Standards for South Carolina Public Libraries

2012 Revision

south carolina
STATE LIBRARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Background

Standards for South Carolina public libraries have been in place since the 1950's. Previous editions of the Standards were created by the South Carolina Library Association. A 1998 edition was the first set of Standards developed under the auspices of the South Carolina State Library. The 1998 edition was reviewed and rewritten by State Library staff to provide a less lengthy, more accessible format in late 2010.

Standards for South Carolina Public Libraries was seen essentially as a planning tool for use by public library decision makers. The objectives of the 1998 Standards – to provide a generally accepted means for assessing the quality and effectiveness of library services – remain unchanged in all subsequent editions. The need for a planning tool is ongoing, but in response to suggestions and feedback from librarians, a goal for the 2012 revision is to provide simpler language and clear quantifiable guidelines which will enable librarians to convey the standards to non-library decision makers.

Why are standards important?

Library systems develop and adhere to standards for a number of reasons. Chiefly, the public is best served through constant, and consistently articulated, adherence to a common set of principles which speak to the contributions that public libraries make to the lives of South Carolina citizens and the vitality of their communities. Standards establish benchmarks and identify ways of evaluating progress toward excellence in public institutions, including libraries.

Standards...
- ...assist libraries in short- and long-term planning.
- ...contribute to greater accountability in the use of public funds.
- ...communicate a shared vision of quality public libraries and library services.
- ...highlight strengths and weaknesses, and aid in the prioritization of services.
- ...provide a driving mechanism for local and state support of libraries.

There are no nationally-recognized standards for public libraries. The determination has been made within the library profession that libraries differ so greatly in size, budget, and the sheer variety of circumstances existing from region to region that a set of common standards is untenable. However, decision makers and financial administrators everywhere continue to ask for standards upon which to base decisions about facilities, staffing, and budgets. Each state has therefore developed its own set of standards to reflect statewide conditions, responding each in its own way to the purposes outlined above.

Statewide standards can likewise be seen as untenable because of the vast differences between small, underfunded rural libraries and large well-supported urban libraries. This difficulty has been largely skirted over the years by scaling the standards for different sizes of service population. Still, severe economic hardship is present in urban as well as under-populated rural areas. In the end, standards can provide just one facet of measurement to aid local decisionmaking, while simultaneously positing a general set of goals for statewide library development.

Compliance and Reporting

While compliance with the statements found in *Standards for South Carolina Public Libraries* is voluntary, the State Library encourages public libraries to adhere to the Standards in assessing their performance and effectiveness. Constant appraisal of the library in terms of normal and above-the-norm factors enables library decision makers to see ongoing progress, and to identify areas for improvement.

The concept of the "user-centered library" remains a guiding principle in all planning for libraries and in all improvements and additions to library facilities and services. Striving to meet generally accepted standards strengthens, over time, the ability of libraries to meet the ever-changing needs of South Carolina library users. Collecting, considering, and gauging input from community members about their needs and preferences, as well as the adoption of measurable criteria for excellent service, allows libraries to engage in evidence-based planning and to present a picture of libraries grounded in realities rather than wishful thinking.

A key concept in the preceding paragraph is "ever-changing needs." The focus of efforts such as this one is on service to the community. These standards must be adopted in tandem with a clear picture of the local community, only gained through serious attention to community assessment, data gathering, and analysis. The library that has these tools in hand is prepared to move forward into the future.

In collaboration with public library leadership, the South Carolina State Library is developing a "Public Library Report Card" based on the Standards and other factors through which libraries can measure their strengths and weaknesses. The Standards Advisory Committee was strongly in favor of the adoption of this kind of measurement tool to gauge libraries' growth and progress; the concept of the "report card" was constantly in view during discussion of the standards. Input on the design and intended use of the "report card" will be sought from all interested sources during the development process.

Methodology of this study

A committee of librarians representing various library service divisions was formed to study the existing Standards and recommend revisions. The State Library's Library Development Services staff moderated and participated in the discussions. The revision process was completed in about six months.

<u>Members of the Advisory Committee</u> included three public library directors: Lana Gardner, Cherokee County; Benjamin Hall, Williamsburg County; Wlodek Zaryczny, Beaufort County, and six library staff members: Jill Cornwell, Greenville County; Mark Mancuso, Lexington County; Steve Sullivan, Richland County; Aubrey Carroll, Florence County; Amanda Holling, Charleston County; Jennie Beck, Aiken County. The State Library is grateful for the steadfast efforts of this committee, which was hardworking, creative, knowledgeable, and a genuine delight to work with.

