SECTION 1 – BASIC INFORMATION

A. Name of System:  North Country Library System

B. Address:  22072 County Route 190  
              Watertown, New York, 13601-1066

C. Phone Number:  (315) 782-5540

D. Fax Number:  (315) 782-6883

E. System Director E-Mail Address:  smitchell@ncls.org

F. System Home Page URL:  https://web.ncls.org/

G. Date of Establishment:  10/24/1958  
                          Date of Absolute Charter:  10/25/1963

H. Name of Central Library:  
   Central:  Roswell P. Flower Memorial Library, Watertown

I. System Service Area:  Jefferson, Lewis, Oswego, & St. Lawrence Counties
   Square Mileage:  6,175  
   Population:  377,369

J. Type of System:  Cooperative Public Library System

K. Minimum staffing requirements:
   Director:  Susan Mitchell
   Youth Services Consultant/ Outreach Coordinator:  Angela Newman
   Library Sustainability Consultant:  Paulette Roes
   Online Resources Consultant:  Matthew Corey
SECTION 2 – SYSTEM GOVERNANCE

BYLAWS

2.1 URL of Current Governing Bylaws:

https://web.ncls.org/board-of-trustees/

2.2 Board Members are elected.

2.3 The NCLS Board of Trustees Nominating Committee seeks nominations from the Member Libraries. The Committee creates a slate of Trustees to be voted on by the Elector designated by each member library. Voting takes place during the Annual Meeting (Bylaws Section III.4). Eight members of the NCLS Board of Trustees are elected in this manner; one member is appointed by the Board of the Central Library.

ADVISORY GROUPS

2.4 North Country Public Library Directors Organization.
The Director of NCLS attends all meetings of the North Country Public Library Directors Organization. The President of the Directors Organization appoints committees to confer with the Director of NCLS as needed.

Outreach Advisory Council.
This council is comprised of volunteers from NCLS member libraries and from various social service organizations in the NCLS service area. It meets twice per year. The NCLS representative incorporates Council suggestions into the normal NCLS outreach process.

Joint Automation Board.
Directors and staff of libraries using the shared circulation system meet three times a year to discuss service and policy options.

Central Library Advisory Committee.
Meets twice a year to discuss service options and the Central Library budget.

SECTION 3 – PLANNING

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

3.1 Member needs are assessed through:

- An Annual Survey of Services
- Discussions between the NCLS Consultants and the Directors and Trustees of member libraries
- Annual visits to libraries made by the NCLS Trustees
- Participation in the NCPL Directors Organization
- Participation in the Joint Automation Board
- Central Library Advisory Committee

3.2 The groups involved in the development of the NCLS Plan of Service and their roles:
- NCPL Directors Organization subcommittee: Review and comment.
- Member Library Boards of Trustees: Vote to recommend approval by the NCLS Board of Trustees.
- NCPL Directors Organization: Review and comment.
- NCLS Board of Trustees: Review, consider amendments, and adopt.

### 3.3 Central Library Planning Process:
The Director of NCLS confers with the Director of the Central Library on a draft document. This is presented to the Central Library Advisory Committee, the NCPL Directors Organization, and the Board of the Central Library for comment.

### 3.4 The groups involved in the development of the Central Library Plan and their roles:
- NCPL Directors Organization: Review and comment.
- Member Library Boards of Trustees: Vote to recommend approval by the NCLS Board of Trustees.
- Central Library Advisory Committee: Review and comment.
- NCLS Board of Trustees: Review, consider comments, and adopt.

### 3.5 Central Library Plan: Integration with Plan of Service
The Central Library Plan of Service was developed in concert with the 2017-2021 Plan of Service, using the same identified needs and reflecting the same service goals. The Central Library plan of service was created to fully align with the plan of service goals and intended results.

### 3.6 URL of the current Central Library Plan
https://web.ncls.org/who-we-are/

### 3.7 Describe the planning process for the 2017 – 2021 Direct Access Plan. Please see 3.2 for details.

### 3.8 URL of the current Direct Access Plan:
https://web.ncls.org/who-we-are/

## APPROVAL OF THE PLAN
The Plan of Service is adopted as a policy document by the NCLS Board of Trustees. Therefore, final approval is given by that Board. However, all comments and discussion that result from the processes in Sections 3.1 through 3.4 are considered prior to approval.

