at the same rate as member libraries. SCLS administers the operations of the consortium under the direction of the PALS executive board in accordance with the PALS bylaws. The consortium pays SCLS an administrative fee and reimburses SCLS for operational expenses. The consortium uses Innovative Interfaces, Inc. as its automation vendor.

2. **Technical support**

SCLS provides specialized technical support service to member libraries. This includes the Suffolk Historic Newspapers collection, SuffolkWave, Suffolk e-Resources, Suffolk Homework Help, SuffolkWeb, and Suffolk WebMail. Staff training sessions, and public presentations for any of these services are available upon request. Additional services include regular training sessions for member libraries’ technical staff to assist them in patron and staff support.

3. **Suffolk Historic Newspapers**

This is a centralized, searchable collection of Suffolk County's newspaper heritage available online to students, genealogists, researchers, and the general public. Suffolk County's 56 public libraries work cooperatively with each other, with local and regional historical societies, and the business community.

4. **SuffolkWave**

SuffolkWave provides 24x7 accesses to an online digital collection of downloadable audiobooks, ebooks, videos, and music. SuffolkWave offers bestselling
fiction, nonfiction, children’s books, music, movies, and how-to videos. 52 SCLS member libraries participate in this cooperative project.

5. Suffolk e-Resources

This is a collection of databases available to Suffolk County residents.

6. Suffolk Homework Help

SCLS provides an online homework help program with New York licensed tutors who assist Suffolk County library card holders with homework. This service serves grades K-12 plus new adult learners, GED (General Educational Development), and ESL (English as a Second Language) students. Help in several subjects is available in English and Spanish.

7. SuffolkWeb

SuffolkWeb was created as an Internet portal for member libraries and their patrons. It offers online research assistance, websites, and resources compiled by Suffolk County librarians.

Suffolk Cooperative Library System Funding

The Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) funding sources include funding from New York State as well as direct financial support from member libraries. About 44% of its 2009 funding is from New York State. SCLS gets 0.2% of its money from the federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). The rest of SCLS funding comes from contractual service fees paid by members, and other miscellaneous incomes. Table 6.3 provides a summary of its funding sources.
Table 6.3. The Suffolk Cooperative Library System 2009 Funding Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCLS Funding</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **State funding** | General state aid - $2,957,263 (33%)  
  - Annual public library system basic state aid - $2,380,510  
    1. Annual grant  
    2. Material reimbursement  
    3. Automation aid  
  - Local Service Support Aid (LSSA) - $576,753  
  Directed state aid* - $9,257 (0.1%)  
  - Coordinated outreach - $0  
  - Correctional facility program - $0  
  - County jail - $9,257  
  Pass-through funds* - $932,532 (10%)  
  - Central Library Development Aid (CLDA) - $391,547  
  - Central Book Aid (CBA) - $61,638  
  - Local Library Service Aid (LLSA) - $404,347  
  - Construction aid - $75,000  |
| **Federal funding** | Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) - $17,753 (0.2%) |
| **Other sources** | Contractual money received - $4,057,708 (45%)  
  - Gifts, endowments and fundraising - $13,510 (0.2%)  
  - Bank interests - $15,614 (0.2%)  
  - Other miscellaneous - $968,979 (11%) |
| **Total income** | $8,972,616 (100%) |

*Note. Item inside the parenthesis means the percentage of the total income.  
*Directed state aid (funding based on formulas, with separate budget)  
*Pass-through funds (received from NYS and redistributed to member libraries)

**State Funding**

The first part of the funding from New York State is general state aid which includes basic system aid, and Local Services Support Aid (LSSA). The basic system aid formula in the New York State Education Law is based on population, geographic area, number of counties served, and material reimbursement, and automation aid for each public library system with an automation program to support bibliographic control and

127 New York State Education Law 273, Apportionment of state aid
interlibrary sharing of information resources of member libraries, and to coordinate and integrate the automated system or systems of member libraries.

1. Basic system aid

   • Annual grant

   SCLS receives $20,000 for serving one entire county.

   • Population

   SCLS receives the sum of $0.94 per capita of chartered population in the area served.

   • Area

   SCLS receives the sum of $52 per square mile of its chartered area.

   • Material reimbursement

   Each year, SCLS receives an amount of state funding for reimbursing SCLS expenditures for books, periodicals, binding, and non-print materials in the preceding fiscal year. This funding covers the part of the expenditure that exceeds $0.40 per capita of the population served but not over $0.68 per capita of population served.

   • Automation aid

   Each public library system in New York State gets an automation aid for its automation program to support bibliographic control and interlibrary sharing of information resources among member libraries, and for its coordination and integration of the automated library system or systems of its member libraries. The amount of the aid equals 7% of the Material Reimbursement or $76,500, whichever is more.
2. Local Service Support Aid

Each chartered and registered public and free association library in New York State meeting standards of service promulgated by the Commissioner of Education shall be eligible to receive annually $0.31 per capita of the population of the library's chartered service area. This is Local Library Services Aid, paid to the public library system to distribute to its member libraries. The Local Service Support Aid is paid to the public library system and it is equal to 66% of Local Library Service Aid paid to member libraries plus an additional $0.31 per capita for the population who do not reside within the chartered service area of a member library.

The second part of New York State Aid comes from categorical funding.

1. Coordinated outreach

$43,000 plus $0.13 per capita must be used to support one or more of eight target groups in the New York State: the blind, physically disabled, unemployed, minorities, geographically isolated, institutionalized, elderly, and the educationally disadvantaged.

2. Correctional facility program

$9.25 per inmate in state correctional facilities must be used to assist correctional facility libraries in providing public library services.

3. County jails

A percentage of $185,000 based on percentage of inmates in the system area compared to the inmate population in New York State must be used to support library programs in county jails.

The third part of the SCLS state funding is pass-through funds that SCLS receives from New York State and redistributes to its member libraries. Local

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128 New York State Education Law 273 (1)(f)(1), Apportionment of state aid
Library Service Aid is one kind of pass-through funds in addition to the following items.

1. **Central Library Development Aid (CLDA)**

   $0.32 per capita must be used to enhance the ability of member libraries to provide reference services.

2. **General Book Aid (CBA)**

   $71,500 must be used for adult nonfiction library materials.

3. **State aid for library construction**

   State aid for library construction provides up to 50% of approved costs of acquisition, construction, renovation, or rehabilitation of public libraries or public library system headquarters. Each public library system reviews and approves member libraries’ applications before submitting them to the Commissioner of Education for approval.

**Direct Member Financial Support**

Along with New York State funding, SCLS members provide direct financial support to SCLS. Direct member financial support of SCLS began in 1995. Since then, each member library has an opportunity to participate in the governance of SCLS and is able to annually vote on the SCLS operating budget. Member library support is allocated among the 54 full membership libraries based on a member support formula. The formula factors in both a library’s service population and its budget size. Each factor represents half of the total formula. Each year, SCLS divides in two the total amount of member support. One half is then split up among the 54 libraries based on their service population as measured by the most recent United States census. The other half of the formula is based on a library’s operating budget size.
There is also another important element of the member support formula which is the minimum contribution. There is a minimum amount that all libraries, regardless of size and budget, must contribute toward member support. The minimum contribution acknowledges that all libraries, even the smallest, should pay a base level to “keep the lights on, the operation running” (SCLS-1-04/13/2010). The minimum contribution level increases each year by the same percentage as the overall increase of member support.

**Federal Funding -- Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)**

The other part of SCLS funding is from the Library Services and Technology Act, which is the federal program administered by the NYS Division of Library Development (State Education Department) to support NOVEL and summer reading in New York State.

**Miscellaneous**

The last part of SCLS income comes from services fees. Fees based on services provided by SCLS include delivery, printing, mailing overdue notices for member libraries, and programming. There is also income from interest earned, rental income, and contract fees from serving unserved areas in Suffolk County.

**Suffolk Cooperative Library System Service Decision-making Processes**

Different services can have different decision-making processes. At SCLS, mandated services are decided by the law and regulations about public library systems; non-mandated services are decided according to the service level and cost.
Service Decisions

The basic services provided by Suffolk Cooperative Library Systems (SCLS) are those mandated by New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. These are mandated in order for public library systems in New York State to receive state funding. New York State funding is available for public library systems in order to provide coordinated outreach services, develop a central library, and serve the inmate population in its chartered area. SCLS also provides a union catalog to coordinate resource sharing among member libraries. These service decisions are already made by the law and regulations once SCLS applies for state funding.

SCLS also provides services that are not mandated in the law and regulations, such as continuing education and training for member libraries on the topics of user services, library administration, technology, and reference. SCLS coordinates interlibrary loan and delivery services for member libraries. SCLS provides coordinated ordering for its member libraries such as databases and photocopy paper. SCLS also coordinates several county-wide services with the cooperative effort of its member libraries. These county-wide services include SuffolkWave, and Suffolk Homework Help, among others. Other services include domain name registration and web page hosting for member libraries. Some of these services are provided free to member libraries. Others are based on a service fee, and several of the services are a cooperative activity of SCLS and those member libraries that wish to provide the services.

SCLS identifies services needs by the following methods. The service needs can come from the issues that arise with the advisory committees. The phone calls, emails, and consultation requests that SCLS staff receives from its member libraries provide
clues for providing services. SCLS also conducts surveys and needs assessments in order to collect information from member libraries regarding their satisfaction and needs for SCLS services. Ideas from SCLS staff reading professional journals, attending conferences, or exchanging information with their peers can provide inspiration about providing services, too.

At SCLS, the service decision-making processes are decided by either the cost of the service or the number of member libraries the service affects. The procedure for making decisions on services that either cost a lot of money or affect many libraries will require more member libraries’ involvement than service decisions that cost less money or affect fewer libraries. SCLS staff has more discretion on service decisions that only affect the background work at member libraries such as continuing education, training, writing grant proposals and annual reports. These background services do not touch the services member libraries provide for their patrons. For services that touch library patrons directly such as interlibrary loan and delivery, member libraries will have a lot of say on the decision.

Member Libraries’ Participation in SCLS Service Decision-making Processes

There are multiple places for member libraries to participate in SCLS service decision-making processes or to voice their concerns. The six SCLS advisory committees are the places for the representatives of member libraries to discuss issues on long-range planning, resource sharing, technology, youth services, adult services, and marketing in SCLS. These six advisory committees meet as often as needed. Members in each advisory committee are directors elected by member libraries by following the same rule of electing SCLS board members, therefore they have the same geographical
representation in Suffolk County as SCLS board members do. Any SCLS service
decision issue will be first discussed in the appropriate advisory committee. The member
library directors in each advisory committee serve as a bridge between SCLS and its local
members in each of the five geographic zones in Suffolk County. Those directors serving
on each advisory committee attend their monthly local zone meetings. Local members
have an opportunity to express their concerns and opinions regarding SCLS services at
these local zone meetings and those representatives on each advisory committee will
bring their sense of the local opinions about a specific service back to SCLS.

At SCLS, boards of trustees of member libraries are also involved in the SCLS
service decision-making processes. Boards of trustees of member libraries elect the SCLS
board of trustees, and vote on the SCLS annual budget. For certain service decisions such
as policy issues involved in changing SCLS resource sharing code, all member libraries
vote to approve a change.

SCLS has a quarterly member directors’ meeting. This meeting is often held at
one of the member libraries. The SCLS staff meets with members and exchanges
information on what is happening, where SCLS is heading, and on ideas that are taking
place. The SCLS director will be able to “put a finger on the pulse of the group in
person” (SCLS-3-05/05/2010).

Aside from the meetings at the administration level, there are also meetings at the
staff level between SCLS staff and member libraries’ staff. Around the county, the
children’s librarians and the young adult librarians meet regularly. SCLS staff members
will be involved with those meetings at the staff level. For some service decisions that
involve library professionals’ knowledge and skill, SCLS member libraries’ directors will
also appoint their staff members to participate in the SCLS service decision-making processes by providing professional opinions and inputs.

Overall SCLS member libraries can participate in system service decision making at different levels. Member libraries’ directors, boards of trustees, and staff members can be involved in different service decision-making occasions. The places for them to participate include SCLS advisory committees, zone meetings, and SCLS quarterly member directors’ meetings. SCLS also provides open channels for individual members to express their concerns through phone calls, email, and listservs.

**Suffolk Cooperative Library System Service Decision Making**

At SCLS, member libraries contribute direct financial support for its operation. Member libraries also provide direct financial support for SCLS services that go beyond New York State funding. With the member libraries providing about 70% of SCLS funding while New York State pays for the remaining 30%. “The core people involved with the decision-making processes here are first foremost the member libraries as represented by their directors. Since they pay such a significant portion of our funds” *(SCLS-1-04/13/2010)*. Member libraries participate in the SCLS service decision-making processes mainly through the six advisory committees. These advisory committees work together with SCLS administration on issues in different service areas and act as a bridge between SCLS and the local member libraries. They provide recommendations to SCLS administration and represent local member libraries’ opinions and interests. The boards of trustees of SCLS member libraries also vote on SCLS’ annual budget and system-wide policy issues.
The other group of people involved in SCLS service decision-making processes is SCLS staff members including the director, the three administrators of outreach services, technology services, and member services, and the SCLS business manager. The heads of SCLS departments are also intimately involved with the processes. SCLS staff is responsible for doing research and background work on the costs and issues around service, and coordinating the discussion among member libraries.

The SCLS board of trustees has to approve decisions before they can be brought up to all local member libraries for a vote. The board approves the SCLS Plan of Service. Members of the SCLS board of trustees represent specific geographic areas within Suffolk County and more than half of them are from member libraries boards of trustees. Therefore the SCLS board of trustees also has a sense of local libraries’ needs and inputs. At SCLS, nothing reaches the board of trustees until the member libraries have expressed their opinions regarding a service decision.

*By the time a decision like that gets to our board, the libraries said yes they want it and we know what the price is gonna be and we are simply saying to them (SCLS board): this is what the libraries want, this is what it’s gonna cost and they (SCLS member libraries) are prepared to pay it, and they (SCLS Board) put the stamp on it (SCLS-1-04/13/2010).*

1. **Identifying the service needs**

Except for the mandated services it has to provide according to the New York State Education Law and Regulations, SCLS identifies its service needs in two directions. The service need can come from member libraries, and it can also come from SCLS staff members. Member libraries can express their needs to SCLS directly. SCLS can also identify service needs from member libraries by receiving repeatedly the same
consultation request or by surveying member libraries. SCLS staff also identifies trends in the field by attending regional, state, and national conferences, workshops, and training seminars.

So we can really stay on top of any type of trend that’s taking place out there, we may go to the library and say: this is something that’s taking place and we think you should be interested, and would you like us to go and investigate it and come back and give you some kind of concrete proposal to provide the service (SCLS-2-04/13/2010)?

On other occasions, SCLS staff and member libraries meet in the middle when SCLS and member libraries think about a service need and then work on it together.

2. Service decision-making processes

At SCLS, once service needs are identified, the following service decision-making process is a process of continuing interaction between SCLS and member libraries. SCLS will first work on the issue and get a grasp on it. It will then be brought into the appropriate SCLS advisory committee for further discussion and feedback. Depending on the discretion of the SCLS director and the chairperson of the advisory committee, some decisions will be made by the SCLS director or advisory committee chairperson; other decisions will need to be brought before all member libraries for a vote. The discussion in the advisory committee will then break off with members of the advisory committee bringing the issues back to their monthly local geographic zone meeting. The SCLS staff starts to work on the background issues of cost and feasibility of the service. Depending on the nature of the decisions, the SCLS staff and the advisory committee will get back together with more understanding of what the interests are of member libraries and how realistic the service proposal is. Ultimately, the issue will be
discussed further by the SCLS board of trustees. Once the SCLS board of trustees approves the service proposal, it will be put in front of the member libraries and with a significant majority of them interested in the proposal, the decision will be moved forward to the next level to be implemented.

