
Trustee Manual

September 2016



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Introduction

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State Librarian's Letter

Dear Library Trustee:

Thank you for serving on the Board of your public library. Along with your library staff and your community, we at the State Library appreciate your commitment to help us better serve all Montanans by meeting their information needs. As a trustee, your role is to ensure that your library meets the information needs of your community. Today, as libraries take on many different responsibilities to best serve their patrons, the role of library trustees is changing and is more challenging and rewarding than ever.

While readers of all ages still relish the hours spent with a good book, there's no doubt that technology has revolutionized how people access and use information. Books now come in print, audio, and electronic form. Patrons are much more likely to do their research online rather than using reference books. Preschoolers enhance their early literacy skills via educational computer games, and seniors are one of the fastest growing populations of new users of the Internet and social media.

Serving communities also means that libraries serve as community centers. From programming for all ages to art space, computer classes, and meeting rooms, libraries bring people together from all walks of life and all parts of our communities. But even as the demand for library services continues to grow, costs rise and the resources that traditionally support libraries are more limited than ever. So, yes, being a trustee is challenging, but it is a challenge that your community believes you can - and will - meet.

This handbook can help. If you are new to the position, this handbook can serve as your starting point to learn about your new responsibilities. If you have served as a trustee for some time, it is a source book for refreshing your knowledge and honing your skills.

We hope you will make full use of your trustee handbook as well as the rest of the support we provide. By working together, we can continue to improve library services for all Montanans.

Again, thank you for your time and your commitment to your public library.

Sincerely,

Jennie Stapp
Montana State Librarian

Overview

The State of Montana started supporting library services in 1929, when the State Library Extension Commission was created by an act of the Legislative Assembly. The Commission's job was to develop libraries in Montana, but it wasn't until 1945 that the Legislature appropriated money to finance its work. Today, Montana is home to more than one hundred public libraries, providing a range of information services to citizens free of charge.

Libraries are at the heart of sustainable communities because of the hard work and commitment of people like you. Over the years, public library trustees have put in long hours to promote public library services. In turn, they have had the satisfaction of seeing their libraries grow and their communities benefit from enhanced life-long learning and a free exchange of ideas.

The *Montana Public Library Trustee Handbook* will help you continue that vital work.

In addition to describing your roles and responsibilities as a trustee, the handbook provides sample documents, checklists and other resources you can turn to when you need information about specific topics. It also provides valuable information for your director. Because trustees and the director must work together to provide quality information services to the community, cooperation and teamwork are emphasized throughout.

Your trustee handbook is a tool. Keep it on hand for easy reference.

Treat the handbook as a tool. For example, you will want to have your handbook available for reference at each Board meeting. And when you retire from the Board, you can pass your handbook on to the next trustee.

The *Montana Public Library Trustee Handbook* is a reference you will return to again and again. But please remember that it is not a substitute for working closely with your community, professional library organizations, other libraries and the Montana State Library. Making use of all of these resources will help you better understand and meet your community's needs for information services.

Acknowledgements

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Trustees and the Board

- ◆ Getting Started
- ◆ Trustee Orientation
- ◆ Continued Learning
- ◆ What Did You Learn
- ◆ The Job of a Trustee
- ◆ What Does a Trustee Do?
- ◆ Sample Trustee Job Description
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- ◆ Chairing the Board
- ◆ Public Participation
- ◆ Board Bylaws
- ◆ Comparing the Roles of the Library Board and the Director
- ◆ Evaluating the Board

Getting Started

Sections

As a library Board member, you have two primary responsibilities: to govern the library, and to help keep the Board functioning at optimum level. Both are equally important.

To govern the library, you must plan and monitor finances and services, as well as guide and evaluate the library's progress. Accomplishing these tasks requires knowledgeable Board members who understand and value the concept of teamwork.

As you gain experience on the Board, you will continue to learn facts, statistics, history, procedures and more. But first things first:

Get to know the other people who serve on the Board with you-not just their names, but who they are. What are their interests and concerns? What motivates them to serve on the library Board? Team building begins by knowing your teammates.

Get to know the director, the other part of the Board team. There must be a very high level of trust between the Board who governs the library and the person who manages the library.

Recognize that this job deserves your very best effort. Although you are a volunteer, the governance of the library demands the best job you can do. It will require your time and your effort.

Find out where to go for answers to your questions. Your best defense against being totally lost in the early stage of your term as a Board member is to learn where to find quick answers to tough questions. The director and other Board members are the best sources for learning about the library. This handbook will serve as a guide to the basics of good Board membership, and it will answer many of your questions.

Trustee Orientation

The library Board is responsible for conducting Board orientation for new trustees. Typically, Board orientation includes a tour of the library, receipt of written materials and a meeting with other trustees. During this orientation period, it is a good idea to have experienced trustees work with new members. An experienced trustee can point out which materials are used most often and which will require further study.

Library Tour

During the library tour, the director can explain how the library works, introduce the staff and demonstrate how the programs and services operate.

Materials

Information provided to a new trustee might include the following.

Board materials

this handbook

trustee job description

list of important websites where new members can find out information about city, county, Montana library law, and Montana library services

list of Board members and their addresses, phone numbers and email addresses

Board bylaws

Board code of ethics

annual calendar of major Board and library activities

minutes of the library Board meetings for the past year

list of committees, job descriptions and current members

Library materials

library policies

written mission statement of the library

copy of the ordinance establishing the library

documents that report the history of the library

long-range plan of the library

current and prior year budgets

financial reports for the past year

timeframe for developing and approving the budget

job description for the director

staff organizational chart, including names

annual reports for the last five years

major contracts the library has with other public or private agencies

marketing materials, brochures or newsletters

Orientation Meeting

The director and a few experienced trustees usually participate in the orientation meeting. It is best if this meeting is scheduled a few days after the tour, which gives new trustees time to review the written materials.

The meeting agenda should include:

discussion of the library's mission, goals and objectives, short- and long-range plans.

explanation of the budget, chart of accounts, sources and location of funding, expenditures and the library's financial status.

review of the past six-months' Board minutes and director's reports to give the new trustee a sense of who the Board members are and how the Board works.

review of the policy manual, explaining policies and procedures.

explanation of reimbursement policy for trustee expenses and the law prohibiting trustees from receiving compensation for their work.

explanation of the library's relationship to local governing authorities, both elected and appointed.

explanation of the library's relationship to its library federation, State Library and state and national associations.

discussion of the respective roles and responsibilities of the trustees and the director, emphasizing that the trustee's responsibilities do not include management of the library. This handbook contains a chart comparing the roles of the board and director. The chart may help with this discussion.

discussion of the roles of trustees as individuals versus the Board, emphasizing that duly appointed individual trustees are only spokespersons for the Board; the Board as a whole has decision-making powers.

review schedule or calendar that explains what decisions the board must make and when

discussion of what is or will be in front of the board in the next 2-3 months, so new trustees have a better idea of where to focus their energies.

Being a public library trustee means being confronted by daunting problems and exciting possibilities. How you respond affects the future of library services in Montana.

Continued Learning

Effective library trusteeship requires ongoing learning and training. There are many opportunities for you and your Board to keep learning, including the following recommendations.

Montana State Library: <http://msl.mt.gov>

MLA: www.mtlib.org

ALA: www.ala.org

ALTAFF: <http://www.ala.org/united/>

MPLA: www.mpla.us

PNLA: www.pnla.org

Essential

Set aside time at each meeting to review an aspect of the library's administration or services.

Rotate meeting locations at branches of a system.

Good ideas

Join the Montana Library Association (MLA).

Attend MLA's annual conference and other events.

Attend Federation meetings.

Attend State Library-sponsored events.

Work through a chapter of the trustee handbook during meetings.

Other opportunities

Attend the American Library Association (ALA) annual conference.

Participate in professional organizations: Mountain Plains Library Association (MPLA), the Pacific Northwest Library Association (PNLA) and Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends, and Foundations (AL-TAFF).

See Libraries and Library Organizations, for more information about the library organizations mentioned here.

Voluntary Trustee Certification

Trustees are welcome to certify through the Montana State Library's certification program for trustees. This is a voluntary certification that tries to recognize those trustees who are committed to continued learning. To become certified trustees must earn 15 continuing education credits in a 4 year period. 10 of those credits need to be in Library Administration . You can learn more about this certification program at http://msl.mt.gov/Library_Development/Training/certification/default.asp or contact the State Library for more information.

Montana Library Event Calendar

This online statewide training/event calendar provides a focused source of information for library-related activities that trustees and libraries can use as a planning tool. The calendar is managed by the State Library.

What Did You Learn

You will continue to learn about the library for as long as you remain on the Board. But you need to know some things from the beginning. Did you learn the answers to the following questions in your trustee orientation?

About the Board?

Who has appointed the Board members and for what terms of office?

Who are the current officers of the Board?

How are the Board officers elected?

Who is the official spokesperson for the Board?

About the library?

What is the library's mission statement?

What are the long-range goals of the library?

When was the library organized and what is the service area?

How many people does the library serve?

What local/state/national legislative issues could affect the library?

What is the relationship between the library and the local government?

Has the library or the Board ever been involved in litigation?

What major problems does the library currently face?

Does the library meet the Public Library Standards?

About library personnel?

How long has the present director held his/her position?

What training does the director have for managing the library?

What is the process used to evaluate the director?

How many staff does the library have and what do they do?

About library finances?

What is the library's annual budget?

Where does the money come from to finance the library?

What are the total assets of the library?

Does the library have any debt service?

Does the city/county own or rent the library facility?

What equipment does the library own or rent?

Are Board members reimbursed for expenses and, if so, how?

The Job of a Trustee

As a trustee, you are entrusted by the public to look after its interest. You are also accountable to the public. Trusteeship is a working relationship with the community, library staff and fellow trustees. It requires a great deal of time, and even more importantly, a commitment to libraries. There is a direct correlation between the quality of library service a community offers and the knowledge, capability and enthusiasm of its Board members.

What Does a Trustee Do?

A trustee knows

the organization of the library Board

the library services and resources available

who uses the library and who does not use it

information needs and interests of the community

how to work effectively in a group

the services available at the State Library

national library trends, standards and developments

library terminology

A trustee attends

every Board and assigned committee meeting

federation meetings

professional meetings such as Montana Library Association conferences

other local meetings and workshops relating to library business

A trustee plans

for future growth and priorities of the library

library policy

active community awareness programs

orientation for new Board members

A trustee supports

the library and the director

the local governing body

the community

local, state and federal legislation related to libraries.

A trustee advocates

to articulate the library's needs

to seek funding

to promote the library

to develop good personal relations with local, state and federal government representatives

to make the Board and library visible in the community

for the community to receive excellent library service

A trustee remembers

the library Board acts only as a whole

an individual trustee may act on behalf of the library only when authorized to do so by the Board

the Board does not run the day-to-day operations of the library

Golden Rules for Board Members

Leave the actual management of the library to the director. It is the director's responsibility to select books, employ the staff and supervise day-to-day operations.

After a policy or rule is adopted by the majority vote of the library Board, do not criticize or re-voice your opposition publicly.

Respect confidential information. Do not divulge information regarding future Board actions or plans until such action is officially taken.

Observe any publicity and information policies of the Board and library. Do not give information individually but refer requests to the library director or appropriate trustee.

Do not hold Board meetings without the director.

Treat the director and staff members in an objective manner. Under no circumstances should you listen to grievances of staff members or treat individual problems on your own. The director is in charge of the staff and has administrative control up to the point where a grievance is presented to the library Board.

Complaints from the public are the director's responsibility. Complaints submitted directly to the Board or an individual trustee should be referred to the director. Continued problems should be taken up at the Board meeting only if

policy revision is necessary or legal ramifications are involved.

All rules and policies must be approved by a quorum of the Board at a regular meeting.

Assume your full responsibility as a Board member. If you are unable to attend meetings regularly and complete work delegated to you, consider resigning so an active member can be appointed.

Job Description

Even though a library trustee is a volunteer position, becoming a trustee is like taking on a new job. It requires the same hard work and willingness to learn as does a paid position.

You might have been given a job description to review before becoming a trustee. If not, your Board may want to consider preparing one. A written job description may help future potential trustees understand the roles and responsibilities of the position.

The following sample job description shows what should be included. Boards will often set goals to keep the workload manageable. However, a trustee's responsibilities will include most of what is listed here over the course of the trustee's service on the Board.

Sample Trustee Job Description

Summary

Provides governance for the Public Library; establishes policy; sets goals; hires and evaluates director; establishes and monitors annual budget; signs necessary contracts; exercises such other powers, not inconsistent with law, necessary for the effective use and management of the library.

Responsibilities

- (1) Participates in the ongoing responsibilities of the governing body, including establishment of library policies, budgeting, evaluating and supervising the library director, working with local and state government officials, and planning for current and future library services and programs.
- (2) Attends all regular and special meetings of the Board, and participates in committees and activities as necessary; attends appropriate library functions.
- (3) Represents the interests and needs of community members.
- (4) Lends expertise and experience to the organization.
- (5) Maintains an awareness of library issues and trends, and the implications for library users.
- (6) Acts as liaison with the public, interpreting and informing local government, media and public of library services and needs.
- (7) Understands pertinent local and state law; actively supports library legislation in the state and nation.

Qualifications

- (1) Is interested in the library and its services.
- (2) Has the ability to contribute adequate time for effective participation in Board activities and decision making.

(3) Has the ability to represent needs and varied interests of the community at large and the library.

(4) Has strong interpersonal and communication skills.

(5) Has the ability to work with governmental bodies, agencies and other libraries.

(6) Has the ability to handle opposition and make decisions in the interest of library service.

Time Commitment

The Board of Trustees meets monthly at a time convenient for members. Special meetings or committee meetings may be called as necessary at times that are convenient to members and that comply with open meeting laws.

Under Montana law, trustees hold their office for five years from the date of appointment and until their successors are appointed. Members serve no more than two full terms in succession.

The Job of the Board

The library Board is responsible for all that happens within the library and its outreach programs.

This statement might be a little intimidating to a new trustee, but it is both a legal and practical way of looking at the job you accepted. The Board does not manage the day-to-day operations of the library but, rather, is responsible for seeing that the library is well managed in accordance with the law and Board-established policies. To meet this responsibility, the Board has six major tasks:

Understand the laws governing the library

Hire and evaluate the library director and with the director's input hire and prescribe the duties of library staff

Set and monitor the library's budget

Set policy

Plan for the future of the library

Advocate for the library in the community and for the community as a Board member

Each of these areas is addressed in later chapters of this handbook.

Information about Nonprofit Boards

For articles about leadership and management, search the online database on your library's web site.

Board Meetings

The most important work of the Board is carried out at the Board meetings. First, individual trustees have no legal authority over the library. Any change in policy or procedure, or other governing act, must be brought before the Board. Second, the Board only has authority when it makes a group decision in a legally constituted meeting.

The Board bylaws provide the structure of your work, but here are some general guidelines for effective meetings.

Be as productive as possible. Deal only with appropriate issues and make a clear distinction between the func-

tions of the Board and those of the director.

Ensure that the director is present at all Board meetings.

Rotate leadership responsibilities to create a stronger Board; each trustee should have the opportunity to hold office.

Hold regularly scheduled meetings, as listed in your bylaws. Select specific dates, times and places six to twelve months in advance.

Follow procedures for conducting business meetings as outlined in *Robert's Rules of Order*. If this seems too formal, the chairperson should devise a specific order of business that maintains an orderly flow for the meetings.

Keep an archival file of Board minutes in the library. Individual Board members should retain current minutes in their trustee handbooks.

Hold working Board sessions and committee meetings prior to the formal Board meetings where decisions are made. This saves time and provides an opportunity for careful study of an issue.

Remember: Committees issue recommendations to the Board but do not make the decisions. Written committee reports distributed before the Board meetings are most effective.

Meetings must be open to the public and held in accessible locations. (See Public Participation.)

