

Public Library Trustee Summary Manual

Washington State Library

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This manual is updated from the 1997 *Summary Manual* that was prepared with the assistance of and endorsed by the Washington Library Association and the Washington Library Friends and Trustee Association. The *Summary Manual* is intended to be used in conjunction with the *Public Library Trustee Reference Manual* published by the Washington State Library in 2001.

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INTRODUCTION

As a library trustee, you have been given both an honor and a major responsibility. With you rests ultimate accountability and liability for the library. You have responsibility for planning the direction of library services, complying with laws, and overseeing the library's expenditure of funds. You have signatory authority for the major actions and contracts which the library undertakes. These are important duties that require dedication, time, and preparation.

You represent the interests of your community and are appointed to serve as a steward of its money, knowledge, and culture. You are a voice for the community of users within the library and a voice for the library within the community. This is a serious trust, one that deserves diligence and discernment. But it is also work of great satisfaction and joy.

Throughout our nation's history, the public library has offered free and equal access to the collected knowledge, information, and history of our culture. This unfettered access is one of the great traditions of our society. As a public library trustee, you have a crucial role in keeping this democratic tradition alive and vital.

This manual is designed to give you a basic understanding of the governing powers and duties of library trustees. The manual highlights information about library issues that all trustees must address and answers basic questions that trustees often ask.

The manual summarizes the basic responsibilities of trustees of governing boards and notes the different roles of advisory boards. This manual is intended to be used in conjunction with the *Public Library Trustee Reference Manual*, published in 2001 by the Washington State Library.

You have been selected as a library trustee because others believe you have wisdom, knowledge, and skill to provide to the library and your community. This introductory manual is designed to help you understand your responsibilities and carry them out effectively.

Trustees set the direction of the library by adopting policies and long-range plans, assuring compliance with laws, and overseeing the library's expenditure of funds.

CODE OF ETHICS

As a trustee of the public library, you are a public servant. You are entrusted with public funds. The public expects, and laws require, that your performance will always be above question and for the public good, not for your own interest or another special interest.

Each board should adopt a code of ethics to guide the conduct of its members and then review it whenever a new board member is appointed. The following is an example adopted by the Association of Library Trustees and Advocates, formerly the American Library Trustee Association (ALTA) and the Public Library Association (PLA). More examples are included in the *Reference Manual*.

Each board should adopt a code of ethics to guide the conduct of its members.

- Trustees must promote a high level of library service while observing ethical standards.
- Trustees must avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or financial benefits gained at the expense of library users, colleagues, or the institution.
- It is incumbent upon any trustee to disqualify himself or herself immediately whenever the appearance of a conflict of interest exists.
- Trustees must distinguish clearly in their actions and statements between their personal philosophies and attitudes and those of the institution, acknowledging the formal position of the board even if they personally disagree.
- A trustee must respect the confidential nature of library business while being aware of and in compliance with applicable laws governing freedom of information.
- Trustees must be prepared to support to the fullest the efforts of librarians in resisting censorship of library material by groups or individuals.
- Trustees who accept appointment to a library board are expected to perform all of the functions of library trustees.*

*Young, Virginia G. *The Library Trustee: A Practical Guidebook* (4th edition). Chicago: American Library Association, 1988.

LIBRARY BOARD POWERS

There are two types of library boards--governing boards and advisory boards. This *Summary Manual* concentrates on the responsibilities of governing boards. Governing boards have policy and decision-making authority for the library or library system. Advisory boards do not have final decision-making authority but are asked to provide advice and information to assist the governing authority.

Governing boards are appointed by the municipal governing body or by county commissioners. Although district and regional library boards are appointed by county commissioners, the boards are legally autonomous and are not responsible to the appointing authority.

Types of libraries and library boards

Public libraries have several organizational structures. They include municipal libraries, rural county library districts, intercounty rural library districts, regional library districts, island library districts, and partial-county library districts. Municipalities may also contract with or annex to library districts. The legal structure determines the library board's breadth of responsibilities and powers.

District and regional libraries have a single governing library board. It is this board that has the full range of powers and duties as established by law. Within the district or regional library, contracting or annexed cities may have advisory library boards.

City libraries must always work within their municipal process for receipt of library funding and for personnel procedures, though the board may have been awarded other powers and duties.

In Optional Municipal Code cities,* the library is a department of the city, and the library director reports to that governmental authority. The library board is an advisory board although in some cases city governments have invested the local board with varying levels of governance responsibility.

It is the responsibility of a municipal library board to clarify and confirm the breadth of its power with the municipal government.

*Optional Municipal Code: A law which broadens a city's powers of self government. Under these expanded powers, the library is considered a department of the city, therefore the trustees are an advisory board not a governing board. To determine if your city is an optional municipal code city, contact your city government or the Association of Washington Cities.

Governing library boards have policy and decision-making authority for the library or library system.

Laws regulating public libraries and library boards are delineated in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

Laws regulating libraries

Laws regulating public libraries and library boards are delineated in the *Revised Code of Washington* (RCW). Chapter 27.12 of the RCW relates specifically to public libraries. Other laws applicable to all governmental units such as the Open Public Meetings Law (RCW 42.17), and budget and finance laws (RCW Chapter 84), also govern library board actions.

Attorney General's Opinions (AGO) provide additional guidance in applying laws. Attorney General's Memoranda and Opinions are written in response to specific issues. Libraries should work with their local government in matters of local concern. In instances when an issue has statewide implications, the Washington State Library may elect to consult with its assigned Assistant Attorney General on behalf of libraries.

Legal powers of governing library boards

Library boards have two kinds of duties: 1) legal powers invested by Washington law and 2) planning and policy-making required for setting the overall direction of library services.

In Washington law governing library boards are charged with the following specific legal powers:

- Employ the library director, prescribe duties, compensation, and remove for just cause.
- Submit an annual budget to the appropriate legislative body or certify the tax rate.
- Supervise the care of all library property.
- Lease or purchase land for a library building.
- Lease, purchase, or construct a library building; acquire other property as needed for a building.
- Accept gifts of money or property for the library.
- Create and adopt bylaws, rules and regulations for board guidance and government of the library.
- Have control of the finances of the library. (See Chapter 3 in the *Reference Manual* that discusses advisory boards in cities and towns.)
- Purchase books, periodicals, maps and supplies. (See Chapter 19, Collection Development, in the *Reference Manual* for discussion.)
- Other acts necessary for orderly and efficient management of the library.

Other state laws describe the powers and duties of local and regional governing bodies and form the broader context within which trustees perform their jobs.

Powers of Advisory Boards

Optional Municipal Code City Library Boards

Cities and towns operating under the Optional Municipal Code, often called code cities, incorporate the library as a city department with an advisory board. The city governmental authority determines the degree and level of decision-making authority vested in the code city library board.

Advisory Boards

City or town libraries that contract with or are annexed to regional or district libraries may have advisory boards. Those advisory boards may provide input to their own local government officials. They have no governing authority and act in an advisory capacity only. In some cases, the advisory board may provide input to the library director and the governing board.

While advisory boards do not have the powers of a governing board, they have duties and responsibilities that are important.

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

Trustees have a delicate balance to keep—taking responsibility and liability for the library but leaving operational management to the director.

Beyond the strict legal description of powers cited in Washington law, governing library boards are entrusted with establishing the broad direction, planning, and policy-making for the library.

Trustees have a delicate balance to keep—taking responsibility and liability for the library but leaving operational management to the director. The board of trustees is ultimately responsible for the library and all that happens in it, but must carefully avoid micromanaging the library.

The library board is legally accountable for governing the library and complying with federal, state, and local laws. The board makes legal commitments for the library—approves legal contracts, approves expenditure of funds, approves grant applications, and enters into other agreements. The board may also delegate some signature authority to the library director accompanied by the requirement for appropriate reports and communications.

Board members do not have authority as individuals. The power of a trustee is derived only through board action. Individual actions may result in that individual being held legally responsible.

A new board member has as much liability and responsibility as the previously appointed members of the board. All boards need to be protected against liability through an errors and omissions insurance policy.

Boards delegate management authority to the library director. Good models for this governing approach are found in boards of non-profit organizations. Trustees are appointed to represent and reflect the community's interest in the library. In carrying out their responsibilities, boards can use the principle, "trust but verify."