This is a typical service decision-making process at SCLS. During this process, SCLS staff works on investigating and researching the service proposal and prepares information for making the decision. An example is if SCLS wants to institute a text reference service for the county, SCLS staff needs to go through several vendors, evaluate the proposal submitted by them, and make the final decisions based on those proposals. On the other hand, the SCLS advisory committees serve as the bridge between local members and SCLS staff, providing input from member libraries and getting the general sense of member libraries’ opinions on the service proposal.

The SCLS service decision-making process strives for a significant majority or a general consensus rather than a simple majority. “You know the majority in our system is 27 libraries, I don’t ever want there (to be) 28 and 26 votes. If 28 libraries want something and 26 libraries don’t want something, we are not doing it…. we would rather scale back and get more libraries in it” (SCLS-1-04/13/2010). The sense of the general consensus comes from the communication between the SCLS director and members on each advisory committee and individual member libraries. “If it is really a big issue, I will call people individually; make sure we know where people stand. If it is a little bit of a smaller issue, I will call the zone representatives” (SCLS-1-04/13/2010).
3. The challenges in the SCLS service decision-making processes

The biggest challenge in the SCLS service decision-making process is to develop a consensus. “You have 56 or 54 really active members who each has different sets of priorities, has different economic situations, and has different financial self-interests, and is trying to make sure that anything we offer is offered in a way that will allow the most, the greatest amount of them to get the actual value out of it” (SCLS-1-04/13/2010). Suffolk County is a county of a million and a half people, and has different community needs to serve. With some directors more progressive than others, it is the most challenging thing for SCLS to take into account all 54 of member libraries’ opinions and try to winnow them down to a single doable plan.

There are some libraries that have no problem with money and there are some libraries that have no money, so it is hard to present something and find a product or new technology or do something that you know is going to cost a library financially. That’s a big challenge by bringing this product to all member libraries without really hurting somebody who can’t afford it (SCLS-2-04/13/2010).

SCLS deals with this challenge by negotiating for the best price for its member libraries, and keeping services optional. SCLS member libraries can decide if they want the service product or not. If they do not want the service, SCLS makes sure that they do not pay for the service. This leads to the second challenge of SCLS service decision-making processes.

At SCLS, all member libraries pay a minimum amount of financial support for SCLS’ operation regardless of the population served by the library or the budget size of the library. Another part of the member financial support is related to member libraries’
budget size and chartered population. For SCLS’ coordinated service, member libraries need to pay for the service. Based on each different situation, not all member libraries can participate in every SCLS coordinated service. Therefore, SCLS has to ensure a fair and balanced service decision-making process is in place to protect all member libraries’ interests and make sure those member libraries who do not participate in a coordinated service do not pay for it, but can have the opportunity to get into it later. With so many different groups involved in the SCLS service decision-making process, it is important that the boundaries of different groups are clear and due diligence has been made before making the final decision.

This chapter introduced the case of Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) including its organizational structure, website contents, services, funding sources and service decision-making processes. Chapter 7 presents the case of the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS). Compared to MHLS and SCLS, CCLS serves the smallest population in New York State.
Chapter VII: Case III - Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System

Doesn’t make any difference what color your paycheck is, you work for, essentially for both organizations. People on the system side do some public library things; people on the public library side do some system things (CCLS-1-04/20/2010).

We can’t make a decision without knowing exactly what the statistics are, without planning for outcomes from just adding or discontinuing a service (CCLS-4-05/17/2010).

The Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS) is located on West Fifth Street in Jamestown, Chautauqua County in New York State. This cooperative public library system was established on 1960 and serves the two counties of Chautauqua and Cattaraugus; both counties are in the southwestern part of New York State. There are three cities in these two counties. Jamestown of Chautauqua County is the largest city with about 30,000 people; Dunkirk of Chautauqua County has about 13,000 people; Olean of Cattaraugus County has about 16,000 people. The rest are mostly small towns and villages. The geographic area served by CCLS is 2,372 square miles; and the population served by CCLS is 226,705 people. Figure 7.1 gives the general location of CCLS in New York State.

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129 CCLS 2007-2011 Plan of Service
There are 36 member libraries served by CCLS. Thirteen of them are in Cattaraugus County; 23 of them are in Chautauqua County. The average population being served by each CCLS member library is 4,760; the average operating funds per library are about $157,457; the average operating funds per capita are $34 and the average number of fulltime employees at each member library is three. Table 7.1 includes the disaggregated information of the 36 CCLS member libraries first by the number of members’ fulltime employees (FTE), then by the annual receipt at each member library and the population served by each member. The Microsoft Excel 2007 PivotTable feature is used to analyze the data.

There are 27 member libraries serving a population less than 5,000; among them, 13 libraries have a budget under $50,000, and 25 libraries have three or less fulltime employee. There are four CCLS member libraries serving a population of more than 10,000. Two of them are CCLS central libraries: James Prendergast Library in Chautauqua County and Olean Public Library in Cattaraugus County. These two libraries employ the largest number of professional librarians and have more financial resources. In CCLS, the central library serves as a major reference, information, interlibrary loan,

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130 The CCLS map was copied from New York State Library, Division of Library Development website: http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/publibs/plstccls.gif
and electronic materials resource for the member libraries and their patrons. The central library serves as an incubator for innovation. The total income for CCLS in 2008 was $1,585,013. $1,144,705 was from New York State. In 2009, the total income increased to $1,616,761, of which $1,205,739 was from New York State.

Table 7.1. The Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System Member Libraries’ Information

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<th>FTE*</th>
<th>1~4999</th>
<th>5000~9999</th>
<th>10000~14999</th>
<th>15000~19999</th>
<th>20000+</th>
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<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*FTE (the number of fulltime employees)

CCLS is located in the same building as the James Prendergast Library, and shares the same administration team. James Prendergast Library contracts with CCLS on an annual basis for the CCLS director to serve as library director.\(^{131}\) This arrangement was originally proposed in 1964 when the director of James Prendergast Library left for another position. This unique relationship brings the CCLS director in direct contact with library patrons who are using the central library and provides the CCLS director with

\(^{131}\) CCLS 2007-2011 Plan of Services
hands-on experience. “If the system people have a question about something, all they have to do is walk down the stairs and ask the member library” (CCLS-1-04/20/2010).

And as a library director, the CCLS director is also responsible for the same service issues other member libraries are dealing with on a day-to-day basis.

The first floor of the building mostly houses James Prendergast Library. Rather than being separated into distinct areas, CCLS offices and James Prendergast Library offices cut across each other and are mingled together. This is a unique arrangement among the 16 cooperative public library systems in New York State. There is a lot of intertwining at the staff level of these two organizations. CCLS and James Prendergast Library are two rather small organizations. The staff of each organization works closely crossing organizational lines to accomplish various tasks and services needed to be performed by both organizations. For example, the children’s librarian at James Prendergast Library is also a CCLS employee and has job responsibilities that include doing system-wide children’s service for member libraries. This person also supervises the children’s department for the James Prendergast Library. System staff is responsible for maintaining James Prendergast Library’s website and its database subscriptions. James Prendergast Library’s professional librarians serve as field consultants for CCLS member libraries. This unique intertwinement at CCLS leads to the unique operation of CCLS in many aspects. This unique arrangement and its impact on CCLS services and its service decision-making processes are discussed later in this chapter.

**Chautauqua - Cattaraugus Library System’s Organizational Structure**

At the Chautauqua – Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS), there are seven professional librarians and 12 staff members. Most of the seven professional librarians
supervise the other staff. The James Prendergast Library has four professional librarians. These professional librarians get involved in the CCLS service decision-making processes that relate to their specialties and areas.

**Departments**

At CCLS, the names of the departments reflect the tasks carried out by each department, but underlying the organizational unit, the line between each department is not clear cut. Not only do employees inside the building cross the organizational line to work for both CCLS and the James Prendergast Library, but employees in CCLS also take charge of several different tasks at the same time. For example, the CCLS outreach coordinator is also responsible for handling interlibrary loan and delivery, and the CCLS employee who is maintaining CCLS’ and the James Prendergast Library’s websites also coordinates training and workshops for member libraries and is responsible for database subscriptions and the digitalization project. The CCLS does not have an organizational chart to be displayed here. The organizational structure information was also not available on CCLS’ website.

**Field Consultants**

At CCLS, field consultants are the connection between member libraries and CCLS. CCLS assigns system members and the James Prendergast Library staff members as field consultants for each member library. Each assigned field consultant is responsible for a certain numbers of member libraries and is expected to provide assistance on many issues facing these public libraries. Each year, field consultants make at least one field trip to their assigned member libraries, and prepare written reports about members’
service needs to the CCLS director based on their visits. Field consultants also make regularly monthly contacts with their assigned member libraries via telephone or e-mail. Most field consultants are librarians with specialized skills and knowledge in certain fields. Member libraries can reach their assigned field consultants for questions. Member libraries can also ask questions on a specific topic directly to CCLS staff members.

**Integrated Library System Users’ Group**

In 2006, CCLS implemented a users’ group comprised of member library directors and staff using the SIRSI Integrated Library System. As of April 2010, 18 member libraries and the system were “live” in the SIRSI system; nine non-automated member libraries were in the process of barcoding their collections. Two member libraries were using their own stand-alone ILS independent of SIRSI. This users’ group meets regularly to discuss the use of the ILS and to develop common policies and procedures. Member libraries are eligible to participate in the group’s activities once they “go live” and are using all functions of the ILS. Due to the uniqueness of CCLS and its relationship with the James Prendergast Library, the central license of the SIRSI is granted to the James Prendergast Library with CCLS staff administering the ILS. Member libraries join the James Prendergast Library in order to join SIRSI.

**Advisory Councils**

CCLS has several advisory councils to get recommendations and inputs from certain interests groups.
1. Director’s advisory council

The CCLS director’s advisory council was implemented on 2007; it advises the CCLS director on activities required to meet the five year Plan of Service’ goals and to evaluate how well the goals are being met, and to advise the system director and discuss issues of common concerns.

2. Outreach advisory committee

The outreach advisory committee has 11 members and meets twice a year with the outreach coordinator to discuss the needs of special client groups at CCLS’ service area, and to develop recommendations for services to these groups.

3. Central library advisory committee

The CCLS central library advisory committee is composed of representatives from the two co-central libraries and member libraries. The committee meets twice a year to advise central libraries on member libraries’ needed services. The committee also surveys member libraries once a year to evaluate the central libraries’ services to members and to solicit requests for additional services. Member libraries are given an opportunity to communicate their service needs on a formal basis within this committee.

Board of Trustees

The CCLS board of trustees is composed of nine members. Five of them are from Chautauqua County; the other four are from Cattaraugus County. Two of these nine members must be from the board of trustees of each central library. At CCLS, system board members are elected by the trustees of member libraries at the annual meeting with each member library having one vote. The term of office for each trustee is five years.

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Almost all current CCLS board members are from boards of trustees of member libraries. The CCLS director is appointed by the board of trustees and is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the library system. The CCLS board of trustees holds regular meetings every two months. It determines what services CCLS will provide and it passes the budget which funds those services. The CCLS director submits the proposal, lays the groundwork, and prepares statistical data and information for the board to discuss in order to make decisions. A quorum for any board meeting is simply the majority of the elected board members. For the purpose of passing or rejecting any resolution, it is necessary that a majority of trustees are actually present and voting.

**Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System Website Structure and Content**

As seen in Figure 7.2, across the top of the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS) main page, there are seven subject tabs listed. They are: about us, catalogs, databases, ILL form, outreach, services, and training. Below these tabs, the page is divided into three columns. The two columns at each side of the page are mostly links to outside websites.

- **About us**

  This subject contains several links to PDF files containing the 2007-2011 Plan of Service of CCLS and its two central libraries, and to the current CCLS bylaws. It also has links to sub pages containing the staff directory, listing of member libraries, and an employment advertisement for one of its member libraries (as of July 29th, 2010).

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133 CCLS website: [http://cclslib.org/](http://cclslib.org/)
• **Catalogs**

This tab connects to the CCLS union catalog for its 18 member libraries. It also connects with the online catalog of two member libraries that are using different ILS. It links to WorldCat under this tab.

**Figure 7.2. Screenshot of the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System’s Main Page**

> Upcoming Workshops for Member Libraries
> September 15: E-Rate
> October 23; Trustworth Training
> November 17; Annual Reports
> Computer Training will start in September
> Registration is required. Please contact Megan.

- **Databases**

There were six databases listed here: *BookList, CREDO, NOVEL, OverDrive, ProQuest,* and *Reference USA*. Booklist contains the online book reviews from the American Library Association (ALA). CCLS subscribes to Booklist and its member libraries can order online for materials they want. CREDO is an online reference content database. NOVEL (New York Online Virtual Electronic Library) is a pilot project which provides access to hundreds of magazines, newspapers, maps, charts, research, and reference books for every New Yorker. OverDrive is the downloadable audiobook

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[^134]: The screenshot of CCLS main page was saved on July 29, 2010.
database that CCLS subscribes to. ProQuest research database and Reference USA business list are the other two databases CCLS provides access to for its member libraries.

- **ILL forms**

  There are two online forms available for member libraries to submit Interlibrary Loan book and article requests.

- **Outreach**

  The sub pages of this topic contain information about assistive hearing devices, talking books, and large print books.

- **Services**

  There are links to several PDF and Microsoft Word files containing CCLS’s delivery schedule, and forms used by member libraries for using the printing service as well as ordering supplies through CCLS.

- **Training**

  The training tab links to tutorial, workshop and professional development materials.

Below these seven subject tabs, the upper part of the middle column displays CCLS news while the lower part displays links to several forms and documents commonly used such as the list of CCLS field consultants, and the supply order form. The left side column contains a group of graphic links including the CCLS logo, the downloadable audio books website, and the websites of Western New York Legacy Digital Collection, and First Book. The CCLS Logo is linked to the CCLS main page. The graphic link of the downloadable audio books opens a customized CCLS

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135 First Book is a nonprofit organization that connects book publishers and community organizations to provide access to new books for children in need.
downloadable audio books page at the vendor’s (Overdrive) website. Western New York Legacy Digital Collection is a project providing online access to materials that document the rich cultural heritage of the western New York region including Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties. CCLS participates in this project. The link to the First Book website is the last link on the left side column. First Book is an organization which provides access to books for children in need. The program is managed by local volunteers. The right side column is a list of links to the 36 CCLS member libraries’ websites.

**Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System Services**

At the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS), the number one priority is not to charge members for system services. CCLS does not charge for delivery, interlibrary loan, or for centralized processing for member libraries. Member libraries only need to pay for the fee that the SIRIS vendor passes on to them for being part of CCLS’ Integrated Library System. Most CCLS services have been provided to member libraries for a long time. Because of lack of money, CCLS does not have a lot of opportunities for starting new services. Due to the funding constraints in the last three years from the state, CCLS actually has had to reduce certain services, such as the bookmobile service. Services provided by CCLS can be described as either common services or unique services. Common system services refer to services that are provided by all three selected cooperative public library systems in this study. Unique services are services only existing at CCLS.
Common Services

Although the New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education do not specify what services cooperative public library systems should provide, they do provide general directions. In order to comply with such directions, certain system services are provided by all 16 cooperative public library systems. Such services include the union catalog; direct access and outreach service; interlibrary loan and delivery services; training and consulting; service to inmates at correctional facilities and county jails, and support from the central library for collection and references services to member libraries. Among these services, resource sharing is the most common one; union catalog, interlibrary loan and delivery all come under the heading of “resource sharing.”