Chairing the Board

It is a good idea for the Board to rotate leadership positions. The trustee serving as the Board chairperson facilitates the Board meetings with the help of the director. Before the scheduled meeting, the chairperson and director should prepare an agenda and schedule adequate time for the items listed. This agenda, along with related materials, should be mailed to the trustees to give them time to prepare for the meeting. The agenda and the meeting date, time and place should also be posted or published.

To get the meeting under way, the chairperson should:

Start on time with roll call.

Introduce visitors and/or new Board members.

Review the agenda, revising the order if necessary.

Establish time limits.

During the meeting, the chairperson should make sure that participants:

Focus on issues at hand.

Follow the agenda and procedures stated in the bylaws.

Establish action items: who, what and when.

At the end of the meeting, the chairperson should:

Review and summarize for the minutes the meeting's progress, decisions and assignments.

Announce next meeting date.

Adjourn the meeting.

After the meeting, the chairperson and director work together to make sure that the meeting minutes are sent to all Board members.

Public Participation

Montana law requires that tax-supported libraries be subject to the Montana Open Meeting Law. The purpose of this law is to ensure that the public has the ability to know how its business is being conducted. The legal requirements for open meetings, however, should be seen as the minimum requirements. From an administrative and community relations point of view, the more open you can make your meetings, the better it will be for the library.

The State Library recommends that public meetings be announced at least a week in advance. An agenda indicating the expected action items should be included with the meeting notice whenever possible.

It is sometimes difficult for trustees to speak candidly with the public or media representatives watching and listening. However, keep in mind that you have been chosen to represent a large number of people. Those who show up at a Board meeting usually represent a very small percentage of your constituents and should not have an undue influence on your actions.

The Board should have a clear policy about regulating the activity of members of the public who attend Board meetings (see sample below). The public participation policy should be easily visible. Consider including it in the meeting notice as well as posting it on the library bulletin board.

Public participation does not mean that the public takes over the meeting. The Board chairperson should welcome public comment at appropriate times, but the amount of time made available for this is at the chairperson's discretion. Remember: Your Board meeting is a meeting conducted in public, not a public meeting. In other words, the public and media are there to watch you work, not to participate. (See Chapter 4-4 for more on this law.)

Guidelines for Effective, Efficient Meetings

Post and use ground rules:

We participate as equals.

We discuss openly and honestly.

We disagree with grace and tact.

We don't hide disagreements or questions.

We stick to the agenda.

We enjoy each other's company.

Sample Public Participation Policy

The _____ Library Board welcomes public input at its meetings. Each agenda item (unless specified oth-

erwise) will be open for public input before the Board deliberates on that item. While it is recommended that anyone wishing to address the Board notify the director at least 48 hours before the meeting so that time may be reserved for such input, it is not absolutely necessary.

Everyone wishing to speak must fill out a form to allow for accurate spelling of names and identification of those speaking on the various items for inclusion in the official minutes of the meeting. The form is available on the table at the rear of the meeting room.

Since time is limited, the Board chair reserves the right to set reasonable time limits for public input on each topic. Normally, a person will be limited to five minutes per agenda item.

During Board deliberation, the public is asked not to make any comments unless responding to a specific question asked by the Board chair.

Thank you for your interest in the library and the Board, and for your assistance in keeping our meetings orderly.

Board Bylaws

The Board's bylaws provide the general structure for your work and ensure continuity and consistency in legal, financial and policy-making activities. Bylaws should be periodically reviewed to ensure that they remain relevant. For more information about each of the sections below please see Suggestions for Bylaws for Montana Library Boards.

Typically, the Board bylaws include the following articles:

Article I. Name of the organization

Article II. Object and reason for the group's existence

Article III. Members

Qualification for membership, types of membership such as honorary, attendance requirements, resignation, who can vote, how members are appointed and removed, filling vacancies, etc.

Article IV. Officers

When elections are held, nominations, voting, filling vacancies as well as the term of office and duties of officers.

Article V. Meetings

Quorums, meeting dates and times, how to call a special meeting.

Article VI. Executive Board or Board of Directors

The executive board duties and responsibilities. Small library boards generally do not have executive boards so you may not see this section in your board bylaws.

Article VII. Committees

Names of standing committees, membership, selection of members, attendance and duties.

Article VIII. Parliamentary Authority

Clearly stated rules of order and a system for resolution of discord.

Article IX. Amendment of Bylaws

Details on procedure for changing bylaws including required notice and vote.

Some organizations have additional articles for finances, policies, discipline and other matters. A source for information about bylaws is *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Comparing the Roles of the Library Board and the Director

<u>BOARD</u>	<u>DIRECTOR</u>
♦ Employ a competent and qualified director.	♦ Employ personnel with the board's input and supervise their work.
♦ Develop a long-range plan, vision and mission statements and review them periodically.	♦ Provide input to the Board on regional/national library issues and statewide trends in library management.
♦ Determine and adopt written policies governing operation and program of the library. Review policies periodically.	♦ Suggest needed policies for Board consideration. Carry out the policies as adopted by the Board.
♦ Determine the goals and objectives of the library and methods of evaluating progress toward meeting them. Secure adequate funds to carry out the library's program.	♦ Prepare regular reports with library's current progress and future needs. Suggest and carry out plans for extending library's services.
♦ Establish, support, and participate in planned public relations and marketing program.	♦ Maintain active public relations program.
♦ Assist in preparation of the annual budget and approve it.	♦ Prepare an annual budget in consultation with the Board. Give a current report of expenditures against the budget at each meeting.
♦ Present the budget to the funding agency, public officials, and the general public; explain and defend it.	♦ Closely follow the budget process. Provide leadership in supporting the budget.
♦ Monitor budget expenditures during the fiscal year.	♦ Oversee expenditures from budget including selection and ordering of all library materials and equipment.
♦ Know local and state laws; actively support library legislation in the state and nation.	♦ Know local and state laws; actively support library legislation in the state and nation.
♦ Board governs.	♦ Director manages.

Evaluating the Board

It is a good idea for the Board to periodically take a few minutes and do a self-assessment. One way you can do this is to use the following questions. First, answer them individually. Then the Board as a whole can discuss what if any changes are needed.

Our Board prepares to do its job by

Yes No : Conducting a thorough orientation for all new members.

Yes No : Integrating new members into the team as quickly as possible.

Yes No : Attending Board development workshops.

Yes No : Providing monthly development activities for members.

Yes No : Performing an in-depth annual self-evaluation of board operations.

Yes No : Providing all members with copies of the mission statement, bylaws, long-range plan and other important documents.

Yes No : Touring all facilities at least once a year.

Our Board ensures good meetings by

Yes No : Providing a comfortable meeting room conducive to business.

Yes No : Convening and adjourning on time.

Yes No : Sticking to the prepared agenda.

Yes No : Working for consensus rather than fighting for a majority.

Yes No : Following a businesslike system of parliamentary rules.

Yes No : Including the library director as a resource for all deliberation.

Yes No : Confining all discussion to Board issues.

Yes No : Allowing/encouraging all members to participate in discussion.

Adapted from The Board Team Handbook: A Complete Guide to Boardmanship Basics for the Board Team of the 90's, published by the Cain Consulting Group, 1992.

Laws and Ethics

- ◆ Complying with the Law
- ◆ Montana Laws
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Complying with the Law

Because public libraries are supported by public tax dollars, they are subject to numerous laws and regulations. As a trustee, you are responsible for being familiar with these laws and understanding their consequences. When dealing with legal issues, the Board should consult with the city or county attorney for interpretation of the law.

Laws specific to governing public libraries in Montana are addressed on the Montana State Library Website. There is a legal section that links to the Montana Code Annotated, the Administrative Rules, and Attorney General Opinions. These links are to laws that impact public libraries in Montana. The focus is on state law. The board needs to be familiar with various federal laws as well. We highlight some of those laws in later sections of the handbook.

Montana Laws

The Constitution of Montana (Article X, Education and Public Lands, 1(3)) directs the Legislature to "provide a basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools" and "other such educational institutions, public libraries and educational programs as it deems desirable."

Laws specific to libraries are contained in the Montana Code Annotated (MCA). In addition, there are a number of Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) that concern library operation and funding mandates.

A selection of state laws and rules you should be familiar with as a library trustee include the following.

Free Public Libraries

The stated purpose of this law is "to encourage the establishment, adequate financing, and effective administration of free public libraries. in this state to give the people of Montana the fullest opportunity to enrich and inform themselves through reading."

The following items are addressed in this MCA chapter.

Creation of a legal public library:

Mill levies, special library funds and bonds (for more on levies see Funding the Library section)

Authorization, allocations and investment of a library depreciation reserve fund

Trustee appointment, compensation and term length

Board size, vacancies and election of Board chair powers and duties of trustees

Board appointment of and compensation for the library director and staff

Exclusion and extension of library use privileges

Assumption of county library functions by a city:

County commission may contract with city library Board to provide countywide public library services.

County commission may use county library fund to cover costs of this contract.

Joint city-county libraries, Boards and funding:

Governing bodies may establish and maintain a joint library by contract.

County may levy special tax for operation of library.

Another section of Free Public Libraries is the Information Access Montana Act, which provides state aid to public libraries which is administered by the Montana State Library Commission. Two aid provisions in this act include the following (for more, see Funding the Library):

Statewide Interlibrary Resource Sharing Program

The purpose of the program is to administer funds appropriated by the legislature to support and facilitate resource-sharing among libraries in Montana. Currently this funding is used to reduce the costs of OCLC software (used to provide interlibrary loans) and to reduce the ongoing costs of the Montana Shared Catalog (MSC.) The MSC is a consortium that encourages sharing of materials between libraries by making it possible for patrons at one library to see and place holds on the items at another library. In addition, the collaboration of the MSC allows its member libraries to have more robust software so they can take advantage of new technologies that provide convenient access for their patrons.

Direct State Aid to Public Libraries for Per Capita

The per capita portion of the direct state aid to public libraries is distributed annually and is based on a formula using the library's service area size and population.

District Libraries

Under a law passed by the 2001 Montana Legislature and revised in 2005, communities can establish a library by forming a public library district. These districts must contain at least \$5 million of property valuation. Electors create the district and set the initial tax levy in an election. Electors also elect members of the library board of trustees, who have similar powers as those of city or county library boards. Because district boards are not under the direct control of local city or county governments, they have greater autonomy than other types of library boards. For more information on forming a library district, contact the State Library or read the Public Library District Handbook on the State Library web site.

Multijurisdictional Service Districts

This law allows municipalities and counties to form multijurisdictional service districts to improve and expand library services. As far as practical, the boundaries of the service district follow precinct, school district, munic-

ipal and county lines. These districts are formed by a resolution from the governing body, petitioners initiating the creation of a special district or by referendum.

The district is administered and operated by either the governing body or by a separate elected or appointed board as determined by the governing body. A special district created by a combination of local governments must be administered according to an interlocal agreement.

Local governments are authorized to make assessments or impose fees for the costs and expenses of the special district.

Library Records Confidentiality Act

This act mandates no person may release or disclose any portion of a library record that identifies a person as having requested, used or borrowed library materials except in response to a written request from the person identified in that record, court order or National Security letter (see Federal Laws). The law applies to all library users, including children. Confidentiality protection for library records is waived when materials are overdue or lost.

Library Federations

This group of laws discusses library federations which attempt to pool resources and avoid duplication of effort. Public libraries that participate in federations are eligible for state aid monies that are awarded through the federation. Details include establishment of a federation, participants, benefits, governing board, resolution of disagreements, and administration of federation appropriations. (For more information about federations, see Libraries and Library Organizations.)

The Big Bill, H.B. 124

In 2001, the Montana Legislature significantly changed state law relating to local government and taxation with passage of House Bill (H.B.) 124. Specifically as it relates to libraries, H.B. 124, referred to as "the Big Bill," amended MCA 22-1-304 to delete reference to a five-mill levy cap for cities and seven-mill for counties. As amended, the statute authorizes the city or county to simply levy mills for support of the library, making no reference to the number of mills to be levied, provided that the budget fits within the restrictions of MCA 15-10-420.

In place of the numeric levies formerly found in MCA 22-1-304 and other statutes, MCA 15-10-420 was amended to allow a city or county to levy sufficient mills to raise an amount equal to the property tax raised in previous years with an upward adjustment to account for inflation. MCA 15-10-420 includes the formula for determining the authorized maximum. As a result, with passage of the Big Bill, local government officials can raise mills up to the maximum authorized without going through the election process. Your local city and/or county clerk can provide you with more information about the Big Bill and its affect on the library.

The final change the Big Bill made was more significant than those listed above. Prior to the Big Bill the library board was seen as the final authority on the bottom line of the library's budget as well as the line items within the budget. Current Attorney General Opinion has brought to light that the Big Bill changed this. Library boards are still the final authority on individual line items, but the local governing bodies have control over the bottom line of the budget. For more information about this particular Attorney General Opinion please see our informational page which includes an FAQ for 54 Op. Att'y Gen No. 7.

Open Meetings

The Open Meeting Law requires that meetings of public or governmental bodies-including boards, bureaus and commissions-must be open to the public. The Montana Legislature revised the law in 2006. A summary of the changes to Section MCA 2-3-203 include the following requirements:

Each agency (in this case, the Library Board of Trustees) shall develop procedures for permitting and encouraging the public to participate in agency decisions that are of significant interest to the public.

The procedures must ensure adequate notice and assist public participation before a final agency action is taken that is of significant interest to the public.

The agenda for a meeting must include notice of action and must allow for public comment on any public matter, which is noticed for action.

No action can be taken unless it has been noticed.

Public comment must be incorporated into the official minutes of the meeting.

Generally, Boards who have followed MCA 2-3-202 and MCA 2-3-203 in the past will not have a problem complying with the revisions.

The Open Meeting Law continues to allow the presiding officer to close portions of the meeting if he or she determines that the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure. However it should be noted that the individual involved does have a say in whether or not the meeting is closed.

Code of Ethics

The code of ethics is designed to prohibit conflict between public duty and private interest by specifying rules of conduct for public officers, which includes library trustees. The rules cover confidential information, gifts and other economic benefits or compensations.

Montana State Library Commission

This law establishes the State Library Commission. The Commission is composed of the State Superintendent of the Office of Public Instruction, or a designee; five governor appointees, who serve staggered terms of three years each; and a librarian from the Montana university system, appointed by the Commissioner of Higher Education.

Montana State Library

The State Library Commission maintains and operates the Montana State Library, located in Helena. This law addresses the role of the library in providing library services and support to state government, the library federations and local libraries. (For more information about the State Library, see Libraries and Library Organizations.)

Public Library Standards

This administrative rule details standards for public libraries and the process libraries must follow to meet those standards. To receive state financial aid public libraries must meet the essential standards under each category.

Other State Laws and Local Ordinances

Many state and local laws not specific to public libraries will also be of interest to trustees. For instance, local zoning laws, parking restrictions, building codes and safety restrictions need to be considered. Questions about these and other laws can be directed to the city or county attorney.

Federal Laws

Numerous federal laws affect public libraries. A selection of these laws of particular interest to trustees includes the following.

Americans with Disabilities Act

It is not unusual for Boards to have questions about the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This major piece of civil rights legislation made it illegal to discriminate against people with physical, mental or emotional disabilities. It requires public facilities, such as public libraries, to make reasonable modifications to ensure equal access to these individuals.

Boards that choose not to modify the library to make it physically accessible must be able to demonstrate that people who do not have access to the building can receive substantially the same services as those who can enter the building.

Employment Laws

Libraries must abide by federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination in relation to hiring, promotion and all other working conditions of employment. It is illegal to discriminate against qualified applicants on the basis of sex, race, creed, color, religion, age, country of national origin, individual life style or physical or mental disability. Stated policies should demonstrate that the library Board makes every effort not to discriminate.

Most library employees also fall under minimum wage and fair labor standards laws. Boards should consult with city or county attorneys regarding how these and other federal laws affect the library. The U.S. Department of Labor's *Employment Law Guide - Laws, Regulations, and Technical Assistance* might be helpful.