To oversee the management of the library and ensure its success the board of trustees has seven major tasks:

- Establish the library mission.
- Define the long-range plan.
- Set policies that align with the library mission and support both library customers and staff of the library.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the library.
- Oversee the funding and approve the library budget or tax levy.
- Hire and annually evaluate the director.
- Advocate for the library.

ROLE OF GOVERNING BOARD AND LIBRARY DIRECTOR

The governing library board and library director work as team. Building a long-term, effective relationship between the board and director requires a clear understanding of their different roles and responsibilities and a willingness to negotiate differences of opinion when needed.

The board establishes the library mission, long-range plan, and policies. The director establishes service directions based on the mission, administers the policies, and accomplishes the long-range plan.

The board hires only one employee—the library director—and develops an annual work plan with the director’s participation. The director is responsible to the whole board, not individual board members.

Board members must always be aware of their special status in relation to the public and library staff. The board must not undermine the authority of the director. However, the board must also be sure that staff are well supported by appropriate policies, adequate resources, continuing education, and personal encouragement.

Following are brief lists of the complementary duties of a governing board and the library director.

Governing board's duties:

- Know community needs, keep abreast of library trends, and actively participate in state and national library associations.
- Set up an organizational structure for the library board and adopt bylaws that meet Open Public Meetings laws.
- Assure that board minutes, library policies, plans, and other information or reports are available to the public as required by law.
- Once the board adopts a policy or plan all members support the decision and support staff who implement decisions.
- In coordination with the director, develop and adopt the library's mission statement, long-range, strategic and annual plans.
- Know local, state, and federal laws related to libraries.
- Employ a competent and qualified director, maintain a current job description, and evaluate the director annually on previously agreed upon criteria.
- Clearly delegate operations to library director avoiding procedural micromanaging.
- Discuss, adopt, and periodically review policies.

A board establishes the library mission, long-range plan and policies. The director establishes service directions based on the mission, administers the policies, and accomplishes the long-range plan.

Clear and honest communication between the director and the board is essential to success.

- Review and adopt the annual library budget or levy, assuring that long-range plan goals will be addressed by the budget priorities.
- Adopt a clear materials selection policy that supports the diverse needs and interests of the community.
- Plan for, secure, and maintain adequate funding for the library within legal limits of library funding.
- Adopt adequate salary scales, benefits, and continuing education opportunities for library staff within budget limits.
- Actively communicate and discuss library policy issues with the public.
- Support the library public relations program.

Director's duties:

- Develop and administer the library service program for the entire community based on board adopted mission, policies, and plans.
- Provide complete and regular reports about the library management, progress, and needs at board meetings.
- Serve as the board's technical advisor attending all regular and special board meetings, as well as executive meetings when invited by the board.
- Keep the board informed about emerging critical issues.
- Know local, state, and federal laws informing the board about pending legislation that may impact the library.
- Develop background information and recommend policies and plans for board action; carry out adopted policies and plans.
- Hire, supervise, and provide for continuing education and evaluation of library staff.
- Prepare the proposed annual library budget for board consideration.
- Administer the library budget, staying within fiscal restraints.
- Supervise maintenance, operation, remodeling or construction of library facilities.
- Communicate with the public about library related issues.
- Actively market the library and maintain a public relations program.
- Actively participate in state and national library organizations.

POLICY-MAKING

A vital responsibility of the board of trustees is establishing library policies. By adopting the library mission statement, long range plans, and policies, the board sets the direction of the library and communicates its intent to the director. The director then implements services and manages the library.

Clear policies should:

- Meet local, state, and federal laws.
- Inform the community as well as the library director of the board's intent and priorities.
- Provide for consistent library services and procedures for the entire community served by the library.
- Guide decision-making in sensitive situations, particularly in the area of intellectual freedom and rules of conduct.
- Assure fair treatment and protection of the rights of all library customers and all staff members.

What are policies?

A library's policies must support its mission statement. Policies are carefully designed, broadly stated, written guidelines for decision-making that are formally adopted by the board. They are governing principles upon which the director and staff develop specific procedures and regulations for the operation of the library.

Policy manual

A policy manual includes all the board's adopted policies with the date of adoption or re-adoption. The director and each board member must have a copy of the manual.

By law, library policies must be accessible to the public. Copies need to be easily available at each branch or community library.

By adopting the library mission statement, long-range plans, and policies, the board sets the direction of the library and communicates its intent to the director. The director then implements services and manages the library.

Try to anticipate potential crisis situations and create policies before they are needed.

Development of policies

Good policies are developed and adopted through a deliberative, thoughtful process. Local needs and situations determine policy content, but policies also need to incorporate best library practices. District or regional library boards have authority to adopt policies that municipal library boards may need to submit to city authorities for approval. The following steps are helpful in developing new policies:

1. Identify the need

The library director often initiates policy review when informing the board of current conditions that raise possible concerns. Another way to identify need for policies is to review policies adopted in other libraries as well as newly adopted statements of library associations. Try to anticipate potential crisis situations and discuss and adopt policies to avoid emotional and/or hasty decision-making.

2. Gather the facts

Once the need for the policy has been established the director usually presents to the board, or to the policy committee of the board, the following:

- Summary of researched information including policies of other libraries, library practices, and opinions.
- Identification of budget, staff, legal and/or service impacts.
- Options to consider.
- Draft text of recommended policy or policies.

3. Discuss the issue

The impact of a proposed policy should be discussed in detail from many perspectives. How will it affect the entire community served by the library, library users of all ages, library staff, the library budget and other resources? Policies can have far-reaching consequences. Here are some questions to ask about a proposed policy.

Is the proposed policy:

- Consistent with mission statement and long-range plans.
- Consistent with other internal library policies.
- Consistent with local, state, and federal laws.
- Necessary, practical, affordable, and fair to all affected.
- Broad enough to cover the subject but stated clearly so staff can implement direction without contradictions.

4. Write the policy

The library director may be asked to draft a policy statement for review. The board evaluates the likely impact of the policy, revises the proposed policy until it clearly reflects the position of the board, and hears public comment. This process is rarely completed in a single meeting.

5. Adopt and implement the policy

Policies must be formally adopted by vote at a legally constituted board meeting. The policy is usually identified by a number and includes the date of adoption and/or revision, and is added to the policy manual.

The library director implements the policy, assigning staff to develop operational procedures and action plans, if necessary. The director and staff continue to monitor the policy and report to the board on the evaluation of effectiveness of the policy or unexpected results.

6. Establish a schedule for policy review

Though policies ought to be durable, changing conditions may render them out-of-date. Policy review must be on-going. Regular reviews remind board members of adopted positions and assists new board members to learn the implications of adopted policies. Boards should establish a review date for each new policy. Some boards assure currency by reviewing a policy every month as a regular agenda item. Some boards establish a policy review committee that handles reviews.

Types of library policies

Library operations should be broadly covered by a policy. Policies which every library should have are:

Board operations. Rules under which the board will operate including board by-laws that describe selection of officers and their responsibilities, attendance requirements, and rules for regular, special, executive, and emergency meetings that meet Open Public Meeting laws; a code of ethics including a statement identifying trustee conflict of interest and legal liability of the board; conduct of meetings that includes rules for public testimony; and any other permanent guidelines for the board itself, including hiring and evaluating the director. All boards need to be covered by errors and omissions insurance.

Personnel. The board hires only the library director, but it approves position classifications, salaries and benefits schedules, and procedures for assuring that staff are evaluated and disciplined fairly and legally. Note: these responsibilities may be retained by city authorities in municipal libraries.

Regular review of policies remind board members of adopted positions and assists new board members to learn the implications of the policies.

The policy manual should include all written policies and the date of their adoption or revision.

Other personnel related policies will include:

- Staff continuing education and training.
- Use of volunteers.
- Procedures that support federal and state mandated civil rights of employees.
- Procedures for handling grievances.
- Dismissal or reduction in force.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Other personnel issues.

In some libraries, these issues may be addressed in a union contract and the director is responsible for compliance.

Library operations and services. The library director is responsible for making specific operational decisions based on board-adopted policies that describe in general:

- Eligibility for borrowing and library services.
- Collection development goals.
- Intellectual freedom and process for handling censorship challenges.
- Circulation policies, including confidentiality of library user records, fines, use of special collections, etc.
- Reference services policy.
- Facilities and equipment availability to community.
- Community relations.
- Participation in cooperative state and local library programs.
- Relationship with Friends of Library groups.
- Management authority and controls.
- Personnel, as noted previously.
- Facility maintenance, ownership, insurance, etc.