1. Resource sharing

The most important reason for establishing public library systems in New York State is to foster resource sharing among member libraries. In order to foster resource sharing, maintaining a union catalog and coordinating interlibrary loan and delivery services are needed.

1) Union catalog

CCLS maintained the SIRSI ILS for 18 of its 36 member libraries as of April 2010. Nine other member libraries were in the process of barcoding their collections and two other member libraries were using different ILS. Member libraries only need to pay for the part that the SIRSI ILS vendor passes on to them for joining SIRSI.
2) **Interlibrary loan**

CCLS provides interlibrary loan service to enable access to resources found inside and outside the system. CCLS also participated in the virtual catalog of one of the 3Rs library systems at New York State -- Western New York Library Resource Council (WNYLRC). There is no charge for CCLS getting interlibrary loan materials out of system but within New York State for its member libraries’ patrons. But either the member library or its patrons need to pay a fee when CCLS has to go out of state. This fee covers the postage and mailing cost of the interlibrary request.

3) **Delivery**

CCLS provides delivery services to each member library twice a week. The delivery includes new materials the member libraries purchased, books that have been ordered from other libraries, all kinds of papers that get exchanged among libraries, and notices from CCLS. Sometimes furniture is delivered from one member library to another library.

2. **Outreach service**

The CCLS outreach department loans assistive listening products to organizations and individuals in Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties to aid people with hearing disabilities. It has a wide selection of more than 6,000 popular titles in large print format which is circulated via CCLS. CCLS provides deposit collections to various institutions and facilities throughout the two counties. The deposit collection is changed bi-monthly. CCLS provides one correctional facility and two county jails’ inmates with access to library materials through deposit collections, interlibrary loan, and delivery services. CCLS also purchases and processes library materials selected by facility’s librarian in
conjunction with the outreach coordinator. CCLS also serves nursing homes with large
print collections and loans bi-focal kits. The CCLS outreach coordinator assists the
talking book service. The CCLS outreach department is authorized by the New York
State Talking Book and Braille Library (NYSTBBL) in Albany to assist individuals,
schools, hospitals, nursing homes, senior centers, and the blind associations in
Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties in registering for and receiving talking book
players and cassettes. The department is also available to answer questions about
NYSTBBL services and to exchange broken machines with new ones.

At the two CCLS central libraries, the outreach department also provides several
computer stations set up for users with special needs. These computers have ZoomText
assistive software installed that magnifies and reads out computer screen content.

3. **Central library support**

The two central libraries of CCLS receive categorical state funding to enhance
collection and reference resources, and therefore to provide support for member libraries
who cannot afford to purchase many materials. At CCLS, the central library helps to pay
for the subscription fees for OverDrive, Reference USA, and CREDO Reference
databases. The central library also provides “best practice” information to member
libraries and assists them with providing reference services. Compared to the rest of the
member libraries, two central libraries employ the largest number of professional
librarians within the system, and generally have more financial resources. Therefore these
two central libraries have larger collections and are more suited for developing new
services or considering emerging technologies.
4. **Workshops and training**

CCLS provides workshops and training opportunities for member libraries’ staff. These opportunities also serve as face-to-face networking opportunities for member library directors, managers, and staff.

5. **Consultation**

CCLS assigns field consultants to each of its member libraries. Member libraries can consult with them for any question. The field consultant is also responsible for directing the questions to the professional librarian with the appropriate skill and knowledge. Member libraries can also directly contact professional librarians in a specific area for consultation.

6. **Communication**

CCLS provides a platform for member libraries to exchange information. CCLS publishes a newsletter both online and in print with a main emphasis on member library news. It also maintains a listserv for member libraries’ staffs and trustees.

**Unique System Services**

Unique system services are services that only CCLS provides compared to the other two cooperative public library systems in this study. Such services include centralized services, and consolidated services. Each cooperative public library system can be different from other public library systems when it provides such services.

1. **Consolidated services**

CCLS facilitates and provides consolidated services in acquisitions, processing, and billing of books and other library materials in order to take advantage of bulk purchasing power. It coordinates the consolidated ordering of computer hardware,
software, and office and library supplies. CCLS places consolidated supply orders for its member libraries. Member libraries are expected to order on a quarterly basis.

2. **Centralized services**

CCLS provides centralized processing for member libraries. New materials ordered by member libraries are first processed at CCLS before they are shelf-ready and delivered to member libraries. They also provide printing and bulk mailing services, payroll for member libraries, public relations, and bindery services.

3. **Material support**

CCLS has had a material grant plan for member libraries for about 50 years. The amount is about $130,000. This money is distributed to member libraries according to three factors: 1) weekly opening hours; 2) three-year rolling average of their expenditures, excluding their capital expenditures, and 3) material spending. By this formula, CCLS rewards member libraries that are open more hours and spend more money on operations and materials. This money is used to reimburse member libraries for serving everybody who lives in these two counties. The money stays at CCLS and is used to pay for member libraries when they order new books and other materials through CCLS.

4. **Centralized video service**

CCLS has a video department located in the James Prendergast Library. This department serves patrons who are using the James Prendergast Library; it also provides a deposit collection to about 12 member libraries every week.

**Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System Funding**

About 74% of the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS) 2009 funding is from New York State. CCLS also gets about 12% of its money from the two counties
it serves. The rest of the income comes from the contract for services that the James Prendergast Library pays to CCLS for administration, and from private donations and bank interest. The funding can be roughly divided into four different groups. Table 7.2 provides a summary of these funding sources.

Table 7.2. The Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System 2009 Funding Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCLS Funding</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State funding</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General state aid – $807,397(50%)</td>
<td>• Annual public library system basic state aid - $679,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Annual grant and Material reimbursement(<em>annual grant and material reimbursement</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Automation aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Local Service Support Aid (LSSA) - $128,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categorical state aid- $2,169(0.1%)</td>
<td>• Coordinated outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Correctional facility program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• County jail - $2,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass-through funds* - $231,202(14%)</td>
<td>• Central Library Development Aid (CLDA) - $94,881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Central Book Aid (CBA) - $64,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Local Library Service Aid (LLSA) - $71,711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special legislative grant - $54,460(3%)</td>
<td>Other state aid* - $110,511(7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local funding - $193,824(12%)</td>
<td>• Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) - $8,210(0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sources</td>
<td>• Contract fees - $96,328 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Private donations - $70,821 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Bank interest - $16,753 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sale of equipment - $4,201 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>$1,616,761 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other state aid (other supplemented state aid or competitive state grants)
*Pass-through funds (received from NYS and redistributed to member libraries)

Note. Item inside the parenthesis means the percentage of the total income.
State Funding

The first part of state funding is general state aid which includes annual basic system aid and the Local Services Support Aid (LSSA). Different from categorical state aid which specifies service areas where the aid should be put to use; general state aid does not have such specification. Except general state aid and categorical state aid, each public library system can also apply or compete for state aid for special programs.

1. Basic state aid

The basic state aid includes the grant specified in the New York State Education Law based on the populations, geographic areas, and the number of counties served by the system. It also includes material reimbursement and automation aid.

- **Material reimbursement**

   New York State provides an amount that equals the part of the CCLS material expenditures during the preceding fiscal year exceeding $0.40 per capita of population of the area served but not exceeding $0.68 per capita of population served.

- **Automation aid**

   Each public library system in New York State gets automation aid for its automation program to support bibliographic control, interlibrary sharing of information resources among member libraries, and for its coordination and integration of the automated library system or systems of its member libraries. The amount of the aid equals 7% of the material reimbursement or $76,500, whichever is more.

2. Local Service Support Aid

Each chartered and registered public and free association library in New York State meeting standards of service promulgated by the Commissioner of Education is

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136 New York Education Law § 272, 273(1)(a, c, d, e, l, m)
eligible to receive annually $0.31 per capita of the population of the library's chartered service area. This is called Local Library Services Aid (LLSA). Local Library Service Aid is paid to public library systems for distribution to its member libraries. In 2009, this amount was $71,711 for CCLS. The Local Service Support Aid is paid to public library systems and it equals 66% of Local Library Service Aid paid to member libraries plus an additional $0.31 per capita for populations that do not reside within the chartered service area of any member library. The Local Service Support Aid (LSSA) for CCLS in 2009 was $64,783.

The second part of CCLS’ state funding is from categorical state aid which includes aid for specific services:

1. **Coordinated outreach**

   $43,000 plus $0.13 per capita must be used to support one or more of eight target groups: blind, physically disabled, unemployed, minority, geographically isolated, institutionalized, elderly, and educationally disadvantaged. In 2009, this was $65,420.

2. **Correctional facility program**

   $9.25 per inmate must be used to assist correctional facility libraries in providing public library services for inmates. In 2009, the amount was $10,440.

3. **County jails**

   A percentage of $185,000, based on percentage of inmates in system area, must be used to support library programs in county jails. In 2009, this was $1,877.

4. **Central Library Development Aid (CLDA)**

   $0.32 per capita must be used to enhance the ability of member libraries to provide reference services. In 2009, this was $94,881 for CCLS.
5. Central Book Aid (CBA)

$71,500 must be used for adult nonfiction library materials. In 2009, this was $64,610 for CCLS.

6. Construction funds

$800,000 statewide, divided by percent of population, must be used for construction. CCLS did not receive construction funds in 2009.

From time to time, CCLS also receive special legislative grants and other state aid.

Federal Funding -- Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)

The second part of the CCLS funding is federal funding from the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). This is administered by the NYS Division of Library Development (State Education Department) and supports NOVEL and summer reading in New York State. In 2009, this amount was $13,365 for CCLS.

Local Funding

The third part of CCLS funding is from the two counties of Chautauqua and Cattaraugus. In 2009, CCLS received $108,300 from Chautauqua County and $85,524 from Cattaraugus County.

Other Sources

Other funding sources for CCLS are from its administration contract with the James Prendergast Library. CCLS also receives part of its income from private donations and bank interest. In 2009, the contract fee for CCLS was $90,265. The private donation and bank interest were $70,558 and $37,336 respectively. Library charges and other reimbursements CCLS collected in 2009 were $25,704.
Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System Service Decision-making Processes

To understand the service decision-making processes at the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS), it is important to first understand services provided by CCLS.

System Services and Service Decisions

The New York State Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education do not prescribe in detail what services public library systems should provide except in setting general directions. In order to comply with these directions, some services are provided by all public library systems, for example services such as a union catalog to facilitate resource sharing among member libraries, coordinated outreach services to target populations, centralized reference service at the central library, and services to state correctional facilities and county jails. Among these services, coordinated outreach services and central library services are funded by categorical state aid. Therefore decisions to provide such services have already been made by the law and regulations. For those services that are not funded by categorical aid and all public library systems are providing them, system decisions to provide them are made according to the law\textsuperscript{137} and the regulations that define public library systems’ roles and functions in fostering resource sharing, strengthening member libraries and using public funding efficiently. As long as the general funding is available, each public library system can also provide unique services that suit its members’ actual needs.

Service needs and requests can be generated by CCLS member libraries or their patrons. The need for the CCLS downloadable audiobooks service actually originated

\textsuperscript{137} New York Education Law 272 (1)(K)
from a patron inquiring about the availability of the service at a member library. Member libraries can also express their needs for certain services to CCLS. The service needs can be identified by CCLS staff members seeing a trend in the discussion in the system’s member libraries staff listserv, attending regional workshops, and meeting with their peers. The phone calls, emails, and consultation requests that CCLS field consultants receive from its member libraries also provide clues for providing services. CCLS also conducts surveys in order to develop the five year Plan of Service and collects information from member libraries regarding their satisfaction and needs for CCLS services.

    CCLS provides almost all its services without charge to member libraries and most of the services have existed for a long time. Due to monetary pressure, there are not many new services starting in CCLS. Therefore there are not many new service decisions to make at CCLS. “We are fortunate to be where we are at this point” (CCLS-4-05/17/2010); “we are just trying to maintain what we are doing” (CCLS-3-04/20/2010); “we are lucky to hang on to what we have been able to provide” (CCLS-2-04/20/2010). Several interviewees from CCLS reinforced this point about their organization.

Member Libraries’ Participation in Service Decision-making Processes

At CCLS, member libraries have to approve the final draft of the CCLS five year Plan of Service. Except for this, most member libraries’ participation in service decision-making processes is informal. CCLS member libraries can influence service decisions by expressing their concerns to their field consultants or to the CCLS director. They can ask questions through the listserv. Since the board of trustees at CCLS is elected by its member libraries, and many board members are directly from boards of member libraries,
the decisions made by the CCLS’ board of trustees can reflect member libraries’ concerns and issues. At CCLS, member libraries also use training or workshops as opportunities to get together and exchange information or talk about issues rather than at a regular member library meeting. Member libraries might be called to an ad hoc committee or task force to provide inputs, but there is no formal procedure in place for them to participate in the CCLS service decision-making processes. As one interviewee described:

*I mean when decisions are made they (member libraries) are aware of it, and they can pass their concerns up to CCLS director. But no, they are not involved (in the service decision-making process). They are really not. It is the system board that makes the decision based on information (CCLS-4-05/17/2010).*

**Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System Service Decision Making**

Before the CCLS service decision-making processes start, and as described above, there is a phase of identifying service needs. This is an informal process, occurring when staff sees needs, rather than at planning meetings specifically for that purpose.

1. **Identifying service needs**

CCLS identifies services needs from two directions. One is from member libraries or their patrons; the other is from CCLS staff. Member libraries can express their needs directly to their field consultants or other CCLS staff. One CCLS staff member described this by saying,

*They will come to me and then what I can do is to take that and go to the administration, and say this is like a need. Maybe we need to take a look at it, see if it is a possibility that we can provide a new service or make an adjustment to our service for our members (CCLS-2-04/20/2010).*

CCLS staff members can also come up with service needs by observing the trends emerging from statistical usage data, from communication with member libraries, or by
attending national, and regional workshops. By attending the meeting with outreach coordinators from all other public library systems in New York State, the CCLS outreach coordinator got the idea of upgrading bi-focal kits, and setting up a mini grant for member libraries serving users with special needs.

CCLS also identifies service needs by observing the changes happening in the community. Over the past several decades, the population in these two counties has declined substantially. At the same time people who are poor and less educated have increased drastically. A lot of the good paying jobs have left the area. CCLS has had to change its services to meet the new community needs. “We don’t see as many people first of all, and a lot of the good paying jobs have left ..., so we see some shifts, and the type of people who are using the library, what they need” (CCLS-1-04/20/2010).

The development process of the CCLS Plan of Service is also an opportunity for CCLS to identify services needs of member libraries. CCLS surveys member libraries and involves member libraries in developing the plan together with the professional librarians from CCLS and the two co-central libraries. The final draft of the CCLS Plan of Service has to be approved by the boards of trustees of its member libraries, and serves as a road map for what to do in the next five years as specified in the plan.

2. Service decision-making processes

Once the service needs are identified, service decision makers will go through different procedures depending on the content of the service decision. At CCLS, this will depend a lot on the discretion of the director. Since CCLS is not starting a lot of new services and also the director has been in this administration position long enough, “there aren’t many things that come up that the CCLS director has to discuss with the board
members” (CCLS-1-04/20/2010). For service needs like training and workshops that do not cost members anything, they are discussed at CCLS staff meetings to see if these needs can be fulfilled according to the system schedule and available resources, and at the convenience of member libraries. The system director will then make the final decision.