### EVALUATION

### 3.9 An Annual Survey of Services is conducted to evaluate whether NCLS has achieved the intended results of this plan.

### 3.10 URL of the evaluation form(s) used by members:
https://web.ncls.org/who-we-are/

### 3.11 URL of the results of the member evaluations:
The results of the Survey are compiled, distributed to the libraries, and discussed at meetings of the NCPL Directors Organization. NCLS conducts regular needs assessments and evaluations. The planning process includes a review of the previous year’s plans and these are discussed with the NCPL Directors Organization, along with plans for the next year.

REVISION PROCESS

The NCLS Board of Trustees may revise the plan by discussing a change at a Board meeting and sending notice to the libraries that a change will be voted on at the next meeting. In this way there is always time for the libraries to comment and also to attend the meeting at the time of a vote. The NCPL Directors Organization may submit an amendment to the NCLS Board of Trustees at any time during the year for the Board’s consideration.

SECTION 4 – GOALS / RESULTS

4.1 MISSION STATEMENT:
To improve library service in the NCLS area by facilitating services that member libraries cannot offer themselves, or services that make sense to provide in a cooperative manner. NCLS will help our member libraries improve society through facilitating knowledge creation in their communities.

ELEMENT 1 – RESOURCE SHARING

4.2 COOPERATIVE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

1. Goal Statement:
The NCLS Professional staff continues to provide guidance for member libraries in the selection of materials for use in meeting the needs of their library patrons and sharing their resources with other libraries.

   - The NCLS Professional staff makes library visits to assist in weeding and collection development.
   - NCLS continues to maintain a database of NCLS and all member library holdings to enhance cooperative system sharing.

3. Intended Result(s):
   Improve and extend the overall library collections in member libraries to meet the needs of their patrons and the patrons of all libraries in the system.

4. Evaluation Method(s):
   Count of NCLS consultant library visits, database usage counts, interlibrary loan counts, Annual Survey of Services.

4.3 INTEGRATED LIBRARY SYSTEM

1. Goal Statement:
Promote efficiency, expansion of services and standardized procedures through the use of a centralized circulation system.

2. **Years 1 – 5 (2017 – 2021):**
   - The NCLS Board of Trustees strongly encourages all non-automated libraries to join the ILS to make the regional library resources more readily and equally available to their patrons.
   - Have regularly scheduled user meetings of the Joint Automation Board.
   - Add additional libraries to the circulation system.
   - Attend library board meetings to discuss automation issues.
   - Research and evaluate alternative network configurations.
   - Encourage member libraries to reduce lending restrictions on new and high demand items to increase access to these materials.
   - Facilitate the standardization of circulation policies on a system wide basis.

3. **Intended Result(s):**
   Operate and maintain an integrated library system for circulation and an Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC).

4. **Evaluation Method(s):**
   Number of libraries participating in the centralized circulation system, minutes and feedback from the Joint Automation Board meetings, library board visits.

### 4.4 DELIVERY

1. **Goal Statement:**
   The timely sharing of NCLS and member library resources is accomplished with deliveries that meet the needs of member libraries and patrons throughout the NCLS service area.

2. **Years 1 – 5 (2017 – 2021):**
   - If funding allows, the Central Library in Watertown receives a daily (Monday through Friday) NCLS delivery.
   - If funding allows, the top lending libraries receive two deliveries per week for the exchange of materials.
   - All libraries receive at least one delivery per week for the exchange of materials.
   - The System evaluates methods to increase the number of deliveries to the libraries.

3. **Intended Result(s):**
   Provide all NCLS member libraries with regular NCLS deliveries for the exchange of materials.

4. **Evaluation Method(s):**
4.5 INTERLIBRARY LOAN

1. Goal Statement:
Support and facilitate lending among member libraries. As funding allows, NCLS continues to pay the Northern New York Library Network a fee for the use of the ICICILL interlibrary loan software. The NCLS Central Library program continues to be a key component of our interlibrary loan services.