National policies

It is recommended that boards of trustees adopt nationally-adopted policies which are widely applicable in local situations. Some policies adopted by the American Library Association include:

- Library Bill of Rights.
- Freedom to Read Statement.
- Internet filtering.
- Statement on Governmental Intimidation.
- Ethics Statement for Trustees and Librarians.

PLANNING

Planning is a key responsibility of the board of trustees that sets the direction for the library and its services to the community. Planning and policy-making build on each other. Library boards guide, shape, and build library services for their community as they make policies that address library, collections, buildings, services, and staff. The challenge is to make these decisions based on a carefully considered written plan.

The purpose of planning is to:

- Focus attention on attainable goals and objectives based on customer need.
- Establish priorities for allocating fiscal and staff resources.
- Determine and maintain accountability.
- Monitor the needs of library customers.
- Encourage creative thinking about library programs and services.
- Evaluate and then identify the next opportunities that the library will undertake to accomplish.

A library should have both a long-range plan and an annual work plan. The annual plan's objectives are based on the long-range plan.

The library's budget should be prioritized to support achieving the most important goals of the long-range plan. Planning should take place on a regular schedule as a part of an ongoing process.

Libraries generally develop long-range plans in three to five year intervals. Short-range planning and the review of the long-range plan are generally done annually.

A good long-range plan is:

- Visionary, but based on community needs and interests.
- Flexible, but including priorities that set general directions.
- Assigns accountability so achievements are measurable.

A short-range plan is practical and adaptable. Although each board member may have personal goals for the library, the board works together as a team to reach consensus on the library's long-range plan.

A library should have both a long-range plan and an annual work plan.

Planning should take place on a regular schedule as a part of an ongoing process.

It is important that the entire board is involved in developing the long-range plan because it forms the basis and priorities for all decisions relating to the library's services.

It is important that all board members are involved in developing the long-range plan because it forms the basis and priorities for all decisions relating to the library's services. The plan is based on the needs of the community.

Boards should work with a planning committee that includes representatives of the community, staff, and governing officials. Obtaining extensive input assures that the library's long-range plan will meet community desires.

The director and staff need to be effectively involved throughout the process in order to ensure that the board incorporates their knowledge of the library and customer needs, as well as to ensure that they fully understand the priorities and intent as they implement the plan.

Planning involves answering these basic questions:

- What is our purpose? What does success look like for us?
- Who do we serve and what do our customers want from us?
- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to go now?
- How will we get there, and what is our timetable?
- What staff, money, equipment and other resources will we need to allocate?
- How will we judge whether we've achieved our plans?
- What is next, based on our evaluation of achievement?

What is our purpose? Vision and Mission

Adopting a written vision statement and mission statement are the first steps in long-range planning. Both must state clearly and very concisely what the board sees as the future of the library and the purpose of the library's existence. All other goals and objectives will then align with this basic philosophy.

Where are we now? Current View

A good plan becomes a road map for the library. To begin, it is important to look at where the library is now—its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. The board should then look at the economic, political, and cultural factors which impact the library; trends which will be significant in the future; and what the community wants and needs from the library.

Where do we want to go? Goals and Objectives

Once the library's vision and mission are articulated and the current circumstances are identified, the next step is developing goals. Goals are general, non-measurable statements that have long-term impact in achieving the vision and mission. Objectives, which are best defined by staff, are specific, measurable, time-limited descriptions of desired results.

How will we get there? Objectives and Action steps

Once goals are established, the staff determines objectives and the specific steps that will contribute to meeting the goals. For every objective, alternative approaches are identified and analyzed in terms of their effectiveness in meeting the objective, impact on the library, potential for success, and cost in dollars and staff resources.

Objectives and activities are developed by the library director and library staff because of their operational responsibilities, skills, and intimate knowledge of the library processes and procedures.

How will we know what we accomplished? Evaluation

After the plan is adopted and put into action, it is the board's responsibility to monitor progress, review the efforts, and evaluate the accomplishments. Progress should be reviewed at every board meeting in addition to the annual evaluation and revision of the plan.

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There are a variety of planning processes that may be wholly or partially adopted according to the circumstances of the library. Many libraries use the planning process developed by the Public Library Association (PLA). Their publication is titled: *Planning For Results, a Public Library Transformation Process*. The Association produces and periodically updates materials on planning, data collection, and evaluation. The United Way offers another approach to evaluating results of services. There are also many other resources aimed at meeting the needs of non-profit boards. An initial information resource is the chapter addressing planning in the *Reference Manual*.

After the plan is finalized and put into action, it is the board's responsibility to monitor progress, review the efforts, and evaluate the accomplishments.

FUNDING

Obtaining adequate funding to support library programs and services is one of the board's important responsibilities.

Obtaining adequate funding to support library programs and services is one of the board's important responsibilities. To be successful, board members must understand how funds are allocated to the city library or levied by the district, as well as legal limitations imposed by state laws, and the potential impact of proposed initiatives and referendums.

Trustees must be advocates for adequate library funding within their community, with city and county governmental authorities, and with state elected officials. Trustees must also consider investigating additional sources of revenue, especially for one-time projects.

Garnering support for the library is critically important. It is a task which requires each board member's personal commitment to:

- Understand the laws that govern public finance and the implications of proposed laws, initiatives or referenda that will impact library finance and budget processes.
- Explore the options for better support of library services in the community, from supporting Friends of the Library to establishing a library foundation.
- Promote the board's vision and long-range plans for the library and ask citizens for their support in a variety of venues in addition to library board meetings.
- Plan ahead for community needs, such as constructing or remodeling library facilities.
- Regularly ask citizens and library users what the community wants and actively work to achieve their priorities.
- Work pro-actively with funding authorities in order to support your city library.

It is the trustee's responsibility and duty to understand the details of their library's funding situation, the sources of their funds, and the district or municipal library budget process. State laws define the budget schedule and the limitations established in the constitution and various initiatives.

It is highly recommended that trustees read the *Reference Manual* Budgeting chapter which details the complex taxing structure and explains information such as the impact of the Implicit Price Deflator (IPD).

How are libraries funded?

While all public libraries are supported by public funds, city and District library boards receive funds and relate to their funding Authority differently.

Municipal Public Libraries

As a department of the city, municipal public libraries are funded through annual appropriations from the city's general fund. Although the library board may request support considered appropriate to successfully operate its plan of service, the city will mandate parameters for budget development. The library's budget competes with the budgets of other city services and the city council adopts the final budget.

The city may choose to allocate additional funds for special library projects. When large capital projects are planned, the city, with the library's support, may ask voters to approve a special bond issue. Capital projects can include a new library building, extensive remodeling of an old library, or technological improvements.

Rural, Intercounty Rural, Island, and Partial-County Library Districts

Rural county library districts, intercounty rural library districts, island library districts, and partial-county library districts are supported by direct taxes levied annually on properties in the district or region specifically for the purpose of supporting libraries. Some other taxes, such as the Timber tax, may contribute to the library but differ from area to area, and are not reliable sources for regular library operations.

Levy rates are established by the board of trustees, within the constricts of state law, and are expressed as a ratio of cents per thousand dollars of taxable property in the library district.

Municipalities affiliated to a district by contract

Municipalities that contract for service with a library district pay an annual fee. The fee amount and/or the method of determining the fee is set in the contract. The fee is usually equal to the library district's levy rate, if it would be applied against the assessed valuation of the property in the city. The contract fee is usually paid from the city's general fund. Cities in some districts also provide and maintain the library building.

Municipalities annexed to a district

Municipalities that vote to annex with a district library are funded by property tax as opposed to the municipal budget. The levy rate adopted by the library district for collection of taxes is uniform throughout the district, including annexed areas. Cities in some districts may also provide and maintain the library building.

It is the trustees' responsibility and duty to understand the details of their library's funding situation, the sources of their funds, and their budget process.

Regional Libraries

A regional library is composed of two or more governmental units. Since the library serves the populations of all of the units, the expenses are borne by all units, apportioned under terms of a contract. Although many library systems in Washington are popularly called "regional libraries," most are in fact either rural library districts or intercounty rural library districts under Washington law.

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Libraries may receive funds from other sources in addition to public money. Endowments, trusts, gifts and donations are often given to libraries. Some libraries create foundations to better garner gifts and manage the funds. (Note: see the *Reference Manual* chapter on Foundations.) Friends of the Library may provide gifts to the library.

