

Presentation on the draft rule for the Maine Regional Library System

MAINE LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING

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LORI STOCKMAN, MAINE STATE LIBRARIAN

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Historical Background

- Maine library community has a long-standing tradition of cooperation and collaboration to maximize the value of taxpayer monies.
- Maine Regional Library System (MRLS) created and initially codified into statute in 1973
- MRLS is the result of the work of the Governor's Task Force to Study Library Services in Maine in 1969.
- This historical context emphasizes the need for statewide services that focuses on resource sharing – this is what drives the current rulemaking process.

Duties of the Maine Library Commission

<https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/27/title27sec112.html>

- Appointment of the State Librarian
- Establish the policies and operations of the Maine State Library and the State's library program, including minimum standards of library services, the apportionment of state aid to libraries, the designation of library regions and their boundaries, the endorsement of the designation of area reference and resource centers and the designations of research centers after full consideration of the advice of the State Librarian;
- Act as an appeals board concerning decisions of the State Librarian;
- Serve as the State Advisory Council on Libraries and in that capacity give advice and make recommendations to the State Librarian with regard to the administration of federal funds, in accordance with the terms thereof, which may now or in the future become available for library purposes.

Sections of the draft rule

Draft Rule

- Summary
- Section 1 – Purpose
- Section 2 – Definitions
- Section 3 – Application of this Rule
- Section 4 – Regions of the Maine Regional Library System
- Section 5 – Maine State Library Services and Eligibility Criteria
- Section 6 – Membership Agreement and Certification

Draft Rule: Summary

Summary

This rule establishes the geographic boundaries of the Maine Regional Library System and determines how school, academic, special, and public libraries are assigned to each region. This rule also identifies services provided by the Maine State Library to members of the Maine Regional Library System and sets forth the eligibility criteria that must be met in order for member libraries to receive each of the services.

Section 1: Purpose

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[This section may not be necessary; to be determined in consultation with Assistant Attorney General Sarah Forster once the Maine Library Commission has discussion and refines the draft rule into a final draft for public consideration]

Section 2: Definitions

Section 2 – Definitions: ARRC

Area Reference and Resource Center. "Area reference and resource center" means a large public, school or academic library designated by the State Librarian and receiving state aid for the purposes of making its resources and services available without charge to all residents within a library region, of providing supplementary library services to local libraries within the library region and of coordinating the services of all local libraries within the library region that by contract become part of the library region. 27 M.R.S. § 110(2).

Section 2 – Definitions: Maine Public Library Fund

Maine Public Library Fund. “There is established the Maine Public Library Fund, an interest-bearing account, referred to in this section as “the fund.” The fund receives money deposited by the Treasurer of State pursuant to [Title 36, section 5291](#) and any other money contributed to the fund. The fund is administered by the State Librarian. All money deposited in the fund and the earnings on that money remain in the fund to be used to provide grants to free public libraries for use in providing services identified as priority services by the State Librarian. Money in the fund may also be used for the necessary administrative and personnel costs associated with the management of the fund but may not be deposited in the General Fund or any other fund except as specifically provided by law. 27 M.R.S. § 8.

Section 2 – Definitions: Public Library

Public library. "Public library" means a library freely open to all persons and receives its financial support from a municipality, private association, corporation or group. The above serves the informational, educational and recreational needs of all the residents of the area for which its governing body is responsible. 27 M.R.S. § 110(10).

Section 2 – Definitions: Regional Library System

Regional Library System. "Regional library system" means a network of library regions interrelated by formal or informal contract for the purpose of organizing library resources and services for research, information and recreation to improve statewide library service and to serve collectively the entire population of the State. 27 M.R.S. § 110(11).

Section 3: Application of this Rule

Section 3 – Application of the Rule

This rule applies to any library in the State of Maine that seeks to participate in the Maine Regional Library System.

Section 4: Regions of the MRLS

Section 4 – Regions of the MRLS: General

This Section identifies the geographic boundaries for each library region that collectively make up the Maine Regional Library System, and assigns libraries and an Area Reference and Resource Center (ARRC) to each region.

