

Libraries in NY

Origin, Oversight & Organization

Helping All Trustees Succeed | Mini-Webinar Series | New York State Library | Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

Hello! Thank you for joining us for this installment of the Helping All Trustees Succeed Mini-Webinar series which is focused on the Origin, Oversight and Organization of libraries in New York State.

My name is Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, I am the Coordinator for Library Sustainability for the Mid-Hudson Library System and co-author of the Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State.

Thank you to New York State Library for partnering with us in providing this educational opportunity for public library trustees.

This is a “mini-webinar”: our goal is to give you an introduction to the topic in less than 15 minutes.



New
York State
Library



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Connecting trustees through advocacy, recognition and education

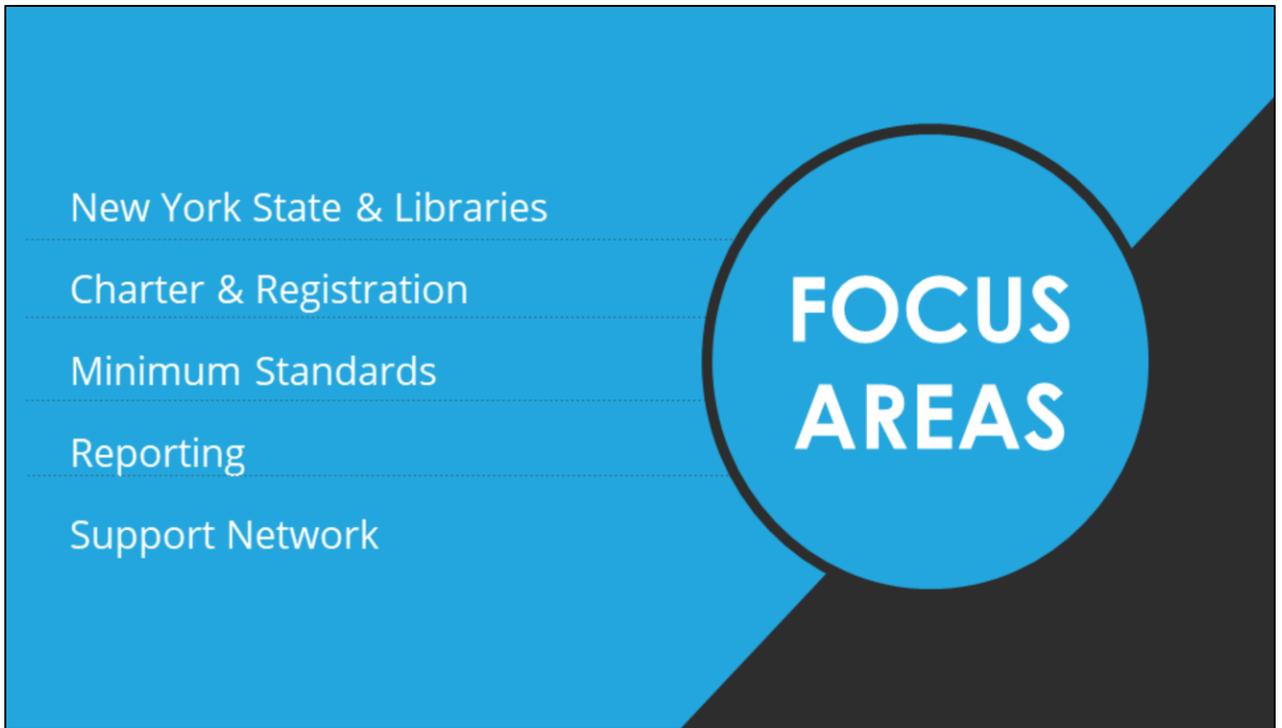
NEW YORK LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
The Voice of the Library Community

Project Partners

The Helping All Trustees Succeed program, often referred to as “HATS,” was made possible thanks to the collaborative efforts of the library community of New York State.