Grants may be available for one-time projects through Library Services and Technology Act funds or through the auspices of private foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

BUDGETING

The governing library board is legally accountable for the finances of the library. The library board is legally obligated to adopt an annual budget on a schedule set by law and to monitor finances of the library. The board maintains a broad perspective on the operation of the library and represents the community's interest in the budget. The board ensures that the budget reflects the mission statement, planning goals, and objectives of the library.

Budgeting and planning are interwoven. The budget should be viewed as a planning tool, the map that the library follows during a fiscal period to attain its mission and planning goals. The budget outlines the library's financial limitations and indicates the priorities that the board and staff plan to accomplish during a fiscal period.

The role of the governing board in the finance and budgeting process includes:

- Supervising the library's finances.
- Adopting the budget and levy by December 31 for districts, or approving a proposed budget that is submitted to the city authorities.

In municipal libraries, advocacy for the library's budget is another important role because final approval of the city budget is the responsibility of the municipal governing authority.

Preparing the budget

The board of trustees and the library director have distinct and separate roles in the budget process. The director develops the budget and presents it to the trustees for review, refinement, public hearings, and adoption. (Note: see the *Reference Manual* detailed chart of responsibilities and timelines included in Chapter 17.)

Because the governing structure of municipal and district libraries is different, the budget process is different.

Municipal Public Libraries

The director prepares a recommended budget request based on the long-range plan, present and anticipated needs of the library, as well as the budget parameters established by the city. After a thorough discussion, review and changes, the board approves the proposed budget. The proposed budget is then submitted to the appropriate budget authority.

The board maintains a broad perspective on the operation of the library and represents the community's interest in the budget.

The governing library board is legally accountable for the finances of the library.

The municipal library board should take the opportunity to support the library director in the budget presentation to the governing body, usually during a city council hearing, as it considers adopting the city budget.

The library's budget is but one of several budgets that will comprise the city's total budget. In some cases, the board chair makes the budget presentation along with the library director. Whoever makes the presentation, the board of trustees should attend the presentation and be strong advocates for the library.

District and Regional Libraries

The library boards of district and regional libraries do not report to, nor take budgeting direction from, appointing authorities.

All governing boards are responsible for adopting policies regarding the authorization for disbursement of funds, applications for grants or other supplemental funding, and accounting for expenditure of public funds.

The library director prepares the budget based on the present and anticipated needs of the library and the potential revenue. After a thorough discussion, review, public hearing(s) and revisions, the board adopts the budget which results in setting the levy rate.

Unlike a city budget that may have some leeway for funding priorities or special projects, the district or regional levy is mandated by limits on property taxes.

Administering the budget

Once the budget is adopted by the board or approved by the city authorities, the director has the authority to allocate funds within the budget allotment to accomplish the plan, though it is the responsibility of the director to discuss with the board or city authorities any significant budget revisions that may be necessary.

The budget is the mechanism by which the board ensures oversight of the library finances. The library must have an effective accounting system that is regularly audited. The board monitors the finances by:

- Informed discussion and adoption of the budget.
- Review of financial statements.
- Careful attention to financial audits.

To oversee the finances adequately the board must read materials thoroughly, ask questions, look for variances, make comparisons, and ensure there are adequate reasons for any apparent contradictions. In watching the financial statements, the board is monitoring how well the library is staying on track. In paying attention to the audit and attendant recommendations, the board maintains its own and the library's fiscal integrity.

To facilitate the board's monitoring of the finances, the director must present financial statements that the library board and other constituencies can understand. The library director should provide monthly financial reports which include:

- Year-to-date revenues and expenditures compared to initial projections.
- Total budget delineated by BARS categories.
- Balance of budgeted funds remaining for fiscal year.
- Explanation of significant changes.

Trustees are legally responsible for the finances of the library. To carry out that responsibility they both monitor the broad financial picture and authorize payment of funds that have been approved for library purposes.

HIRING THE DIRECTOR

Hiring a library director is one of the most challenging and rewarding jobs that a library board can undertake.

The entire board of trustees should be involved in hiring the library director. Because the director is the board's only employee, it is important for trustees to work as a team and reach consensus as they develop the job description, as well as determine the interview method, the hiring criteria, and other procedures and decisions.

Hiring the library director

Hiring a library director is one of the most challenging and rewarding jobs that a library board can undertake.

In the process of hiring a new director boards must be aware of current practices in the library profession; competitive salaries and benefits; and state and federal laws relating to interviewing and hiring employees. Each library board should seek a director with qualities, strengths, and professional background that meet the library's current circumstances, plans, and needs.

The prospect of new library leadership offers an opportunity to:

- Assess the library's present position and the desires of the community.
- Establish plans for the future.
- Review library goals and direction.
- Identify conditions that may need correction.
- Redefine the job of the director, revise qualifications, and review the salary and benefits.

The public expects a smooth transition to new leadership, that the board will hire the best possible candidate for the job, and that the board will use public funds responsibly to secure a candidate.

The first step is to appoint an interim director who will have full authority and is paid at the director salary level. Follow these steps when preparing to select a library director:

1. Assess the library and its current needs.
2. Draft a job description and establish salary and benefits.
3. Establish and fund a search committee.
4. Advertise the position.
5. Interview candidates, requesting input from staff and the community.
6. Select the new library director based on agreed upon criteria in a public board meeting.
7. Orient the new director.

Once the selection of a new director has been made, the board needs to develop a written contractual agreement that spells out the relationship and expectations of the board and director. Many boards and directors develop and sign a formal contract that is reviewed annually.

Legally, Washington libraries are not "at will" employers. This means that the library director can not be dismissed without just cause. The written contract, accompanied by an annual work plan, is an essential document that carefully establishes measurable expectations that form the basis for evaluations.

To ensure a smooth transition and clarity of direction, the board must evaluate a new director within the first three to six months of employment.

EVALUATING THE DIRECTOR

Evaluation should be a positive experience, a time when the board can officially recognize the talents and skills of the director.

Evaluation should be a positive experience, a time when the board can officially recognize the talents and skills of the director. Since evaluation is a constant process, suggestions for improvement can be offered by the board as part of a continuing effort towards a shared and dynamic future. An evaluation can:

- Clearly state and review expectations.
- Clear the air and strengthen the relationship of the board and director.
- Provide criteria to reward positive performance.
- Reaffirm the board's role as the employer.
- Communicate to the director the board's satisfaction or dissatisfaction and vice versa.

An annual written evaluation is an essential management practice. It provides the director with a clear understanding of board expectations and whether expectations were met. It is also a formal method of communication between the board and the director, and a way to identify concerns that need to be addressed.

Prior to the evaluation, the board should discuss and take action on the following:

- Adopt, with the directors input, a measurable annual workplan which forms the basis for evaluation.
- Develop an evaluation process in cooperation with the director.
- Select a general evaluation method, criteria, and rating system.
- Share and negotiate the evaluation method with the director.

Neither the evaluation process, nor the content of an evaluation should be a surprise to the director. The director should know the expectations of work and the criteria that will be used to measure success. In addition, it is not only fair and appropriate for the board to discuss concerns with the director's performance between evaluation periods, it is good practice to solve misunderstandings or problems sooner, rather than later.

When it is time for the formal evaluation, the board prepares the written evaluation. It is important for the board to reach consensus on the content of the evaluation. The director should have the benefit of clear direction from the board as a whole—not individual assessments of performance.

When the trustees have reached consensus, they meet with the director to discuss the evaluation. During that meeting the director must have the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

Evaluation criteria

Evaluation of the performance of a director is firmly tied to success in achieving the annual library workplan.

Listed below are some indicators of a director's effectiveness:

(Note: the *Reference Manual* includes an extensive list.)

- Fulfillment of job description.
- Evidence of fiscal responsibility.
- Budgeting and financial planning.
- Accuracy of financial reports.
- Financial stability of the library.
- Progress towards achieving long-range and annual plans.
- Good flow of information to the board.
- Assistance to the board.
- Good customer/staff/community relations.
- Accomplishment of personal measurable objectives.
- Correction of any previous performance problems.

The board's ultimate concern is how well the library accomplishes its mission. It is important for the board to get feedback from the community on the effectiveness of library service. The bottom line is delivering service of optimum quality. The director is accountable for the goals and outcomes of the library's long-range plan.

The board's ultimate concern is how well the library accomplishes its mission.

ADVOCATING

It is the responsibility of the library board to support and to advocate for the library.

