



April 12, 2016

To NYLA Council,

Many of the most incredible library directors and managers in rural regions don't have their MLS/MLIS. For many who work long hours at scant wages, taking on the degree program is simply not practical. These rural library managers often work closely with their public library systems who have MLS holding librarians for the express purpose of supporting these libraries when specific professional knowledge is necessary. When these library managers do what they can to make the library the economic and cultural engine of their communities, or seek sustainable funding, they can find themselves in conflict with DLD's Minimum Standard: Paid Director which requires increasingly advanced degree attainment for directors who serve chartered populations of 2,500, 5,000, culminating with an MLS/MLIS for those serving 7,500 or more.

Variance requests for wonderful, non MLS holding library managers in rural communities have gone unheard at DLD and the State Library. We request that NYLA Council take a stand for rural libraries on the matter of fair, equitable, and conscientious consideration of variance and excuse of default requests. We additionally request that the NYLA Council advocate for the creation of alternative paths to professional certification that take into account the financial burden the current system imposes on rural library directors whose earnings are not in proportion to the expense.

For strong libraries and strong communities,

Rural Libraries Round Table