- Central Library provides a core adult nonfiction collection for interlibrary loan.
- Evaluation reports reflecting ILL use of the collection and describing the subject areas of interlibrary loan traffic are created.
- Market and promote the concept of interlibrary loan to the public.
- Promote patron-generated requests that can be initiated from the catalog.

3. Intended Result(s):
Provide an efficient, easy to use ILL system and supplement the adult nonfiction collections of the member libraries with items not normally found in the general collections of many libraries.

4. Evaluation Method(s):
Annual Survey of Services, ILL use reports.

4.6 DIGITAL COLLECTIONS ACCESS

1. Goal Statement:
Provide a centralized collection of digital materials, such as ebooks, emagazines and downloadable audiobooks that meet the needs of our member libraries’ patrons.

- Member libraries’ contributions to the OverDrive budget are adjusted annually to reflect changes in usage during the previous year.
- Digital collection (ebooks, emagazines, downloadable audiobooks) development policies are reviewed and adapted according to needs.

3. Intended Result(s):
Patrons of member libraries have access to a large, diverse collection of digital materials and formats accessible on traditional computer platforms as well as mobile ones. Because all member libraries contribute fees based on usage of digital materials, the collection is substantial and exceeds what an individual library could provide.

4. Evaluation Method(s):
Circulation statistics are analyzed regularly to provide a perspective on usage trends. The results of evaluation are considered for digital collection development and purchasing policies.

4.7 OTHER
1. **Topic ELECTRONIC DATABASES**

2. **Goal Statement:**
   Provide centralized digital resources to member libraries meeting a variety of different needs.

3. **Years 1 – 5 (2017 – 2021):**
   - Coordinate and/or participate in the cooperative purchase of online databases as a result of discussions with the Central Library Advisory Committee and the NCPL Directors Organization.
   - Curate resource offerings in accordance with both patron and member library feedback.

4. **Intended Result(s):**
   Patrons of member libraries will have access to a diverse collection of resources that individual member libraries are unable to provide themselves.

5. **Evaluation Method(s):**
   Usage statistics are analyzed regularly to provide a perspective on the value of these resources to our member libraries.

**ELEMENT 2 – SPECIAL CLIENT GROUPS**

4.8 **ADULT LITERACY**

1. **Goal Statement:**
   Provide improved adult literacy services and capabilities to member libraries.

2. **Year 1 – 5 (2017 – 2021):**
   - Maintain regular communication with regional adult literacy providers.
   - Assist member libraries and adult literacy providers in the development of applications for literacy related grants.
   - Provide advice for collection development of adult literacy materials to the member libraries.
   - Visit member libraries to discuss programs and grant opportunities.
   - Encourage partnering with literacy focused organizations.

3. **Intended Result(s):**
   Member libraries and NCLS staff are valuable adult literacy resources in the NCLS service region.

4. **Evaluation Method(s):**
   Number of libraries that partnered with literacy focused organizations (Annual Survey of Services question), the number of grants received by member libraries, and the outcome reports of literacy grants directly facilitated by NCLS.

4.9 **COORDINATED OUTREACH**

1. **Goal Statement:**
Residents of the North Country Library System service area who are blind/visually impaired, deaf/hearing impaired, physically handicapped, elderly, learning disabled, or residents of institutions receive services from the Outreach Department.

2. **Years 1 – 5 (2017 – 2021):**
   - If funding allows, the Outreach Coordinator attends all pertinent local and statewide meetings, workshops, conferences as deemed appropriate.
   - The Outreach Coordinator, or a designee, speaks at meetings and participates in local events to promote Outreach Services.
   - The Outreach Coordinator facilitates two meetings a year of the Outreach Advisory Council.
   - If funding allows, the Outreach department awards mini-grants to member libraries to encourage new and innovative programs for underserved populations.
   - The Outreach department responds to requests for materials made by Outreach patrons and attempts to acquire as many of the requested items as possible.
   - The Outreach department promotes its services to the member libraries.
   - The Outreach department fills patron requests and has the items mailed directly to the patron’s residences, or sent to a member library for delivery by the librarian or for pickup by a friend, volunteer, or family member.
   - Communication is maintained with Outreach patrons through a periodic newsletter and updated lists of materials.