A trustee is the library's best and most credible advocate for excellence in library service. Trustees are knowledgeable about library issues and, as citizens, reflect the needs and concerns of the community. Library staff, while skilled and passionate, can be perceived as having a vested interest. As volunteers, trustees' words hold weight with community leaders and government officials.

It is the responsibility of the library board to support and to advocate for the library. As a group, the library board has a responsibility to:

- Be well informed on local, state, and national issues and proposed legislation, initiatives and/or referenda that may affect libraries.
- Advocate, support, defend, and speak out about library issues at board meetings or hearings as well as with citizens, government leaders, and elected officials, within the limits defined by Public Disclosure Commission rules and regulations.
- Communicate to the community on a regular basis about the library services and long-range plans.
- Assure that the library has an effective marketing and public relations program.

As individuals, library trustees should:

- Be well informed, vocal, and visible in the community.
- Share the plans, policies, and progress of the library with individuals and community groups.
- Seek out and listen to the community.
- Work closely with government officials.

The Community

The trustee is a link between the library and its community. The library board represents the needs and wishes of the community to the library director, and represents the needs of the library to the community.

The community consists of many overlapping constituent groups. However, it is useful for the board to consider their needs separately:

- Taxpayers and voters.
- Library users and non-library users.
- Friends of the Library.
- Educational institutions, home schoolers.
- Residents of the library neighborhood.
- News media.
- Businesses.
- Civic organizations.
- Local and state elected and appointed officials.

It is important for the board to be involved in the community and to support the library in a positive manner.

To be effective, the board must know the library well and understand the library's relationship to all constituent groups. Board members must be willing to both listen and speak for the library.

The library board defines the overall policy for public relations and marketing activities to be carried out by staff. It is important for the library to proactively inform the public about its services and policies. This is both a responsibility and a necessity in order to maintain public support and assure that people know the services and resources offered by their library.

Marketing

Marketing is an organized method to determine the needs of a community, develop library services that meet those needs, and communicate those services to the public. While boards are not directly involved in the library marketing program, trustees need to understand and support those activities.

Public relations

Public relations (or community relations) is a planned program of communication between the library and the community it serves. The purpose of community relations is to create good will and support for the library.

Good service is the foundation for good public relations. It is everybody's job! Everyone and everything connected with the library affects its public image. Trustees have a crucial and defining role in community relations.

It is important for the board to be involved in the community and to support the library in a positive manner.

Good service is the foundation for good public relations. It is everybody's job!

Ballot issues

When the library is contemplating a special levy or bond issue, it is wise to measure the opinions of the entire community. This is important because to achieve passage of such measures, the library needs the approval of voters who may not be library users. The board and library staff must carefully follow the Public Disclosure Commission rules and regulations concerning distribution of information about the issue and strictly avoid using public resources to campaign for ballot issues. (Note: see Chapter 23 of the *Reference Manual*.)

Advocacy with governing officials and legislators

Local, state and federal laws affect the library in many ways—including the availability of funding, hiring employees, and assuring that people with disabilities have access to the library and its services. Trustees must stay informed on these matters and become involved in the political process in order to support the library's ability to provide excellent services.

This means getting to know city council members, county commissioners, state and federal legislators. It means providing clear and accurate information to help them understand the library's needs and the potential impact of proposed legislation. It also means encouraging others to express opinions on matters in which the library has an interest. It may require letter writing, phoning, or visiting officials in person. Already-established relationships are invaluable when an important issue comes up for a vote.

Friends

Many Friends of Library groups are strong library advocates and frequently raise funds to assist the library to improve its resources and services. Formed to support, promote, and improve their local library, they can be one of the most important citizen groups in the library community.

It is wise to have a written agreement between the Friends and the library board identifying their separate roles and responsibilities. It is important to establish a clear pattern of control with agreement from the board and the Friends regarding funds and other related matters. (Note: see Chapter 21 of the *Reference Manual* for information about the roles of the board, director, and Friends of the Library.)

FUNCTIONING AS A GOVERNING BOARD

To conduct the business of the library in an efficient and responsible manner, it is essential that trustees build and maintain good working relationships and adopt responsible guidelines to govern themselves. Continuing education for board members is an essential ingredient for success.

Terms of office

County commissioners or city officials appoint library board members, based on state law. Geographic representation is particularly important for multi-county districts. Appointments may be made in consultation with or upon the recommendation of the board and the director.

Library board terms are deliberately limited by law to allow the broadest possible representation of community interests and viewpoints. Staggered terms prevent complete board turnover from occurring except in very unusual instances. Board members who are unable or unwilling to fulfill the duties prescribed by law may be removed from office by the appointing authority.

The law limits service to no more than two, full consecutive terms. A trustee who fills an unexpired term of another trustee is still eligible for two additional terms. Five member boards serve a five-year term and seven member boards serve a seven-year term.

Recruitment

Trustees should be willing to assist in the recruitment of new board members if the appointing authority desires assistance. A proactive recruitment process is described in the *Reference Manual* Chapter on Board Organization.

Current board members know what skills and qualities will enhance the work of the board. Most boards recruit applicants who will be active participants and can contribute specific skills as well as ask questions and offer ideas and solutions. Board members must be able to participate as a member of a team that includes not just the board, but the library director. Community leaders who have been active in a variety of organizations or projects are ideal candidates.

Job description

Trustees are volunteers but the positions require dedication, willingness to learn, and accountability. A written job description provides a clear understanding of the responsibilities. Candidates should be informed of the duties and responsibilities and give their consent to fulfill the duties if appointed.

A library trustee is a volunteer, but the appointment requires dedication, willingness to learn, and accountability.

It is important to clearly delineate expectations and responsibilities of trustees.

New trustee orientation

The library director and board president should take responsibility for orientation and education of new trustees. Experienced board members can meet with new board members to review basic materials, introduce meeting procedures, and answer questions. It is important to clearly delineate expectations and responsibilities of trustees.

Provide the new trustee with basic information about the library including:

- The code of ethics adopted by board.
- List of current board members names, addresses, and phone numbers, as well as current committee rosters.
- Board bylaws.
- Schedule of board meetings.
- Schedule of library opening hours and tour of library facilities.
- Organizational chart for the library accompanied with a list of key staff and positions.
- Copies of all board policies and dates when current policies are scheduled for review.
- Library long-range plan and annual workplan.
- Most recent library annual report and audit.
- Recent board meeting minutes.
- Library budget and current financial reports.
- *Public Library Trustee Reference Manual*.
- Membership information for Washington Library Association (WLA), Pacific Northwest Library Association (PNLA), and American Library Association (ALA).

After the first scheduled board meeting, time should be taken to review the meeting with the new board member to answer questions and to help prepare the trustee for the next meeting.

Organization of the board

Bylaws

Bylaws are procedures by which the board transacts its business. Each governing board must adopt bylaws, rules, and regulations for their own guidance and for the governance of the library within the bounds or restrictions of state laws and regulations. Bylaws contain such information as:

- Duties, powers, and terms of officers.
- Definition of quorum and attendance requirements.
- Cause for removal from the board and process.
- Regular meeting schedule.
- Provisions for calling additional meetings as defined in the Open Public Meetings laws (RCW 42.17).
- Appointment process and duties of standing and special committees.
- Required reports, yearly timetables.
- Provision for amending bylaws.

Officers

A public library board establishes the board officers in its bylaws including positions such as chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer. The director often serves as secretary of the board, ex-officio.

Committees

Since all the information that the board needs to operate effectively cannot be acquired in the course of regular meetings, committee work is required. Some standing committees that boards appoint include:

- Budget and finance
- Buildings and equipment
- Planning
- Policy development and review
- Personnel
- Public relations

In addition, special committees and task forces are sometimes used. At the discretion of the board, the chair may appoint non-board members who have knowledge to support the committee or task force charges. These meetings are open to the public. Occasionally subcommittees are named to investigate particular aspects of an issue. The goals and timelines for committees must be clearly stated and understood.

Each governing board must adopt bylaws, rules, and regulations for their own guidelines and for the governance of the library.

The Open Public Meetings Law requires that the actions of the library board and other boards "be taken openly and that their deliberations be conducted openly."

Their reports are presented to the full board and are public documents. The committees' report is a recommendation, however, and not binding. It is up to the entire board to adopt final decisions.

Board meetings

The business of the library board is transacted through open public meetings. The Open Public Meetings Law (RCW 42.17) requires that library board actions "be taken openly and that their deliberations be conducted openly." Under the provisions of this law, all meetings at which action is taken must be open and public. Any person is permitted to attend without registering or meeting any other requirements. The Open Public Meetings Law defines the few circumstances when the board might meet in executive or emergency sessions.