Library Services and Technology Act

In 1996, the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) replaced the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), which had been in operation since the 1950s. LSTA, which is administered by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), helps states develop electronic networks among libraries. These networks make it possible for libraries to share information resources as well as provide library services to users with special needs.

LSTA funds are awarded annually and administered by the State Library Commission. These funds are used for State Library programs, such as the Talking Book Library and Library Development Department, as well as statewide projects such as the MontanaLibrary2Go and Montana Shared Catalog. (For more information about LSTA, see Funding the Library).

Telecommunications Act of 1996 (E-Rate)

In 1997 the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted a Universal Service Order implementing the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The order is designed to ensure that all eligible schools and libraries have affordable access to modern telecommunications and information services. Each year, up to \$2.25 billion is available to provide eligible schools and libraries with discounts on authorized services. These discounts are often referred to as the "E-Rate." (For more information about this program, see Funding the Library).

Services covered by E-Rate range from basic local and long-distance phone services to Internet access services. Acquisition and installation of equipment to provide networked access to these services can also be covered for libraries whose discount rates are high enough.

To apply for E-Rate discounts, a library must meet the Montana Public Library Standards. For any services beyond basic telecommunications and Internet, a library must develop, submit and receive approval of a technology plan to ensure that the library has the ability to use the discounted services once they are purchased. (For more information on technology plans, see Additional Planning). Some E-Rate eligible services also require CIPA (Children's Internet Protection Act) compliance.

Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)

Libraries that wish to receive federal funding for services classified as "Internet Access" and "Internal Connections" must comply with both CIPA and the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act (NCIPA). CIPA requires use of a technology protection measure (often referred to as a filter) on any computer that can access the Internet, including staff computers. Any public library using E-Rate or LSTA funds for certain purposes must comply with the filtering requirements. Filtering is not required when a library receives funding for telecommunications only (i.e., telephone or data circuits).

Although filters must be installed on every computer that can access the Internet, adult users can request that the filter be removed. Therefore, the State Library recommends that libraries purchase filters that can be disabled.

Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act (NCIPA)

Libraries receiving federal funding for "Internet Access" services are required to put in place measures that protect children using the Internet. The main focus of NCIPA is Internet use policies. To comply with NCIPA, policies must address the following:

Access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and the Web.

The safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Unauthorized access, including so-called hacking, and other unlawful activities by minors online.

Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

Measures designed to restrict minors' access to materials deemed harmful to minors.

Adapted from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction materials.

Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act (USA Patriot Act)

Enacted after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the Patriot Act broadens the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Justice. Among its provisions, the act allows the FBI to seek the library records of any patron suspected of terrorist activities without first obtaining a search warrant or showing probable cause. The agency simply has to state that the agency believes the records are related to an ongoing investigation linked to terrorism. Once the patron's records are requested, the library is under a gag order and prevented from speaking about the search, meaning that the librarian cannot inform the patron that the FBI has obtained his or her records.

Changes were made to the Patriot Act when it was reauthorized in March 2006, including the following:

The standards under which the FBI can obtain library records in the course of an investigation are now slightly more stringent.

The librarian can now disclose receipt of the request order, called a Section 215 order, to "any person to whom disclosure is necessary to comply with such order." In addition, the new wording explicitly allows the recipient of the order to consult with an attorney and to obtain legal advice or assistance "with respect to the production of things in response to the order" and disclosure to "other persons as permitted" by the FBI director or the director's designee.

The recipient is now allowed to challenge the Section 215 order but only in a special court.

The recipient is now allowed to challenge the gag order within certain circumstances.

The Patriot Act remains quite complicated. Libraries across the country are dealing with the provisions of the act that affect them in different ways. You can learn more about the law and what your library needs to consider from the American Library Association.

Board Liability

The legal power of the library Board derives from the Board's actions as a body. Because these actions are subject to public scrutiny-and can be challenged in court-you and the other members of your Board need to be well informed and make decisions based on sound judgment.

There are several major areas in which Board liability may be incurred:

Acts in excess of authority: for example, inappropriate expenditures or exceeding budget spending levels.

Failure to act when action should have been taken: for example, failure to get needed copyright clearances or failure to meet contractual obligations.

Negligence: for example, unsafe buildings and grounds, failure to supervise funds, loss due to depositing funds over the maximum amount insured, etc.

Intentional misconduct: for example, libel, assault, improper discharging of an employee, theft, etc.

Acts in violation of the law: for example, improper reimbursement to trustees and employees, authorizing payment of improper expenses, purchasing certain property without obtaining bids, failing to follow proper rules for hiring, acting on an issue when there is conflict of interest, etc.

The library board should check with their city or county attorney or their insurance carrier to confirm lack of liability. In most cases there is no personal liability for trustees with the exception of criminal conduct, failure to cooperate in the defense, or settlement of a claim without the consent of the governmental entity employer.

Protecting the Public's Freedom to Read

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. As part of our freedom of expression, it is a right guaranteed by both the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of Montana. It is your responsibility as a trustee to help ensure that this right is not impinged upon.

Most library mission statements endorse the concept of intellectual freedom-that is, the right of any person to free expression and free access to ideas. Trustees can support this concept by adopting library policies that incorporate the basic principles set forth in the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement. That way, you will ensure that library users receive access to the widest possible variety of resources.

Collection Management Policy

The selection of library materials is an essential process that is strongly related to intellectual freedom. To be prepared to meet challenges to this freedom, every local library needs to have a written collection management policy that has been adopted by the Board. The library's policy should clearly state that the basic goal of the library is to offer access to its collections and services to all members of the community. In addition, it should state that the intent of a public library is to circulate all legally protected materials that patrons require or desire, even though some officials or private citizens may not approve of them. When a censorship attempt occurs, don't

defend the material; defend the right to read.

The following steps should be considered by every public library:

Handling Complaints

If your library collection provides access to a wide range of materials, includes many points of view, and responds to requests from patrons, you are guaranteed to receive complaints. Most complaints about the library's collection can be resolved by making sure that individuals who question materials receive a copy of the library's policy. But, sometimes a person objects so strongly, they may take their complaint to the media or local government officials.

If a library faces a challenge to materials, as a trustee you should:

Officially adopt and support the American Library Association's Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statement.

Maintain a collection management policy. It should be in written form and approved by the Board. The policy should apply to all library materials equally (print, electronic, Internet).

Maintain a clearly defined process for handling complaints. Complaints should be filed in writing and the complainant properly identified. (See the sample Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources form). The process should determine who will review the challenged materials, how the review will be handled, who will respond to the complaint and how quickly, and what appeal process is available to the person lodging the complaint. The established process should be followed whether the complaint originates internally or externally.

Provide regular in-service training so if there is a challenge to library materials, both the Board and staff are aware of the contents of the collection management policy and the procedures for handling complaints.

Maintain lines of communication with civic, religious, educational, and political bodies of the community and emphasize the library's selection process and intellectual freedom principles in presentations to these groups and through newspaper articles and radio and television programs.

Be aware of local, municipal and state legislation relevant to intellectual freedom and First Amendment rights.

Follow all established policies and procedures.

Remember your responsibility to speak your mind and argue for your point of view within the forum of the Board, but to support the decision of the majority once it has been made. If you disagree, do not speak out publicly. If you cannot be silent, it is best to resign from the Board before making your opposition public.

Defend the selection policy that tries to satisfy many tastes and interests.

Be sensitive and fair and react in a responsible manner.

Take into consideration the rights of the whole community, which you represent.

Once a complaint has been filed, the library can contact Montana State Library for guidance and support. The American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom also has information and resources to assist at any stage of a challenge.

Children's Rights

In Montana, minors have the same fundamental rights as adults unless otherwise prohibited. Those rights include the freedom of speech and the right to know. Because Montana law does not restrict a minor's use of the

library, children have the right to use the library without the permission of a parent.

Although libraries cannot require a parental signature before loaning minors material, they can require that a parent sign a statement of financial liability before their child receives a library card. Montana law says that a minor may enter into a contract, such as agreeing to return library materials, but it also states that a minor can renounce the contract. A statement of liability protects the library's resources by having parents assume the financial liability for overdue or lost materials loaned to their children.

In addition to signing the statement of liability, the library can also require that parents verify their child's name, address and telephone number before a library card is issued.

Confidentiality of Library Records

Another responsibility of the library and Board is to protect the confidentiality of a patron's library records. No library record that identifies the library materials a patron has requested, used or borrowed can be released or disclosed except in certain instances as defined by law. (For more information about this law see Montana Laws.)

The Board may want to formally adopt a policy that specifically recognizes the library's circulation records as confidential in nature. It is important that all library staff be advised that these records cannot be made available to any agency of state, federal or local government except by a court order, national security letter or subpoena or written permission from the patron.

Sample - Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources

The _____ Library has delegated responsibility for selection and evaluation of library resources to _____ (director, selection committee, etc.) and has established reconsideration procedures to address concerns about those resources. Completion of this form is the first step in those procedures. If you wish to request reconsideration of library resources, please return the completed form to _____.

Name _____ Date _____ Ad-
dress _____ City _____ State _____
Zip _____ Phone _____ Do you represent: self? organiza-
tion?

Resource on which you are commenting:

book textbook video display magazine audio recording newspaper library program
electronic information/network (please specify) _____

Other _____

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

What brought this resource to your attention?

Have you examined the entire resource?

What concerns you about the resource? (Use back or additional paper if needed.)

What resources do you suggest to provide additional or other viewpoints on this topic?

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background or views.

Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948. Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980, inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.

Freedom to Read

The Freedom to Read Statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers. The statement has been revised periodically, but its intent is as strong today as it was when the statement was drafted decades ago: the freedom to read is a fundamental right. As the statement proclaims:

";free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings. The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights."

The full text of the Freedom to Read Statement can be found in the link above or the Appendices.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

- First Amendment, Constitution of the United States

Ethical Considerations for Trustees

As a Board member of a public library, you are a public servant. The public expects that your conduct will always be above question and for the public good, not for your own interest or another special interest. What's more, the law demands it.

As mandated by the Constitution of Montana, Montana has a code of ethics that prohibits conflict between public duty and private interest for members of the legislature, state employees and local officers. Under the rules of conduct outlined in this law, trustees cannot disclose or use confidential information acquired in the course of their official duties for personal gain or economic benefit, nor accept gifts of substantial value.

In addition to meeting legal requirements, an effective Board will adopt, and periodically review, its own code of ethics to guide its actions. If your Board does not have a written code of ethics, you might consider the following statements as a starting point:

As a public servant and advocate for the public library, I will:

Work to ensure that the public has equal access to information.

Work to meet the information needs of the whole community.

Resist efforts to censor library materials.

Keep all library policies free of racism, sexism and other bigotry.

As a public servant and representative of the community, I will:

Attempt to interpret the needs of the community to the library and interpret the action of the library to the community.

Represent the whole community to the library and not a particular area or group.

Protect the public's right to open meetings.

Refer complaints about the library to the proper level in the chain of command.

As a member of the library Board, I will:

Listen carefully to other Board members.

Respect the opinions of other trustees.

Support the decisions of the Board.

Recognize that all authority is vested in the Board when it meets in legal session and not with individual Board members.

Be well-informed of developments that are relevant to issues that may come before the Board.

Call to the attention of the Board any issues that may have an effect on the library.

Vote to hire the best possible person to manage the library.

Not interfere with the duties of the director or undermine the director's authority.

Ensure that the library is well maintained, financially secure, growing and always operating in the best interests of the community.

Declare any personal conflicts of interest and avoid voting on issues that appear to be conflicts of interest.

Not use any part of the library for my personal advantage or the personal advantage of my friends or relatives.

Not discuss confidential Board proceedings outside of the Board meeting.

Not promise before a meeting how I will vote on any issue to be decided on during the meeting.

Work to learn more about the job of a trustee and how to do it better.

Guidelines for Preserving Public Trust

Encourage all trustees to attend, perform and take part in Board activities.

Abide by the time limits of the terms of office for trustees and advise the appointing authority when those terms are up.

Keep all library Board meetings open to the public as required by law and make sure advance notice of Board meetings is given to the public.

Unless local government audits the library, require a CPA audit once a year or once every two years. An accountant who has dealt in municipal affairs should be used.

Formally adopt written rules and policies. Keep them up to date and publicize them.

Vote for proposed actions only when there is sufficient information. If a trustee abstains, be sure the minutes show the reason.

Be sure that accurate minutes of each meeting are maintained and that votes are properly recorded. Take attendance at each meeting.

Seek outside assistance on technical matters. Obtain the assistance of the city or county attorney or retain the services of a qualified attorney for legal matters. Ask the attorney to read the agenda, minutes, policies and resolutions passed by the Board on a regular basis.

Publicize trustee actions. Publish minutes, reports and financial statements in local newspapers or library newsletters to inform the public. Consider placing copies of the minutes in the public library.

Trustees should not profit from their appointment to the Board. Avoid conflicts of interest, such as a trustee acting as the Board's attorney, investment advisor, banker, insurance consultant, accountant, or a purveyor of goods and services which the library buys.

Personnel

- ◆ Hiring the Director
- ◆ The Wrong Question
- ◆ Montana Certification Program for Library Directors, Staff and Trustees
- ◆ Working with the Director
- ◆ Motivation
- ◆ Salary and Benefits
- ◆ Continuing Education
- ◆ Common Missteps
- ◆ Working with the Library Staff
- ◆ A Team Effort
- ◆ Evaluating the Director
- ◆ The Basis for the Review
- ◆ Sample Evaluation Forms

Hiring the Director

One of the Board's most important responsibilities is hiring the director.

The needs of your library and your community will determine who will be the best person to fill the position. One Board may decide that imagination and energy are the most important characteristics the new director needs to have. Another Board might put more emphasis on administrative experience, while still others on education and library experience. Whatever combination of expertise and vision your Board determines is needed, the guiding directive should be that the Board is responsible for hiring the best candidate possible to direct the library.

The process of hiring a new director begins long before recruitment advertisements are placed. Although only local trustees and officials can determine the type of person they want and need as a director, Boards must organize their search and gather the needed information to conduct a legal and productive recruiting campaign.

Below are suggested guidelines to assist the Board in hiring the director.

Know the law

Before recruiting and hiring a director, the Board should learn about federal and state laws concerning equal opportunity, affirmative action and the issues of confidentiality, public information and documentation as they apply to the hiring process. The city or county human resources department can help the Board with this as well as with the hiring process as a whole.

The Board can also ask the city or county attorney to provide information about the legal aspects of hiring. Ask the attorney to give a short presentation to the Board, with time for questions. Understanding these issues is vital to conducting a legal recruitment and hiring.

Develop a recruitment timeline

The details of the schedule can be prepared by the search committee, once it is appointed, but the Board should determine the timeline for the hiring process. Realistically, the entire process will take from two to five months.

If the Board has plenty of advance notice (as in the case of a planned retirement, for instance), it is often possi-

ble to have a new director begin the day the previous director leaves. If the current director is leaving within a month of giving notice, the Board will need to appoint an acting director to serve while the recruitment process is under way. In this case, the Board needs to decide:

Does it matter if the acting director will also likely be an applicant for the position?

If the acting director is a current staff member, is he or she expected to handle the responsibilities of both positions?

What is a fair salary for the acting director?

How long do you anticipate the need for an acting director?

Develop a realistic budget

In developing a budget for the recruitment and hiring process, the Board needs to consider if and how much money is available to spend on:

the acting director's salary

advertisements (where and how often)

out-of-town applicants' travel expenses for final interviews

interviewing expenses, such as lunch with the Board

long-distance telephone expenses for verifying applicant's employment history, level of education and reference

Write a job description

Before recruitment begins, the Board needs to determine what exactly the director is to do and what qualifications are required. If the library has a job description for director on file, the Board should review this with the current director and update or revise it as necessary. If one is not on file talk to regional public library directors and boards, review the descriptions at the website listed, or search the Internet for sample job descriptions.