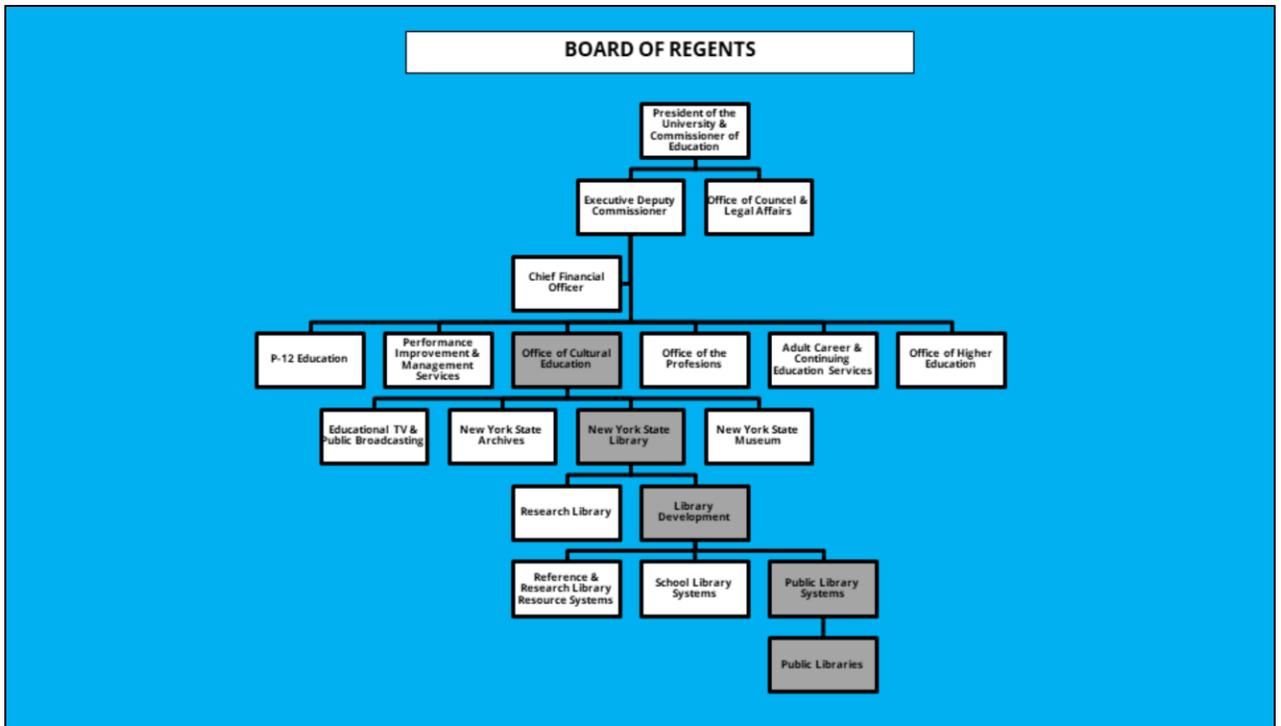
The State Library, the Directors of Public Library Systems, the Library Trustee Association of New York State and the New York Library Association were joined by hundreds of trustees from around New York State to help shape the content and delivery of the HATS mini-webinar series.

Another great example of how we are stronger when we work together.



In this webinar we will provide an introduction to the origin, oversight and organization of libraries in New York State.

We will review the State Education Department's involvement with your library, help you understand how to stay in compliance with basic state regulations and explain the landscape of support organizations that work together to ensure New Yorkers have access to library services that can meet their needs.



Each public library is chartered by the **Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York**, one part of the vast statewide educational system. The Regents' responsibilities include oversight of all educational and cultural institutions, including more than 750 public libraries, upwards of \$1.2 billion dollars in public library operating funds and more than 6,000 public library trustees.

The Regents appoint the **Commissioner of Education**, who is the chief executive officer of the State Education Department. Among the major offices of the Education Department is the **Office of Cultural Education**, comprised of the State Archives, **State Library**, State Museum and the Office of Educational Television and Public Broadcasting.

The Assistant Commissioner for Libraries, also known as the **State Librarian**, is responsible for the activities of the New York State Library, which includes the **Research Library, the Talking Books and Braille Library and the Division of Library Development – often referred to by the acronym DLD.**

The Division of Library Development coordinates and administers federal and state aid programs as well as the rules and regulations that govern public libraries and library systems. The Division of Library Development also helps to develop new statewide programs of library service and provides guidance on charter changes and other matters that must be referred to the Board of Regents.

Nearer to the local library, and your first source of assistance and resources, is the **public library system**. Virtually all of the public libraries in the state belong to one of the twenty-three public library systems.

Your public library System provides shared service opportunities that help to stretch state and local tax dollars through resource sharing and library development efforts. Each System operates under a state approved plan of service, tailored to meet the needs of its member libraries. Your System serves as your liaison with the State Library.

Charter & Registration

- Provisional & Absolute Charter (incorporation)
- Registration (proof of compliance)

For more information: New York State Library

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/>

Public libraries in New York State are incorporated by the Board of Regents as not-for-profit education corporations. At the time of incorporation each library is issued a provisional or absolute charter from the Board of Regents and are registered with the Education Department.