3. **Intended Result(s):**
   Serve individuals in the NCLS Service area who have special needs.

4. **Evaluation Method(s):**
   Circulation counts of large print, audio books, etc. The number of communications with service organizations and visits to senior housing sites. The number of Outreach patrons registered with NCLS Outreach Services.

4.10 **CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES (STATE AND LOCAL)**

1. **Goal Statement:**
   Inmates of State Correctional Facilities (CF) and county jails in the NCLS service area have access to normal library services that NCLS provides to member libraries.

2. **Years 1 – 5 (2017 – 2021):**
   - The Outreach Coordinator visits the State Correctional Facility libraries as needed to confer with librarians.
   - NCLS staff maintains open oral and written communication with the CF librarians as needs arise during the year.
• NCLS staff hosts CF planning meetings at the NCLS Service Center to plan and prepare the budget application, share common concerns and meet with NCLS staff.

• NCLS continues to strive to fill inmates’ special requests for titles.

• NCLS continues to annually purchase popular paperback books for use by county jail inmates.

3. **Intended Result(s):**
   Provide NCLS services to the inmates of the State Correctional Facilities and county jails.

4. **Evaluation Method(s):**
   Meetings with Correctional Facility librarians and communications with representatives from the county jails.

4.11 **YOUTH SERVICES**

1. **Goal Statement:**
   NCLS supports our member libraries as lifelong learning centers for children and families.

2. **Years 1 – 5 (2017 – 2021):**
   The Youth Services Consultant:
   
   • Encourages member libraries in forming community-based partnerships for youth services and activities.

   • Pursues system-wide resources to promote and enrich children’s and young adult activities.

   • Encourages member library staff to join and participate in the Youth Services Section (YSS) of the New York Library Association (NYLA).

   • Offers a variety of continuing education workshops.

   • Offers collection development lists to assist member libraries in the selection of materials.

   • Keeps the member libraries and the NCLS IT staff informed of opportunities to integrate technology into library services for children.

   • Coordinates the NYS Summer Reading Program, provides supporting materials and holds a workshop to assist member libraries with this important activity.

3. **Intended Result(s):**
   Assist member libraries in improving services for children and young adults by providing advice, continuing education opportunities, and helping to acquire age-appropriate materials and technology.
4. Evaluation Method(s):
Workshop evaluations, Annual Survey of Services.

4.12 EARLY LITERACY (Birth to School Age with Parents/Caregivers)

1. Goal Statement:
Provide improved early literacy education and resources to member libraries.

- Encourage member libraries to form community-based partnerships that support early literacy.
- Provide professional development opportunities to member libraries by offering classes on best practices for early literacy.
- Visit member libraries to assist with early learning spaces.
- Pursue system-wide resources to promote and enrich early literacy activities in member libraries.
- Disseminate information and promotional materials throughout the system service area in order to encourage activities that support early literacy.
- The Youth Services Coordinator attends relevant meetings, workshops, and conferences as deemed appropriate.
- If funding allows, the Youth Services department awards mini-grants to member libraries that support early literacy activities.

3. Intended Result(s):
Improved library service to families with young children.

4. Evaluation Method(s):
Number of libraries who offer programs for children age five and under, circulation of NCLS early literacy resources, evaluations from early literacy classes.

4.13 OTHER (Optional)

ELEMENT 3 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

4.14 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

1. Goal Statement:
Provide educational opportunities on library practices, services, trends, and important issues to member library staff and trustees.

- If funding allows, NCLS staff attends conferences and training sessions to remain current.
- NCLS provides regularly scheduled training classes for member libraries, including management-related classes.
- NCLS surveys the libraries to determine training needs.
- NCLS continues to pursue alternative methods of providing training classes for the libraries (i.e. web conferencing, video conferencing)
3. **Intended Result(s):**
   Library staff and trustees have opportunities to build the skills and knowledge they need to enhance the services of their libraries.

4. **Evaluation Method(s):**
   Number of workshops offered and number of attendees. Annual Survey of Services. Class evaluations.