In addition to establishing the regular meeting date, the library board is required to provide notice of special meetings or executive sessions. If the meeting is adjourned or postponed to a later date, immediate notice of the change must be publicly posted. Boards may conduct emergency meetings in order to deal with a natural disaster with no prior notice. Minutes of meetings shall be publicly posted.

Preparing for the meeting

An agenda should be prepared jointly by the chair and the library director with input from other board members. It is good practice to ask at each meeting what items members may wish to have placed on the next agenda.

Public notice of the meeting must be published and/or posted following open public meetings rules. A board packet of information is sent to members at least a week prior to the meeting. The board packet usually contains:

- Agenda with concise notations explaining each item, with supporting documents and explanatory materials.
- Minutes from the previous meeting.
- Financial reports.
- Services report.
- Director's report.

Explanatory notations on the agenda help board members handle minor items quickly and save time for in-depth discussion of important events and/or plans.

The board establishes a yearly calendar that includes dates to review policies, hold budget hearings, approve the budget, evaluate the director, review the long-range plan, attend library conferences, and other significant events.

Decision-making

The board is a team and should act as one. All votes must be public. In making decisions, the board strives to reach consensus but must speak with one voice to the public and to the press. This requires that each member be able to accept the decision. While on the board, a trustee has an obligation to support a decision after it is made by the whole board.

The board is a team and should act as one. In making decisions, the board strives to reach consensus but must speak with one voice to the public and to the press.

It is appropriate for trustees to state their opposition during board discussion of an issue, but not outside the board meeting. A board member who loses an issue can say they voted against it but that they support the decision of the board. If a board member feels so strongly about an issue that they cannot support the decision, it is time for the member to resign.

Conflict of interest

When an issue arises that may result in financial or other gain that benefits the trustee, a family member, or an organization connected with a board member, the situation may pose a conflict of interest. In such a case, state laws require that the trustee refrain from discussing the issue and abstain from voting.

Library board members represent the community. It is important to vote on what is best for the whole community, not just one segment of it. Although members may represent certain perspectives or areas within the community, decisions should be based on what is best for everyone.

Executive sessions

The Open Public Meetings Law allows the board to call an executive session during regular or special meetings. Before convening an executive session, the presiding officer must announce the purpose for excluding the public from the meeting and the approximate time when the executive session will conclude and the regular session reconvene.

RCW 42.17 establishes that executive sessions are not public and may be held only for:

- Site selection, acquisition, or sale of real estate if public knowledge would result in increased price.
- Personal performance review of library director, or charges against a trustee or employee.
- Review of contract negotiations.

Trustees supply ideas from their community contacts and the library director supplies evaluation, analysis, options, and recommendations to assist in making decisions.

- Receive and evaluate major complaints or charges brought against a trustee or an employee after personnel process is completed.
- Evaluate qualifications of applicants for library director.
- Discuss litigation with legal counsel.
- Discuss collective bargaining negotiations or salaries, wages or other conditions of employment. (See Chapter 10 of the *Reference Manual* for further information.)

The library director's role in board meetings

In order to make recommendations, develop policy and plans, boards need sufficient information. Trustees supply ideas from their community contacts and the library director supplies evaluation, analysis, options, and recommendations to assist in making decisions. The library director should:

- Supply information about the library's status and activities. Routine figures, like circulation data and financial records, should be standardized in format, presented promptly, and interpreted by the library director.
- Propose policies and make recommendations.
- Provide background facts and figures for all options being considered, accompanied by potential impact on library.
- Raise questions and expose problems promptly.
- Make the board aware of trustee workshops and professional programs.
- Keep board members updated on library services, activities and/or problems.
- Ask trustees to serve as community representatives in gathering information on what users think, what needs are not being met, and how well the library is performing.

Minutes

Minutes are the official record of a board's actions and must be accurately kept, held on file, and made available for public inspection. The board secretary is responsible for preparing the official minutes. Ideally, minutes are recorded by a staff member appointed by the director so all are free to participate fully in discussion.

Because minutes are the legal reference of board decisions and activity, they must be in writing, circulated for reading and comment, and adopted by a formal motion. They are public documents as are other working documents or reports.

As well as documenting the business conducted at the meeting, minutes should include:

- Text of motions.
- List of members present and absent.
- Convening and adjournment times to show a quorum and the beginning and end of formal business.

Public participation at board meetings

The board should have a policy on the involvement of the public at board meetings. This ensures that the treatment of interested citizens does not vary from meeting to meeting.

It is advisable to state in written policy that a time period is allocated for audience comment. The chair should announce the policy at the beginning of the meeting.

Some suggestions of procedures to use during public meetings:

- Welcome visitors.
- Have visitors sign up if they wish to speak.
- At the beginning of the meeting state the board's policy on public comments, including time limits.
- Concentrate on the written, adopted agenda.
- If necessary, move the meeting to another facility to accommodate the public.

To encourage public participation:

- Invite liaisons from Friends groups and advisory boards.
- Invite representatives from other groups to attend.
- Publish the schedule of board meetings in newspapers, newsletters, and other materials distributed to the public.
- Send the board agenda to the media.
- Allow time on agenda for public comments.

The board should have a policy on the involvement of the public at board meetings. This ensures that the treatment of interested citizens does not vary from meeting to meeting.

It is the responsibility of the board to complete its business at the board meeting and include the public at the appropriate time.

Although a board meeting is held in public, it is not a public hearing. It is the responsibility of the board to complete its business and include the public at the appropriate time. The public must be allowed to speak, though the board can set the time limits, the place, and the manner in which the public will be called upon to speak.

Trustee education and development

Several local and national organizations and agencies provide continuing education programs for library trustees and offer opportunities for trustees to share experiences with each other. These organizations and agencies are:

- Washington Library Association (WLA)
- Washington Library Friends and Trustees Association (WLFTA)
- Washington State Library (WSL)
- Pacific Northwest Library Association (PNLA)
- American Library Association (ALA)
- Association of Library Trustees and Advocates (ALTA)
- Public Library Association (PLA)

Many resources exist to help library boards. Trustees should take advantage of the workshops available for continuing education, especially the Workshop in Library Leadership (WILL) sponsored by the Washington State Library, and the programs offered at the annual Washington Library Association Conference, ALTA conferences, and PLA conferences. The Washington State Library offers consultation and facilitation on issues facing library boards.

If at all possible, a board should allocate funds in their budget to spend on their own education and development. Library directors should alert trustees to continuing education opportunities and assist them in arranging to attend.

Board retreats

A board retreat is a good opportunity to review the library's long-range plan and goals, develop teamwork skills, and socialize in an informal setting away from the pressures of monthly decision-making. Even though boards are subject to the Open Public Meetings laws, they can hold retreats as long as they are public. The potential of having the public and the press at a retreat is no reason not to hold a retreat.

Board self-evaluation

An annual review of board effectiveness should be part of the board calendar. This can be effectively conducted at the board retreat. Self-evaluation can increase awareness of strengths and weaknesses as well as provide the basis for a planned approach to improving board performance.

The board can use the following criteria in annually evaluating its own effectiveness as a board: (Note: the *Reference Manual* includes an extensive section on board evaluation.)

- Formal self evaluation.
- Review code of ethics.
- Review board member job descriptions.
- Evaluate committee operations.
- Evaluate meetings and accomplishments.
- Review progress on the long-range and annual work plan.

The board can develop its own self-evaluation method. The following questions may serve as a guide:

- Do all board members have an equal opportunity to contribute ideas, opinions, and concerns?
- Do individual board members support the action of the board as a whole and refrain from making promises and taking action on their own?
- Are executive session discussions held in confidence?
- Do committees function to assist the board effectively?
- Are board meetings run in a businesslike manner?
- Do board members respect each other's rights to disagree, work through differences of opinion, and treat each other with respect?
- Do new board members come up to speed as quickly as possible? Are provisions made for the continuing education of all board members?
- Is there good communication between the library director and the board, between the presiding officer and the board members, between the board and public groups?
- In cities, does the board work cooperatively with the governmental authorities?
- Does the board act in accordance with the library's current mission, goals, and objectives?

Self-evaluation can increase awareness of strengths and weaknesses as well as provide the basis for a planned approach to improving board performance.