Individual elements of the Standards were thoroughly discussed in the context of contemporary issues and realities. Standards for public libraries in other States were studied and considered, and in some cases adopted as appropriate for South Carolina.

Organization and Content of the Standards

There are no agreed-upon definitions of individual standards and no universal set of standards in American public libraries. Each state, and often each library community, is free to adopt its own evaluative criteria; however, statewide and nationwide standards provide benchmarks that can be helpful in striving to achieve the best possible library services in communities large and small. The elements includedin *Core Standards for South Carolina Public Libraries* represent the most widely-adopted elements nationwide, selected for use in South Carolina after years of application and thoughtful professional discussion.

Some of the standards included in this document are "tiered" – that is, they present two levels of service: Essential service and "targeted" service. Providing a norm of basic criteria as well as a higher level to strive for recognizes that, as library size and resources vary, so guidelines should reflect this reality and offer flexibility. It is understood – but perhaps should be repeated often - that communities should strive for the highest standards possible for their libraries.

- "Essential" service is the basic library service that is needed and expectedby public library users. Any library, regardless of size, should meet this level of service.
- "Target" services buildupon essentials, moving the library forward in the quantity and quality of resources available for library users, and representing a goal toward which South Carolina libraries should strive.

Other guidance for public libraries is found in South Carolina legislation governing libraries and the provisions for State Aid, referenced throughout the Standards document.

South Carolina library standards are divided into five groupings:

- **Governance and Funding:** Standards that reflect organizational principles, management and accountability of library systems.

- **Staff:** Standards for education, training, skills, and numbers of library employees in relation to populations served.

- **Materials and collections:** Standards for the library's collection development policies.

- **Services:** Standards addressing the availability of library services to the community.

- **Facilities:** Standards for the size, safety, accessibility, and technology readiness of library buildings.

For questions about the Standards, contact Library Development Services, South Carolina State Library: lds@statelibrary.sc.gov.

--Library Development Services, SCSL, August 2012

LIBRARY GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

The standards in this section address the administrative measures South Carolina public libraries must take in order to ensure legal recognition and appropriate funding.

General Statement on Library Leadership:
To achieve excellence, a public library must have a director who plans, coordinates and communicates at the highest professional level. The director must have the complete confidence of the Library's Board of Trustees in administrative and personnel matters.
Excellent public libraries need excellent Trustees. Board members must have a high degree of commitment measured by willingness to donate time and effort to work on library issues. They should be able to develop good communication and a degree of influence with community leaders.

Functions and responsibilities of the Library Director and the Library Board are outlined in some detail in South Carolina legislation pertaining to the establishment of public libraries in the state: South Carolina Statutes (Code of Laws), TITLE 4. Counties, CHAPTER 9. County Government, SECTION 4-9-35. County public library systems; boards of trustees.

Library Governance and Funding: ESSENTIAL	Library Governance and Funding: TARGET
The Library Board is fully populated with Trustees serving within term limits.	Library budget includes funding for ongoing Library Board development. Trustees participate in professional statewide Library activities.
The Library has active Friends of the Library support group.	The Library has a staff liaison on the Friend's Board.
The Library has written policies for (at a minimum) services, collection, personnel, patron behavior, patron/staff interactions, and operations. Policies are reviewed every five years.	Policies are reviewed every two years with staff input.

Library administrative staff is fully engaged in all facets of Library operations; understands and can provide and explain current budget status; provides reports and data periodically as required.	Library administrative staff encourages and provides leadership in seeking partnerships for the Library.
Library Board and Director actively pursue continuous strategic planning activity to ensure currency of the Library's mission and goals. A planning document is written for the Library. A new strategic plan is written every five years. Staff is included in the planning activity.	The local community is included in the Library's planning activity.
Library Board and Director have developed a financial plan, included within the overall Library planning document, based upon recent community analysis, economic and political factors.	Library has concrete plans for developing funds for long range large-dollar targets, such as additional or renovated facilities, bookmobile, etc.
County meets minimum statutory level of financial support for the Library (the annual Maintenance of Effort, i.e., local tax dollars committed to Library operations.)	The County consistently exceeds the required level for the annual Maintenance of Effort, and participates actively in seeking to increase funding for the Library through a number of channels in addition to tax dollars.
A full audit of the Library's finances is conducted annually.	

LIBRARY STAFF

South Carolina public libraries must provide a regular, paid, qualified staff including a properly certified library director who is responsible to a Library Board of Trustees. In general, library staff should be competent, friendly to the public, and service oriented. Staff should be aware of all library policies, and should be well trained in the practices and procedures required by their individual
positions.