Librarianship is a technical, professional career. Even in the smallest library, the level of service, financial management, public relations activities and organization and selection of books and other materials all require some specialized knowledge and skill. Sometimes this expertise can be obtained through experience, but usually it is gained through formal education and training, leading to a master's degree in library and information science.

Determine salary range and benefits

Salary and benefits for the position of library director vary across Montana, depending on the resources of each community. The Board has the legal right to set the director's salary and benefits. Considerations may include any or all of the following:

Library budget

Current director's salary and benefits

Existing personnel policy and salary scales

Policy and practices of the governing body (if applicable)

Comparison of the salary structure of other local government employees with similar responsibilities and quali-

cations

Negotiation, if necessary, with funding bodies to obtain the necessary funds to allow the library to pay an equitable salary for the level of expertise required

Establish a search committee

A search committee allows the community to become involved in the selection process. The size of the committee depends on the community, but seven or eight members allows representation of various segments of the community that have an interest in the library. Possible members are:

at least two trustees

a library staff member

a city council member or county commissioner, depending on the governing structure of the library

the president of the Friends of the Library and/or a member of the library foundation board, should those organizations exist in your community

a school board member or school administrator

one or two members of the community at large, such as a parent of a preschool library user and a representative from the chamber of commerce

The goal is to have good community and political involvement in the hiring process. That said, the Board needs to give clear guidance to the committee when the members are appointed. The Board chairperson often serves as the chair of the search committee.

The role of the committee is to do the planning, recruiting and initial screening of applicants. The Board should decide before the committee is appointed how much involvement it wants the committee to have in selection of finalists. The committee could be asked to interview finalists and make recommendations to the Board for first, second and possibly third choices.

Once formed, the search committee's tasks are as follows:

Round out the job description and qualification requirements

A good place for the committee to start is by listing characteristics. For example:

Personal qualities: What kind of person do we want?

willingness to work hard

enthusiasm

cooperative attitude

service attitude

friendliness

leadership skills

Administrative skills: What kind of experience as an administrator and what kind of management training do we want applicants to have?

budget preparation and administration

personnel and volunteer management

good communicator, with public speaking abilities and good writing skills

time management skills

computer skills

facility management

Professional competencies: What does the director need to be able to do?

Explain and implement the philosophy of public library service, including the concepts associated with intellectual freedom, as expressed in the Freedom to Read statement and the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association.

Understand and practice the principles of material selection and acquisition for library material in a variety of formats.

Implement the cataloging and classification scheme used by the library (usually the Dewey Decimal Classification).

Provide information service to the patrons of the library through an understanding of the reference interview process and the use of standard information or reference sources.

Organize and conduct programs for adults, students and preschool children, as needed by the library.

Develop a detailed timeline

Be realistic in preparing this timeline and then maintain the schedule if at all possible. If unforeseen delays do occur, the schedule should be revised and the public informed. Include in the timeline:

Dates for recruitment advertising

Date and time of application deadline

Dates of application review period and recommendations made to the Board

Approximate interview dates (at least "the week of...")

Target start date for new director

Dates and times for search committee meetings (meetings should be scheduled well in advance so members can be available to accomplish the various tasks of the process)

Establish review criteria

Establish the process and criteria by which the applications will be initially reviewed, based on the requirements determined in completing the job description. The Board can contact the city or county human resources de-

partment or attorney for assistance in developing review criteria. Some of the basic criteria used to screen applications might include:

Submitted within the advertised deadline

Inclusion of both resume and cover letter

Completed application form (if form is necessary, be certain that it meets current legal requirements; for example, it cannot include questions about age, race, children, marital status, etc.)

Basic educational requirements met and verified by the committee chair or a designated committee member

Basic experience and reference requirements met and verified (This process is often conducted by calling each previous employer and reference, and asking specific, pre-determined questions. Replies should be noted on a form for each applicant.)

Establish ranking criteria

Applicants meeting the basic review criteria will then be ranked by the committee, so the process and criteria for ranking must also be developed. At the very least, score sheets should be prepared for committee members to use to evaluate each applicant's ability to meet the requirements in library and management ability, experience and knowledge.

Implement initial recruiting process

After completing the previous steps, the search committee advertises the position, checks the basic qualifications and ranks the applicants according to the plan. It then meets and shares its rankings or scoring of the applicants, arriving at a consensus concerning its recommendations for finalists to be interviewed by the Board.

On occasion, the search committee might find that too few, or even no, applicants meet enough of the criteria for the committee to comfortably recommend finalists to the Board. If that is the case, the committee may want to recommend that the Board establish a new timeline and re-open the search with the same criteria and salary/benefits as before.

Or, perhaps the search committee might recommend that the Board review the job description and qualifications in light of the salary offered. The Board might need to take one of the following actions:

Find a way to increase the salary and benefits to attract individuals qualified for the position.

Reduce the qualifications to allow consideration of less-experienced or less-educated applicants. If the Board takes this course of action, it needs to rank-in order of importance-the skills, knowledge and qualifications it originally desired to avoid compromising in vital areas of need.

Determine if it is possible to compromise on some of the qualifications if an applicant was willing to be hired as a trainee for a period of time, during which the individual would acquire specific skills or knowledge through formal classes, workshops or individual learning.

Notify candidates and set up interviews

After the search committee gives its recommendations for finalists to the Board, it then notifies the candidates and schedules interviews. The committee will also structure the interview process. It should always include:

structured questions prepared ahead of time and asked of all candidates, to ensure they are all treated consistently

standard evaluation sheet and scoring scheme

adequate time for discussion, as the interview is a mutual evaluation process

brief tour of the library

In addition, the search committee might arrange for some or all of the following activities to be part of the interview.

Assessment exercises (use the library collection)

Interview with the search committee (with a report and recommendations to be made by the committee to the Board)

A social event such as a reception with local officials or simply lunch or dinner with the Board

Tour of the community

Conduct the interviews

Once the search committee schedules and structures the interviews with the finalists, the Board conducts them.

As a trustee, you need to be knowledgeable about what you can and cannot ask during an employment interview. Your questions must be related to the job description and how the applicant will perform the job. For example, you may ask why the applicant left former places of employment and what kind of references the applicant would receive from former employers. You can also ask if there are hours or days that the applicant would be unavailable to work. But you cannot ask questions such as the applicant's age (see *The Wrong Question*).

Given the legal regulations affecting employment interviews, it is important that trustees follow the prepared questions when interviewing director finalists. Trustees are encouraged to consult with the city or county attorney or human resources department for additional interview guidelines.

Select the new director

The Board selects the new director through discussion and by ranking the candidates based on the predetermined selection criteria. In addition to reaching a consensus on their first choice, trustees should also determine their second and third choices at this point, in case the selected candidate turns down the Board's offer or the Board and candidate cannot reach an agreement about the terms of employment.

This phase of the hiring process includes the following steps.

Make a verbal offer to the selected candidate, including salary, benefits, anticipated starting date and length of the probationary period, if any, followed by a verification of the offer in writing. If the candidate accepts the offer, ask for a written confirmation of acceptance and the specific terms.

If the first candidate declines the offer, offer the position to the second candidate or consider options such as re-opening the position or reviewing the salary and qualification requirements.

After receiving written confirmation of acceptance from the candidate, write all other candidates to thank them and inform them of your decision.

Officially thank the search committee and all those involved in the hiring process.

Take care of practical arrangements, such as providing assistance with the new director's relocation to your com-

munity, if applicable.

Welcome the new director and introduce the individual to staff, local government officials and others in the community.

Notify the public

Before the new director begins work, the Board should send news releases to the local media and other appropriate organizations. The State Library should also be contacted.

Monitor the probationary period

A probationary period of six months to a year is common practice for new directors. The Board should informally evaluate the director's performance midway during this period, and then do a formal evaluation at the end of the probationary period to determine whether to retain or dismiss the director. Future evaluations should be done on an annual basis (see Evaluating the Director)

The Wrong Question

Due to federal law, certain questions cannot be asked of job candidates. Questions to avoid when interviewing candidates include:

- Age
- Date of birth
- Religion or church affiliation
- Father's surname or mother's maiden name
- Marital status
- What languages they speak (unless it is a job requirement)
- How many children they have, their children's ages and who will care for the children while applicant is working
- Financial information not related to compensation
- If they served in the military of any foreign country

Montana Certification Program for Library Directors, Staff and Trustees

The Montana State Library Commission requires that all public library directors have professional certification as defined by the Montana Certification Program for Library Directors, Staff, and Trustees. To learn more about the program visit our website to review the manual or contact the State Library. Boards are asked to work with their library director to plan for CE activities that will best serve the community and the library. When the director applies for certification the board chair will verify the director's participation in continuing education.

Local Boards may require certification of other staff as well as individual trustees. Everyone is encouraged to participate in the program as continuing education is essential for ongoing development and enhancement of library services. Boards may also want to consider recognizing staff who certify. Staff that are certified have worked hard to achieve certification and have shown a dedication to the library, the community, and their own development. Board recognition of this accomplishment will help improve morale and give staff the proverbial "pat on the

back" for a job well done.

The goals of the certification program are:

Encourage library directors, staff, and trustees to acquire and improve their skills through continuing education

Recognize those who continue to update their skills and knowledge to provide better library service

Assist public library directors in meeting the library certification standard adopted by the State Library Commission

Provide guidelines for Boards to use to select and retain personnel

When a new director is hired he or she should review the Montana Certification Program for Library Directors, Staff, and Trustees and contact MSL staff to find out how to become certified.

Certification needs to be renewed every 4 years.

Working with the Director

How the Board interacts with the library director can have as much impact on library services as anything else the Board does. The two must work together closely, but they have very distinct areas of responsibility. Building a relationship of mutual respect and clear communication will ensure that both the Board and the director can do their jobs well.

The first thing to realize in working with the library director is that the director reports to the Board as a whole not to individual trustees. Therefore, a trustee cannot give orders or suggestions to the director unless the action is approved by the entire Board.

While the library director reports to the Board, the Board does not supervise the director's day-to-day activities. The Board's role is to define the director's duties in a written job description and perhaps prepare an annual work plan based on the library's long-term plan (see Planning for the Future). It is then up to the library director to determine how she or he will perform those duties.

That said, the Board still needs to be aware of what the library director does as part of the Board's accountability to taxpayers. The Board should conduct an annual evaluation of the director's performance (see Evaluating the Director, for detailed information) but the Board needs to have additional processes for staying current on the director's activities. For example, the Board can ask for a monthly report from the director.

By asking questions and showing an interest in what is happening at the library, the Board shows that it cares about the library and the director. As in any work situation, expressing interest and respect increases morale and productivity.

Motivation

A good employer knows how to motivate valuable employees. Although the Board and library director do not have a typical employer/employee relationship, the Board still has a role to play in keeping the director motivated to do his or her best job possible.

Different people are motivated by different things. The Board will have to learn what the director values and desires. For instance, does he or she value a challenging position above all else? Is recognition important? What about child care, additional staff members or increases in pay? After asking the library director what is important

to him or her, and why, the Board can try to find a way to make it happen.

One simple thing that helps keep people motivated is acknowledging their accomplishments. Be specific. Rather than saying, "Good job," for example, say, "I like how you handled that angry customer. Your patience, willingness to listen and determination to solve the problem kept the situation from escalating." By being specific, you show respect and caring.

Salary and Benefits

Compensation is often the hardest issue to deal with as a Board trustee. Although wages are a basic element in job satisfaction, low pay is a problem in the library field as a whole and particularly in rural areas where city and county budgets are tight. Nonetheless, it is up to the Board to try to ensure that the director receives a competitive salary and benefits. The director is a key factor in the quality of services a library can provide its community, and a director who is well satisfied with the position is likely to do a much better job of serving the community than one who is unhappy.

To determine if your director's salary should be increased, compare it to that provided by other libraries of the same size as well as to the compensation paid to department heads in other public and private organizations. If the salary is too low, talk to the appropriate government officials about increasing it. Perhaps more of the budget can be allocated to the director's salary, or the budget can be increased. It may take several attempts for your efforts to bear fruit.

Once the base salary of the director is improved, the Board should address raises and benefits. Cost of living raises are standard elements of a fair compensation plan. If the library is not part of a government compensation system, health insurance and/or retirement are other benefits to consider.

If the board is considering offering health insurance the best option is to investigate joining the city or county's insurance plans. The board will be able to take advantage of being a member of a larger pool. If that is not possible the board can also offer to give employees a certain dollar amount that is to be applied towards health insurance premiums. If the library is a member of the Chamber of Commerce it may be possible to join the chamber's health insurance pool. Contact the local chamber organization for more information.

The best option for retirement benefits is to explore being a part of Montana Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). To learn more about joining PERS please contact the Montana Public Employee Retirement Administration.

If the library simply cannot afford to offer standard raises and benefits, the Board can compensate the library director in non-monetary ways. Consider giving the director some time off with pay, for instance. Trustees can also always publicly acknowledge the director's hard work, as well as volunteer for projects that lighten the director's responsibilities.

The Board's efforts can make a big difference in the library director's working conditions. Remember: being an advocate for the library also means being an advocate for the director.

Continuing Education

Because librarianship is always changing, it is important that the library director stay informed about innovations and advancements in the profession. Continuing education is the best way to do this. In fact, the director is required to participate in continuing education under the Public Library Standards, which the library must meet to be eligible for state aid. The standards state that directors must be certified through the Montana Certification Program for Library Directors, Staff and Trustees. Certification and renewal of certification both specify

the number of continuing education credits required and the time allowed for earning the credits. (See Public Library Standards, and Hiring the Director, for more on the Montana Certification Program for Library Directors, Staff and Trustees.)

Because the continued education of the director is so important, the Board is strongly encouraged to support the director's efforts to attend training. This includes both approval of time off with pay to travel to workshops and conferences, and financial assistance for registration fees and other expenses. A director should not be asked to attend continuing education opportunities on personal time or at personal expense. A director who is well trained and who continues to learn about the library profession is an asset to the library and the library's patrons.

Common Missteps

There are legal limits to what the Board can ask of its library director. One of the most common mistakes made by Boards is asking the library director to work more hours than she or he is paid for. Many library directors go above and beyond what is required and give extensively of their personal time to the library without being asked to do so. As a Board member, not only should you not ask them to volunteer their time, you should make it a goal to see that they are paid for actual hours worked.

Some trustees will ask the library director to work holidays reasoning that the director is being paid for the day. In some cases, this is illegal. It can also be demoralizing, especially if the director already receives few benefits as is the case in many libraries in Montana.

Finally, don't micromanage. After the Board and the library director have agreed on the director's job responsibilities, the Board must let the director take the lead. Problems need to be addressed, but even in these cases, the situation needs to be handled with respect. Step back and ask yourself if there really is a problem or if the situation is just a difference of opinion or style. There are different ways to reach the same goal of providing the community with excellent library services.

Working with the Library Staff

Although decisions by the Board affect working conditions, salaries and other aspects of typical employer/employee relationships, you as a trustee need to understand and respect the chain of command in which the director reports to the Board and the staff reports to the director. The law does give the Board the authority to hire, discharge, set salaries, and prescribe duties of the library staff, and in many cases a director may value the input of the Board when hiring. However once someone is hired the relationship between the board, director, and staff is a delicate one. It may become confusing for staff on who to answer to if the board is involved in the day-to-day operations of the library. This might lead to a decrease in productivity. The best practice would be for the Board to delegate hiring, supervising, and evaluation of the library staff to the library director. This can be done through Board bylaws or a decision/motion from the Board. This is considered to be best practice because the director is the one overseeing day-to-day operations and is probably the best person to identify what skills and abilities are needed for a particular position as well as to give constructive feedback to staff when there are problems. This also helps create a clearer chain of command which is helpful for staff. If the Board chooses to delegate this duty to the director it:

has no direct responsibility for day-to-day supervision of staff other than overseeing the director. Board members have no authority to issue orders to staff or make demands of them except through the director.

has no direct responsibility for assessing staff performance other than that of the director. The director is expected to give the Board regular reports about staff performance.

does not usually act on complaints from the staff. Should a staff member ignore the command structure and take

concerns and complaints to a trustee, or the entire Board, it is the trustee(s)' responsibility to remind the individual about the proper procedure.

