

# Administrative Essentials: A Handbook for Wisconsin Public Library Directors

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**Acknowledgements**

# Administrative Essentials: A Handbook for Wisconsin Library Directors

The staff of the Public Library Development Team of the Division for Libraries and Technology is responsible for the content of this handbook.

The continuing education consultants for Wisconsin's public library systems assisted the Public Library Development Team in deciding on the table of contents for the handbook.

Prior to the development of the final content of the handbook, chapters were reviewed by an advisory group consisting of the following individuals:

Cheryl Becker, South Central Library System  
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Early chapters were also reviewed by:

Sandy Robbers, former Director, Indianhead Federated Library System  
Bridget Rolek, Director, Eager Free (Evansville) Public Library

The Public Library Development Team contracted with Larry T. Nix, Consulting Librarian, to draft and compile some of the initial content of this handbook.

Some of the content of the publication has been adapted from the publication *Trustee Essentials: A Handbook for Wisconsin Public Library Trustees*. The Public Library Development Team was assisted in the development of that publication by a task force made up of Wisconsin public library trustees and administrators.

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# Administrative Essentials: Introduction

Serving as a public library director can be one of the most interesting, challenging, and rewarding jobs that our society has to offer. The opportunity to make a difference in a community and in the lives of the people who live in that community is limited only by your abilities, training, knowledge, commitment, and desire. This handbook will provide you with some of the essential information that you need to succeed in your position as a public library director in Wisconsin.

A scanning of the table of contents of this handbook quickly demonstrates how complex the position of public library director has become. As a public library director you are expected to know everything from how to work with a board of trustees to how to interpret copyright law. You are expected to be able to develop and administer a budget for the library and to comply with complex government regulations on a wide variety of topics. Most importantly, you must oversee the effective delivery of library and information services to the community.

This handbook can be particularly helpful to directors of small public libraries and those with limited prior administrative training and experience. At the same time it will offer a valuable review for experienced library directors and can help focus thinking and suggest resources when dealing with particularly challenging or unique situations.

If you have not yet taken or are in the process of taking the courses required by the Department of Public Instruction for certification as a Grade 3 or Grade 2 public library administrator, it will serve as a valuable resource.

Although the primary audience for the handbook is public library directors, it can be useful to public library trustees and public library system staff members who have a responsibility for assisting and supporting public library directors. It can be used by both of these groups to assist in the orientation of new public library directors. Public library trustees may find the handbook useful in gaining a better understanding of just how complex and challenging this position can be.

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# AE 1: The Mission of the Public Library

## **This Administrative Essential covers:**

- The public library's mission
- The library in the community
- Basic characteristics of a public library in Wisconsin
- Brief history of public libraries in Wisconsin
- Statutory basis of a public library in Wisconsin
- Sources of additional information

## **The public library's mission**

Broadly speaking, the mission of the public library is to provide free and open access to a broad range of materials and services to people of all ages and backgrounds. The library is an integral part of the educational process for youth and a venue for continuing education for adults. The modern public library supports a sense of community within the population it serves. The specific collections and services of your public library are designed to meet the specific needs of your community.

Your public library may already have its own mission statement which has been adopted by the board of trustees as part of the library's long range plan. (See AE 16: Planning for the Library's Future)

## **The library in the community**

A successful public library is an integral part of the community in which it is located. You cannot serve effectively without building relationships with other service providers within the community. In administering the library, you will want to assure that the library remains involved in a variety of community activities. You should be mindful that the library's actual service area usually extends beyond the community in which it is located. Some of the ways in which the library plays a role in activities in its community and service area are as follows:

- Cooperates with other public and non-profit agencies in the community which have similar or compatible goals

- Provides information to support local government and community initiatives
- Participates in significant community events
- Provides a meeting room for use by community groups
- Provides public programming on topics of interest to the community

## **Basic characteristics of a public library in Wisconsin**

- It is authorized by state law
- It is a part of municipal or county government
- It is governed by a board of trustees that is appointed by the municipal or county government
- Its board has unique powers compared to other municipal or county units
- It is supported primarily by public taxation
- Its services are provided without charge to anyone in the library's service area