Library Staff: ESSENTIAL	Library Staff: TARGET
.5 FTE library staff per 1000 population	.75 FTE library staff 1000 population
Library employs MLIS staff* (in addition to the Director) whose first responsibility is non-administrative, at .167 FTE per 1000 population.	
At least one MLIS staff is employed at each headquarters facility and at each branch.	
Each library facility will have the services of a dedicated on-site MLIS Children's Services Librarian for at least a portion of the hours the facility is open to the public.**	Each facility will have a dedicated MLIS Children's Services Librarian for all hours the facility is open.
Each library facility will have access to the services of a MLIS Teen Services Librarian (services not necessarily conducted on site.)**	
Has written personnel policies consistent with local, state and federal regulations.	

Has written job descriptions incorporating required levels of education and experience. Position descriptions for professional staff should incorporate the principles of ALA's Core Competencies for Library Staff.***	
Supports continuing education and staff development, beginning with an appropriate orientation and including customer service training, for all staff to ensure maintenance of core competencies and stay current with best practices.	CE program takes into consideration staff retention, succession planning, new developments in the field.
Supports staff development by allocating 1% of its annual gross personnel budget to CE.	2% of annual gross personnel budget
Conducts a formal performance evaluation of each staff member annually.	Annual evaluation is tied to professional growth, compensation, and improved library services.
Pays staff at a competitive rate.****	Salaries are geared to retention of high quality staff.
Strives to staff the library, either through hiring practices or staff training, to best serve the demographic makeup of the community.	
Library retains an institutional membership in standard professional organizations. Staff is encouraged to join professional organizations.	Library pays for staff memberships in professional organizations.

* "MLIS staff" means library staff that has attained a Masters Degree in Library and Information Studies from an ALA-accredited library school.   State Law mandates any county receiving State Aid must employ at least one certified MLIS. *Statutory Authority:* 1976 Code § 60-1-80; *SC Regulations*, 75-1.*Use of State Aid Funds*[SC ADC 75-1]: "D. Any library receiving State Aid shall ... (5) employ in professional and pre-professional positions librarians meeting the certification requirements of the South Carolina State Library and meeting the staffing standards consistent with the South Carolina Public LibraryStandards published by the South Carolina State Library."

**See also *Youth Services Guidelines for South Carolina Public Libraries, 2002* for additional guidance on staffing for children's and teen services.

****Core Competences of Librarianship*, approved and adopted as policy by the ALA Council, 2009.   This document defines the basic knowledge to be possessed by all persons graduating from an ALA-accredited master's program in library and information studies.

****Refer to the *Survey of South Carolina Public Librarian Salaries, 2005*, available from the South Carolina State Library in print format or found online at http://www.statelibrary.sc.gov/docs/statistics/SalarySurvey2005.pdf

LIBRARY MATERIALS AND COLLECTIONS

South Carolina public libraries must provide a wide range of materials in a variety of formats and in sufficient quantities to meet the needs of all residents. These standards address the number and type of materials libraries should provide, and the technology equipment needed to access it.

Library Materials and Collections: ESSENTIAL	Library Materials and Collections: TARGET
15 to 20% of the library budget is allocated to purchase of materials, including electronic resources, as established by South Carolina law.	
The library offers a minimum number of cataloged print library materials per capita as identified in these Standards.[1]	
The library has a written, Board-approved collection development policy based on community needs. The policy includes criteria for materials selection and deselection, a process for reconsideration of materials, the library's collection specialties and purchase priorities, and guidelines for ongoing evaluation and maintenance.[2]	
The library's collection reflects the diversity of the population served (in terms of age, ethnicity, gender, religious preference, reading interests, and other aspects of the population.)	
Library provides access to print materials in a variety of formats.	Library provides materials for special populations and/or provides specialized local collections

The library integrates new technology / electronic formats into its offerings (such as downloadable audio and e-books, web-based materials, and other formats as they are developed.)	
Public computers are allocated[3] and placed throughout the library system so as to meet local demand[4] during all hours the library is open to the public. Suggested placement: One public computer per 1000 population.	Public computers are available at three per 1000 population.
Library makes a photocopier available for the use of the public.	Library makes equipment such as fax machines, scanners, and assistive reading devices available.
The library provides interlibrary loan services to cardholders and to other libraries.	Library provides access to or membership in a consortial lending collection.