Section 4 – Regions of the MRLS: Regional Boundaries

- *Boundaries of each region are determined by using three factors: county population figures from the decennial census published by the U.S. Census Bureau, the total number of public libraries in the state, and the service area of each ARRC.*
- *Counties that are geographically proximate comprise each individual region.*
- *To the extent feasible, county population is evenly divided to create three regions.*

Section 4 – Regions of the MRLS: Regions

The Maine Regional Library System shall have three regions comprised of the following counties:

- (1) Northeastern Maine Library Region: Aroostook, Hancock, Knox, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Waldo, Washington*
- (2) Central Maine Library Region: Androscoggin, Franklin, Kennebec, Lincoln, Oxford, Sagadahoc, Somerset*
- (3) Southern Maine Library Region: Cumberland and York*

Oxford County towns that have traditionally been part of the Southern region that are now proposed to be part of the Central region, joining all other Oxford county towns:

Town name	Legal service area population
Brownfield	1,170
Denmark	1,242
Fryeburg	3,563
Hiram	1,703
Lovell	2,299*
TOTAL	9,977

*2,299 reflects the total for all municipalities served by Lovell: Sweden, Stoneham, Stow, and Chatham, NH. Chatham is NOT factored into the Legal Service Area because it crosses over into NH.

Source: 2024 US Census Estimates Vintage Table

2020 Census data for each region:

Northeastern Region – 555,090

Aroostook, Hancock, Knox, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Waldo, Washington

Central Region – 444,427

Androscoggin, Franklin, Kennebec, Lincoln, Oxford, Sagadahoc, Somerset

Southern Region – 515,341

Cumberland and York

Section 4 – Regions of the MRLS: ARRCs

Each region has the following ARRC:

- *Northeastern Maine Library Region: Bangor Public Library*
- *Central Maine Library Region: Maine State Library*
- *Southern Maine Library Region: Portland Public Library*

Section 4 – Regions of the MRLS: Assigning Libraries to Library Regions

All participating libraries are assigned to the region that serves the county where the library is physically located.

Section 5 - Maine State Library Services & Eligibility Criteria

Section 5A – MSL Services & Eligibility Criteria: General

The purpose of this section is to identify and define certain services provided to Maine's public, school, academic, and special libraries by the Maine State Library that are a benefit for member libraries of the Maine Regional Library System. Additional eligibility criteria for certain services are identified.

Section 5B– MSL Services available to all member libraries of the MRLS

- *Eligibility to receive grants funded through the Maine State Library so long as they agree to fulfill all applicable reporting requirements; and*
- *Eligibility to participate in the van delivery service for interlibrary loan (ILL) (unsubsidized).*

Section 5C – MSL Services available to members of the MRLS that agree to comply with the requirements in subsection D below

Section 5D – In order to receive the services in subsection 5C, a public library must meet the following minimum standards of library service

Section 5C – MSL Services available to members of the MRLS that agree to comply with the requirements in subsection D below

- 1. Internet connection (1-10 Gigabits per second) through the Maine School and Library Network managed by NetworkMaine at no additional cost to the library;*
- 2. Content filtering, email, web hosting, technology support, and consortia pricing through the Maine School and Library Network managed by NetworkMaine at no additional cost to the library;*
- 3. Discounts through the federal E-Rate program on eligible technology required to maintain an internet connection;*
- 4. Eligibility to receive grants through the Maine Public Library Fund;*

Section 5C – MSL Services available to members of the MRLS that agree to comply with the requirements in subsection D below

5. Eligibility for discounted membership to the Maine Association of Nonprofits; and

6. Eligibility for subsidized van delivery service for ILL subject to the following conditions:

To receive a subsidized day of van delivery service a public library must:

a. Have at least one library staff member subscribed to the Maine State Library Delivery listserv for Van Delivery participants;

b. Have more than 100 ILL materials per year as reported on the most recent certified IMLS Public Library Survey for Maine libraries. The 100 ILL materials are the combined total of the borrowing and lending ILLs per library; and

c. Agree to pay a portion of the annual cost based on the population served by the library.