## **Brief history of public libraries in Wisconsin**

Public libraries with the characteristics listed above were first established in Wisconsin by state law in 1872. The predecessors to these public libraries were membership libraries which charged an annual fee to be able to use them. The Wisconsin Free Library Commission, a state agency with the mission of promoting the developing public library service, was established in 1895. Over the years, that agency has evolved into what is now the Division for Libraries and Technology of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. In 1971, Wisconsin passed legislation creating public library systems. The mission of public library systems is to promote the development of public library service, to provide open access to public library service, and to facilitate the sharing of library resources among public libraries in the system's service area. Currently there are 382 public libraries in Wisconsin which belong to 16 federated public library systems. The local public library, then, is a part of a statewide network designed to assure the greatest possible access for all Wisconsin citizens to the extensive resources of the state.

## **Statutory basis of a public library in Wisconsin**

The 1872 law establishing public libraries has gone through many revisions in its history. It is now part of Chapter 43 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Chapter 43 also

includes the statutes relating to the Division for Libraries and Technology and public library systems. As a public library director it is extremely important that you become familiar with the provisions of Chapter 43 and that you assist your trustees in becoming familiar with Wisconsin's library law. It is here that the relationship of the library to local or county government is defined, that the powers of the library board are enunciated, and that the statutory mission of the library is prescribed. It is also here that your leadership role as the chief executive officer of the library is established.

## **Sources of additional information**

[Trustee Essential 15](#): Planning for the Library's Future

[Chapter 43](#), Wisconsin Statutes

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# AE 2: The Director's Job Description

Your library should have an official job description for the library director. This is an important document because it spells out the library board's expectations of you in this capacity. The job description also will often be the basis for the library board's evaluation of your job performance. If the job description doesn't match what you actually do, you should update it and seek approval of the revision from the library board.

**Job Title:** Public Library Director

**General Function:** Serve as chief executive officer of the library, implement library policies and projects, and provide leadership for improving public library service to the community.

**Qualifications:**

- Commitment to the mission and philosophy of public library service.
- Excellent leadership skills.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to work effectively with library trustees, elected officials, and community groups.
- Ability to supervise and motivate library staff and volunteers.

**Principal Activities:**

1. Work with the library board

As the library's director, you report to the library's board of trustees which has the legal responsibility for governing the library and hiring the library's director (See AE 5: Who Runs the Library). You will provide administrative support to the library board. You will normally assist the library board president in preparing the agenda for board meetings by preparing an initial draft of the agenda (See AE 7: Effective Library Board Meetings). You will compile and distribute background materials for items on the agenda. You will have a responsibility for keeping the library board informed of issues and problems relating to the library, for assisting in and promoting the continuing education of board members, and for orienting new board members (See AE 4:

Working with the Library Board). You will assist the library board in the development of the library's annual budget and in justifying the budget to municipal or county officials. You will assist the library board in the development of library policies. You will bring issues facing the library to the attention of the board and present options and recommendations for dealing with those issues.

## **2. Public Services**

You will help develop and oversee a variety of services designed to meet the needs of a diverse public. You are expected to operate the library under a philosophy of service which puts the needs of library users first and responds to those needs in a positive, helpful, and friendly manner. In addition to the lending of a wide variety of materials to users of all ages, the library provides reference and information services, public programming, and access to electronic information. Library services are designed to be accessible to everyone in the community including individuals with various types of disabilities. (See AE 8: Public Services and AE 9: Accessible Library Services)

## **3. Collection Development and Technical Services**

You will be expected to select or direct the selection of a collection of library materials that meets the needs of a diverse public. Selection of library materials should be based on a collection development policy which has been approved by the library's board of trustees. It is important that you and the library board review the collection development policy regularly and make sure that it is consistent with current practice and otherwise up to date. After decisions have been made about which materials to add to the library's collection, you will be expected to oversee and participate in the acquisition, processing, and cataloging of these library materials. The nature of these processes will vary from library to library. You will also oversee and participate in the circulation of library materials. The nature of this activity will depend to a large extent on whether the library participates in a shared automated library system or has its own automated library system. Your library, as a member of a public library system, will be expected to share materials with other libraries in the system and in the state through interlibrary loan. The nature of this activity will also depend on whether your library participates in a shared automated library system and will require knowledge of a variety of tools. (See AE 10: Technical Services)

