

AAC Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2022

Attending: Jill Dugas Hughes (EGRN), Michele Reilly (VOOR), Phil Berardi (BETH), Joe Thornton (UHLS) and Mary Klimack (NGRN)

Meeting started at 9:09 AM

October 2022 Minutes approved. Motion by Joe Thornton, seconded by Michele Reilly. Motion carried.

Barriers of Service Study Discussion: Committee members discussed the study and how it could be applied to UHLS. Jill gave a list of five barriers from the survey that AAC could explore. These include:

1. Library policies—policies can be difficult for patrons to navigate as they are different at each library
2. Fees-fines and fees can keep patrons away from the library due to inability to pay or embarrassment
3. Transportation—patrons may not have ability to travel to the library
4. Service Awareness—patrons may not know what services libraries provide
5. Literacy—lack of digital literacy.

Areas to consider:

- Library cards for patrons without a permanent address
- Simplify the online card registration process
- Consider single loan periods
- Increase staff training

Joe also added some additional areas to consider based on the Barriers of Service Study including:

1. Simplifying the holds pick up process
2. Provide more assistance for patrons looking for books (readers advisory)
3. Simplify getting a library card. Perhaps add the “Get a Library Card” button to every library’s website?
4. Proof of address—is there a way to interface with the USPS to get instant proof so patrons don’t have to wait for verification if they don’t have a license
5. Dropboxes—possibly having library drop boxes in community locations away from the library (like a the local grocery store, gas station, etc)
6. SMS notifications—perhaps we need to promote this option more to patrons when they get their card including instructions for them to get started. Mary noted that the current SMS message needs to be updated to indicate our new auto renewal policy. The current SMS message says “Your library loan will expire in two days.” We could easily change it to “Your library loan MAY expire in two days” without adding characters to the message text.

7. Customizing courtesy notices: in past meetings we discussed adding book jacket images to the courtesy notices to help visually jog patrons memories about the items. Joe doesn't think we have that availability within Sierra but UHLS could possibly create a program and run it independent of Sierra.
8. How do we simplify the online registration process while also trying to prevent residents from outside the area from setting up an online card? GUIL has a customized online registration form that verifies that a patron is a Guilderland resident. Perhaps this API could be modified so it would work for other libraries as well? Or perhaps we could use geolocation at the time of online registration to help patrons identify their closest library so they know which library to visit to get their physical card. Phil commented that he is familiar with the API that GUIL created and that there may be add-ons that aren't compatible in other communities.

Michele R commented that perhaps a version of the MyCard for adults may be a good option for patrons without a permanent address. She also wondered which libraries had social workers on staff and could the system work with these social workers to help get library info dispersed to the patrons who need it.

After laying out these barriers to access, the committee discussed where to begin. Should we begin with library card registration since we have already been working on this? Michele suggested that we could tie in removing the driver's license field from Sierra? Should we delete that field from the paper registration cards as well? Michele noted that VOOR has already removed that field from their registration process. Having (or not having) a driver's license is definitely a barrier to service. Along the same line, is it time to stop saving the paper registration cards? Phil wondered if there are any NYS records retention rules that apply to the paper card registrations? The committee members did not believe so as EGRN and VOOR no longer keep their registration cards after the patrons info has been entered into Sierra. It was also noted that some libraries keep their paper cards as legal proof that a patron agreed to be responsible for the card.

Actionable items before the next meeting:

- Joe T will contact GUIL re the address location API they created to see how it works and see if it is feasible to use system wide.
- Joe T will also update the language of the current SMS text message discussed above.

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 AM.

Next Meeting Wednesday, December 14, 2022 at 9 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Klimack