As individuals, trustees may want to review their own performance to mark their progress and note areas where more information or training is needed.

As individuals, trustees should review their own performance to mark their progress and note areas where more information or training is needed. The following areas may be reviewed:

- Regular attendance at board and committee meetings.
- Preparation for board and committee meetings.
- General knowledge of the library issues and trends obtained from reading library magazines, newsletters, and professional publications, and discussing issues with others.
- Awareness of local, state, and national laws, as well as proposed legislation.
- Advocacy for the general health of libraries in the community, state, and nation.
- Attendance at local, state, and national meetings that offer educational workshops for trustees and librarians.
- Attendance at local group meetings and community events to build awareness of the library.
- Contribution to the evaluation of the board's effectiveness, the library's plan, and the director's performance on an annual basis.
- Membership in professional associations, contacts with trustees who serve in areas other than your own.

Each board member is accountable for his/her own actions. The board is responsible for disciplining its members if they are not meeting their responsibilities. If a board member is not fulfilling their responsibilities, the board chair should address the member directly about the board's concerns over their performance. However, only the appointing authorities can remove a trustee before the completion of their term.

In conclusion

Every library board in Washington State is composed of trustees with unique talents and skills. Each trustee is entrusted with a stewardship of one of the community's most valuable resources: the public library. Serving as a library trustee is a considerable responsibility. It can also be a source of great satisfaction and joy. This manual was prepared to help trustees in Washington State carry out their important responsibilities and should be used in conjunction with the *Public Library Trustee Reference Manual*.

RESOURCES

Associations and Agencies

American Library Association (ALA)

Through a broad-based program of legislative advocacy, public awareness and professional education, the ALA provides leadership and support for more than 100,000 school, public, academic, and special libraries. ALA holds an annual conference and publishes *American Libraries*, a bi-monthly journal. The ALA website includes extensive information helpful to trustees.

American Library Association
50 E Huron St
Chicago, IL 60611-2795
1-800-545-2433
<http://www.ala.org>

ALA Washington Office
1301 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Suite 403
Washington, D.C. 20004-1701
1-800-941-8478
alawash@alawash.org

Association of Library Trustees and Advocates (ALTA)

Formerly named the American Library Trustee Association, ALTA is a division of ALA which addresses the specific concerns of trustees. It serves as a clearinghouse for information trustees need concerning policy, personnel, buildings, programs, and evaluation of services. ALTA sponsors programs at ALA conferences and publishes a quarterly, *Trustee Voice*. A library board may affiliate with ALTA as a whole board or members can join ALTA as individuals. Contact ALTA at the same address and phone number as ALA. Their website is <http://www.ala.org/alta/>

Public Library Association (PLA)

The Public Library Association is a division of ALA which addresses the specific concerns of public libraries of all sizes. The association organizes and publishes materials of special interest to public libraries, presents workshops at ALA annual conferences, and conducts its own conference every other year. PLA publishes *Public Libraries*, a bi-monthly journal. Contact PLA at the same address and phone number as ALA. Their website is <http://www.pla.org>

Pacific Northwest Library Association (PNLA)

As an international library association, PNLA represents the interests of information providers and advocates in the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia. The association provides continuing education opportunities through its annual conference, publishes *PNLA Quarterly*. Their Website is <http://www.pnla.org>

Washington State Library (WSL)

Consulting

WSL staff members working with the Washington library community provide information and advice on a broad range of issues and practices, from advocacy, to library governance, to library technology. Libraries and boards of trustees across the state are eligible to request these services. For public libraries, several staff members consult specifically with boards of trustees on:

- General governance and library law
- Relationships with governing authorities
- Library board powers, roles, responsibilities, and processes
- Library planning and development
- Long range and strategic planning
- General library services
- Children's services

Washington State Library staff can provide detailed information to library board members and governing officials, assistance with developing and facilitating library board retreats and educational opportunities, guidance through difficult governance issues, and advice on library board roles and responsibilities. In answering concerns and questions from library board members, staff may refer trustees to additional consultants, resources, or agencies.

Technology issues

In the specific area of technology, Washington State Library staff have significant experience in technology and are available to consult with libraries and library boards on:

- Development of technology plans
- E-Rate discounts
- Filtering
- Library automated systems
- Local and wide area networks
- Telecommunications

World Wide Web Site

The Washington State Library offers a broad range of information on its website. The main address is <http://www.statelib.wa.gov>.

At this site, trustees can get the latest information about what is happening at the State Library and can also explore the "Services for Washington Libraries" link. This services link includes information about statewide projects, initiatives, information about LSTA grants, training opportunities, and other current information.

The State Library also offers a variety of free services to the public—your patrons included! You can find out how WSL can assist by investigating the "Services for the Public" section of the site. For example, you will find extensive consumer information, access to information published electronically by state agencies, as well as a library directory of libraries, library personnel, and major resources. This web site is one of WSL's most valuable services, so please use it extensively!

Statewide Plan for Washington Libraries

The state's formally adopted statewide plan for libraries, *Designing Our Future, 2002-2007*, provides guidance to libraries as they work collaboratively to achieve mutually supportive goals. Its purpose is to outline a common vision and to clarify, in a general fashion, the future needs and direction of all types of libraries in the state.

In addition, *Designing Our Future*, forms the framework for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Five-Year Plan (2002-2007) that directs how federal funds will be used for libraries in the state.

The vision, values, goals, and strategies in the statewide plan were gathered and refined from comments and opinions expressed by library staff, trustees, and citizens in surveys and forums conducted across the state. The plan was developed under the direction of the Library Council of Washington and formally adopted by the Washington State Library in September 2001.

Local public libraries can refer to the plan and are encouraged to incorporate any of its directions in their own local planning. The implementation of a statewide plan that includes the needs of all types of libraries necessitates action at a variety of levels. Those actions are to be shared between state, regional, and local libraries and groups—each taking responsibility for those best implemented at their level.

Required Report: Public Library Statistics Report and Salary Survey

Each year every public library board of trustees is required by law in *RCW 27.12.260* to provide information “showing the condition of their trust.” That report is to be made to the legislative body of the governmental body that the library serves and a copy is to be filed with the state librarian.

For the purposes of the law, this report is the annual public library statistical report and salary survey that is sent out to libraries by the Washington State Library in the spring of each year. Libraries submit their report of income, expenditures, circulation of materials, collection holdings, and other statistics that provide an overview of service in their library. The library director and/or the staff of each public library gather and submit this information.

The information in this report can provide the library board and director valuable insight into the growth of the library, changes in service and funding, differences in levels of service as well as other patterns and trends. It also provides a method for libraries to compare themselves with similar libraries. With information from these reports, a board can use concrete data to assist them and their governmental agencies in decision-making.

In the last several years, libraries have submitted their reports in electronic format. Libraries can view the report on line and they can also download the report over the Internet. The statistics reports are found on the State Library homepage <http://wlo.statelib.wa.gov/services/STATS/stats.htm>

The State Library submits these public library statistics to the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) for inclusion in the annual national report on public libraries.

Directory of Washington Libraries

Each year the State Library publishes a directory of all Washington libraries, with addresses, names of director and key staff, names of board of trustees, telephone numbers, Internet addresses, service hours, special collections, and other selected information.

The directory includes academic libraries; state, federal and local government libraries; public libraries; and special libraries. It also includes information about library associations throughout the Pacific Northwest, statewide councils and commissions, and library degree programs. The directory is indexed by personal names and by institutional names.

This directory is available both online and in paper format. As the State Library moves to digital formats, the number of printed copies available for distribution will be reduced. Because the directory is online, libraries can update their information throughout the year as changes occur.

The directory can be searched online via the State Library home page at <http://wlo.statelib.wa.gov/>

Washington Library Association (WLA)

Through its committees and interest groups, WLA helps develop and improve library services in the state. WLA provides continuing education for its members through workshops and annual conferences, supports a legislative committee, and employs a lobbyist. Membership is open to anyone interested in libraries.

Gail Willis, Association Coordinator
4016 1st Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98105-6502
1-800-704-1529
WLA Legislative Hotline 1-800-562-5634
Washla@wla.org
<http://www.wla.org>

Washington Library Friends and Trustees Association (WLFTA)

WLFTA is an Interest Group of WLA that addresses the concerns of trustees and friends. The Interest Group sponsors workshops and programs for trustees and friends at annual WLA conferences and other periodic forums. Members serve on advisory committees to help organize special projects and continuing education opportunities. Their website is <http://www.wla.org/wlfta/>

Additional Resources with WEBSites

Friends of Libraries U.S.A. (FOLUSA) <http://www.folusa.com>

FOLUSA is a nationwide organization of local Friends groups and individuals. In addition to programs they provide publications such as *Friends of the Library Sourcebook*.