This command structure is designed to make things work, not to hinder communication. Failure by any trustee to adhere to this structure can result in organizational problems. Not only is the director's authority compromised, so too is the director's job performance. The Board will not be able to hold the director accountable for staff performance if trustees get involved in staff management.

In addition, staff morale will be damaged. Staff will not have a clear understanding of who is in charge and to whom they will be accountable. And once the precedent is set, staff will believe they can go to the Board with every issue, resulting in the director becoming an ineffective figurehead without real authority.

Developing a Grievance Process

Staff should follow the chain of command if they have concerns, but on occasion staff may need to talk to board members about an issue involving the library director. The Board may wish to look at the city or county's grievance process and either adopt it or develop one for the library board. A grievance process is usually a multi-step process that staff follows in order to address a problem. Generally it starts with the library director and then if the problem is not resolved the staff takes the concern to the library board. Deciding on what type of grievance process the board would like to use may save the board some trouble in the future.

A Team Effort

Acceptance of the command structure does not mean that a wall is placed between the Board and the library staff. The Board, director and staff need to view themselves as part of the same team, with the same mission - service.

Board members may often work with the library director and staff members on committee work. All are involved in long-range planning and building community awareness and support.

As a trustee, you should show concern for the well-being of the staff. The Board should be concerned about retention of good staff, especially as it relates to budgeting pay and benefits. In addition, the Board should work with the director to recognize and acknowledge good performance and say thanks to staff through specific Board action.

Adapted from The Board Team Handbook: A Complete Guide to Boardmanship Basics for the Board Team of the 90's, published by the Cain Consulting Group, 1992.

Evaluating the Director

Trustees evaluate the director all of the time-by what they see in the library, what they hear from the public and what they perceive as the library's reputation in the community. But that informal consideration does not take the place of a formal review of the director's performance.

There are several good reasons for an annual evaluation. It:

Provides the director with a clear understanding of the Board's expectations and its perceptions of how those expectations are being met.

Identifies the Board's concerns and initiates a procedure for actions to be taken.

Creates an opportunity to review and acknowledge the director's accomplishments as well as to establish a record

of unsatisfactory performance if there is ever cause to terminate employment.

Demonstrates sound management and accountability to community officials and the public.

Gives the director an idea of where to focus future efforts

Satisfies the director's desire to know how s/he is doing

Boards often delegate the task of developing a preliminary evaluation of the director to the personnel committee or a specially appointed committee especially if particular trustees have experience in human resource management. The key is to be consistent and decide ahead of time who will take part. Although a special committee can do the preliminary evaluation process, the entire Board should review, discuss and approve the final written evaluation.

To be effective, the evaluation process needs to match the specific local situation. The current trend in employee evaluations is toward clearly stated performance goals and measured outcomes. The clearer the expectations, the easier the process will be.

The Basis for the Review

Although your specific library situation will determine what you will consider when evaluating the director's performance, the starting point should always be the director's written job description. This document must be kept up to date so that it is a realistic statement of the work that the Board expects the director to do. A director should never be faulted for failing to do something that was not agreed upon at the time of hire or at a later Board meeting.

During the evaluation, the director and Board can agree on a list of objectives that can be used as a basis for evaluation the following year. The list should be closely related to the library's long-range plan (See Planning for the Future). It is important to remember that it might not be possible for the director to meet all of the objectives and that failing to do so does not necessarily indicate poor job performance. More important to consider when evaluating objectives are the progress, initiative and willingness of the director to expand the limits of his or her work and understanding.

Other important parts of the review are the success of the library in carrying out service programs and resource management. Monthly financial statements, statistical reports and other management documents offer a more reliable assessment of the library director's performance than do subjective comments from individuals.

As part of the performance evaluation, it can be helpful to have the library director fill out a copy of the evaluation form as a self-assessment. Comparison of the director's form and the committee or Board's completed form will establish areas of agreement and indicate work to be done in resolving differences. The Board can decide if the director's self-assessment is to be considered part of the permanent record. Either way, the director should have the opportunity to respond in writing to reviews if she or he chooses to do so. No performance review should ever be placed in a personnel file without the knowledge of the director.

All discussions of the director's job performance should be carried out in legally posted and conducted meetings. (See Montana Laws, for more information about the Open Meeting Law.)

Prevent Surprises During the Annual Performance Evaluation

Work with the director to resolve performance problems when they occur.

Be willing to discuss the issue and offer solutions.

Acknowledge good work and accomplishments.

Review Criteria

The following review questions can be adapted to your library situation and your director's written job description. It gives you some points to consider in creating an evaluation process as well as a starting point for a list of objectives for the coming year.

The board may wish to choose 2-3 of these areas each year as a primary focus. The key is for the board and director to agree on which areas will be the main focus *before* the annual evaluation. The director needs to know what areas s/he will be evaluated on in the coming year. For example if the library is going through a long range planning process the board might identify that area as one to evaluate at the end of the year.

These review criteria can be turned into a form with either yes/no responses or something more subtle like does not meet, meets, or exceeds expectations. The board may also wish to review what other libraries use for an evaluation form, and it may also be helpful to look at local evaluation forms.

Preparing and managing the budget

Is all the necessary staff work completed in a timely manner prior to presentation to the Board?

Does the budget cover all necessary expenses?

Are funds allocated or reserved for unanticipated contingencies?

Are the funds effectively allocated?

Are midcourse corrections minimized?

Managing the staff

Are positive management/staff relations maintained?

Are fair and equitable policies proposed for Board adoption and then fairly administered?

Have grievances been filed? If so, what is their nature?

Professional state-of-the-art awareness

Are innovative methods of service delivery, technical processes, etc., studied thoroughly; implemented only after they fit the needs of the institution and are proven to be cost effective?

Does the director maintain an adequate knowledge of the current state-of-the-art?

Is the staff encouraged and assisted in maintaining an awareness of technological advances in the profession?

Conversely, how prone is the director to adopting change for change's sake?

Collection management

How adequate is the library's program of determining user needs/wants and translating these into acquisitions and services?

Have adequate criteria been established to enable the library to react systematically to materials budget cuts?

Implementation of Board decisions

Are Board decisions implemented on a timely basis?

Once a decision has been made, does the director fully and enthusiastically back Board decisions or are they sometimes presented to staff in an apologetic or deprecatory manner?

Use of the library

How effectively are library services communicated to the public?

Is a realistic balance established between promotion of services and budget constraints?

Are circulation trends and in-house use adequately analyzed and are there appropriate reactions to the results of such analyses?

How well is information on new services communicated to the public?

Development of staff

Are potential managers encouraged to develop career goals?

Are internal candidates for promotion competitive with outside candidates for management positions?

Does the director adequately justify the need for, actively campaign and adequately account for staff development funds?

Is cross-training leveraged to provide service to the public?

Utilization of staff

Is there a clear separation of professional and clerical tasks for staff guidance?

Have peak service hours been identified and staff deployed accordingly?

Are functions analyzed periodically with the objective of combining, eliminating and/or creating new positions?

Community development

How active is the director in the community?

Is the director "visible" to large segments of the population?

Is the director available for speaking engagements in the community?

Activity in professional organizations

Does the director actively participate in MLA, ALA, PNLA, etc.?

Does the director hold office in professional organizations?

Policy recommendations to Board

Is adequate staff work completed prior to presentation to the Board?

Are reasonable alternatives recommended?

Are policy recommendations generally proactive rather than reactive?

Are policy recommendations usually necessary and appropriate to the efficient operation of the library?

Friends of the Library

Has the director actively promoted the formation and/or maintenance of a Friends group?

Does the director provide adequate support to the organization?

Has the director helped define the role of the Friends group?

Maintenance and construction of physical plants

Within the imposed budgetary constraints are the buildings and grounds adequately maintained?

If applicable does the director provide adequate information on the need for new and/or remodeled facilities?

Establishing priorities

Are the director's recommended priorities in concert with the library's mission as defined by the Board?

Do these priorities appropriately reflect community needs?

Are priorities established proactively or reactively?

Staff selection

Is staff selection accomplished at appropriate supervisory levels and with adequate use of staff resources?

Is adequate emphasis placed on equal opportunity employer/affirmative action and is the director's commitment to these principles communicated to the staff?

Is the selection process designed to ensure the selection of the best person for the job?

Short- and long-range planning

Do the director's short- and long-range plans reflect Board priorities?

Are the short- and long-range plans updated on a continuous basis to reflect changing circumstances?

Are the director's accomplishments in sync with the short- and long-range plans?

Are the short- and long-range plans flexible enough to allow for changing circumstances?

Does the director provide adequate information to the Board on the implementation, revision, etc., of short- and long-range planning?

Miscellaneous rating factors

Are "hard decisions" made and implemented or are they deferred or ignored?

Does the director display adequate initiative or rather merely react to necessities?

Is the director objective in making the necessary decision or do personal prejudices intrude too often?

Is the director consistent in decisions that affect the staff and/or public?

Is the director open with the Board or does a "hidden" agenda intrude too often in the relationship?

Does the director set an example for the staff through professional conduct, high principles, business-like approach, good work habits, etc.?

Sample Evaluation Forms

I. Sample 1

Name:

Evaluation Period:

Responsibilities:

Expectations and Goals:

Comments:

Overall Performance:

Comments:

Performance Rating:

Above satisfactory

Satisfactory

Below satisfactory

Employee:

Agree

Disagree

Signature

Date

II. Sample 2

Criteria for Director's Evaluation

Budgeting and Financial Management

Manages the library's resources appropriately

Involves Board members appropriately in managing library resources

Prepares budgets and oversees preparation of financial statements so Board members can understand them

Communications

Attends all Board meetings and participates appropriately

Writes well-written reports and proposals, containing enough information to help Board members make informed decisions without being wordy or lacking in essential details

Represents the library at important state, regional and national meetings and reports on significant happenings

Communicates appropriately with elected officials, Friends of the Library, patrons and others

Is responsible for public relations, effectively communicating library services to the public

Physical Plant

Supervises the general maintenance of buildings and grounds

Informs Board of the status of building and grounds

Policies and Guidelines

Recommends policy changes as needed, with suggested wording

Implements Board policy and guidelines appropriately

Staff Recruiting and Supervision

Keeps the Board informed about staff changes

Administers salaries, involving the Board appropriately

Delegates responsibility and authority to staff members in a way that empowers them to do their jobs well and accomplish the mission of the library

Staff Training

Prepares and presents training opportunities for staff members and trustees

Attends appropriate continuing education opportunities

Library Director Performance Appraisal

Goal Setting

The following are goals agreed upon by the director and the trustees for the director to accomplish during the next twelve months:

Comments

Noteworthy accomplishments of the director during the past year have been:

Situations that might have been handled differently were:

Additional comments:

From Richards Free Library, Newport Regional Library, Newport, New Hampshire, 2005

III. Sample3

Job Title: Library Director

Name:

Date:

Reason for Evaluation: End of probation (Annual/Final/Other)

Administrative Services Duties

Act as the Board's executive officer.

Serve as the technical adviser to the Board.

Implement the policies of the library as established by the Board.

Prepare the draft of the annual library budget for Board discussion and approval.

Participate in the presentation of the adopted budget to local officials.

Receive and expend library funds according to established guidelines and maintain accurate and up-to-date records showing the status of library finances.

Recruit, select, hire, supervise, evaluate and terminate if necessary library staff in conformity with library policy and state and federal law (and any applicable local civil service regulations and/or union contracts).

Prepare Board meeting agendas and necessary reports in cooperation with the Board president, and notify Board members of scheduled meetings.

Prepare state annual report for review and approval by the Board.

Inform and advise the Board as to local, regional, state and national developments in the library field and work to maintain communication with other area libraries and the library system.

Rating: Excellent (6 5 4 3 2 1) Poor

Narrative evaluation and assessment of effort in achievement of annual objectives:

Collection Management Duties

Select or direct the selection of materials for all media and all age groups, based on the library's approved collection development policy.

Catalog and classify library materials according to accepted standards and maintain the public catalog.

Process materials to provide appeal, protection and control.

Develop and maintain a regular weeding schedule.

Periodically review the collection development policy and make recommendations to the Board for revisions.

Oversee the shelving and organization of materials.

Prepare and distribute overdue notices to users with overdue or lost materials.

Maintain an accurate and up-to-date database of user registrations and activities, including information adequate to support reimbursement requests for nonresident borrowing.

Rating: Excellent (6 5 4 3 2 1) Poor

Narrative evaluation and assessment of effort in achievement of annual objectives.

Service and Service Promotion Duties

Develop and execute an array of service programs to address the various needs of users and to make the library more accessible to all. These might include: preparation and dissemination of bibliographies of popular topics and genre collections; tours of the library for school, daycare and home-school groups; inclusion of interesting displays of an educational or cultural nature; presentations to local organizations or groups on the benefits offered by the library; provision of storytime sessions for small children, and teen and adult book discussion sessions; support of a summer reading program; acquisition of special materials and provision of accommodations to encourage use of the library by individuals with special needs; development of a home-bound service for residents unable to visit the library.

Provide friendly and efficient direct assistance to users checking out materials, requesting directional or community information or seeking materials or information on specific topics.

Prepare news releases and submissions to the media to announce new or special services and events that spotlight the library.

Assist and guide local volunteer groups (e.g., Friends of the Library) who wish to help with library promotion, fundraising and enhancement of services.

Prepare grant applications, when grant opportunities are offered, to supplement local funding of library operations and development.

Maintain records showing all programs offered and number of attendees at each.

Continually investigate the value, costs and logistics of adding library services, new media and new technologies to keep the library current and proactive in its service provision to the public.

Conduct on-going evaluations of existing library programs, services, policies and procedures, and submit recommendations for improvements to the Board.

Rating: Excellent (6 5 4 3 2 1) Poor

Narrative evaluation and assessment of effort in achievement of annual objectives.

Facilities Management Duties

Oversee care and maintenance of the library building and grounds.

Oversee the work of custodial staff.

Regularly review building needs and advise the Board in its planning for future expansion or development.

Assess the adequacy of existing facilities in regard to the provision of automated services.

Rating: Excellent (6 5 4 3 2 1) Poor

Narrative evaluation and assessment of effort in achievement of annual objectives:

Director's objectives for the coming year (agreed to by Board and director):

Certification

Board President's Signature

Date:

Library Director's Signature

Date:

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IV. Sample 4

Form Instructions

Each Board member should individually respond to this form.

To help in completing the form, Board members can refer to past Board minutes, usage statistics, program results and other information sources from the year.

Return the completed form to the Board President for inclusion in the Summation Form that will be used during the face-to-face meeting with the director.

Scale: E = excellent S = satisfactory N = needs improvement U = unknown

Area of Organizational Health

Customer Service & Community Relations

Level of patron satisfaction

Customer service received by patrons

Consistent application of policies that affect the public

Services are communicated to the public effectively

Working relationships and cooperative arrangements with government officials, community groups and organizations

Awareness of community needs

Mechanisms are in place to hear from patrons and the community at large

Library is being marketed to the community

Comments

CS&CR TOTALS: E___ S___ N___ U___

Organizational Growth

The library is making progress on its long-range plan (LRP)

Services to meet the goals and objectives of the LRP are carried out with staff and trustee involvement

Goals and objectives are evaluated regularly

Creativity and initiative are demonstrated in creating new services and programs

Collection is responsive to changes in the community

The library is responsive to changes in the community

Staff are aware of library's long-range plan, policies and activities

There is a working knowledge of significant developments and trends in the field.

Building and grounds are kept up and needed repairs and maintenance are done on a timely basis

Comments:

OG TOTALS: E___ S___ N___ U___

Administration and Human Resource Management

Work is effectively assigned, appropriate levels of freedom and authority are delegated.

Job descriptions are developed; regular performance evaluations are held and documented.

Personnel policies and state and federal regulations on workplaces and employment are effectively implemented.

Policies and procedures are in place to maximize volunteer efforts.