Moving into section 5D

Section 5D – In order to receive the services in subsection 5C, a public library must meet the following minimum standards of library service

Section 5D – In order to receive the services in subsection 5C, a public library must meet the following minimum standards of library service

1. *It submits the Public Libraries Survey (a.k.a. the Public Library Annual Report) to the Maine State Library by April 1 each year and must maintain an active subscription to either MELIBS-L or MEINFO-L.*
2. *It promotes quality library services by ensuring:*
 - a. *The library director engages in at least 4 hours of professional development annually in the areas of*
 - i. *Library management;*
 - ii. *Library governance;*
 - iii. *Library facility and maintenance;*
 - iv. *The fundamentals of librarianship;*
 - v. *Trends in library service; or*
 - vi. *Other areas of study relevant to daily operations of a public library.*

Section 5D – In order to receive the services in subsection 5C, a public library must meet the following minimum standards of library service

2. It promotes quality library services by ensuring (cont.)

b. All members of the board of trustees attend at least one professional development opportunity annually in the areas of:

i. Library governance;

ii. Board roles and responsibilities;

iii. Fundraising;

iv. Advocacy;

v. Strategic planning; or

vi. Other areas of study relevant to daily oversight of a public library

Section 5D – In order to receive the services in subsection 5C, a public library must meet the following minimum standards of library service

2. It promotes quality library services by ensuring (cont.)

c. Maintains policies concerning confidentiality of patron records, circulation, collection development, reconsideration of library materials, programs, internet acceptable use/Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), child safety, patron behavior, and meeting space use.

d. The board of trustees reviews the library's policies at least once every three to five years.

Section 5D – In order to receive the services in subsection 5C, a public library must meet the following minimum standards of library service

3. It ensures the safety of its staff and the public by having two representatives of the library (employees or volunteers) on site when the library is open to the public.

Section 5D – In order to receive the services in subsection 5C, a public library must meet the following minimum standards of library service

4. It plans for long term sustainability by ensuring:

a. It has a strategic plan that is reviewed at least once every three years;

b. It receives annual funding from the municipality in which it is legally situated;

c. It has a dedicated person who serves as director of the library and is responsible for the day-to-day management and oversight of the library on behalf of the board of trustees (in the case of a non-profit library) or the municipality (if the library is a municipal department). This may be a volunteer position. This position may not be filled by an individual who also serves as a trustee on the board of trustees.

Section 5D – In order to receive the services in subsection 5C, a public library must meet the following minimum standards of library service

5. It promotes access to information by ensuring:

a. It does not charge members of its legal service area for membership;

b. It is open to the public for at least 12 hours per week year round;

1. The above subparagraph 5b does not apply to a library located on an island with a legal service area of less than 300 year-round permanent residents.

c. It has at least one dedicated public access computer and printer;

d. It has a dedicated phone and email address;

e. It has organized print and other library materials reflecting diverse needs of the community it serves.

Section 5D – In order to receive the services in subsection 5C, a public library must meet the following minimum standards of library service

6. It operates according to the values of librarianship by ensuring:

a. It complies with Maine's confidentiality of library records law, 27 M.R.S. § 121.

b. It is guided by the Library Bill of Rights, Core Values of Librarianship and the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association

Section 6 – Membership Agreement and Certification

Section 6 – Membership Agreement and Certification

- A. *All member libraries shall maintain a signed Maine Regional Library System Agreement on file with the Maine State Library. The Agreement shall be resubmitted every three years.*
- 1. In the case of a nonprofit library, the Agreement shall be signed by the president of the board of trustees.*
 - 2. In the case of a municipal library the Agreement shall be signed by the town administrator.*

Section 6 – Membership Agreement and Certification

B. Member libraries seeking to access the services outlined in Section 5.C above shall self-certify compliance with the requirements of Section 5.D as part of the Public Libraries Annual Report.