Friends of Libraries U.S.A.
1420 Walnut Street Suite 450
Philadelphia, PA 19102-4017
215-790-1674 or 1-800-9FOLUSA folusa@folusa.org

Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) <http://www.mrsc.org>

MRSC is a comprehensive information resource. Both cities and districts can access their Website that includes state and local laws, commentaries on governmental issues, publications, budgeting and planning information as well as access to data. Full services are available only to city and county officials.

National Center for Nonprofit Boards (NCNB) <http://www.ncnb.org>

Excellent source for comprehensive information about boardsmanship.

Washington Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) <http://www.pdc.wa.gov>

The PDC is charged with providing information as well as enforcement of the Open Public Meeting laws and public records. Also responsible for assuring that public resources are not used inappropriately to support ballot issues.

Washington State Government Homepage <http://www.access.wa.gov>

Information and access to Washington state government agency websites.

The Benton Foundation <http://www.benton.org>

Of particular interest is their publication *Buildings, Books, and Bytes*. Funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the report is a result of surveys of library leaders and the public talking about the future of libraries in the digital age.

Videos

Trustee 2000: Change, Changes, Changed, Changing... Langa Communications. Rhinebeck, NY. 1995.

Libraries Under Fire, A Case Study. Fort Vancouver Regional Library. Vancouver, WA. 1995

Books

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Baughman, James C. *Policy Making for Public Library Trustees.* Libraries Unlimited, Inc. Englewood, Colorado. 1993.

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- Securing a New Library Director.* No. 1. Andrew Geddes and James A. Hess. 1979.
Library Service to Farmers. No. 3. Thomas J. Hennen, Jr. 1981.
Library Trustees in State Organizations. No. 4. Alice B. Ihrig. 1982.
Library Trustees and Personnel. No. 5. Irene Gitomer Stoller and Charles E. Reid. 1983.
Evaluating the Library Director. No. 6. Nancy M. Bolt. 1983.
Library Boards- Who are They and How Do They Get There? No. 7. Mary Amey. 1988.
Major Duties, Functions and Responsibilities of Public Library Trustees. An Outline.
No. 8. Jeanne Davies, Editor. 1988.
A Questionnaire to Evaluate Your Library and Library Board. No. 9. 1988.
Public Relations as a Library Trustee's Responsibility, Not New--Just Different.
No. 10. Alice Ihrig. 1990.
Draft Language for Liability Limitation Bill. No. 11. 1992

Association for Library Trustees and Advocates, Association for Library Service to Children.
Children and the Internet: Guidelines for Developing Public Library Policy. Chicago, 1998.

Irig, Alice B. *Decision Making for Public Libraries.* Library Professional Publications. Hamden, Connecticut. 1989

National Center for Nonprofit Boards. *Governance Series Books.* (Series of 14 individual booklets covering topics such as #4 Board Assessment and #6 Strategic Planning.)

Rubin, Renee. *Avoiding Liability risk: An Attorney's Advice to Library Trustees and Others.* American Library Association. Chicago, 1994.

Short, Jack. *Library Trustee Guidelines.* Consultant Publications. Avon, Connecticut. 1994.

Swan, James A. *Working Together: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Trustees and Librarians.* Neal-Schuman. 1992.

Wade, Gordon S. *Working With Library Boards: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians.* Neal-Schuman. 1991.

Williams, Lorraine M. *The Library Trustee and the Public Librarian: Partners in Service.* Scarecrow. 1993.

Young, Virginia G. *The Library Trustee: A Practical Guidebook.* Fifth Edition. American Library Association. Chicago, Illinois. 1995.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

INTERNET DICTIONARIES, ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND OTHER RESOURCES:

ACQWEB: <http://acqweb.library.vanderbilt.edu/>

INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS:
<http://web.syr.edu~jryan/infopro>

ODLIS (ONLINE DICTIONARY OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE)
<http://vax.wcsu.edu/library/odlis.html>

WEBOPEDIA: (Computer and internet technology site) <http://webopedia.internet.com>

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act. A federal law which prohibits discrimination against people with physical, mental or emotional disabilities.

ALA: American Library Association. A national association for all types of libraries and persons interested in libraries.

ALTA: Association of Library Trustees and Advocates. Formerly the American Library Trustee Association. A division of the American Library Association which supports, encourages, and provides information for trustees of libraries.

CD-ROM: Compact Disk-Read Only Memory. A sealed disk for storage of large quantities of data; cannot be changed by the user.

CE: Continuing Education.

FAX: Telefacsimile machine.

FOLUSA: Friends of Libraries-U.S.A. A national group which supports and encourages the activities of Friends of Libraries around the nation.

FTE: A measure used in personnel work to indicate full-time equivalency, for example, the number of full-time workers who would be employed if all part-time positions were added together and divided by 40 hours per week. Two people each working 20 hours per week equals one FTE.

FY: Fiscal year. In public libraries the FY is January 1 - December 31.

I&R: Information and referral services.

ILL: Interlibrary loan. The transaction in which library materials are loaned from one library to another library for the use of a patron.

IPD: Implicit Price Deflator.

IMLS: Institute of Museums and Library Services. The federal agency which administers Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and associated funding.

ISBN: International Standard Book Number. A unique numerical identifier for each book or monograph publication.

ISSN: International Standard Serial Number. A unique numerical identifier for each serial publication.

LAN: Local area network. Computers are linked together electronically to create one system.

LC: Library of Congress.

LCW: Library Council of Washington. Members are appointed to advise the Washington State Library Commission on the use of Library Services and Technology Act funds in Washington State.

LSCA: Library Services and Construction Act. Federal legislation superceded by Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) in 1997.

LSTA: Library Services and Technology Act. Federal funds are allocated annually to states. The program is administered in Washington State by the Washington State Library Commission.

MARC: Machine Readable Cataloging. An international standard format for the storage and exchange of bibliographic data.

MLS: Master's degree in library science.

NCLIS: National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, headquartered Washington, D.C.

NEH: National Endowment for the Humanities.

NLW: National Library Week. An annual event celebrating libraries.

OCLC: A bibliographic utility and research organization that member libraries use for cataloging, interlibrary loans and location information for library materials and to access reference resources.

OPAC: Online Public Access Catalog. A catalog containing bibliographic records for the holdings of one or more libraries and made available online to the public.

PLA: Public Library Association, a division of ALA.

PNLA: Pacific Northwest Library Association, a regional organization that includes Washington State.

RCW: Revised Code of Washington. A code containing the laws of the state of Washington published in print and also available on the Internet at <http://www.access.wa.gov>

RFP: A request for proposal to accomplish a project.

TDD: Telecommunications Device for the Deaf.

WWW: World Wide Web. A system of Internet Servers that support specially formatted electronic documents.

WAC: Washington Administrative Code. A code containing regulations and rules of various Washington State agencies. Published in print and accessible via the Internet at <http://www.access.wa.gov>

WAN: Wide Area Network. A communications network that spans large areas (larger than a single building or campus) by using telecommunications lines provided by a common carrier, such as Qwest.

WHCLIS: White House Conference on Libraries and Information Services, held in 1979 and 1991.

WIIF: Washington Information Issues Forum. An electronic discussion group set up to facilitate electronic communication among libraries in Washington State. Contact the Washington State Library to join this free service.

WILL: The biennial workshop in Library Leadership conference which is sponsored by the Washington State Library with assistance from an advisory group of trustees, members of WLFTA, and library staff throughout the state.

WLA: Washington Library Association. A statewide library association which represents all types of libraries. Its goal is to develop and improve library services throughout the state.

WLFTA: Washington Library Friends and Trustees Association. An Interest Group of the WLA.

WLN: Western Library Network, now merged with OCLC.

WSL: Washington State Library. The library which is responsible for statewide library development and providing information services to state government.

WSLC: Washington State Library Commission. The governing board of the Washington State Library with policy-making authority for the State Library. The five members are appointed by the Governor of Washington State.

WTBBL: Washington Talking Book and Braille Library. The State Library contracts with the Seattle Public Library to provide this free service to eligible persons.

YA: Young Adults.

YALSA: Young Adult Library Services Association. A division of the American Library Association.

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