Staff development and education are encouraged.

Staff understand how their role at the library relates to the mission.

Library climate attracts, keeps and motivates a diverse staff of top-quality people

Comments:

A&HRM TOTALS: E___ S___ N___ U___

Financial Management/Legal Compliance/Fund-raising

Adequate control and accounting of all funds takes place; library uses sound financial practices.

Budget is prepared with input from staff and trustees; the library operates within budget guidelines.

Official records and documents are maintained; library is in compliance with federal, state and local regulations and reporting requirements (such as annual report, payroll withholding and reporting, etc.)

Positive relationships with government, foundation and corporate funders are in place

Funds are disbursed in accordance with budget, contract/grant requirements and donor designations

Comments:

FM/LC/F TOTALS: E___ S___ N___ U___

Board of Trustee Relationship

Appropriate, adequate and timely information is provided to the Board.

Support is provided to the Board.

The Board is informed on the condition of the organization and all important factors influencing it.

The Board works effectively.

Comments:

BTR TOTALS: E___ S___ N___ U___

Mid-Hudson Library System, Poughkeepsie, New York, 2006.

Finances

- ◆ Funding the Library
- ◆ Local Funding Sources
- ◆ Suggested Mill Levy Timeline
- ◆ State Funding Sources
- ◆ Federal Funding Sources
- ◆ Other Funding Sources
- ◆ Building the Budget
- ◆ Sample Budget Planning Calendar
- ◆ Following the Money

Funding the Library

Money Matters

The Board is responsible for ensuring that there are adequate funds for all operations of the library. This vital function requires that Board members:

understand library funding laws

have a knowledge of funding sources

develop a working relationship with the appropriate governing body

be willing to seek prospective funding sources for the library

ask other libraries how they meet their funding needs

explore ways of sharing resources with other libraries

explore community resources

be innovative

Sound financial management by the Board of trustees is crucial to ensure ongoing library services for the community. To prepare a budget, you need to know where the funds come from and how much revenue you can expect each year. In Montana, public library funding comes from local, state and federal sources. Private funding sources are also important.

Local Funding Sources

The major source of public library funding in Montana comes from local property taxes, either through a specific mill levy or an appropriation from general funds. State law allows the governing body of a city or county with an established public library to levy a special tax in the amount necessary to maintain adequate public library service unless an increased mill levy is approved through a vote of the people. The timeline on the next page outlines the steps and timing necessary to pass a mill levy.

Libraries that receive funds from mill levies are eligible to receive prorated money from sources other than property taxes as well, such as ancillary taxes including motor vehicle taxes, oil and gas production taxes, motorcycle

fees and so on. State law also allows the governing body of any city or county, or a combination of the city and county, to establish a library depreciation reserve fund. This money can be used to acquire property, make capital improvements and purchase equipment necessary for library services. City or county funds allocated to the library but not spent at the end of the fiscal year can be applied to the library depreciation reserve fund. The Board must request establishment of this fund.

Support for libraries differs considerably among cities and counties in Montana because taxable valuation and the amount levied varies from place to place. Initiative 105, passed by Montana voters in 1986, significantly compounded funding problems for libraries by freezing the level of local property taxes from which public libraries receive most of their funding. A petition and election process is now often required to secure adequate library funding.

The Board can explore local options with the city or county budget officer and should consider reviewing MCA 15-10-420 and 15-10-425 for more information on running a mill levy.

Suggested Mill Levy Timeline

January - March	Board defines goals and prepares budget for upcoming year, determines if an exceeded mill levy election will be needed.
April-May	Trustees communicate with city or county commissioners about budget and the exceeded mill levy needs.
June - July	Board seeks out the legal requirements and ballot language.
August - September	Trustees recruit for Board/citizens' task force and appoint task force members.
October - December	Task force identifies funding sources and develops the petition. Task force presents recommendations to the trustees. Trustees adopt task force recommendations and support petition.
January	Task force circulates petition, which must be signed by at least five percent of the resident taxpayers. Trustees meet with city or county clerk to review ballot language. Trustees and commissioners meet to discuss petition and election. Trustees and task force hold an informational meeting about the adopted mill levy vote.
February	Board files petition with governing body at least 90 days prior to the general election. Task force recruits a citizens' campaign committee.
March - May	Citizen's campaign committee prepares facts, fliers and other materials; holds information meetings for the public; and implements other steps in publicity campaign.
June	Election*

**Develop comparable timelines for elections not in June by working back from the date of election.*

State Funding Sources

There are two state funding sources for Montana's public libraries: the Information Access Montana Act and the Coal Severance Tax. To receive this funding, public libraries must meet the essential standards as described in the Public Library Standards.

I. Information Access Montana Act

State aid to public libraries is provided through the Information Access Montana Act (IAMA) passed by the Montana Legislature in 1989. The act is designed to broaden access to existing information by strengthening public libraries, augment and extend services provided by public libraries, and permit new types of library services based on local need. IAMA is administered by the Montana State Library Commission.

IAMA funds may not take the place of general operating funds. The law allows the Commission to withhold these funds when there is a reasonable link between the reduction in local funding and the receipt or expectation of IAMA funds. In such cases, the reduced funding from a mill levy or local government appropriation must be less than the average amount the library had received from these sources for the preceding three fiscal years.

IAMA stipulates four types of state aid:

Per capita and per square mile.

This aid is based on a population distribution formula (See MCA 22-1-327 or ARM 10.102.4003). The amount of money received by individual libraries can change as the population distribution changes. When Montana's population increases, the funds per person are less. These funds are distributed annually, and the local libraries receive the money by the end of September.

Statewide interlibrary resource-sharing program.

The commission shall establish a statewide interlibrary resource-sharing program (See MCA 22-1-328 and ARM 10.102.4001.) The purpose of the program is to administer funds appropriated by the legislature to support and facilitate resource-sharing among libraries in Montana, including but not limited to public libraries, public library districts, libraries operated by public schools or school districts, libraries operated by public colleges or universities, tribal libraries, libraries operated by public agencies for institutionalized persons, and libraries operated by nonprofit, private medical, educational, or research institutions.

Statewide Library Access Program.

This section (See MCA 22-1-329) authorizes the Commission to develop a voluntary statewide library access program whereby a participating library may allow access to the library's materials and services by patrons registered and in good standing with another library.

Base grants.

Each public library receives a base grant (See MCA 22-1-331 or ARM 10.102.5106) to support the cooperative activities and services of the six library federations in the state (see Federations for more information). The funds are sent to federation libraries by the end of September. The libraries may use the grants to fund projects that maintain or improve cooperative library services and activities within the federation or state.

II. Coal Severance Tax

In 1979, the Montana Legislature designated that a portion of the state severance tax (See MCA 15-35-108 or ARM 10.102.5102) on coal mining go to the library federations to help local libraries provide basic services. The federation libraries receive the annual funds by the end of September. Each federation submits an annual plan of service to the Commission for approval that details how the funds will be spent. Currently Coal Severance Tax

funds are also used to fully fund statewide electronic resources that every public library can access and share with its patrons. (See Federations for more information.)

Libraries that receive state aid must comply with the public library standards. Please contact the Montana State Library for assistance with complying with the public library standards.

Federal Funding Sources

On occasion, federal grants for specific programs become available for libraries. Trustees and directors can learn about these and other grant opportunities through library literature.

Two of the most common sources of federal funds for library services in Montana are the Library Services and Technology Act and the Telecommunications Discount Program (E-Rate).

Library Services and Technology Act

The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant program is designed to serve all types of libraries: public, academic, research, school, special and consortia libraries. Administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a federal agency, LSTA provides annual funding to all state library agencies to "develop library networks to share library information resources across institutional, local and state boundaries and to reach those for whom library use requires extra effort or special materials."

The act also authorizes a national grant competition for education and training, research and demonstration, preservation and digitization, and models of cooperation between libraries and museums. In addition, IMLS provides grants to improve Native American and Native Hawaiian library services.

In Montana, the State Library Commission administers LSTA grant funds. The amount of money received each year varies, depending on the funding LSTA receives in each federal budget. The funds awarded to Montana are used for State Library programs, such as the Talking Book Library and the Library Development Division, or for statewide projects that provide specialized programming or services for Montanans.

Telecommunications Discount Program (E-Rate)

Since 1997, the federal Telecommunications Discount Program has provided Montana libraries discounts on eligible telecommunications services ranging from 20 percent to 90 percent, depending on economic need and location. Commonly referred to as the "E-Rate program," it is administered through the nonprofit Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), which was established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to implement the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The Schools and Libraries Division of USAC administers the schools and libraries program.

The determination of economic need is based upon the percentage of students eligible for participation in the national school lunch program. Libraries use a weighted discount percentage, which includes figures for all of the schools in the school district in which the library is located.

Services covered by E-Rate range from basic local and long-distance phone services to Internet access services. Acquisition and installation of equipment to provide networked access to these services are also covered. To apply for E-Rate discounts, a library must meet the Montana Public Library Standards. There are also federal requirements that must be met depending upon the type of discount the library requests.

Other Funding Sources

As funding needs increase, many libraries seek grants from foundations, corporations, endowments and govern-

ment agencies. Local businesses are another option. Boards can solicit funds from these businesses directly or determine if the business has a community support program. The Board might also want to explore partnerships with civic organizations for special products or fund-raising activities. Possible groups include the Kiwanis, Rotary Club, Jaycees, Lions, League of Women Voters and local youth groups.

Another consideration for the Board is to encourage endowments from individuals or memorials in the form of gifts to the library. Some Montana libraries have gone a step further and established their own foundations. A library foundation functions as a separate entity and can attain nonprofit tax status from the Internal Revenue Service, so that gifts are tax deductible for the donors. Establishing a library foundation also opens up the potential of funds from other foundations that do not give grants to tax-supported agencies. (See Community Partners.)

Valuable resources for Boards seeking information on grant funds are materials produced by the Foundation Center. This is a national service organization founded and supported by foundations to provide information on foundation and corporate giving. Among its primary activities are publishing reference books and offering online searchable databases on grants.

There are five Foundation Center libraries in the United States. These are located in New York, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Cleveland and San Francisco. In addition, Foundation Center Cooperating Collections are located in each state to provide a core reference collection of Foundation Center publications, other materials and services useful to grant seekers.

Building the Budget

Once you know where funding comes from and how much you can expect, you can begin to prepare the budget. Budgeting is vital to the library's planning process and one of the most important Board functions.

The budgeting process includes the following steps:

Define the library's goals for the upcoming year based on the library's long-range plan. What does the library really need? Base the budget on those needs. The budget will change as the goals change.

Gather information to project costs of providing services and meeting the year's goals.

Estimate potential income from taxes, gifts, fines, fees, grants and any other possible source of income.

Compare costs and income to see if all the goals can be met. If income exceeds or equals costs, the budgeting process continues.

Adjust objectives if funding doesn't cover goals, or search for additional funding.

Present the written budget to the funding body.

The Board and the director work on the budget together but, ultimately, the Board is responsible for its approval and will typically present it to the entity with funding authority, within the required time frame and procedural steps. It is important for Board members to support the budget and speak out for library funding.

As in any planning activity, it is important to establish a schedule. A comprehensive, balanced budget cannot be compiled overnight. Allow adequate time for planning, gathering information, reviewing goals and producing a finished product that will allow the library to meet the community's needs for library services.

The schedule on the next page shows specific steps for building the budget. Key dates are also included in the calendar in Appendix.

Sample Budget Planning Calendar

Based on a July 1 to June 30 Fiscal Year

December	Establish goals and objectives for coming year based on staff, community and other input.
	Distribute goals and objectives with request for appropriate strategies.
January	Review strategies and budget requests.
	Prioritize objectives determined in December.
	Reconfirm projected revenue information.
	Assign committee to work with the director to prepare a draft budget for review.
February	Review draft budget prepared by director and committee.
March	Consider holding a public hearing on draft preliminary budget.
	Adopt preliminary budget.
April	Submit preliminary budget request or certified budget to funding body.
May	Continue to work with submitted request or budget.
	Adopt final budget for next year and submit it to appropriate authority (if possible).
June	Review and finalize any adjustments in closing out the present year.
July	Review goals and objectives.
December	Review budget report each month.

Following the Money

Boards have control over the library's expenditures. While the Board should delegate the power to purchase materials, supplies and other goods to the library director, it should be aware of all purchases and monitor the budget monthly throughout the year.

The director should provide the Board with a monthly statement that shows at minimum:

monthly income

total income for the year

cash on hand

monthly expenditures by budget category

cumulative expenditures for the year by budget expenditure

a list of library accounts including the library depreciation reserve fund and any trust fund or donation accounts

When reviewing the reports, look for yearly patterns of expenditures, such as energy bills in the winter, fees for building repairs or grounds maintenance in the summer, special program costs such as those associated with summer reading programs, and purchases of supplies and materials that occur once or twice a year.

This is also a good time to compare budget figures with actual amounts. Is the income as you expected? If not, the Board needs to find out why and make adjustments in the budget if necessary. Compare actual expenditures with budget amounts as well. Unusually high and low expenditures need to be explained by the director. If costs are greater than expected, the Board might have to adjust the budget. You also need to know why funds are not being spent. Perhaps an under spent book budget means the staff does not have the time to make book selections, and that funding more staff is becoming a priority.

Setting Policy

- ◆ Introduction
- ◆ Making Policy
- ◆ A Policy List for Public Libraries

Introduction

Much of a trustee's work deals with policy - making policies, reviewing policies, interpreting policies, enforcing policies and monitoring their effectiveness.

Policies set the direction for the library and protect it from misunderstandings. They are broad, philosophical guidelines, rather than specific procedures, addressing such areas as personnel, collection management, operations, program development and intellectual freedom.

Library policies should be based on community needs, the library mission statement and established goals; they should not be a reaction to specific problems that arise.

A good set of written Board policies:

Balances library resources and customer needs.

Promotes consistency.

Eliminates the need for instant (crisis) policy making.

Clarifies Board member, director and staff roles.

Trustees are responsible for making and adopting library policies, but policy development is best done in conjunction with the director and staff. Policies should be clearly written, organized in a policy manual and made available to the staff and the public. The manual can be kept at the circulation or reference desk.

In addition, every trustee should have a copy of the policy manual and be completely familiar with the rationale for each statement. You need to thoroughly understand the policies to knowledgeably adopt new or revise existing ones. Also, you may be called upon to defend or interpret policies to the public or governing officials.

Your Board should follow established policies but keep in mind that things change. The community's economic conditions or the growth or decline of the population, for example, may justify changes in library policies. Therefore, it is important for your Board to conduct periodic community analysis studies and be flexible enough to revise or change policies as needed. An annual review will help ensure that the policies are accurate and up-to-date.

The State Library can answer questions your Board might have on developing policies and provide you with samples of specific policies developed by other libraries.

Making Policy

Good policy is "developed" rather than just "written." Development includes these steps:

Identify the need.

Define the issue.

Ask yourself if the Board is the right body to deal with the issue.

Identify alternative ways of dealing with the issue.

Examine the consequences of each alternative.

Determine the value of each alternative.

Consider what the policy says about the library.

Select the alternative that best expresses the Board's and the community's values.

After a policy is proposed, determine if it is:

necessary?

consistent with the library's mission statement?

within the scope of the Board's authority?

consistent with local, state and federal law?

compatible with other policies?

practical?

broad enough to cover the subject completely?

enforceable?

affordable?

When you are ready to write the policy:

Establish a committee of trustees and the director/staff to prepare a draft.

Seek comments on the draft; those contributing to making policy are more likely to accept and implement it.

Compile comments and present a recommendation to the Board.

Reach final consensus on the final draft; make sure wording and intent are clear.

Adopt the policy at a scheduled open meeting of the Board.

Publish and distribute the policy.

Train staff on new policy if needed.

Review effects of the policy in six months or a year.

4 Tests of a Good Policy

It's legal - the policy complies with all local, state, and federal laws.

It's fair - the consequences of violating the policy should not be excessive.