**ELEMENT 4 – CONSULTING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

4.15 **CONSULTING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

1. **Goal Statement:**
   NCLS provides Consulting Services to its members through a Professional library staff with expertise in all areas of library and information science.

2. **Years 1 – 5 (2017 – 2021):**
   If the number of consultant hours remains constant, or if the consultants are not assigned new duties due to budget constraints, NCLS consultants:
   - Develop a schedule of site visits so that each member library receives at least one visit annually.
   - Attend board meetings of assigned libraries as requested and as needed, with the goal of attending one board meeting per library annually.
   - Prepare toolkits on frequently requested topics and make these toolkits available on the NCLS website.

3. **Intended Result(s):**
   Member libraries meet or exceed minimum standards mandated by the NY State Library.

4. **Evaluation Method(s):**

**ELEMENT 5 – COORDINATED SERVICES FOR MEMBERS**

4.16 **VIRTUAL REFERENCE**

1. **Goal Statement:**

2. **Years 1 – 5 (2017 – 2021):**

3. **Intended Result(s):**

4. **Evaluation Method(s):**

4.17 **DIGITIZATION**

1. **Goal Statement:**
   Member libraries are aware of NNYLN digitization program.

2. **Years 1 – 5 (2017 – 2021):**
   Mention NNYLN program at directors and board meetings, as well as orientations.

3. **Intended Result(s):**
   Physical materials owned by member libraries become digitized.
4. Evaluation Method(s):
   Number of libraries that have participated in digitization.

4.18 OTHER (Optional)

ELEMENT 6 – AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

4.19 AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

1. Goal Statement:
   Member library trustees, librarians, Friends, and volunteers receive information and assistance in promoting their libraries to legislators and their communities.

   - NCLS provides NYLA memberships to member libraries as a means of participating in, and supporting, statewide advocacy and legislative efforts.
   - NCLS professional staff keeps library directors and trustees informed of opportunities for their library supporters to contact legislators and public officials for action on issues of importance to libraries.
   - Consultants provide education and resources to member library staff and trustees regarding the importance of library advocacy.
   - NCLS Director and Professional staff speak to organizations and other groups regarding the importance of library services in communities.
   - NCLS Professional staff assists member libraries’ representatives in developing strategies for their annual requests for county aid when applicable.
   - NCLS Director and staff invite libraries to contact state officials and organize groups to visit legislators on “Library Legislative Day” in Albany.
   - NCLS staff provides statistics to assist Member Libraries’ advocacy efforts.
   - NCLS provides graphics and printing services to assist libraries with advocacy campaigns.
   - NCLS assists libraries with bulk mailings.

3. Intended Result(s):
   - Member libraries have the necessary information to lobby public officials for funding and support for laws favorable to libraries.
   - Provide the organizational structure member libraries need to conduct campaigns to lobby legislators for funding.
   - Improved local support for the libraries as reported on the Annual Report.

4. Evaluation Method(s):
   Level of state and local support for libraries as reported on the Annual Report.
ELEMENT 7 – COMMUNICATION AMONG MEMBER LIBRARIES AND/OR BRANCHES

4.20 COMMUNICATION AMONG MEMBER LIBRARIES AND/OR BRANCHES

1. Goal Statement:
   Member libraries are encouraged to develop relationships among themselves in order to support their efforts to provide the best possible services for their patrons.

   - Encourage person to person contact between member libraries to foster and promote friendly, informal relationships among them. NCLS provides time periods before and after all in-service training sessions for such exchanges.
   - NCLS promotes the NCPL Directors Organization and sends a representative to each of their meetings.
   - NCLS encourages members of the NCPL Directors Organization to attend each NCLS board meeting to promote communication between NCLS and the member libraries.
   - Member libraries are continually encouraged to communicate with each other via electronic means.

3. Intended Result(s):
   Opportunities for communication and cooperation among member libraries are facilitated.

4. Evaluation Method(s):
   Annual Survey of Services. Input from the NCPL Directors Organization.

ELEMENT 8 – COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS WITH OTHER LIBRARY SYSTEMS

4.21 COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS WITH OTHER LIBRARY SYSTEMS

1. Goal Statement:
   NCLS collaborates with all other library systems in the area and throughout the state for the purpose of coordinating library services.