[1]Library Collections – Print Items

Quality Level	Number of Print Items Per Capita[5]		
	Population up to 39,999	Population 40,000 to 99,999	Population 100,000 and above
Essential	2	2	2
Target	5	4	4

[2] Weeding methods, such as CREW, are defined in the appendix.

[3] Public computers are allocated with reference to factors such as available space, availability of broadband, appropriate furnishings, ability of the library to conduct regular maintenance, etc.

[4]"Demand" is defined as requests from the public and includes other factors such as education level of the community and computer ownership by residents.

[5]Includes only cataloged print materials as defined in the annual nationwide *Public Libraries Survey* conducted by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the U.S. Census Bureau. The figure is calculated using the count submitted by the library in the survey as "Total, Books/Serials/Volumes – Physical Print Format." Not included: Uncataloged paperbacks, periodical subscriptions, individual periodical issues, electronic materials (either physical such as DVDs or CDs, or downloadable such as eBooks.)

LIBRARY SERVICES AND COMMUNITY

The standard for open hours of service is one of the most important measures for South Carolina public libraries. *At least one library facility* is open in each county and provideson-site access consistent with these standards (including at least 20 open hours during evenings* and weekends.)*

Libraries should use the following table as a guide for determining the appropriate number of service hours for their facilities. The population referenced is that of the library system's service area, i.e. the county.

	Population under 25,000	**Population 25,000-49,999**	**Population 50,000-99,999**	**Population 100,000 & Above**
BASIC	40 hours per week	48 hours per week	58 hours per week	68 hours per week
TARGET	48 hours per week	54 hours per week	62 hours per week	70 hours per week

*Statutory Authority: 1976 Code § 60-1-80; *SC Regulations*, 75-1.*Use of State Aid Funds.* [SC ADC 75-1]: "D. Any library receiving State Aid shall be legally established and administered by a legally appointed Board and shall ... (8) Provide at least one library in the system that is open and provides on-site access consistent with South Carolina Public Library Standards published by the South Carolina State Library."

Additionally, South Carolina public libraries strive to be active, contributing community members. Through outreach and active engagement in local events and activities, library staff can more accurately understand the makeup and characteristics of its service population, attract residents to the library, and target library services appropriately. The following standards address the efforts the library makes to participate fully in the community.

*Evening hours after 5:00 p.m.

Library Services and Community (cont.)

Library Services and Community: ESSENTIAL	Library Services and Community: TARGET
The percent of the service area population that is registered for a library card is 30%.	50% to 75% of the population is registered for a library card.
The library has active Friends of the Library support group.	The library has an active Friends group and has appointed a library staff member to be a liaison to the Friends.
The library acknowledges and respects cultural diversity in the community it serves, as reflected in collections and programming.	
The library plans for and engages in strong community relations efforts. The library informs its community about services, resources and programs through media releases, posted notices, printed publications, and other appropriate measures. A minimum of 1% of the library operating budget is spent on this effort.	Public relations efforts are conducted through a library website and other online networking channels such as social media. Radio and television are also utilized for promoting library services.

LIBRARY FACILITIES

Access refers to making the library's services and resources as widely available as possible. The library's location, the number of hours it is open, bibliographic access to the library's collections, and use of appropriate technologies to facilitate use of local and remote resources are all important access elements. The principle of equal access should be integral to the library's long-range plan.

Library Facilities: ESSENTIAL	Library Facilities: TARGET
Public areas: Gross square footage per capita for the service population*: at least 1.25 SF per capita. Square footage per seated adult[1]: 40 Square footage per seated child: 20 Square footage for programming for children[2], per program attendee: 40 *Service population[3]: Population (determined by the current census) of the governmental jurisdiction within 25 minutes travel time) of the facility, based on the general standard of an average 20 minutes travel time in an urban area and 30 minutes in a rural area.	[No target measures identified.]
Staff areas: Square footage per staff work area: At least 70 Square footage per office: At least 100	
Facilities and parking areas comply with fire, safety, building, other federal, state and local codes, and ADA regulations[4].	Special consideration is given to particular service populations.