It's clear and concise - the language should be clear enough that the average person can understand the consequences. It should also be clear enough that staff members can enforce the policy.

It's consistent - the policy should apply equally to everyone. It should not favor one group over another.

Library policies cover all aspects of the operation:

the what, when, where and how, frequently the who, and sometimes the why.

A Policy List for Public Libraries

The following list of policies may be relevant to your needs. It is arranged in the form of an outline to show how policies relate to one another.

- (1) Mission and Role Statement
- (2) Board Bylaws and Public Participation Policy
- (3) Public Service Policies
 - (a) Eligibility for borrowing and services
 - (I) Resident and nonresident
 - (II) Programming and outreach
 - (b) Collection Management Policy
 - (I) Mission and goals with community description
 - (II) Responsibility for selection
 - (III) Selection criteria for each format
 - (IV) Scope and priorities of collection
 - (V) Selection procedures and vendor relations
 - (VI) Evaluation, weeding and maintenance
 - (VII) Censorship, access and challenged materials procedure
 - (VIII) Intellectual Freedom Statement, Library Bill of Rights
 - (IX) Gifts and donations
 - (c) Circulation Policy
 - (I) Loan period and renewal
 - (II) Confidentiality

- (III) Reserved material
- (IV) Fines, damages
- (V) Interlibrary loan
- (VI) Special collections
- (VII) Audiovisual equipment
- (VIII) Fees
- (d) Reference Policy
- (e) Facilities Policy
- (I) Hours of operation
- (II) Americans with Disabilities Act compliance
- (III) Security
- (IV) Meeting room use
- (V) Exhibits and displays
- (VI) Copiers and other equipment use
- (f) Community Relations Policy
- (I) Cooperative borrowing agreements
- (II) Relations with schools
- (III) Volunteers
- (IV) Friends groups
- (V) Public Participation Policy
- (g) Patron Behavior Policy
- (I) Unattended children
- (II) Respect for staff, users and library property
- (h) Internet Use Policy
- (4) Management Policies
- (a) General
- (I) Responsibility and authority

- (II) Budget, accounting and financial management
- (III) Procurement, including gifts
- (b) Personnel
 - (I) Responsibility and authority
 - (II) Job descriptions and classifications
 - (III) Salaries and benefits
 - (IV) Hours, annual and sick leave, overtime, holidays
 - (V) Hiring, termination, resignations and nepotism
 - (VI) Performance evaluation and promotion
 - (VII) Continuing education/professional development
 - (VIII) Discipline and grievances
 - (IX) Americans with Disabilities Act compliance
 - (X) Fair Labor Standards Act compliance
 - (XI) Sexual harassment
 - (XII) Personnel records
- (c) Facilities
 - (I) Responsibility and procedures for maintenance
 - (II) Acquisition and ownership
 - (III) Insurance and liability
 - (IV) Emergency preparedness
 - (V) Americans with Disabilities Act compliance
 - (VI) Use of equipment, vehicles, etc.

Planning for the Future

Introduction

The Long-range Planning Process

Additional Planning

Planning for Disaster

Introduction

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Your Board should follow established policies but keep in mind that things change. The community's economic conditions or the growth or decline of the population, for example, may justify changes in library policies. Therefore, it is important for your Board to conduct periodic community analysis studies and be flexible enough to revise or change policies as needed. An annual review will help ensure that the policies are accurate and up-to-date.

The State Library can answer questions your Board might have on developing policies and provide you with samples of specific policies developed by other libraries.

The Long-range Planning Process

The work of the long range planning committee is to identify what the community needs and how the library can help meet those needs. The committee's role is not to set the library's goals and objectives. That is the Board's job. Involving the community in the planning process, however, will ensure that those goals and objectives are firmly rooted in the community's best interests.

Where do we want to go as a community?

The first step for the community committee is to look at the big picture. What constitutes the ideal community? What makes it successful? What does Main Street look like in a great community? How would teens define a great community? What do seniors need from the community? What do working parents need? What other groups make up the community and what do they need? At this point the discussion is about the community.

Where are we now?

Once the committee has a vision of where it thinks the community should go, it needs to step back and consider the reality of where it currently is. The easiest way to do that is to look at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that presently exist in the community. What are the community's strengths and how can they be drawn on to achieve success? Conversely, what are the weaknesses that might be barriers to that achievement? Are there opportunities around the corner? What are the present and future threats to success? This section is still focusing on the community.

What are the community's needs and how can the library help meet those needs?

The work done in steps one and two will reveal the work that must be done for the community to achieve its vision of the future. The committee can develop a road map detailing the steps to success. Included in that road map will be the role of the library. Although the library is represented on the committee, it will probably be helpful for the committee to meet with additional library staff and perhaps Board members to discuss how the library can best support the committee's vision.

The library's written long-range plan

After the community committee's road map is complete, the Board can prepare the library's long-range plan setting goals and objectives for serving the community. The following elements should be included in the written plan:

A short summary of the plan highlighting what the library wants to accomplish in the next three to five years.

The mission of the library.

Goals and objectives.

Implementation activities and the staff members responsible.

Measuring success

It is important that the Board monitors the implementation of the plan and its on-going effectiveness. Given today's ever-changing communities, the goals and objectives in the plan might need to be adapted. Trustees should set a schedule for reviewing the plan that includes periodic progress reports from the library director and any committees that are implementing parts of the plan, as well as an annual review and final evaluation. (See library evaluation primer for more on the evaluation process.)

Additional Planning

After the long-range plan is in place, it becomes the basis for how the library operates. As the Board considers other elements of library services, it can use the long-range plan as the starting point for planning for facilities, technology and public relations.

I. Planning for Facilities

The typical public library serves the community with a variety of programs and a diverse collection of materials. The Board needs to determine if the facility meets the current needs of the library as well as its future needs based on the long-term plan. Will there be a need in the near future for more meeting rooms, for example? Do services focus on a particular user population, such as children or seniors? Will that change over time? Each group has its own needs and the facility should reflect that.

After the long-range plan is developed, the Board might decide that the library facility needs to be renovated or upgraded. If so, it is vital that the public be informed. Clearly communicate how the library's plan to meet future needs of the community is changing the face of the library. More information about planning for facilities is available from the State Library.

II. Planning for Technology

In addition to short-term issues, such as periodic upgrades of computer equipment, the Board must also consider long-term technology issues in light of the long-range plan. For example, if computer classes were identified as a community need, the Board may want to plan for the purchase of computers as well as find space for a computer lab within the facility. Or if digitization of local history was identified as a community need, the library might require a different set of technology and equipment than it currently owns. The long-range plan will be the guide for developing a technology plan that reflects the community's priorities.

III. Goals or Objectives?

Goals are general accomplishments that support the library mission. In general, goals are not time limited and are often not expected to be fully accomplished. A sample goal is: *The library provides materials which are appropriate to the lifelong learning of its adult users.*

Objectives are specific, measurable, time-limited descriptions of desired results. Achievement of objectives will be the basis for assessment of success in meeting library goals. One of many possible objectives that would relate to the above goal is: *During the next fiscal year, increase turnover rate of selected sections of the adult nonfiction collection to 5 circulations per item.*

IV. Planning for Public Relations

On-going communication with the public is key to implementing the library's long-range plan. Written plans for each public relations campaign will help the library achieve its goals. The plans should include a clear description of the target audience, that is, who the library wants to reach; a timeline; short- and long-term goals of the campaign; staffing requirements; the budget; and details of how success will be measured. (See *Marketing the Library* for more on public relations.)

Planning for Disaster

Disaster response and prevention is essential for the continuation of library business. A written disaster plan will help ensure the health and safety of the staff, decrease the amount of time it takes to begin recovery, and increase the recovery rate for materials.

When preparing a disaster plan:

Consider types of disasters most likely to happen, including the possibility that the entire building or collection might be destroyed.

Consider what services would be most affected if patrons and staff did not have access to the building and its collections.

Determine who has the decision-making authority in the case of a disaster to close the library, contact the insurance company, assign staff to the recovery effort, hire temporary staff if needed and serve as media spokesperson.

It is the director's responsibility to ensure that the staff is knowledgeable about emergency procedures, but trustees should be familiar with them as well. One of the Board members might be responsible for having a copy of the disaster plan stored at home in case the library copy is damaged or is inaccessible.

Library Evaluation Primer

Evaluation addresses two questions: (1) What progress are we making, or what difference has the library made for the people it serves? and 2) What changes occurred?

I. Identifying Desired Outcomes

Part of the Board's responsibility in completing the long-range plan is defining its goals or desired outcomes. Outcomes result from a discussion of the critical question, "What changes or accomplishments are expected?" These can occur in the library users, the library, local agencies and organizations, and ultimately, the community.

For library users, changes might be expected in their knowledge, behaviors or attitudes. Examples of these changes include learning more about a specific subject, being a more informed consumer, reading more for relaxation or becoming more open to divergent viewpoints. Program attendance figures, the number of information requests and collection use statistics also can be used to indicate outcomes. Community collaboration is another area where desired outcomes can be defined.

II. Setting Targets

Once the Board has defined its desired outcomes, it can set measurable or observable objectives, or targets, including timeframes for completion. For example, targets may be to increase circulation by 10 percent within a year reduce complaints by 50 percent by the end of the fiscal year or hold three adult programs. These targets provide useful benchmarks for both the extent and quality of library services. Without clear targets, the evaluation process can only describe what was done, not what was accomplished.

"Impact stories" can be done to supplement measurement of outcomes. These are stories that illustrate how things have changed for the users, library, collaborators or community. The process of describing impact uses quotations and observations to tell the library's story, providing a better understanding of how others are influenced by the library. They also bring multiple "voices" to the evaluation process.

III. Evaluation Process

Once the first two steps are completed, the evaluation process is primarily a mechanical one. The Board will need to determine who will be responsible for the evaluation and the timeline. Among those involved may be library staff, volunteers, users, community partners and funders.

The Board will also need to determine how information is collected for the evaluation. Possible methods include collecting statistics, interviews, questionnaires and structured observation. The key to choosing strategies is to consider which are the most appropriate for the information needed to document change, while keeping in mind the time and cost of each approach.

Evaluation helps promote both the effectiveness and efficiency of the library's operations and services. The goal of the process is to use the information to improve the library, making it a learning process for all involved.

Community Relations

- ♦ Marketing the Library
- ♦ Planning
- ♦ Publicity
- ♦ How to Talk about the Library
- ♦ Public Relations
- ♦ How to Write a Press Release
- ♦ Sample Press Release Form
- ♦ What's Your Story?
- ♦ Media Relations
- ♦ Politics
- ♦ Community Partners
- ♦ Friends of the Library
- ♦ Library Foundations
- ♦ Libraries and Library Organizations
- ♦ Montana State Library Commission
- ♦ Montana State Librarian
- ♦ Library Development Division (LDD)
- ♦ Montana Talking Book Library (MTBL)
- ♦ Montana Digital Library (MSDL)
- ♦ Montana Library Federations
- ♦ Library Associations (MLA, MPLA, PNLA, and ALA)
- ♦ Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)

Introduction

Long-range planning is a fundamental duty of the Board. It takes some hard work, but once completed, a written long-range plan serves as a road map to guide the Board and the library director as they make decisions about the budget, services, personnel and other considerations.

There are several long-range planning methods. Many have the same components but differ in process. The information presented in this chapter is based on a streamlined long-range planning process developed by Sandra Nelson for the Public Library Association. You can learn more about this process in Nelson's book, *Strategic Planning for Results* (American Library Association, 2008). If your library does not have a copy, it is available from the State Library.

The most important aspect of Nelson's approach is its focus on community. The library exists to serve the community. But it cannot do that effectively without the community's goodwill and support.

Although your library might be doing a good job in meeting some of the needs of your community, it is likely that other needs are going unmet. The best way to identify how the library can better serve the community is to include community members in the planning process. There are two ways to do this:

Take advantage of other long-range planning processes. If your city or county has already gone through a long-range planning process, look at that document to see how the library can play a roll in helping the community

achieve its future goals.

Ask community members to be a part of a committee involved in the planning process for the library. Consider people who represent diverse populations, such as teens, seniors, business people, blue collar workers, government officials and others.

A Board member and library staff member should also serve on the committee as representatives of the library. If possible, however, the library director should serve only as an ex-officio member. If the library director serves as a full member, committee members will likely look to her or him for guidance defeating the purpose of the committee.

Marketing the Library

Marketing means different things to different people. Some think it is advertising, others planning events, while still others see it as public relations. Actually, it is all of those things and more. You can think of marketing as a broad range of activities that tie together the following four "Ps."

Planning: developing an array of services (products) that the public (customers) wants

Publicity: telling customers about the services

Public relations: taking part in activities that help users and non-users develop a positive attitude about the library

Politics: advocating for the library with elected officials

Trustees have a role to play in each of these areas.

Planning

All of your efforts to market the library stem from the information in the long-range plan. In developing the plan, the Board has analyzed how the library can best support the needs of the community. In addition to the scheduled evaluations of the long-range plan, the Board can also informally monitor the library's "customer service." Board members might wish to take some/all of these questions and walk through the library in attempt to experience the library as a customer rather than as a board member.

There are several elements of this to think about.

How are customers greeted at the circulation desk?

Are conversations about overdue fines handled discreetly?

Do customers typically have to wait in line at the reference desk?

Are policies and information materials about library services and regulations readily available to the public?

How are users informed of policies and plans?

Is the library in a convenient, accessible location?

Is there adequate, clean and safe parking?

Is there adequate outside signage?

Is the entrance inviting?

Is inside directional signage adequate?

Are materials clearly labeled?

Are displays neat and attractive?

Is there a community bulletin board?

Are the restrooms clean?

Is there a library newsletter to keep the public informed?

How are new staff, trustees and volunteers trained in customer service?

Publicity

Publicity can cover everything from a press release to an image advertising campaign. Whatever form it takes, it is important that the library be visible throughout the community. Trustees can be part of this by bringing the library up in conversation. Whether you are talking to your friends or having informal conversations with local officials or business people, a conversation is a good opportunity to build awareness about the library and its services.

Trustees can also give formal presentations about the library to service groups and other organizations, write letters to the editor of the local paper and even carry library literature to give out when an opportunity arises.

Develop a Fact Sheet about Your Library. Information about the library's collection, circulation, and other statistics can be found on the Statistics page for public libraries.

How to Talk about the Library

Speak to your listener's interests, not your own. For example, if you are speaking to someone who loves to hunt and fish, it doesn't do much good to talk about the library's collection of craft books.

Don't give out false information. Be sure of your facts. If you don't know the answer to a question, tell the person that you'll find out and get back to them.

Don't make assumptions about what your listener knows. Don't use library jargon.

Make sure you listen as well as talk.

Be positive about the library. If you disagree with something that is happening at the library, talk to other trustees or the library director. Being negative about the library gives a poor impression of the Board, the library and the trustee.

To be effective in this role, trustees need to be very familiar with the library collection and services, attend continuing education programs and visit other libraries. In addition, the trustee should know the community, participate in civic activities, and serve on local committees to gain insight into the needs of people in the community.

Public Relations

More encompassing than publicity, public relations (PR) implies two-way communication - not only do you tell the public what your library is about, you gather information as well.

A PR campaign involves four basic steps: research, planning, communications and evaluation. First, in the research phase, the director assesses attitudes of various target groups toward the library. Next is the development of a written plan that includes a clear description of who the library wants to reach with the campaign, a timetable, short- and long-range goals of the campaign, staffing requirements, a budget and how success will be measured.

After the plan is completed, the director starts communicating the message to the identified target groups. Communication tools might include press releases, newspaper articles and photographs; radio and television public service announcements (PSAs); community group newsletters; displays, exhibits, and special events; billboard space (donated); printed materials such as bookmarks, booklists, flyers, brochures and posters; and personal contacts. (See press releases and State Library online tools.)

At scheduled points during the PR campaign and at the end of the campaign, the process is evaluated using the measurement factors identified during planning.

