

Jacob Edwards Library



Decertified Communities Policy

Approved by Board of Trustees: January 2004

The Trustees of the Jacob Edwards Library strive to uphold the standards of public library service required for a community to be certified by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners to participate in the State Aid to Public Libraries program. Communities that do not meet MBLC standards and are not granted a waiver are “decertified”. The closing of a public library for “any reason other than the undertaking of a project to improve library service (construction, automation preparation or inventory) or the occurrence of a natural catastrophe (including a limited emergency closing due to illness or death)” results in immediate decertification.

The regulations governing this program state that “all public libraries participating in the direct state aid grant program must be willing, on a reciprocal basis, to extend direct access and services to nonresidents who are cardholders in other libraries participating in the state grant program...” The regulations do not oblige participants to lend materials to residents of decertified communities, only to provide “access to reading and reference rooms under the same conditions as residents of the [local] community.”

Full use of the Jacob Edwards Library by residents of decertified communities would be an inappropriate reliance on the taxpayers of Southbridge. Permitting such use would subsidize library services to a community unwilling to support its own public library. Therefore, the Jacob Edwards Library will not lend library materials to residents of decertified communities, either through direct borrowing or through inter-library loan and network transfers.

1. Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. “Policy, FY2004 State Aid to Public Libraries Program, The Closure of a Public Library”. Approved January 9, 2003. (State Aid Policies are approved annually.)
2. 605 CMR 4.01
3. Ibid.