   - NCLS staff serves on committees of the Northern New York Library Network for program development and information technology enhancement.
   - NCLS assists NNYLN and area School Library Systems in disseminating promotional materials for their programs and activities to our member libraries.
   - NCLS consultants serve on School Library System Advisory Councils and consider cooperative projects, i.e., grant opportunities, etc., that would benefit all library patrons.
   - NCLS participates in state-wide collaborative efforts and programs.
• If funding allows, NCLS provides delivery links with the Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System and Onondaga County Public Library.

3. Intended Result(s):
Improve overall interlibrary cooperation and coordination through the development of interpersonal ties and networking among public, academic, school, and special librarians.

4. Evaluation Method(s):
Participation and membership in the NNYLN Board and committees. Participation in area school library groups. Participation in state-wide collaborative efforts. Participation in PLS, NYLA, and other regional organizations impacting public libraries.

ELEMENT 9 – OTHER

4.22 OTHER (Optional)

4.23 ELEMENT 10 - CONSTRUCTION

4.24 CONSTRUCTION

1. Goal Statement:
The professional library consultant staff of the North Country Library System administers and completes all the requirements by DLD within the program of NY State Aid for Public Library Construction.

• NCLS staff counsels Directors and Trustees concerning the process of updating their planning documents.
• NCLS staff meets with member library boards and presents workshops and meetings to advise them concerning various aspects of Construction Grant application and funding process.
• NCLS staff assists member libraries in completing the application process and assists in providing any additional information needed by State agencies responsible for the review of construction grant applications.
• Eligibility to apply for funds is based upon: having the required matching funds available, participating in ILL, and demonstrating a pattern of striving to increase local public support over the past three years.
• NCLS staff reviews, evaluates, and ranks the applications in accordance with priorities set by the NCLS Board of Trustees.

3. Intended Result(s):
Provide assistance for individual libraries in obtaining New York State construction funding for their building projects.

4. Evaluation Method(s):
Number of successful building projects, surveys.

4.25 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 NY State Library, and was reviewed and approved by the NCLS Board on 09/29/2016.

4.26 APPROVAL – For NYSL Use Only
The Library System’s Plan of Service was reviewed and approved by the New York State Library on (date – mm/dd/yyyy).

4.27 REVISION ASSURANCE
The NCLS Plan of Service was revised in accordance with provisions of Education Law and Regulations of the Commissioner and the requirements of the NY State Library and revisions were reviewed and approved by the NCLS Board on 08/27/2020.

The North Country Public Library Directors Organization (NCPLDO) appointed a Plan of Service Committee that reviewed the Plan of Service. The revised document was discussed at a NCPLDO meeting on June 14, 2016 and emailed to Directors and mailed to Board Presidents on July 22, 2016.

The following forty-five libraries voted to approve the Plan of Service. No dissenting votes were received. These votes were received between July 22 and September 22, 2016.

Adams Free Library
B. Elizabeth Strong Memorial Library
Brantingham-Grieg Reading Center
Carthage Free Library
Central Square Library
Cogswell Free Library
Constableville Library
Croghan Free Library
Depaulville Free Library
Dexter Free Library
Ellisburg Free Library
Evans Mills Public Library
Fulton Public Library
Hannibal Free Library
Harrisville Free Library
Hay Memorial Library
Henderson Free Library
Hepburn Library of Colton
Hepburn Library of Edwards
Hepburn Library of Herman
Hepburn Library of Lisbon
Hepburn Library of Madrid
Hepburn Library of Norfolk
Hepburn Library of Waddington
Heuvelton Free Library
Lowville Free Library
Lyons Falls Library
Mexico Public Library
Morristown Public Library
Ogdensburg Public Library
Osceola Public Library
Oswego Public Library
Parish Public Library
Phoenix Public Library
Port Leyden Community Library
Potsdam Public Library
Pulaski Public Library
Reading Room Association of Gouverneur
Rodman Public Library
Roswell P. Flower Memorial Library
Sally Ploof Hunter Memorial Library
Theresa Free Library
Town of Lewis Library
William H. Bush Memorial Library
Williamstown Library