Facilities are equipped with telecommunications equipment and lines/cables, bandwidth, and Wi-Fi access. See "South Carolina Public Library Technology Standards" for details.	Additional technologies to enhance public service and security: Public address system; emergency call system; electronic security system; walkie-talkies.
Signage (external) – Signage ensures the library is clearly identifiable from the street. There is directional signage to the library on nearby streets. Hours of service are clearly displayed.	Signage, such as marquee style, announces library events, etc.
Signage (interior) - Provides professionally produced signage to assist patrons with navigating the facility and collections. (Address with references: Service areas, collections, other issues)	Programs and events are announced with digital signage.
Furnishings and equipment for public and staff meeting needs of patrons of different ages, and following ergonomic recommendations and ADA regulations.[4]	Assistive technology and equipment is provided for use by people with disabilities. All furnishings for public use are durable, easy to maintain and sanitize.
Lighting: Interior of facilities are well lit for reading and general use of all spaces (50 to 70 foot-candles at table top height in public service areas.) Lighting in stack areas should be 6 foot-candles measured on the stack face at a height of 12″, and 35 ft-c maximum at any height to achieve no more than a 6-to-1 maximum-to-minimum ratio across the entire stack face. Exterior lighting for safety of library users and staff.	For both exterior and interior spaces, automated control of lighting of spaces for energy efficiency.

Provides at least one exterior book drop that meets all fire and safety codes, is sized to handle the library's circulation, and is placed in a safe, well-lit area.	Provides a drive-up, covered book drop.
To reflect the library's role in the community, a public meeting room is provided for library programming and for use by community groups.	Meeting room is equipped for technology-based presentations using audiovisual equipment with computer interface. Different-sized meeting rooms are provided to accommodate a variety of activities such as small meetings, study groups, etc. Larger meeting rooms will have kitchen facilities and adjacent restrooms.
Public restroom(s) configured to meet federal, state and local requirements. Restrooms include convenience furnishings for diaper changing.	Restroom in children's area; Family use restroom.
The facility that houses shipping and receiving functions has a separate delivery entrance or loading dock appropriate to the size of materials and the activities of the facility; it is conveniently and safely located for staff.	Allows for growth of the facility, the activities, and/or the size of the system.
At least once every six years, and more frequently if needed, the Library Board directs the preparation of an assessment of the library's long-term space needs.	
Space configuration, finish materials and other factors have been considered to control noise levels.	An acoustical engineer has studied the space and assisted in addressing noise levels.

Single point of entry for the public that is ADA accessible and accommodates strollers.	Covered drop-off area for patrons.
Bookmobile and other library vehicles are kept in a safe and secure area. Related service areas are convenient for staff access.	Bookmobile is kept in a closed, roofed area.
Training room with computers.	Production lab (for video, audio, online content)
New facilities plan for LEED certification.	Facilities have attained LEED certification.

[1]Square footage is stated as a measure for an adult, teenager, or child seated for working, studying, listening, or leisure reading; includes ample personal space and space for a chair and a desk or table for holding materials. The standard is an average for the library overall, may be reduced in some areas and enlarged in others, and provides for personal items and equipment such as books, backpacks, canes, walkers, and wheelchairs. Typically, a work/study space is 20 to 30 square feet (a 4' by 5' space for a child, a 5' by 6' space for an adult,) and a lounge seating space is somewhat larger (about 6' by 7' for an adult).

[2] Children's space planning for programming assumes the presence of an adult companion. Children's programs can be conducted as chair seating or floor seating. The standards prescribe an average space to comfortably accommodate all types of programs, including programs that involve movement, activity, and craft materials; and the various personal equipment that often accompanies small children (strollers, carriers, bags.)

[3]"Service population": There is no one way to calculate the service population for a library. In South Carolina, it is generally agreed that a county library system's service population consists of all the residents of the county. Where there is significant use of the library by non-residents (such as in an area of heavy tourism), non-residents should be taken into account in planning particular service elements. The number of people who check out books at a branch library may be considered as an indicator of the branch's service population in combination with the 25-minute travel time guideline noted above.

[4]For information about ADA regulations for public libraries, visit the web page of ALA's Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA): http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/ascla/asclaissues/libraryservices.cfm

Recommendations for Planning and Positioning Library Facilities

- Current population and anticipated growth/decline
- Number and placement of existing facilities in the county
- Number and placement of library facilities in adjacent counties, along with the fee structure
- Geography and roads (natural barriers to travel)
- Driving time – 30 minutes or less to the site from home or business
- Where the library's current card holders live
- Where the library's current card holders are checking out their books (i.e. at the library outlet nearest their home? Nearest their school or workplace?)
- Gate count fluctuations over time at existing library outlets and the reasons for them
- Major employment centers, for calculating later growth
- Where people live in relation to where they work – these types of studies should be available from the county economic development office
- Other counties' libraries – proximity to branches and the county line
- Online/remote offerings compared to the needs of the particular community – many people living in an area, but perhaps they use the library's online services and will never visit the library. This kind of data results from a thorough analysis of the community (survey, focus groups, etc.)
- Availability of public transportation