The line between service decisions made by CCLS director and by the CCLS board of trustees is somewhat unclear. “it was something that I (director) felt they (board members) have to decide about it, I just have a feel, that’s all I can tell you of what I should have them decide, what I feel we can decide within the building” (CCLS-1-04/20/2010).

For those service decisions made within the system building, a lot of the time the CCLS director is the one to make final decisions based on staff discussions. The staff is expected to prepare statistical usage data or information in a specific service area for the CCLS director when the decision needs to be made in that area. For example, in order to decide which databases to keep, the monthly usage data of databases and reference questions asked by patrons have to be checked to decide if the database could help to answer reference questions. CCLS has a regular monthly staff meeting in order to disseminate information. When service needs emerge, an ad hoc meeting and workshop on service decisions is called by the CCLS director to involve those whose areas and expertise is helpful in making the decision. During the CCLS service decision-making processes, the professional staff is depended on for their knowledge, skill and information in different service areas to help the administration making service decisions. The CCLS
director will also have an understanding of member libraries’ needs by talking to their field consultants.

At CCLS, the board of trustees makes all service decisions, especially when the service decision affects all member libraries or involves spending a substantial amount of money. When it comes to considering either cutting or continuing a service, the questions that the board asks are: What good is it doing? What is the cost of it? And is there anything else that may be cheaper? The board needs accurate and up-to-date data and information in order to make service decisions. The CCLS director serves an important role in the board during service decision making. The CCLS director takes the information to whoever is involved or affected by the decision. When the CCLS board of trustees is making a service decision, the system director is the one who brings information to the board meeting and helps it make the decision. A good example for explaining this process is the decision made by the CCLS board on eliminating the former bookmobile service.

CCLS had been providing bookmobile service to communities that are too small to support a stationary library. This service started in 1965, and ended in 2009 due to a combination of several factors: vehicle aging, usage decline, and skyrocketing fuel prices. As part of the process that was more than one year in deciding to cut bookmobile service, the CCLS director had research conducted to identify the group of bookmobile users and to find out the cost of serving one patron by bookmobile compared to the cost of serving one patron by a stationary library. It turned out that more than 50% of bookmobile users have public library cards. And none of them lived more than 12 miles away from a stationary library. Along with conducting research and preparing information and data,
another part of this decision-making process involves talking with people, to explain to people what is going on. The CCLS board of trustees was involved in almost all the discussions and reviewing all the data. At the end, the bookmobile had serious issues, so it was almost a “perfect storm” for the CCLS to end the service and take it off the road. To compensate the bookmobile users for the loss of the bookmobile service, the CCLS board of trustees made the decision to start a second delivery to its member libraries to ensure those users can have what they want delivered to their local libraries more often.

Another example of the CCLS board of trustees making service decisions is the idea of the CCLS mini grant project. This is a project that motivates and encourages member libraries to serve people with special needs. In order to implement this project, CCLS needs to take out a part of its coordinated outreach money and use it as a competitive grant. Since this involves funding service, it needs to be decided by the board. This idea was first discussed by the outreach coordinator with the outreach advisory committee. Then the issue was brought to the CCLS director and eventually, the CCLS board approved the idea.

The CCLS board of trustees takes a vote to make final decisions. A majority of trustees constitutes a quorum for any board meeting. A majority of trustees actually present and voting is necessary for passing or rejecting any resolution.

There are also times that the members libraries get involved in the CCLS service decision-making processes. It is at the discretion of the CCLS director to decide when to get them involved. When CCLS made the decision of switching from Publishers Weekly to Booklist for ordering materials, CCLS called together a task force of eight or nine member library directors to discuss the change rather than letting the board of trustees to
decide. The board was informed of the discussion and the decision. After this discussion, all the member libraries were called together and told that the decision had been made to switch to Booklist. At CCLS, when the member libraries are involved like this, a general consensus not a formal vote is the way to make the final decision.

3. The challenges in the CCLS service decision-making processes

The most challenging factor in the CCLS service decision-making processes is the monetary issue. As a CCLS interviewee put it: “money, the lack of money, it all boils down to money… There are a lot of things we would like to do but we don’t have the money to do them” (CCLS-1-04/20/2010). Continuous budget cuts are a big challenge for the CCLS service decision-making process. Sometimes the service decision is already made by the system budget situation. In 2009, CCLS ended its bookmobile service for patrons. The continuous budget cuts are potentially leading CCLS to consider the possibility of having members help pay for part of the cost for a database product if they want to keep it. This will be a big change to CCLS in the near future because if members start to pay for CCLS services, they will have more say in the decision-making processes.

The other challenging issue in the CCLS service decision-making process is the fact that its member libraries have various funding and staff skill levels. There are only ten CCLS member libraries that have professional librarians. The other 26 member libraries have directors with various degrees of education. As discussed previously, among 36 member libraries, five libraries have annual budgets less than $20,000; ten others have annual budgets more than $20,000 but less than $50,000; and the rest of the member libraries have annual budgets somewhere between $50,000 and one million dollars. Some CCLS member libraries only spend $500 a year on new materials and a
few of them are only open 20 hours a week. Only about half of the CCLS member libraries are using the automated library system (SIRSI ILS) and the rest are not yet automated. With these large differences in mind, it is a substantial challenge for CCLS to develop services that meet all their needs. These differences also limit the extent of member libraries’ participations in the CCLS service decision-making process.

Having discussed the three cooperative public library systems in detail in Chapters 5, 6, and 7, Chapter 8 summarizes and contrasts the service decision-making processes across the three organizations and reports on how the service decision-making processes vary in these different organizational environments.
Chapter VIII: Stage II - Service Decision Making at Three Cooperative Public Library Systems

The Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS), Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) and the Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) were selected for further study based on the previous analysis results\(^{138}\) and their unique settings.\(^{139}\) Each selected public library system differs from the other two public library systems in its size, annual budget and member composition. They were selected to investigate how cooperative public library systems’ service decision-making processes vary across such different settings. Individual cases were already discussed separately in previous chapters; this chapter will discuss the issue across all three cases.

**Data Collection**

Interviews were conducted at these three public library systems to learn about their service decision-making processes. Data collection took place over a period of two months from March to May 2010. Based on their involvement in system service decision making, interviewees selected included system directors, staff members, and member library directors or system board members. Nine interviews were carried out: two at the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS);\(^{140}\) four at the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS); and three at the Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS). Seven interview sessions were face-to-face interviews; two interview sessions were conducted

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\(^{138}\) The cluster analysis results from Stage I analysis divided 16 cooperative public library systems into three clusters based on their demographic and service characteristics. Three public library systems were selected, one from each cluster. They represent the variation of system characteristics.

\(^{139}\) Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System serves the smallest population among 16 cooperative public library systems; Suffolk Cooperative Library System serves the largest population; Mid-Hudson Library System is inbetween.

\(^{140}\) One group interview was conducted at MHLS with the system director and three system staff members; eight other interviews were one-on-one interviews.
over the phone. Each interview lasted from 45 minutes to one hour and was audio recorded. The audio files were transcribed and yielded a total of 163 pages of 1.5-spaced text. Each text file was named after the public library system visited, and then numbered sequentially, together with the date when the interview took place.

Data Analysis

This qualitative information was analyzed manually. Open coding was applied to the original interview texts. Similar codes were grouped into the same category. Themes were extracted from related categories. Several themes emerged from the interview transcripts; they are presented and discussed separately in this chapter. Each theme will be explained first, discussed first from the perspective of each public library system; then the theme will be compared across three public library systems in order to understand how the theme is reflected across three different settings.

Theme One: System Profile

The first theme that emerged across the three public library systems is about system features, and perceived functions and services of public library systems. The following paragraphs first discuss the theme at each public library system and then compare how the theme is reflected similarly or differently across the three public library systems.

The Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS) is unique in many ways. Its system director is also the director of the system central public library. These two organizations reside in the same building with intertwined office areas and personnel.

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141 Face-to-face interviews were better when interviewing system directors and staff members, because the researcher could take the opportunity to observe the system setting. Phone interviews were sufficient when interviewing system board members and member library directors.
responsibilities. “Doesn’t make any difference what color your paycheck is, you work for, essentially for both organizations” (CCLS-1-04/20/2010). After coding the interview transcripts from the CCLS system director, staff members and a board member, several system features stand out.

- CCLS serves an area in western New York with a declining population and mostly small towns or rural areas;
- “Most of our libraries are very poor” (CCLS-1-04/20/2010). Five out of 36 member libraries have an annual budget of less than $20,000; ten others have an annual budget of less than $50,000. Some member libraries have no professional librarians and are open only limited hours (20 hours per week). Only 18 of 36 members had joined the system’s Integrated Library System \(^{142}\) at the time of interviewing;
- The major funding source for CCLS is from New York State. CCLS also receives funding from the two counties of Chautauqua and Cattaraugus and from some private donations. All system services are free to member libraries. Member libraries do not contribute to the system budget.

The system services provided by CCLS range from interlibrary loan and delivery to training and consolidated acquisition. Because most member libraries are small and poor, CCLS provides all services free of charge to members and the system board tends to make sure it stays this way. CCLS delivery service also includes delivering furniture: “One library is getting rid of something, here, this library over here would like to get”

\(^{142}\) ILS is a suite of software programs that supports all standard library operations, including acquisition, cataloging, inventory control and circulation.
CCLS also provides centralized services such as processing newly purchased materials and getting them shelf-ready for members. Beside member services, CCLS provides the most direct public library services among all cooperative public library systems. For example, the system has a video department which serves both the public coming to its central library and member libraries. Among all 16 cooperative public library systems, CCLS has the most service points in places such as senior centers. CCLS also had a bookmobile which delivers books to patrons within the system service area.\textsuperscript{143} CCLS’ functions are to help member libraries and to accomplish state-mandated functions.

The Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) does not provide direct public library service at all. Its coordinated service is limited; the only one is the purchasing of databases. It provides interlibrary loan and delivery services, maintains an Integrated Library System and provides training and consulting services. All 66 members joined the system ILS. MHLS also has concerns for small member libraries which only have two or three staff members. MHLS has 29 member libraries that serve a population less than 5,000; among them, only one library has an annual budget of less than $50,000. For small member libraries, service discussions about and by bigger member libraries do not apply. MHLS provides a small library roundtable for them to meet quarterly and to express their concerns.

MHLS’ functions expressed by system staff and member libraries are:

- To help member libraries;
- To predict and forecast; and

\textsuperscript{143} The public service provided through the CCLS bookmobile was cut in 2009.
To coordinate resource sharing.

The Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) is the largest cooperative public library system in New York State serving a population of 1,419,369 with an annual income of $8,972,616 in 2009. Out of 56 member libraries, SCLS has eight member libraries serving a population less than 5,000; among them, only one has an annual budget of less than $50,000. At SCLS, member libraries support the system operating fund and also pay for service charges. SCLS works in partnership with its members to assist member libraries; to promote and organize cooperation among members to accomplish cost savings and services members cannot do alone. It also has the function of “pushing” new services to members. Using one member library director’s words, SCLS is “the hub of member libraries” (SCLS-3-05/05/2010).

The above is background information acquired through coding interview transcripts about the three selected public library systems. Each represents a unique case with CCLS being a relatively small organization that serves small and poor member

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Table 1.

Demographic Information of Three Cooperative Public Library Systems

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CCLS</th>
<th>MHSL</th>
<th>SCLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>System annual operating fund</td>
<td>$1,616,761</td>
<td>$2,867,177</td>
<td>$8,972,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System population</td>
<td>223,705</td>
<td>627,046</td>
<td>1,419,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System service areas (square miles)</td>
<td>2,372</td>
<td>2,937</td>
<td>911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System annual operating fund per capita</td>
<td>$7.22</td>
<td>$4.57</td>
<td>$6.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average member annual operating fund</td>
<td>$151,106</td>
<td>$388,122</td>
<td>$3,597,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average population served by members</td>
<td>4,802</td>
<td>9,197</td>
<td>24,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average member annual operating fund per capita</td>
<td>$31.46</td>
<td>$42.20</td>
<td>$144.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2009 New York State Public Library System Annual Report
libraries in rural areas, SCLS being the largest system in the state receiving both state aid and member support, and MHLS somewhere in between. They all expressed their function to be helping members; CCLS has no money to start new services; MHLS emphasized predicting and forecasting new service trends, while SCLS strongly emphasized cooperation among members. All three public library systems provide ILS services, interlibrary loan and delivery services and training and consulting. CCLS provides most direct library services to the public; MHLS provides no direct library services to the public and very little coordinated services; SCLS emphasizes its coordinated services among members. The differences in the system profiles are directly related to Theme two, the service decision-making practices across three public library systems.

Table 8.1 summarizes both the sub themes within Theme one and the categories within each sub theme across the public library systems. The same categories across all three public library systems are underlined; the categories between two public library systems are italicized; unique categories at each public library system remain unchanged. Theme one is “System Profile.” It includes three sub themes: system functions, features, and services. Each sub theme includes all relevant categories gleaned from the raw interviewing transcript. Codes that reflect the same subject were grouped into the same category.
Table 8.1. System Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub Themes</th>
<th>CCLS</th>
<th>MHLS</th>
<th>SCLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>System Features</strong></td>
<td>• Intertwined office areas and personnel</td>
<td>• Declining population in rural areas</td>
<td>• Biggest system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Declining population in rural areas</td>
<td>• Small and poor member libraries</td>
<td>• Members support system funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Small and poor member libraries</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Members vote on system budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>System Functions</strong></td>
<td>• To help members</td>
<td>• To help members</td>
<td>• To help members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To accomplish state mandated functions</td>
<td>• To accomplish state mandated functions</td>
<td>• To accomplish state mandated functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• To predict or forecast</td>
<td>• To coordinate members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• To coordinate resource sharing</td>
<td>• To predict and forecast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>System Services</strong></td>
<td>• ILL and delivery</td>
<td>• ILL and delivery</td>
<td>• ILL and delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Training and consulting</td>
<td>• Training and consulting</td>
<td>• Training and consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ILS (18/36)</td>
<td>• ILS and consulting</td>
<td>• ILS and OPAC (48/56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maintaining webpage</td>
<td>• Maintaining OPAC (66/66)</td>
<td>• Maintaining webpage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consolidated acquisition</td>
<td>• Coordinated database purchase</td>
<td>• Coordinated services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Central processing</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Customized service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Deposit collection*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Direct public library service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Item inside the parenthesis means the fraction of member libraries joining the system ILS.

*System collections for resident of nursing homes and other institutions

**Theme Two: System Service Decisions and Decision Makers**

The second theme that surfaced during coding is about different kinds of system decisions, and parties involved in making such decisions. Depending on what kind of service decisions are being made, the three public library systems adopt different decision-making processes and involve different decision makers.
At the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS), service decisions are divided into the following categories:

- Service decisions that affect all members;
- Policy decisions; and
- Operational/management decisions.

At CCLS, the parties that are involved in services decision making are the system board, the system director, system staff and member libraries. The CCLS system board is responsible for making policy and service decisions that affect all members and the system director is responsible for making operational/management decisions within the system. The system board meets every other month and looks into the information and data to make decisions. The system director and staff members are responsible for providing such information and statistical data. There is member libraries’ involvement in service decision making at CCLS but no formal mechanism is in place for them to participate in the service decision-making process. Members’ involvement is called upon by the system director through ad-hoc task forces; members’ input is sought through informal channels like phone calls or face-to-face meeting opportunities during training sessions. The small degree of members’ participation in CCLS service decision making can be related to the perception of member public libraries’ lack of professional capacity, lack of money and the fact that all system services are provided for free. It is also a big difference between CCLS and the two other public library systems in how very much the CCLS system board is involved in making service decisions.
Service decisions are categorized differently at the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS). Depending on what decision-making process is used, service decisions are categorized into:

- Service decisions that cost members;
- Service decisions that affect all members,\textsuperscript{145} and
- Other services.