Policies and procedures for PR programs vary, depending on the size of the library, its financial resources, the number of staff and other local circumstances. The role of the trustees in these programs, however, is consistent: be prepared to speak to the issues and participate in events.

How to Write a Press Release

Press releases are a tool for keeping your community informed about activities, special events and operational changes occurring at the library. Unfortunately, many press releases end up in the editor's wastebasket because the information isn't presented in a compelling manner or is incomplete.

Content

Be accurate with all dates, names and places.

Include the most important details in the first paragraph (called the lead). Try to capture the reader's interest and include the most important elements of who, what, when, where, why and how. (Some of these can be addressed in the second paragraph.)

Include all details and information in DESCENDING order of importance. If space is short, the editor will cut the release copy from the bottom up.

Be sure to attribute statements, announcements and claims to some relevant person. For example, Mary Smith, Main City library director, announced that the group's annual event would be... Or, "Everyone's invited," Smith said.

Identify all people mentioned in the press release, either by title or relationship to the subject of the release. For instance, Sally Jones, professor, department of engineering, MSU. Or, Jane Doe, library spokesperson.

In most cases, keep the press release short. One page is sufficient for most announcements. Try to avoid ever going over two pages.

Format

Use short sentences and simple words.

Double-space the copy and never send a press release that isn't typed.

Include a release date or the words FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE at the top of the first page.

Include a contact with a name and phone number at the top.

Put (MORE) at the bottom of the first page if the article continues to a second page.

At the top of the second page, put one or two key words and the page number. For example: CHILDREN'S HOUR - Add 1 (or Page 2).

Put # # # or - 30 - at the end of the story.

Sample Press Release Form

RELEASE DATE: (Specific date or "For Immediate Release")

CONTACT:(Name, title, telephone number)

(SUBJECT):

HEADLINE

First paragraph should catch readers' attention and give essential elements of the press release. Remember to tell who, what, when, where, why and how. Continue main points in second paragraph. Remember to give information in descending order of importance. Editors will cut copy from the bottom up. When quoting individuals, identify them with professional title and/or relationship to the subject of the press release. Always type and double-space.

- 30 -

(to end article)

(or)

- more -

(if article continues on next page)

(Heading for second page, top left corner)

(SUBJECT) - Add 1

What's Your Story?

Montana State Library developed "What's Your Story? Find it at the library!" in partnership with the Montana Library Association to help Montana libraries market themselves to their communities. The multi-year effort, united by a single logo, will target a different market demographic each year.

What's Your Story provides Montana librarians with a wide range of tools and materials, which are available online, that target specific segments of the community.

Public Relations Tools and Resources

Programming

How-to Guides

Legislative Action

Media Relations

Typically, the director serves as the spokesperson for the library, and the Board chair serves as the spokesperson for the Board. Designating a media spokesperson can save the Board from unintentional and sometimes destructive misunderstandings.

Should a reporter call an individual at home to get a response to a particular issue, for example, redirecting the reporter to the spokesperson will ensure that the Board's agreed-upon message is the message the reporter receives. The director should keep the spokesperson informed of all potentially newsworthy issues as they develop.

Politics

Because libraries depend on public funds, politics are a fundamental part of marketing the library. As a trustee, your role is to be an advocate on behalf of the library and the citizens who use its services, extending your local public relations activities to elected officials to show them that public libraries are a factor in creating and maintaining sustainable communities.

When there are specific issues you ask these officials to act on, your advocacy role becomes that of a lobbyist. It is in this role that trustees become the personal face of the library. Although the library director and staff are also advocates of the library, political decision makers may view them as biased participants who have a personal, professional and economic stake in the library. A trustee, on the other hand, has the credibility associated with being a citizen who is voluntarily providing a community service.

Advocacy involves:

Getting to know officials at all government levels and helping them learn about the library.

Speaking out about what libraries do for the officials' constituents.

Assembling facts and translating them into action.

Planning and presenting evidence of need for a law or appropriation.

Trustees can make a difference because they:

See the library from the user's viewpoint

Have a perspective on the full range of public services

Represent a broad base of consumers

Are volunteer participants in government

Vote

As mentioned, advocacy by trustees becomes lobbying when specific issues need to be addressed. However, your role in advocating for the library to elected officials is ongoing throughout the year. Contact them on a regular basis. Invite them to special programs and ask for their input on long-range planning issues. By building relationships with officials, you can keep them informed and aware of the vital role the library plays in the community.

Strategic Marketing Checklist

The Board, individual trustees, the director and the staff all have roles to play in marketing the library.

The Role of the Board

Establish a written marketing and public relations policy.

Make sure the library has a marketing plan and timetable, and evaluate it annually.

Support staff training and involvement in marketing the library.

Budget for marketing and/or assist in obtaining volunteer specialists to help.

Encourage the development of Friends of the Library and other volunteer programs where suitable.

The Role of Individual Trustees

Use the library.

Talk about the library to friends and acquaintances.

Keep county and city officials informed of library issues and of your continued interest in library matters.

Participate in community activities.

Listen to the community.

Tell people what trustees do, who they are, when they meet, how they can be reached.

Organize a speaker's bureau and speak to civic, business, professional and social organizations about library programs, services and facilities.

The Role of the Director/Library Staff

Develop the annual marketing plan and budget.

Evaluate marketing efforts and regularly report on these to the Board.

Plan staff training on marketing efforts.

Analyze public relations needs, plans and budget

Assess public attitudes toward the library.

Develop rapport with media, community groups, writers, artists, business leaders and other libraries.

Coordinate special activities with community groups.

Actively promote the library on television, radio, in newspapers.

Provide friendly service to all members of the public.

Attend appropriate training and continuing education events.

Interpret library policies, procedures and services to the public.

Maintain community awareness.

Community Partners

Just as the public library promotes the common good of the community, so too can the community work to promote the good of the library. Two community organizations in particular can help sustain local public libraries: Friends of the Library and a local library foundation.

Friends of the Library

In many Montana communities, citizens who support the public library have established Friends of the Library organizations. A Friends of the Library group is a nonprofit organization that voluntarily supports library causes and services. Each group has its own bylaws, board, committees and policies, and sets its own goals.

It is important for the library Board to work closely with the Friends group to ensure that the goals of these volunteers are consistent with those of the library. The Friends' role can be enormously important, especially in small libraries with very limited budgets.

The Friends can serve as publicity agents for the library, sponsoring cultural and educational programs, as well as advocates for the library with local government. They can develop and coordinate volunteer services in cooperation with the library director and staff; organize fund-raising events; and encourage donations of materials, as well as bequests and endowments.

To prevent public confusion or misunderstanding about the role of the Friends group, the library Board needs to clearly communicate its needs and expectations of the organization. In some communities, a trustee is appointed to act as a liaison to the Friends to ensure coordination of the group's activities with library policies and goals. In turn, a member of the Friends group might be invited to attend Board meetings.

The national organization, the Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations (ALTAFF), is a branch of the American Library Association. Its website includes excellent information about organizing and revitalizing Friends groups.

Library Foundations

Library foundations can be a valuable funding tool to encourage gifts, bequests, memorials and other monetary donations. The foundation board and staff, if any, also represent another partnership for the Board. As with the Friends organization, a local library foundation can be of immense help but open communication is key. The Board and the foundation need to work in concert for the good of the library.

A library foundation functions as a separate entity and can attain nonprofit tax exempt status (known as 501c3) from the Internal Revenue Service, so that gifts may be tax deductible for the donors. Establishing a library foundation also opens up the potential of funds from other foundations that do not give grants to tax-supported agencies.

See *Funding the Library*, for information on other funding sources, including grant resources, that might be of interest to a library foundation.

Libraries and Library Organizations

Montana's library system has grown significantly since the state first started to support the system in 1929. Today there are 82 public libraries and 34 branch libraries serving Montana residents, about 500 elementary and high school libraries, and 27 academic libraries in post-secondary institutions. In addition, there are 6 institutional libraries and about 52 special libraries meeting the specialized needs of businesses, hospitals and government agencies.

All of Montana's publicly funded libraries work in partnership with one another and their local communities to form information networks and provide a better return on the citizens' investment. Thanks to advanced technologies, libraries use networks to locate and borrow books and materials, fax and email services to transfer information via telephone lines, and satellites and modems to provide ongoing educational opportunities to rural areas. With improved cooperation among different types of libraries and better access to expanding technologies, Montana libraries are improving access to information locally, regionally and internationally.

The *Montana Library Directory*, an annual directory of all of the libraries in Montana, is compiled by the State Library and is available online on the State Library web site.

In this chapter, you will find some of the libraries and library support organizations that you will come in contact with as a trustee. Many of these can provide valuable support in helping you to be an effective trustee.

Montana State Library Commission

The Montana State Library Commission is the governing body for the State Library. It provides assistance and advice for all public libraries in the state, administers federal and state grant funds made available to Montana for library purposes, provides library services for the blind and physically handicapped, and acts as a state board of professional standards and library examiners.

Montana State Librarian

The Montana State Librarian provides leadership and articulates a vision for statewide library services, recognizes divergent library objectives and develops statewide consensus among Montana's libraries. The State Librarian directs the Montana State Library, serves as executive officer of the State Library Commission, conducts strategic long-range planning and evaluation of library services, and is responsible for statewide library development and assistance to libraries. The State Librarian also advises the Governor and the Montana Legislature on the present status of library and information services and on new programs or legislation necessary for effective library service to the people of Montana.

Library Development Division (LDD)

LDD staff provide consulting services to libraries in Montana and assist with the improvement of library services statewide. Information and assistance are provided in technology, development of library consortia, library staff/

trustee certification program, library improvement projects, collection management, federal grant and assistance programs, legal issues, Board development, library statistics, federation activities and statewide licensing and purchasing of electronic resources. LDD also provides training and continuing education opportunities for library staff and trustees across the state.

Montana Talking Book Library (MTBL)

The Montana Talking Book Library provides free library services to Montana citizens who are blind, visually impaired, physically disabled, or learning disabled. This program is affiliated with the Library of Congress's National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Services provided to Montana patrons include recorded books and magazines, playback equipment, descriptive videos and Braille books. TBL staff advises and assists individuals, other libraries, nursing homes, schools, and institutions in providing library services to eligible disabled individuals.

Montana Digital Library (MSDL)

The MSdL includes the Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) and the Library Information Services Division (LISD). Much of the information compiled today about Montana's resources and government operations is now electronically produced. The MSdL's mission, therefore, is to collect, arrange, and distribute this electronic information so that it can be easily accessed by citizens, policy-makers and others.

As part of the MSdL, NRIS identifies, acquires, and provides access to information about Montana's natural resources for government agencies, business and industry, and private citizens. NRIS operates a clearinghouse and referral service to link users with the best sources of information and services. NRIS also provides services through the Natural Heritage Program (NHP). NHP scientists collect, manage, and disseminate biodiversity information, emphasizing those plants, animals and natural communities that are rare, declining or have outstanding qualities.

Library Information Services is the principal library for serving work-related needs of state employees. It also provides back-up reference services for Montana libraries and public access to the State Publications Center. State publications, materials on library development and selected federal documents are available from this library to all citizens through interlibrary loan.

Montana Library Federations

Public libraries in Montana are organized by region into federations, groups of libraries working together to provide a broader range of resources and services than individual libraries alone can offer. These federations were developed by the Montana State Library Commission to give all Montanans access to a public library and, through it, the library resources within their area, the state and the nation. In 1999, the Legislature expanded the law to allow other types of libraries to participate in the federations, including school, academic and special libraries.

Library Associations (MLA, MPLA, PNLA, and ALA)

Montana Library Association (MLA)

This state association works to promote library interests and development, raise the standards of library services in Montana and provide continuing education for lay people and professional growth opportunities for librarians. Through membership in MLA, trustees get to know library trustees from across the state.

MLA represents all types of libraries, public library trustees and members of Friends organizations within its divisions and interest groups. MLA standing committees work on a variety of library-related issues including government affairs, intellectual freedom, marketing and professional development.

Montana Library Focus, the association's newsletter, is issued six times a year and is available online. In addition, MLA hosts an annual conference in the spring as well as division and interest group retreats throughout the year. MLA's electronic mailing listserv, WIRED-MT, is used by Montana librarians and others to discuss ideas and share information relevant to those subscribing to the listserv. It is open to anyone with Internet access and email.

Mountain Plains Library Association (MPLA)

MPLA is an eleven-state regional association of libraries and Friends. States include Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. The mission of the association is to further the development of librarians, library employees and trustees, and to promote quality library service in the states of the Mountain Plains Region.

MPLA publishes the *MPLA Newsletter* bimonthly and meets annually in joint conference with other library associations.

Pacific Northwest Library Association (PNLA)

PNLA is a regional association that promotes regional library activities and cooperation. The association represents libraries in Alaska, Alberta, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington, and is designed for people who work in, with and for libraries.

The association publishes *PNLA Quarterly* and holds an annual conference of its members. In addition, PNLA sponsors the annual Young Readers' Choice Award, which is the oldest children's choice award in the United States and Canada. Nominations for the YRCA are received from children, teachers, parents, and librarians of the Pacific Northwest region.

American Library Association (ALA)

The oldest library association in the world, ALA is dedicated to improving libraries of all kinds, maintaining professional library standards and protecting freedom of access to information without fear of censorship.

ALA has two divisions of special interest to trustees. The first one is the Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations (ALTAFF) which conducts national programs on trustee education and publishes items about trusteeship. The second, the Public Library Association (PLA), represents public libraries.

Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)

IMLS is the federal agency that administers the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant program. LSTA grant funds are awarded to Montana annually to improve library services. (For more information, see Chapter 11-4, Funding the Library.)

Appendices

- ◆ Calendar of Annual Events and Deadlines
- ◆ Freedom to Read Statement

Calendar of Annual Events and Deadlines

Trustees can take part in numerous events, activities and continuing education (CE) opportunities. This calendar shows the typical schedule, as well as the timing for important Board decisions. Deadlines and specific Board duties are coded with a "B."

January	Events and CE Opportunities	Deadlines
	American Library Association (ALA) midwinter conference	
February	Events and CE Opportunities	Deadlines
	MSL Commission meeting	Complete preliminary budget (B)
	Montana Library Association (MLA) OFFLINE Interest Group retreat	
March	Events and CE Opportunities	Deadlines
	Public Library Association (PLA) conference (even-numbered years)	Adopt preliminary budget (B)
	Spring Federation meetings	
April	Events and CE Opportunities	Deadlines
	MLA annual conference	Submit preliminary budget to funding body (B)
	MSL Commission meeting	
	Spring Federation meetings	
May	Events and CE Opportunities	Deadlines
	Spring Federation Meetings	Director's evaluation (B)
		Review library policies (B)
		Federation plans of service due
June	Events and CE Opportunities	Deadlines
	ALA annual conference	Close out budget for current year
	MSL Commission meeting	Complete Board evaluation for past year (B)
	MSL Summer Institute	Adopt and submit final budget for upcoming year (B)
July	Events and CE Opportunities	Deadlines
		Public Library Standards form due
		Federation Grant Agreement form due

		Board orientation for new trustees (B)
August	Events and CE Opportunities	Deadlines
	MSL Commission meeting	Approve and submit final annual report to governing body and MSL (B)
	Pacific Northwest Library Association (PNLA) annual conference	Governing body approves and adopts final budget (B)
September	Events and CE Opportunities	Deadlines
	Fall Federation meetings	State aid and federation checks distributed
	MSL fall workshop	
October	Events and CE Opportunities	Deadlines
	Fall Federation meetings	
	Montana Education Association/Montana Federation of Teachers (MEA/MFT) annual fall conference	
	MLA Academic/Special Library and Public Library Division retreat	
	MSL Commission meeting	
November	Events and CE Opportunities	Deadlines
		Federation annual reports due
		MSL Library Directory information and MSL Public Library Annual Statistics data due
December	Events and CE Opportunities	Deadlines
	MSL Commission meeting	Collection management policies due

JFor details about events, visit the online Montana Library Event Calendar.

Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these prop-

ositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

End of Manual

This concludes the Trustee Manual.