The charter provides legal proof of a library's corporate existence. The charter document outlines critical origin information such as the library's legal service area, number of trustees and length of trustee terms.

Most libraries have an absolute, or final, charter. However, a provisional charter may have been put in place at the inception of a library as the library board works to stabilize and develop its operations and funding. Once a sustainable library has been established your board will work with your public library system, State library staff and the Board of Regents to graduate to an absolute charter.

A library's "registration" demonstrates a library's compliance with Education Department Regulations section 90.2, better known as Minimum Standards for Public Libraries in New York. A library must maintain its registration to receive tax dollars.

Minimum Standards

Section 90.2 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education

Minimum Standards for public libraries:

- promote quality local public library service in all communities within New York State;
- empower libraries to strengthen community relations and promote public support for quality library services; and
- support a culture of transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Minimum Standards

Minimum Standards



Registration



Tax dollars

- Bylaws
- Long-Range Plan of Service
- Annual Report to the Community
- Policies
- Written Budget
- Evaluation of Library Services
- Mandated Minimum Hours Open
- Facility that Meets Community Needs
- Equipment & Connections
- Printed Information about library “basics”
- Director Educational Requirements

A list of the standards, summarized here, can be found in the Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State. Helpful information for meeting the standards is provided on the State Library’s web site.

As a trustee, it is critical that you keep an eye on compliance with these regulations. Remember, compliance with these standards is a requirement to keep your library’s registration in good standing with the State. Failure to do so can jeopardize your library’s ability to receive tax dollars.

You will be reminded of these standards annually as your board is asked to certify that your library is in compliance with the standards as part of your library’s annual report to the state.

Annual Report to the State

- Statistical
- Financial
- Minimum Standards Compliance

See also:

- [Annual Update Document \(AUD\)](#) → [Office of the State Comptroller](#)

At the beginning of each calendar year, your library is required to file an Annual Report to the State online. This report tracks financial and usage information about your library and provides an annual opportunity for your board to report on your compliance with the Minimum Standards.

Failure to file this report jeopardizes funding not only for your library, but for your system as well. Be a good neighbor and file this report in a timely manner.

Public libraries also fall under New York State General Municipal Law Section 30 which requires each public library to file an annual report of financial transactions with the Office of the State Comptroller. Association libraries are exempt from filing with the Office of the State Comptroller.

Accountability + Transparency

Ensuring your library is run in an accountable and transparent manner is key to retaining and building trust among stakeholders, particularly tax payers.

Part of being a good steward of the public's trust requires compliance with basic regulations, such as the minimum standards, and the accurate and timely filing of required reports. It is the responsibility of all trustees, not just the board president and director, to protect the reputation of the library.

We are
stronger
together.

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ALA American
Library
Association



United
for Libraries
Association of Library Trustees,
Advocates, Friends and Foundations
A division of the American Library Association

In addition to the State Library and your regional public library System there is a deep bench of great organizations in the library community that help support libraries.

Membership and active participation in these organizations not only provides assistance on the local level, but also adds significantly to the collective strength and wisdom of library trustees throughout the State and the nation.

The Library Trustees Association of New York State, often referred to as “LTA,” is an important source of support for local library trustees. LTA offers a range of services. It advocates on behalf of library interests at the state level, provides educational opportunities for trustees and valuable resources available through their web site.

The New York Library Association often referred to by its acronym: NYLA, is the statewide organization of library professionals, support staff and advocates like trustees and Friends Groups. It is dedicated to advancing the interests of all types of libraries and library service in New York State. By representing the library community before the State Legislature, it provides important planning and support in the development of library-related legislation and is a leading voice in advocating for state aid for libraries. NYLA offers extensive continuing education opportunities through its annual conference and other programs.

Your library should have a budget line devoted to organizational memberships. Each library benefits from the advocacy and professional development work done by these

groups.

Since many issues affecting libraries originate on the federal level library trustees should be familiar with the [American Library Association](#) and its [United for Libraries Division](#). Both organizations work diligently to inform and support libraries, their trustees and their advocates on a national level.

Each public library can contribute to, and benefit from, the national and statewide library community. An informed trustee is familiar with the network and uses the information and opportunities available to improve the programs and services of their local library.

Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State



For more information on the topics touched on in this mini-webinar please consult the Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State

Questions?

Contact your public library system
<http://tiny.cc/PULISDO>

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Got questions? Hungry to learn more?

Your public library system is your best source of local help.

If you have questions about any of the topics presented in this mini-webinar please reach out to your System.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about your role as a public library trustee. We hope this mini-webinar has helped to increase your confidence and comfort level.

Thank you for volunteering to make your community a better place through your public library.