At MHLS, service decisions that either cost members money or end up being a rule that every member has to follow will need to be made by member public library directors. The system director can decide on training or consulting which does not cost members money, but members’ input always has to be sought. The system board is the final decision maker when members or the system director already studied the issue and recommended a decision to the board. The system board passes the budget and the Plan of Service.

Service decisions at the Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) are very similar to MHLS. Those service decisions that either cost a lot of money or affect a significant number of members will have to be decided by members. System directors or administrators can make decisions for training or continuing education, but members’ input must be sought. The system board is the final decision maker. “Nothing reaches our board for a decision until the libraries have said yes we want this and that part of the decision-making processes is over” (SCLS-1-04/13/2010).

\textsuperscript{145} Most are resource sharing decisions.
Table 8.2 summarizes sub themes under Theme two as well as corresponding categories in each sub theme. The same categories across all three public library systems are underlined; the same categories between two public library systems are italicized; unique codes at each public library system remain unchanged.

Table 8.2. System Service Decisions and Decision Makers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub Themes</th>
<th>CCLS</th>
<th>MHLS</th>
<th>SCLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>System Service Decision</strong></td>
<td>• Service decisions that affect all members</td>
<td>• Service decisions that cost members money</td>
<td>• Service decisions that cost members significant amount of money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Policy decisions</td>
<td>• Service decisions that affect all members</td>
<td>• Service decisions that affect a significant number of members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Operational/management decision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>System Service Decision Makers</strong></td>
<td>System board</td>
<td>Member libraries</td>
<td>Member libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• System director</td>
<td>• System director</td>
<td>• System director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Member libraries (very little)</td>
<td>• System board</td>
<td>• System board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike MHLS and SCLS, CCLS does not identify service decisions that will cost members money or affect all members. This aligns with the fact that CCLS has small and poor members and CCLS provides all system services without any charge to members and it rarely coordinates system service that will cost everyone money. The only exception is the fee members have to pay to the ILS vendor for joining CCLS centralized ILS. Service that will cost members money is not seen at CCLS. Service decisions that will affect all members are made by the system board at CCLS, although members’ input will be sought. Compared to MHLS and SCLS, CCLS does not have a formal mechanism in place for members to participate in the system service decision making. Informal
channels are used such as ad-hoc committees or communication between members and CCLS.

The CCLS system board is deeply involved in the system service decision making. Much discussion and many information-exchange activities happen at system board meetings. But system boards at MHLS and SCLS are not as deeply involved in system service decision making as system board at CCLS. At MHLS and SCLS, system boards are final decision makers who are presented with recommended decisions made by the system staff and member libraries. Both MHLS and SCLS members are deeply involved in system service decision making. Certain system service decisions that either cost members money or affect their operation have to be made by members at MHLS and SCLS.

Theme Three: System Service Decision-making Processes

The third common theme that emerged from the interview transcripts is the system service decision-making process. Sub themes under this theme include: identifying service needs; member involvement and group decision making. The following paragraphs first look at sub themes and corresponding categories at each public library system, then compare the similarities and differences across all three public library systems.

At the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS), the system director plays a central role in system service decision making. To the system board, the system director “is a very very capable person” and “does a super job” (CCLS-4-05/17/2010). To the system staff, the system director is the one who possesses information and makes
decisions; and service decisions are made either by system administrators or by the system board. The system director is the one to call meetings; to decide who should be involved in making a service decision; and to provide required information to the system board. Years of experiences and intuitive feelings are called upon when the system director decides whether a service decision should be made by the system board or by system staff: “It was something that I felt they (system board) have to decide about it; I just have a feel, that’s all I can tell you, of what I should have them decide; what I feel we can decide within the building” (CCLS-1-04/20/2010).

The service decision-making process at CCLS involves identifying needs, collecting information, group discussion and making final decisions. The need for making service decision at CCLS can come up from member libraries or their patrons, or come down from system administrators or from system staff. Information that is used to help making service decisions comes from conducting studies and doing research, collecting statistical usage data; seeking professional opinions; and surveying members. The system director’s years of experiences and personal knowledge are also used to make service decision. Discussions take place among board members, or staff members; advantages and disadvantages are presented and debated. At the end, either the system director or the system board makes the final call.

The other characteristic of the service decision-making process at CCLS is the fact that there is no formal member participation structure in place. Members’ input is sought through phone calls when needed or through forming an ad hoc task force or field visit by assigned field consultants. The knowledge of a service decision-making process among system staff member is not explicit. An ad-hoc committee will be formed when a
new situation emerges. The system director decides who shall be involved in such committees.

At the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS), members participate in system service decision making through director’s association and advisory committees. They meet regularly and discuss issues concerning all members. System service decisions that either cost them money or affect their operations have to be brought to these meetings for discussion and voting. Even if the service decision does not need to be brought to the director’s association for discussion or voting, advisory committees’ input is collected to help the system director making decisions. System staff members provide information for the group discussion among members. There are rules in place governing service decision-making activities among member libraries: the quorum rule and the rule of “nothing should be voted on before it was discussed at least once before the voting takes place” (MHLS-1-03/16/2010). Service decisions made by members are applied system-wide.

The most formal and structured service decision-making process at the three systems is at the Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS), especially at the members’ participation level. Like MHLS, SCLS has advisory committees which include member representatives into different service areas such as resource sharing, technology and marketing. The system area is divided into five geographical zones; each zone has its monthly meeting. All system members meet quarterly around the system. These regular meetings provide opportunity for the system to communicate with members, and to discuss issues with members, and “to be able to put a finger on the pulse of the group in person” (SCLS-1-04/13/2010).
At SCLS, voting is avoided generally except for those service decisions that all members have to agree upon in order for the decision to work, such as resource sharing service decisions. “The vote to me, all that does is to pin people in a corner I don’t think they necessarily wanted to be pinned into” (SCLS-1-04/13/2010). Instead, SCLS adopts a “significant majority” policy when it comes to make group service decisions. “You know the majority in our system is 27 libraries, I don’t ever want there be a 28 to 26 vote, but if 28 libraries want something, 26 libraries don’t want something, we are not doing it, because that’s not general enough consensus” (SCLS-1-04/13/2010). The service decision then will be scaled down to a level that is appealing to most members. MHLS adopts a “simple majority” policy when members make service decisions.

Table 8.3 summarizes the three sub themes under Theme three and the corresponding categories in each sub theme. These categories were extracted from the opening coding results of the original interview transcripts, similar codes are grouped into same categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub Themes</th>
<th>CCLS</th>
<th>MHLS</th>
<th>SCLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identifying Needs</strong></td>
<td>• From members • From system staff</td>
<td>• From members • From system staff • From advisory committees</td>
<td>• From members • From system • Meeting somewhere in the middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member Involvement</strong></td>
<td>• Not formal • Field consultants</td>
<td>• Director’s association • Advisory committees</td>
<td>• Zone meeting • Advisory committees • Directors’ quarterly meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Decision Making</strong></td>
<td>• Voting among board members</td>
<td>• Voting among members • Simple majority</td>
<td>• Avoiding voting in general • Significant majority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme Four: System Service Decision Making – Information

Theme four reflects how the three public library systems collect and use information in making service decisions. To help the system director and the system board making service decisions at the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS), information is collected. Such information includes members’ input, statistical usage data, and professional expertise. Members’ input is collected through surveying members and annual field visits to member libraries by assigned system field consultants. Statistical usage data are used to see what kind of reference questions have been asked and if certain database products are well used in answering those questions. Professional librarians are involved when their expertise and knowledge is needed. Cost studies are carried out to provide quantitative data for making service decisions at CCLS. System staff members are responsible for collecting information.

At the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS), members’ input is always sought in both formal and informal channels. Members’ concerns can be expressed at regular meetings or through other communication methods such as phone calls or emails. Quantitative data are necessary when making service decisions whenever the data are available. System staff members are responsible for collecting information and presenting it to members for discussion.

The Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) also seeks inputs from members through regular meetings, field visits by the system director and staff members and by other communication methods such as phone calls or emails. The interaction not only happens at the administration level, but also involves member library staff members; their input is useful for making certain service decisions in their expertise areas. Vendors are
invited and proposals are presented to all members in order for them to make final
decisions. Experts from outside SCLS are also invited when they are needed.

Table 8.4 summarizes Theme four and the corresponding categories in the theme.
Categories that are same across three public library systems are underlined. Unique
categories remain unchanged. The same categories between two public library systems
are italicized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme Four</th>
<th>CCLS</th>
<th>MHLS</th>
<th>SCLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Information | • **Members’ input**  
  1. Annual field visit by assigned field consultant  
  2. Surveying  
  3. **Phone call**  
  4. **Email**  
  • Statistical data  
  • Cost studies  
  • **System staff members’ professional expertise**  
  • System board members’ expertise and knowledge | • **Members’ input**  
  1. Phone call  
  2. **Email**  
  • Statistical data  
  • **System staff members’ professional expertise** | • **Members’ input**  
  1. **Field visit by system director or assigned staff**  
  2. **Surveying**  
  3. **Phone call**  
  4. **Email**  
  • Statistical data  
  • **System and members’ staff expertise**  
  • **External resources** |

**Theme Five: System Service Decision-making Challenges**

Theme five is about challenges occurring during the system service decision-making process. Although all three public library systems share some common challenges, each public library system also has its unique challenges.

One challenge at the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS) for making service decisions is members’ lack of capacity. Because CCLS has some members that only have limited annual budgets and are open only limited hours, and have no
professional librarians, their direct involvement in system service decision making is limited. CCLS depends more on the system board and system staff members to make service decisions. The second challenge in CCLS’ service decision-making process is the lack of money. Over the years, state funding, as the major system funding source, has been continuously cut. Difficult decisions have to be made to cut certain system services that have been in existence for many years; or to ask members for help continuing system services that used to be free (e.g., book mobile and database access). These are difficult service decisions that CCLS has to make under the current funding situation.

At the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS), the challenge of system service decision making is to develop consensus, especially in resource sharing: “Everybody is very passionate about their own rules and they would love to have a consensus, as long as everybody does what they want” (MHLS-1-03/16/2010). Usually group discussion will go on and on, and the service decision has to be tabled without consensus from members. MHLS also receives its funding from the state; the budget cuts have led to both cutting existing services (e.g., printing services and mini grant) and charging members for services that were free (e.g., delivery services).

The Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) receives both member support and state funding for its operations. Members also pay services fees for whatever service they receive from SCLS. But with state budget cuts, SCLS also has to make decisions to cut services (e.g., dial-in Internet services). The other challenge for SCLS service decision making is also about developing consensus among members:

You have 56 or 54 real active members who each has different sets of priorities, has different economic situations, has different financial self-interests, and trying
to make sure that anything we offer is offered in a way that will allow the most, the greatest amount of them to get the actual value out (SCLS-1-04/13/2010).

Because of the significant amount of financial support received from member libraries, the SCLS director takes special precautions to make sure that every interest involved in the system service decision making is treated fairly. The significant majority rule rather than the simple majority rule is applied to members’ group decision making to ensure greater consensus. Sometimes such processes can be time-consuming and comments like the following example about the process reach SCLS: “These other people can’t figure it out, leave them aside” (SCLS-1-04/13/2010). Aggressive members try to push the agenda, while the system tries to make sure that every member is treated fairly.

As seen in Table 8.5, across all three public library systems, stagnant state funding and budget cuts are a common challenge for them to make service decisions of either cutting services or charging members for service fees. For both MHLS and SCLS, the difficulty of reaching group consensus is a common challenge. The group decision-making process can take a long time and still be tabled afterward. For CCLS, the challenge is not the group decision-making process but the fact that members’ capacity is limited. At CCLS, the system board is used to making service decisions that are otherwise made by members at MHLS and SCLS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme Five</th>
<th>CCLS</th>
<th>MHLS</th>
<th>SCLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>• Members’ limited capacity • Budget cut</td>
<td>• Group decision making • Budget cut</td>
<td>• Group decision making • Budget cut</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

This chapter introduced the process of conducting semi-structured interviews at three selected public library systems in New York State to learn about their service decision-making activities, and reported the qualitative data analysis results based on these interview texts. The interview texts were analyzed manually. An open coding process was applied to the original texts, and themes emerged from the coding and synthesizing process. Similar codes were first grouped into similar categories, and categories into themes. Each theme was first discussed for each public library system, and then compared across all three public library systems.

Five themes have emerged from the interview texts: 1) system profiles; 2) system service decisions and decision makers; 3) system decision-making process; 4) system decision making – information and 5) system decision-making challenges. Each public library system’s service decision-making practice has been examined under these themes and has been compared with other two public library systems. The sections below address the major overarching themes from this chapter’s analysis.

1. The Chautauqua – Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS) is a cooperative public library system that focuses more on “supporting” members in their operation and services.

Most CCLS services have already existed for a long time and all these system services are free. There are no coordinated library services among members which cost members financially. Most members are poor and small. They are not directly involved in system service decision making. The system board and system director are the major
decision makers at CCLS. System staff members’ expertise and research are depended upon for collecting information.

2. Due to the limitation of members’ capacity and the relatively small system budget, the system service decision-making process at CCLS displays the feature of being both flexible and economical.

At CCLS, ad hoc committees or meetings are formed to discuss service decisions whenever they are needed. The rationale for not involving members much into the system decision-making process by a formal structure includes members’ limited capacity and the fact that there is no system service at CCLS that costs members’ money. The more that members’ money is at stake, the more they need to be involved in system service decision making. When all system services are provided for free, the need for members’ participation in system service decision making is less essential. It is also expensive for members and the system to maintain a formal structure when both have limited resources to spare.

The CCLS system director plays an extremely important role in system service decision making by forming ad hoc committees, and making final decisions. This works well because CCLS is a relatively small organization. Group decision making can be expensive and time-consuming. This director-centered decision-making process means faster decision making at CCLS. Overall, the CCLS’ service decision-making process has features of being informal, flexible and director-centered; these features all answer the need of maintaining an economic and efficient decision-making process at CCLS.
3. The Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) is more of a “coordinating” cooperative public library system.

SCLS pays more attention to looking for opportunities to provide coordinated services that individual members will not be able to provide on their own. More new and county-wide services are explored and provided at SCLS than at MHLS and CCLS, since SCLS and its members have more resources.

4. SCLS members are deeply involved in SCLS service decision making since they pay a large amount of money for system operations and system services.

Since all SCLS members pay to support system’s operations and services, they have more involvement in service decision making than members at CCLS and MHLS, and individual members’ interests are protected and treated fairly. The significant majority rule rather than the simple majority rule is applied to make group decisions in order to make sure most members’ interests are protected rather than just a little more than half of them. Making a satisfying service decision that involves 56 members could be time-consuming and difficult, since each member can have different schedules and needs.

SCLS serves a geographically small area; therefore traveling is less an issue here than it is at CCLS and MHLS. Member meetings and system board meetings take place more often at SCLS. The system director takes regular field trips to member libraries. SCLS also has more resources at hand when it comes to making service decisions. Not only system staff members’ professional expertise can be called on, but member library staff members’ expertise can also be useful.
5. The Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) is a “supporting” cooperative public library system.

MHLS provides no centralized services such as centralized processing to members as CCLS; it provides only coordinated database purchase for members. Most system services are free to members. MHLS has a formal structure for members to participate in system decision-making processes to decide on services costing them money or affecting their operation. System members’ expertise and research are depended upon for collecting information.

6. MHLS provides system services for free, and it adopts a group decision-making process for members’ participation.

MHLS lets members make service decisions when they pay for the service or when it is a system-wide policy decision. The system board is not directly involved in service decision making. It is the final decision maker of members’ or system’s recommended decisions. MHLS makes it formal for members to participate in system service decision making. It has rules for members to follow when making service decisions. But traveling cost could be a factor for certain members’ absences from such meetings all the time. Since MHLS serves a geographically larger area than SCLS, the formal structure cannot ensure member libraries’ fully participating in the system service decision-making processes. Simple majority is applied in group decision-making processes, this means 20 out of 66 member libraries would be enough for passing or rejecting a system-wide service decision. This can be problematic when it is always the same group of members making system-wide decisions while the rest of members do not
participate either because they do not care or they cannot afford such costs. Similar to the group decision-making processes at SCLS, group service decision making at MHLS takes a longer time to develop consensus.

These three public library systems have different service decision-making processes in place; such differences can be attributed to their members’ capacity and system services provided. The stronger the members’ capacity is, the more coordinated system services will be provided and there will be more member involvement in system decision-making processes. When the member’s capacity is not strong, there will be fewer coordinated services that cost members’ money, and less member involvement in system decision making.

The next chapter discusses the theoretical and practical implications of these findings. By looking at such service decision-making practices through theoretical lenses, a better understanding of service decision-making practices at three cooperative public library systems and an understanding which also contributes to organizational decision-making theories by applying them to cooperative public library system settings can be gained. Cooperative public library systems in New York State can also be better understood based on this study and its findings.
Chapter IX: Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation study was to document service decision-making processes in three selected cooperative public library systems in New York State, and to look at their organizational decision-making processes through the theoretical lenses of decision making. This knowledge of service decision-making processes at cooperative public library systems adds to the understanding of such organizations and their operations. Findings from this study also contribute to the theory of organizational decision making in public organizations.

The service decision-making processes used at the three selected cooperative public library systems share common features but also bear unique system marks. This agrees with findings from previous studies on organizational decision-making processes: that the decision-making process is determined by decision content and the organizational environment. On the one hand, this means that within organizations, system services that are either funded or provided differently require different decision-making processes. On the other hand, these cooperative public library systems are different organizations, serving different areas with different populations and different levels of operating funds. Therefore, some service decision-making processes varied across organizations for similar services.

The next three sections of this chapter are organized around a discussion of system services, service decisions, and service decision-making processes within and across three different cooperative public library systems. After that, the theoretical and practical implications of this research are discussed. The last part of the chapter talks about possible future research.
System Services

To learn about service decision-making processes at three selected cooperative public library systems, it was necessary to first gain knowledge about services provided by each system. Cooperative public library systems in New York State were established to improve public library services in a way that individual libraries cannot or would not do alone. The important tasks for cooperative public library systems are to ensure that all New York State’s population has equal accesses to library resources and services, to improve services provided by public libraries, to coordinated public library services, and to use public funds efficiently and economically. Overall, all public library system services can be categorized as follows: services to strengthen member libraries, coordinated services among members for economical and efficient use of public funds, and direct services to the public where there is no public library.

The law and regulations that specified the establishment of cooperative public library systems did not provide detailed information about what services public library systems should provide. New York State cooperative public library systems have great freedom and autonomy to decide what services they will provide. Depending on systems’ and members’ capabilities and needs, systems can have different focuses on certain service areas.

When member libraries lack professional staff and operating funds, public library systems pay more attention to strengthen and support their day-to-day efforts in serving their communities, and pay less attention to coordinate cooperative services that require member libraries to spend money. When member libraries are well off, public library systems can coordinate cooperative services among member libraries in providing
system-wide services, or expend more efforts in exploring new service ideas. Consolidated services are always popular services provided by public library systems in order to help lower acquisition costs for member libraries. When the populations and areas served by public library systems have low average household income, public library systems also need to provide more direct library services since not all communities can afford their own public libraries.

Overall, when cooperative public library systems in New York State decide what services to provide, actual needs from member libraries, as well as members’ financial and professional resources are important factors to be considered in addition to those requirements specified in the state law and regulations.

The Chautauqua – Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS) has many member libraries that are poor and small, with limited annual budgets and few or no professional librarians. Therefore at CCLS, system services focus on sustaining and supporting member libraries. CCLS provides material funds and deposit collections to member libraries. Since members lack funds, CCLS provides all services to members for free. Cooperative services among members that cost them money are not popular at CCLS. The only cooperative service that costs members money is the centralized Integrated Library System (ILS) which contains modules for acquisition, circulation and patron records. Members pay a fee to the ILS vendor for joining in the centralized ILS. Usually the centralized ILS is maintained at the system headquarters. Here at the CCLS, the central ILS license is granted to the James-Prendergast Library, the CCLS central library, although it is administered by a system person.
The Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) is the biggest cooperative public library system in New York State. Its member libraries provide financial support to the system in an amount that is more than its annual state aid. Each year, the SCLS budget has to be voted on by member libraries. At SCLS, members also pay for system services. SCLS not only supports members but also emphasizes cooperative services that individual libraries cannot accomplish alone. Because all members are contributing to the SCLS’ operating funds, SCLS can afford to provide system services at different levels along different scales to satisfy each and every member’s interests.

System services at the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) are somewhere between CCLS and SCLS. Member libraries at MHLS are not all as small and poor as member libraries at CCLS, but they are also not capable of providing as large a portion of financial support as SCLS members. Most MHLS system services are free to members. It does not have a lot of cooperative services except coordinated purchasing of databases.

The service decision-making processes at each public library system are also different because of their different membership composition. As system service users or customers, member libraries play an important role in public library systems’ service decisions and the corresponding decision-making processes.

**System Service Decision-making Processes**

Service decision-making processes at public library systems are influenced by both service-related features and organizational features. Depending on the service content, service funding and service impact, public library systems adopt different decision-making processes to make decisions. To make a cooperative system service decision (e.g., resource sharing, coordinated database purchasing), members should be
major decision makers because they either share service costs or make resource contributions to the service. To make a centralized system service decision (e.g., training, consulting), public library systems can make the call, with some input from member libraries.

The members’ contribution of resources and money in system services is not the only condition for them to become major decision makers. When the system service decisions have to be applied system-wide, member libraries need to be decision makers, too. An example would be to provide a standard Open Public Access Catalog (OPAC) webpage that leads to the system-wide library materials held by member libraries and the system headquarters. Member libraries might not need to pay for such webpage design services provided by public library systems, but they all have to participate in deciding on the design features, since it will be displayed on their libraries’ webpage and used by their patrons.

The actual decision-making process will be different depending on the public library systems’ geographic location and distance, systems’ capacities and members’ capacities. When the system serves a large geographic area, the distance could be an issue for those member libraries that are either too far or too small to attend the group process as often as possible. When both the public library system and its member libraries are limited by lack of funding and professional staff members, its service decision-making processes will be different from the public library system that has relatively more funding and resources, and better funded member libraries.
The above paragraphs provided a general and simplified description of service decision-making processes in the three cooperative public library systems. The actual service decision-making process at each public library systems is different because of different background and member characteristics. Factors that could contribute to such variations are discussed below.

**Service-related Features**

Service-related features that influence decision-making processes in public library systems include service content, service funding and service impact. Each of the three public library systems adopts somewhat different service decision-making processes based on differences in these service-related features.

1. **Service content**

   Cooperative public library systems in New York State provide services ranging from centralized supporting services to cooperative and shared member services. They also provide direct services to the public. Services to members cover areas of administration, operation and user services. Services can be provided in the form of money support, material support, and professional support such as consulting and continuing education services. For centralized system services and direct public services, public library systems are the major decision makers; for cooperative system services, member libraries are the major decision makers.

2. **Service funding**

   Because the state is not increasing our funding, therefore we have to cut some services, because we can’t afford them. We will also start to charge our members for services, so once we start to charge them, they will be more involved in the decision-
making process. The reason they are more involved in ILS is because we charge them for that (MHLS-1-03/16/2010).

The core people involved with the decision-making processes here (SCLS) are first and foremost the member libraries as represented by their directors, since they pay such a significant portion of our funds (SCLS-1-04/13/2010).

Even the same types of system services can be funded differently and therefore require different decision-making processes accordingly. When the system service is funded solely by the system and provided to members free of charge, public library systems can make the service decision; when the system service is funded with member libraries’ money or provided to members with charges, member libraries are decision makers.

3. Service impact

They, the directors, make the decisions about things that either cost everyone money or end up being a rule that everyone has to follow. And the majority of the rules are how resources are shared. So there they really have to do the voting. In those other areas they are suggesting a direction that we then follow (MHLS-1-03/16/2010).

When the system service does not affect member libraries’ day-to-day operations and user services, the public library system can make the call. But when a system service requires changes on how library users receive library services, member libraries want to make such decisions according to their patrons’ interests. At public library systems, whenever a service decision has to be applied system-wide, member libraries are decision makers.
Organizational Features

Organizational features that can influence service decision-making processes at public library systems mainly include systems’ features and members’ features.

1. Systems’ features

*Sometime it’s my right hand talks to my left hand; I have to switch hats, you know, for sometimes I am a library system director, and then sometimes I am the public library director. So it’s interesting. Sometimes I just have to ask permission of myself to do things (CCLS-1-04/20/2010).*

The unique setting of each public library system has a natural influence on its service decision-making processes. The number of professional staff members, the amount of annual operating funds, and the geographic location and distance can all affect the system’s actual capacity to make decisions despite the ideal they have about making service decisions. The governance structure, the director’s leadership style, and the organizational culture can also have affects.

2. Member’s capacity

*For whatever reason, many libraries, many directors don’t show up for director’s association meetings. I mean we are a five-county system, and it’s a long way to come for some directors. Some directors also have very small libraries, and if they leave the building, there is nobody there, so often it’s the same group of the people at the director’s association meetings. You know there are certain people that are never there, so it’s hard to take into account their needs, if they are not there to voice their need. … And they have to live with whatever decision is made for the system, whether they are present or not (MHLS-3-03/25/2010).*

*We don’t do it (getting member libraries involved in system service decision making) as much as that other systems do, mainly because they (members) are, most of them are not*
professionals, most of them work part-time, and we have winter out here, so getting them together is often difficult (CCLS-1-04/20/2010).

On the other hand, the members’ capacity also plays a big role when it comes to making a system service decision that matters to members. The number of professional staff member(s) at member libraries, their annual operating funds, their available resources and community needs can all affect how willing they will be in participating in group decision-making processes and how easy it is for them to do it.

At the Chautauqua – Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS), all system services are free to members. With limited resources and few or no professional librarians at member libraries, it is also difficult to gather members together to discuss system services that affect them. Policy decisions about system services that affect all members are made by the system board of trustees at CCLS. This is very different from the other two public library systems since their boards of trustees only approve or disapprove a final decision submitted by members or by systems. Member libraries make very few system service decisions at CCLS.

At the Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS), members not only pay financial support to the system but also pay for system services. Their financial involvement in the system is so great that members get to vote on SCLS’ annual budget. Since all members contribute to SCLS financially, service decisions are made to appeal to as many individual members’ needs as possible.

Member libraries at the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) do not pay financial support to the system, but the system coordinates services (e.g., cooperative database purchasing) among members for which they have to pay. For such services,
members have to make decisions, since it is their money. There are differences between MHLS and SCLS in the way members make decisions. At MHLS, as long as a simple majority of members agree, the service decision can be made, while at SCLS, each member is given consideration for its opinions because each contributes to SCLS’ operating funds. Therefore simple majority is not enough for making such service decisions at SCLS; a significant majority is sought instead. The same service decision made at MHLS by the rule of simple majority might not be made successfully at SCLS.

The next two sections examine the service decision-making processes along the dimensions of (1) formalization and (2) model fit.

**Service Decision-making Processes – Formalization**

Well, you know there are some things where a formal vote must take place, where we talked about, where there is not a specific vote required. Oftentimes they are just showing a hand or again discussion as an indicator of the group mentality. It hardly ever comes down to a recorded vote. I guess where we would say, oh there are 30 for, you know, 25 against. That’s not what usually it comes down to. We generally have more consensus than would necessitate a formal vote (SCLS-3-05/05/2010).

The vote is just the simple majority of the people in the room. So even though there are 65 directors, you don’t have to have 33 people saying yes. It's just the majority of the people who are present. So as long as you have a quorum, then that work can be done (MHLS-3-03/25/2010).

The previous section discussed factors that could influence the service decision-making process adopted by each public library system. This section looks at service decision-making practices at three public library systems and discusses how these factors
can influence their service decision-making processes in the dimension of process formalization.

Process formalization in this research is examined through the following two aspects: 1) the existence of a formal decision-making structure; 2) the existence of rules for making service decisions. The formal decision-making structure provides a platform for the decision-making activity to take place. The decision-making rules can make sure the due diligence is done in order to make a service decision.

According to these two aspects, the service decision-making process was least formal at the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS) among all three organizations. Ad hoc committees and task forces were formed based on actual needs. There was no formal arrangement for members to get together and discuss service issues. Instead, informal channels such as email, phone calls or system training opportunities were used at CCLS for such communications. The CCLS director decided whose expertise and knowledge was fit for participating in making service decisions, and what decisions should be decided within the system or by the system board of trustees. The knowledge of system service decision-making processes at CCLS is not explicit knowledge. The system director is considered by both system staff members and the system board of trustee members as the one who is capable in handling system issues. The service decision-making process at CCLS is the one that is most economical and efficient.

Compared to CCLS, the Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) has the most formal procedure for making service decisions. There are regular meetings among members happening at different levels within SCLS. SCLS divided its service area into
five geographic zones; each zone has its zone meetings. There are also regular system-wide member meetings. SCLS has advisory committees on different service topics. Selected members from each zone serve as representatives on advisory committees, and committee meetings take place whenever they are needed. At SCLS, not only is the system director deeply involved in making system service decisions, but other administrators at SCLS are also involved in system service decision making in different service fields. The significant majority rule is applied when members make group decisions in order to ensure most members are happy with the result.

…really puts the decision in their (members’) hands, and our (SCLS) job, our responsibility is to make sure there is a method whereby they can make a collective decision, where we don’t give it to votes, because vote tends to have the same pool of the people vote yes all the time and the other same pool of the people voting for no all the time, so we have 30 really happy libraries and 24 really unhappy libraries. Now we got probably 4 or 5 unhappy libraries, 40 happy libraries, and 12 neutral libraries, which are unhappy on some issues and happy on other issues (SCLS-1-04/13/2010).

The Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) also has a formal decision-making procedure for making system service decisions. MHLS has regular system-wide member meetings and follows a simple majority rule when members make group service decisions. Compared to SCLS, a service decision would be made at MHLS at a much lower voting rate. Unlike SCLS, members do not contribute to MHLS’ operating funds nor vote on MHLS’ annual budget. Therefore making sure most members are happy with the result is not as important as at SCLS.

Overall, the degree of formalization of the service decision-making process is influenced by service-related and organizational factors discussed in the previous section.
The degree of formalization of the service decision-making process depends mostly on available resources and funds at each public library system and at its member libraries. The smaller organization with fewer resources tends to adopt informal decision-making processes since maintaining and operating a formal procedure can be expensive and costly for both the system and its members. The bigger organization with more resources tends to have formal decision-making procedures in order to ensure fairness. This range is manifested by the practices at CCLS and SCLS.

The following section looks at the service decision-making process at three public library systems along the dimension of model fit by applying decision-making models.

**Service Decision-making Processes – Model Fit**

This section looks at system service decision-making processes from the point of view of both the rational choice model and the garbage can model. A decision-making process that reflects the rational choice model includes collecting all available information and using information to support decision-making activity. The rational choice model is a normative model in the ideal situation. This is rarely the case in reality since organizational decision-making process can be messy and decision makers’ capabilities to collect and analyze information are limited. The garbage can model is a more descriptive model of the actual decision-making practice. A decision-making process that reflects the garbage can model includes situations in which solution, problem and decision makers meet together by chance rather than by design. What happens in the decision-making process that possesses the features of the garbage can model usually is the solution looking for problems. (One good example of this would be deciding how to spend some extra budget money or how to apply a new technology.) This section
examines service decision-making processes at these three cooperative public library systems to analyze how much these two models are reflected in their decision-making processes, and how these previous discussed service-related and organizational features affect the model fit.

At the Chautauqua – Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS), service decisions that affect all members are made by the system board of trustees. Such service decisions at the other two public library system are made by members. This unique arrangement at CCLS could be attributed to the traveling distance for members and the lack of resources and professional skills in most member libraries. The CCLS board of trustees makes service decisions based on board members’ skills and expertise, and on information collected and provided by the CCLS staff to evaluate the pros and cons of alternative options. CCLS collects such information from surveying members, conducting research and collecting statistical usage data, or through informal communication channels such as making phone calls to member libraries. But the line is not explicit about what service decisions should go to the board of trustees and what should be decided within the system. It is up to the CCLS system director to decide, and the rationale is implicit in the following: “but it was something that I felt was theirs (board of trustees), they have to decide about it. I just have a feel, that’s all I can tell you of what I should have them decide; what I feel we can decide within the building” (CCLS-1-04/20/2010).

At CCLS, the service decision-making process is not explicit knowledge among staff members and the decision-making process is informal. The CCLS director’s experiences and position were pointed to by both the board members and the staff members when asked how service decisions are made at CCLS. The board of trustees
gives high acknowledgement to the CCLS director’s capability, and staff members also consider the CCLS director as the most knowledgeable person regarding system service decision making. The CCLS director decides whose expertise to call on for making service decisions, and ad hoc committees and task forces are formed when needed rather than in place just in case they are needed. Therefore at CCLS, the system director is a critical factor in making service decisions. As one interviewee told this researcher, “yes, yeah, it was definitely a group meeting, but I think that if the director didn’t want it, you know what I mean; the director would have said no” (CCLS-2-04/20/2010).

Compared to the other two library systems, the service decision-making process at CCLS is informal, implicit and director-dependent. It could be an arrangement in response to its being a small organization with limited resources. Informal arrangement is much cheaper to maintain compared to a formal and regular organizational arrangement.

The system service decision-making process at CCLS reflects both the rational choice model and the garbage can model. The best example of this is the CCLS decision of cutting the bookmobile service. The bookmobile usage was declining at CCLS, the state aid for the system was cutting down, and the fuel price was skyrocketing. This decision was discussed among stakeholders and information was collected about pro and cons of different options at CCLS. Then the bookmobile had mechanical problems and broke down. This provided the chance opportunity for CCLS and brought the discussion to the end.

The decision-making processes at CCLS reflect the feature of bounded rationality. “Bounded rationality” refers to a situation where decision makers are limited by capacities and available resources. Rather than collect all relevant information, decision
makers settle with the limitation and make decisions based on whatever information available resources allow them to collect, and use experience, among other techniques, to make up for the deficiency of the relevant information. This is consistent with what happens at CCLS.

At CCLS, information collection is limited by the lack of resources at both system and member level. When CCLS was making the system decision to end bookmobile service, one study the system carried out to facilitate this decision making was to identify who the bookmobile’s users were. This study was completely contingent upon the centralized ILS system at the time and since only 18 out of 36 members participated in this centralized ILS system, the data were not complete for the whole system. Nonetheless this information was used in this process. CCLS makes service decisions by collecting information, but is limited by reality. Such information collection is not always complete and up-to-date. Therefore the service decision-making process reflects “bounded rationality” in collecting whatever information it can and complementing it with other means such as personal experiences, knowledge and successful experiences shared by other public library systems.

The Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) has the most formal and regular decision-making process among all three cooperative public library systems. It mostly reflects the rational choice model. SCLS has relatively more resources at its command compared to the other two organizations. Member needs are surveyed whenever they are necessary; discussions among members can take place as often as they are needed; vendors are asked to submit proposals and present to the members; and the system director and other relevant decision makers take field trips to places to collect
information onsite when needed. SCLS also uses successful stories in other public library systems and decision makers’ personal experiences in its decision making, but such means do not replace the necessity of collecting relevant information, rather complementing the available information.

The service decision-making process at the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) reflects both the rational choice model and the garbage can model. MHLS makes decisions on information and data whenever information is available and MHLS can afford to collect such information. But there were scenarios at MHLS in which, even when the information was available, service decisions were not made rationally based on that information, but rather on merely the satisfaction of member libraries. “So if they really aren’t happy, we will do it, adjust it” (MHLS-1-03/16/2010). Also in some situations the system director made decisions rather than going through a members’ group discussion process.

*What we just did for instance last year, we ended printing, we used to print and design services for our members. We have designer. We have print and those people retired so rather than fill the position I say let’s save the money. Now that decision is mine. Some people liked it. Some people don’t like it. Decisions we have to make ultimately and I have to make it (MHLS-1-03/16/2010).*

The three initial conditions that identify the kinds of organizations that make decisions through the garbage can model are: (1) problematic preferences, (2) unclear technology and (3) fluid participation (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972). Problematic preferences exist when decision makers have conflicting organizational goals. Unclear technology occurs when it is uncertain to all decision makers what kind of technology can accomplish their goals. Fluid participation points to unstable participation from
decision makers. Cooperative public library systems satisfied these conditions based on the fact that they have autonomous members that have different schedules and interests; they are not all clear about the technology that can help them to accomplish their schedules and goals; and the participation from decision makers can be fluid and inconsistent in some cooperative public library systems. Another feature of the garbage can model is solutions looking for problems. Here solutions can emerge from new ideas, new findings, or some extra funds received by these organizations. For example, “In 2006 or 2007, we got an extra 200,000 dollars because of Governor Spitzer, so that decision of how to spend the money” (MHLS-1-03/16/2010).

Cooperative public library systems’ decision making through the garbage can model is mostly reflected through those service decisions that affect many members. The Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS) reflects the garbage can model with unstable involvement of members and staff members in system service decision-making processes. Many times at CCLS the need to make a service decision is generated by the system director. The Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) reflects the garbage can choice model in its service decision-making process based on the fact that it is “pushing” new ideas and new services to members. As one SCLS interviewee pointed out, “the other thing is to find any services and identify them and try to get pricing that make it, you know, attractive to the directors” (SCLS-2-04/13/2010). One big difference between SCLS and the other two organizations is that it has the capability to identify and market new services. At CCLS, the same idea was repeated by different interviewees that most system services were in existence for a long time and the system is lucky to maintain what it has. The Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) shares with SCLS the
feature of “pushing” new services to members. MHLS considers itself as a forecaster, introducing new trends to members. An example was encouraging members to purchase a module for smart phone users.

Generally speaking, all three selected cooperative public library systems displayed the features of the rational choice model in their service decision-making processes. At CCLS (more so) and MHLS, limited by resources, their practices displayed features of bounded rationality. The garbage can model can also be applied to all three selected cooperative public library systems.

The degree to which the garbage can model is reflected in service decision-making processes of each organization is related to the decision content. Certain decisions are prone to the garbage can model, such as decisions that find a problem for an existing solution. On the other hand, the degree of the garbage can model reflected in the decision-making process is also related to the degree of participation from member libraries, and the degree of conflict between individual member’s goals and system group goals. CCLS members rarely participate in the system’s decision-making processes, and the system consultants make field trips to member libraries annually. Limited by resources and distance, there is no regular member participations at CCLS. The organizational features at CCLS tend to reflect a garbage can model of decision-making processes. Both MHLS and SCLS also have members with different goals and agenda. Compared to MHLS, SCLS member libraries’ participation is more consistent and regular than at MHLS because of the distance factor and the available resources at each member library. In spite of these differences, all three organizations have to make decisions from time to time that are finding problems for solutions. Therefore all three
cooperative public library systems in this study reflect to some degree the garbage can model in their service decision-making processes.

**Implications**

*I can’t think of any, more than four years I have been here, I can’t think of a single decision that we made that the overwhelming majority of the libraries were not in favor of. Now you know, we can make decisions you know, internally, affecting one or two libraries, people aren’t very happy with. But any decision that will impact the libraries in general and they are not happy with it, if there were many of those, I wouldn’t be here. There would be a different decision-making process (SCLS-1-04/13/2010).*

The purpose of this study was to articulate organizational decision-making processes in three selected cooperative public library systems in New York State. There was very little previous research on the organizational decision-making process at cooperative public library systems; this study filled the gap through a multiple case study. Findings from this research project can be useful for decision makers at these organizations and for state policy makers who are funding these organizations.

**Resources**

Research findings from this study verified that the degree of decision-making models reflected in decision-making processes at these three organizations is related to the resources available to these organizations and to their members. One most direct suggestion would be to increase funding to those cooperative public library systems and their members in need of support. Considering the current (2012) funding conditions in New York State, this most direct suggestion might not be applicable right away.
Training in Decision Making

Another observation from these research findings would be to provide training or support to public library systems’ in making service decisions, and to create a common knowledge bank that can be used by all these organizations. One way to do this is to enhance the communication and information sharing among New York State public library systems. By pooling decision-making experiences and tools in a common knowledge bank, all systems could learn from each other and avoid the duplication of effort and cost while collecting some common information.

Research findings from this project also verified the rational choice model and the garbage can model in their application in organizational decision making. These findings agree with previous studies on decision content, selection of decision-making processes. This research serves as a base study for further study of combining decision-making theories and applying findings to practices at New York State public library systems.

The research observed that the service decision-making processes at three selected cooperative public library systems in New York State varied based on the following factors: (1) degree of members’ financial input in system operating and system service: the more the members’ financial input in system and its services, the more members were involved in making system service decisions; (2) service related features such as service content, funding and impact. Different decision-making processes can be applied to different services.

Future Research

This multiple case study is a first step in studying public library systems. The natural next step will be to expand the study to all public library systems in New York
State. The current research project collected enough information for developing further quantitative studies that could move beyond a sample of three. Two such projects and their extensions are discussed below.

**Statewide Service Decision-making Processes Study**

The current study is a multiple case studies which involve three cooperative public library systems. The cases selected reflect variations of system sizes and member compositions, and the findings from these three cases correspond to these differences. One rationale for choosing multiple cases is the lack of information and knowledge about the service decision-making processes in such organizations. The current study collected information from three cooperative public library systems and the findings from this study provide further bases for a study across all public library systems in New York State. It would be feasible to conduct a survey study to collect information from all 23 public library systems and use the findings here to develop such a survey instrument. This is the case in New York State.

Similar studies could be extended to different states and even carried out at the national level. Public library systems or regional library systems in the United States date back to the 1940s. Over the years, public library systems disappeared from some states, merged in other states, and still exist in states such as New York. The original rationale for establishing public library systems or regional library systems was to coordinate individual public libraries’ efforts in cost saving. Future research can seek to find the current services provided by public library systems or regional library systems: coordinated services, supportive services or consolidated services.
Linking Decision-making Processes with Decision Outcomes

This research did not link the service decision-making processes identified from these three cooperative public library systems to their decision outcomes. This link was studied in previous research and the findings support the hypothesis that decision content and decision context decide the selected decision-making processes, and that the rationality of the decision-making processes is conditionally related to the decision outcome. Depending on the importance of the decision, the influence of the rationality of the decision-making process on the decision outcome is different. The current research only collected information on decision-making processes in these three cooperative public library systems. A future study could link such decision-making processes with decision outcomes.

In the current research findings, the degree of formalization of the system service decision-making processes changes according to the available resources at both cooperative public library systems and their member libraries. Systems that have more resources with members that are better funded tend to have more formal decision-making processes compared to systems that have fewer resources and less-well-funded members. An informal process can be economical and efficient, in comparison to a formal process. A question for future research to answer is, does the degree of formalization in system service decision-making process affect the decision outcome?
REFERENCES


APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Areas unserved by public libraries in New York State

146 The map can be accessed from: http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/pldtools/plsmaps/state.gif
Public library systems listed by name

- Brooklyn Public Library
- Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
- Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System
- Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System
- Finger Lakes Library System
- Four County Library System
- Mid-Hudson Library System
- Mid-York Library System
- Mohawk Valley Library System
- Monroe County Library System
- Nassau Library System
- The New York Public Library

147 The map can be accessed from: http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/pldtools/plsmaps/index.html
• Nioga Library System
• North Country Library System
• Onondaga County Public Library
• Pioneer Library System
• Queens Borough Public Library
• Ramapo Catskill Library System
• Southern Adirondack Library System
• Southern Tier Library System
• Suffolk Cooperative Library System
• Upper Hudson Library System
• Westchester Library System

**Public library systems listed by type**

**Consolidated public library systems**

• Brooklyn Public library
• The New York Public Library
• Queens Borough Public Library

**Cooperative public library systems**

• Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System
• Finger Lakes Library System
• Four County Library System
• Mid-Hudson Library System
• Mid-York Library System
• Mohawk Valley Library System
• Nassau Library System
• Nioga Library System
• North Country Library System
• Pioneer Library System
• Ramapo Catskill Library System
• Southern Adirondack Library System
• Southern Tier Library System
• Suffolk Cooperative Library System
• Upper Hudson Library System
• Westchester Library System

**Federated public library systems**

• Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
• Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System
• Monroe County Library System
• Onondaga County Public Library
APPENDIX C: IRB approval form

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
State University of New York

Institutional Review Board: DHHS FWA00001470
Notice of Approval
IRB Protocol Number: 10-046

Date: February 23, 2010
Principal Investigator: Michael Rene

Title: How Public Library Systems in New York State Make Service Decisions: A Comparative Case Study in Administrative Decision Making

Review Type: Exempt Category # 2
Approval Type: ☑ New ☐ Modification

Approval Date: February 17, 2010
Expiration Date: None

1. Provisions of Approval: none
2. Summary of Modifications: none
3. Informed Consent: An adequate standard of informed consent has been met when required.
4. Principal Investigator Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that all investigators and staff associated with this study meet the training requirements for conducting research involving human subjects, follow the approved protocol, use only the approved forms, keep appropriate records, and comply with all University at Albany Policies, federal, state and local laws, Declaration of Helsinki and the Belmont Report.
5. Research Records: Accurate and detailed research records must be maintained. All research records (including all IRB correspondence) must be kept for a minimum of 2 years after the completion of the research.
6. Changes: Any changes in the above referenced study may not be initiated without prior IRB review and approval. Changes include (but are not limited to) study personnel, consent forms, protocol, procedures, addition of funding source.
7. Funded Research: If your research is funded, you must also submit sponsor information and two copies of the grant/funding application for IRB review with the human subjects section(s) highlighted. This is true whether the source of funding is central or external.
8. University Permissions: A) Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (IRPE) permission may be required if your research participants are recruited from the UAlbany campus. It is the responsibility of the Investigator to contact IRPE at (518) 437-4271 for a determination. B) All UAlbany permissions (e.g., classroom, room or organization permission) must be kept on file with your research records.
9. Posters or Symposia: If posters or symposia are to be posted on the UAlbany campus, they must be registered with the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership in Campus Center 130 prior to posting on the academic Postage.
10. External Permissions: All external permissions (e.g., schools, businesses, organizations, etc.) must be kept on file with your research records.
11. Study Closure: A study is considered to be open and active until the Investigator has submitted a Closure Form (available at ualbany.edu/oirb/researcher-resource-forms.html) to the IRB. Until a Closure Form is received, IRB oversight of the research will remain active.

The IRB wishes you success with your research.

[Signature]
Mark Bratkovich, Ph.D.,
IRB Chairperson
On behalf of the Institutional Review Board

Gc: Deanne L. Andersen
OSRC, LCSB 2B
1400 Washington Ave, Albany, NY 12222
(518) 437-6059/(518) 437-4997
IRB@uasy.edu/IRBweb
Appendix D: Email template for setting up interview

Dear Director ***

How are you?

My name is Xiaoai Ren. I am a Ph.D. student in the Department of Informatics at SUNY-Albany. I am very thankful to you for your willingness to meet with me in conjunction with my research on New York State cooperative public library systems' service decision-making processes.

Would it be possible for me to make an appointment with you for an interview on next Tuesday (March 16th)? The interview takes about one hour. During that day, I can conduct the interview at any time that is convenient for you. If the day is not convenient for you, please let me know and suggest another more convenient date.

The interview will focus on several selected service areas provided by public library systems and the decision-making processes that lead to these service decisions. I will send you a copy of the key interview questions the day before I go to meet with you. If there is anyone else in your public library system that you would like me to meet with, please let me know.

I appreciate this opportunity very much and looking forward to hearing from you.

I am attaching my CV for your information.

Thank you very much

Xiaoai Ren
APPENDIX E: Interview consent form and interview protocol

Interview consent form

Xiaoai Ren, PhD Candidate
College of Computing and Information
Informatics Department
Data Collection for Dissertation Research

I am conducting this study of library system decision making as part of my Ph.D. dissertation research. The overall purpose of this study is to learn how library systems in New York State make decisions about providing services to member libraries. The dissertation will use case study to provide in-depth information about decision making. The data collection method is interviewing key persons in decision-making processes.

You have been selected for an interview based upon your past experience and involvement in these processes. Your participation is nonetheless voluntary so that you may feel free to withdraw from the study or not to answer questions listed in the interview protocol (attached). There are no foreseen negative side effects or risks associated with this interview process. I will interview you about the services your system provides and about how decisions for services are made. I will also ask you to suggest other individuals who should be interviewed to provide additional information about this topic. If you have any questions after the interview, please feel free to contact me by email or phone.

All information collected will remain confidential except as may be required by federal, state or local law. Participants will be assigned a respondent code that is cross-checked to a participant list. I will maintain sole access to this list. Your responses will remain confidential and all publications from this research (including my dissertation) will give no identifying details about you.

I will record the interview session, the recordings will only be accessed by me and will be erased at the end of the study. Transcripts of the recordings will use respondent codes. This research has the potential benefit of providing insights for all library systems in their efforts to provide the best services to all public libraries and their subsequent users. Your insights and experiences are a critical portion of this research. Thank you for your participation.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign below.

Signature of participant ___________________________ Date ____________

Please sign below if you are willing to have this interview session recorded
Signature of participant ___________________________ Date ____________

Contact information:

If you have questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher, Xiaoai Ren, via email xr919847@albany.edu or by telephone at 518.334.0370. You can also contact Professor Deborah Lines Andersen, the chair of the dissertation committee via email dla@albany.edu or by telephone at 518.442.5122. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the researcher or if you wish to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University at Albany Office of Regulatory Research Compliance at 518.442.9050 (toll free 800.365.9139) or orrc@uamail.albany.edu.

Xiaoai Ren
Interview protocol

Date: ________________________________________________________________

Place: ______________________________________________________________

Interviewee(s): ______________________________________________________

Time: _______________________________________________________________

Notes: ______________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Interview questions checklist:

1. Could you please introduce yourself and your library system?
2. What are the important services that your library system provides?
3. Does your library system provide integrated library system services for your members?
4. What kind of features does your ILS have? How did you decide what ILS features to include in your ILS?
5. Does your library system provide training services?
6. What are they? How did you decide what kind of training sessions to provide?
7. Does your library system provide coordinated services?
8. What are these coordinated services? How did you decide what coordinated service to provide in your library system?
9. Do you provide services to special clients?
10. What special clients does your system serve? How did you decide what services to provide?
11. Do you provide direct service to the public?
12. What kind of services you provide to the public and how you decide what to provide?
APPENDIX F: The coding table and guidelines for mission statements text analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLS</th>
<th>Brooklyn</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>Queens</td>
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<td>CEF</td>
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<td>Monroe</td>
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<td>Onondaga</td>
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<td>Nioga</td>
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<td>NCLS</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLS</td>
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<tr>
<td>WLS</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>examples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Equal service    | To ensure all population within system area being served without unreasonable discrimination, and being treated equally | - To ensure that all residents have …
|                  |                                                                             |   … public library service to all the people of the county                     |
|                  |                                                                             |   To expand library services                                                 |
| Direct access    | To ensure open and direct access to all library services within system, including all member libraries’ resource and service, not just one library, but all libraries’ resources; to coordinate resource sharing among members | - … seamless access to excellent library service                               |
|                  |                                                                             |   … access to materials and services in a seamless, consistent and uniform manner |
|                  |                                                                             |   through leadership, education, advocacy and enhanced resource sharing      |
|                  |                                                                             |   … promoting cooperation and facilitating resource sharing                   |
|                  |                                                                             |   … promoting cooperation and facilitating resource sharing                   |
|                  |                                                                             |   through leadership, education, advocacy and enhanced resource sharing      |
| Quality          | To improve public library services                                           | To foster, strengthen, and improve public library services                 |
|                  | To strengthen public library services                                        |                                                                           |
| Cost efficiency  | To coordinate other services and activities                                  | to coordinate member libraries                                               |
|                  |                                                                             | any other coordination other than resource sharing                           |
| Direct service   | To serve library users directly                                             | To provide quality service to County public libraries and to the residents of the County |
|                  |                                                                             | to provide people with free and open access to information for education, recreation and reference |
| Serving members  |                                                                             | To support and strengthen member libraries                                   |
|                  |                                                                             | … assisting local libraries in meeting the information needs of their communities |
APPENDIX G: The template of the Plan of Service

New York State Education Department
New York State Library
Division of Library Development

FIVE-YEAR LIBRARY SYSTEM PLAN OF SERVICE

Public Library Systems

SECTION 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Name of System</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Street Address</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Zip Code</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Four Digit Zip Code Extension (enter N/A if unknown)</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Telephone Number (enter 10 digits only)</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Fax Number (enter 10 digits only)</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Name of System Director</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>E-Mail Address of the System Director</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>System Home Page URL</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>URL of Current List of Members</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>Date of Establishment</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>Date of Absolute Charter</td>
<td>P R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>Name(s) of Central Library/Co-Central Libraries</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>Square Mileage of System Service Area</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>Population of System Service Area</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>Type of System</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## SECTION 2 – SYSTEM GOVERNANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>System</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BYLAWS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>URL of Current Governing Bylaws</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPOINTMENT/ELECTION OF SYSTEM BOARD / SYSTEM COUNCIL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>System Board / System Council Appointment/Election – Indicate whether the System Board / System Council Members are appointed or elected (select one).</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A – System Board / System Council Members are appointed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E – System Board / System Council Members are elected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O – Other (specify using the State note)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Indicate by whom the System Board / System Council Members are appointed/elected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADVISORY GROUPS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Advisory Groups – Indicate the groups that advise the System Board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Member Directors’ Organization / Council</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Outreach Advisory Committee</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Central Library Advisory Committee</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>j. Other (specify using the State note)</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 3 - DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING, APPROVAL, EVALUATION AND REVISION PROCESS FOR ALL SECTIONS OF THE PLAN OF SERVICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Provide a summary describing the processes used to assess needs.</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Identify the groups involved in development of the Plan of Service.</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Describe the planning process for the 2012-2016 Central Library Plan.</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Identify the groups involved in development of the 2012-2016 Central Library Plan and each group’s role.</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Describe the integration of the 2012-2016 Central Library Plan with the system’s Plan of Service.</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Describe the process for approval of the Plan of Service. School library systems must include the Council’s role in the approval.</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Describe the information to be collected in order to evaluate and determine members’ satisfaction with the system’s services.</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>OPTIONAL - Provide the URL of the related evaluation form(s).</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>OPTIONAL - Provide the URL of the results of the evaluation by members.</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Describe how the information on customer satisfaction will be used to shape the system’s plan in the next year or in the following planning cycle.</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>Describe the process for revising the system’s Plan of Service for submission to the New York State Education Department/New York State Lib.</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# SECTION 4 – MISSION STATEMENT, GOAL STATEMENTS, INTENDED RESULTS AND EVALUATION METHODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4.1 | The Library System’s Mission Statement  
(Refer to the Introduction, page 1, of the Instructions for the definition of the mission statement.) | P |
| | Minimum Requirement for questions 4.2 though 4.18 – complete one | |
| 4.2 | Element 1 – RESOURCE SHARING  
Cooperative Collection Development  
**Repeating Group #1**  
1. Goal Statement | P |
| | 2. Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing | P |
| | a. Year 1 | |
| | b. Year 2 | |
| | c. Year 3 | |
| | d. Year 4 | |
| | e. Year 5 | |
| | 3. Intended Result(s) | P |
| | 4. Evaluation Method(s) | P |
| 4.3 | Element 1 – RESOURCE SHARING  
Integrated Library System  
**Repeating Group #2**  
1. Goal Statement | P |
| | 2. Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing | P |
| | a. Year 1 | |
| | b. Year 2 | |
| | c. Year 3 | |
| | d. Year 4 | |
| | e. Year 5 | |
| | 3. Intended Result(s) | P |
| | 4. Evaluation Method(s) | P |
| 4.4 | Element 1 – RESOURCE SHARING  
Delivery  
**Repeating Group #3**  
1. Goal Statement | P |
<p>| | 2. Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing | P |
| | a. Year 1 | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.5 Element 1 – RESOURCE SHARING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interlibrary Loan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeating Group #4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Goal Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Year 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Year 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Year 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Year 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Year 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intended Result(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Evaluation Method(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.6 Element 1 – RESOURCE SHARING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other (Optional)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Repeating Group #5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Goal Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Year 1</td>
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<td>b. Year 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Year 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Year 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Year 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Intended Result(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Evaluation Method(s)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>4.7 Element 2 – SPECIAL CLIENT GROUPS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult Literacy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Repeating Group #6</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Goal Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Year 1</td>
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<td>b. Year 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Year 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Year 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Year 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intended Result(s)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Question</td>
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<td>----------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Evaluation Method(s)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.8 Element 2 – SPECIAL CLIENT GROUPS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Coordinated Outreach</em></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Repeating Group #7

1. **Goal Statement**

2. Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing this goal (check all that apply)

   a. Year 1
   b. Year 2
   c. Year 3
   d. Year 4
   e. Year 5

3. **Intended Result(s)**

4. **Evaluation Method(s)**

### Element 2 – SPECIAL CLIENT GROUPS

**Correctional Facilities (State and Local)**

**Repeating Group #8**

1. **Goal Statement**

2. Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing this goal (check all that apply)

   a. Year 1
   b. Year 2
   c. Year 3
   d. Year 4
   e. Year 5

3. **Intended Result(s)**

4. **Evaluation Method(s)**

### Element 2 – SPECIAL CLIENT GROUPS

**Youth Services**

**Repeating Group #9**

1. **Goal Statement**

2. Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing this goal (check all that apply)

   a. Year 1
   b. Year 2
   c. Year 3
   d. Year 4
   e. Year 5

3. **Intended Result(s)**

4. **Evaluation Method(s)**

### Element 2 – SPECIAL CLIENT GROUPS

**Other (Optional)**

**Repeating Group #10**
| 1. Topic | P |
| 2. Goal Statement | P |
| 3. Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing this goal (check all that apply) | P |
| a. Year 1 | |
| b. Year 2 | |
| c. Year 3 | |
| d. Year 4 | |
| e. Year 5 | |
| 4. Intended Result(s) | P |
| 5. Evaluation Method(s) | P |

### 4.12 Element 3 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

| 1. Goal Statement | P |
| 2. Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing this goal (check all that apply) | P |
| a. Year 1 | |
| b. Year 2 | |
| c. Year 3 | |
| d. Year 4 | |
| e. Year 5 | |
| 3. Intended Result(s) | P |
| 4. Evaluation Method(s) | P |

### 4.13 Element 5 – CONSULTING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

| 1. Goal Statement | P |
| 2. Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing this goal (check all that apply) | P |
| a. Year 1 | |
| b. Year 2 | |
| c. Year 3 | |
| d. Year 4 | |
| e. Year 5 | |
| 3. Intended Result(s) | P |
| 4. Evaluation Method(s) | P |

### 4.14 Element 6 – COORDINATED SERVICES

<p>| 1. Goal Statement | P |
| 2. Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing this goal (check all that apply) | P |
| a. Year 1 | |
| b. Year 2 | |
| c. Year 3 | |
| d. Year 4 | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.15</td>
<td><strong>Element 7 – AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repeating Group #14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Goal Statement P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing this goal (check all that apply) P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>b.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Evaluation Method(s) P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.16</td>
<td><strong>Element 8 – COMMUNICATIONS AMONG MEMBER LIBRARIES AND/OR BRANCH</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repeating Group #15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Evaluation Method(s) P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.17</td>
<td><strong>Element 9 – COOPERATIVE EFFORTS WITH OTHER LIBRARY SYSTEMS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repeating Group #16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Evaluation Method(s) P</td>
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<td>4.18</td>
<td><strong>Element 10 – CONSTRUCTION</strong></td>
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<td>Repeating Group #17</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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2. Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing this goal (check all that apply)
   - a. Year 1
   - b. Year 2
   - c. Year 3
   - d. Year 4
   - e. Year 5

3. Intended Result(s)

4. Evaluation Method(s)

4.19 **Element 11 – CENTRAL LIBRARY SERVICES**

   Provide the URL of the 2012-2016 Central Library Plan.

4.20 **Element 12 – DIRECT ACCESS**

   Provide the URL of the 2012-2016 Direct Access Plan approved by the New York State Library.

4.21 **Element 13 – OTHER (Optional)** – If there are other elements in the System’s Plan of Service not listed above, complete one repeating group for each element.

   **Repeating Group #18**
   
   1. Element
   2. Topic
   3. Goal Statement
   4. Indicate year(s) during which the system will be addressing this goal (check all that apply)
      - a. Year 1
      - b. Year 2
      - c. Year 3
      - d. Year 4
      - e. Year 5
   5. Intended Result(s)
   6. Evaluation Method(s)

4.22 **ASSURANCE**

   The Library System’s Plan of Service was developed in accordance with provisions of Education Law and the Regulations of the Commissioner and the requirements of the New York State Library, and was reviewed and approved by the Library System Board on (date – mm/dd/yyyy).

4.23 **APPROVAL**

   The Library System’s Plan of Service was reviewed and approved by the New York State Library on (date – mm/dd/yyyy).