## **4. Supervise staff and volunteers and implement personnel policies**

You will be responsible for the hiring and supervision of library employees and the enforcement of personnel policies established by the library board. This includes the

evaluation and disciplining of employees if necessary. You will be expected to carry out tasks related to personnel in conformity with state and federal laws. You will also be responsible for training other staff members and for facilitating their continuing library education. In some libraries you may also need to be aware of the provisions of a union contract covering the library's employees and to operate within that contract. (See AE 11 & 12: Personnel Issues)

## **5. Develop the library budget and manage the library's money**

Each year the library must develop a budget for the next fiscal year (January 1-December 31) and present that budget to the library's governing body. It will be your responsibility to prepare the initial budget for consideration by the library board (See AE 13: Developing the Library Budget). You will also be expected to assist in the presentation of the library's budget to the library's governing body. Once the library has an approved budget, it will be your responsibility to manage the library's finances so that expenditures stay within the approved budget (See AE 14: Managing the Library's Money). Bills to the library must be submitted each month for approval by the library board. You will be required to maintain accurate and up-to-date financial records and to report on the library's financial position in the library's annual report to the state Division for Libraries and Technology.

## **6. Develop policies and procedures for the library**

Day-to-day library services and operations are carried under policies approved by the library board and under procedures which have been developed by the staff to implement those policies. Effective policies and procedures ensure that library services are consistent, fair, in compliance with local, state, and federal laws, and in the public's interest. You will be responsible for the initial development of policies for consideration by the library board and for creating procedures to administer these policies effectively and efficiently. You will be responsible for making sure that both policies and procedures are kept up to date. (See AE 15: Policies and Procedures)

## **7. Plan for the library's future**

Your library and its services will be constantly changing and evolving. To ensure that these changes are occurring in a way that services to the public are improving, it is essential that the library plan for the future. Every public library should have a long range and/or strategic plan. You and the library board are responsible for developing that plan in conjunction with the library community. There are various models for developing the plan which you and the library board can follow. An important

planning tool, and one you will need to be familiar with, is the publication Wisconsin Public Library Standards issued by the Division for Libraries and Technology. Because of its special nature, there also needs to be a technology plan for the library. (See AE 16: Planning for the Library's Future)

## **8. Advocate and promote the library**

The effectiveness of the library and the way the library is viewed by the community are significantly influenced by the way you and others advocate and promote the library in the community. To effectively advocate and promote the library you need to stay informed of what is happening in your community and you need to be active in your community. Effective library advocacy and public relations require a coordinated effort by the library director, the library staff, the library board, the library's Friends of the Library organization, and library users. There are a wide variety of proven advocacy and public relations techniques that you and others can utilize to promote the library. Support for your efforts can be provided by the public library system, the Division for Libraries and Technology, and the Wisconsin Library Association, and the American Library Association. (See AE 18: Library Advocacy, Public Relations and Marketing)

## **9. Manage the library facility**

You will be expected to oversee the care and maintenance of the library facility in which the library is located and the grounds on which it is located. The exact nature of your duties in this regard will depend on whether the library shares a facility with other governmental entities or is a stand alone facility. Your duties will also be impacted by the role the municipal or county government plays in maintaining the facility and its grounds. You may or may not be required to supervise custodial staff. In any case, it will be your responsibility to determine problems and needs relating to the library facility and its grounds and to bring these to the attention of the library board and the municipality or county. If there is a deficiency in the amount of space that is available to the library, you will need to initiate a formal space needs assessment in conjunction with the library board. The space needs assessment may result in the need to pursue a remodeled, expanded, or even a new library facility. You will need to be aware of requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as they relate to the library's facility and make any deficiencies known to your library board. (See AE 22: Library Building Accessibility and AE 23: Facilities Management)

## **Sources of additional information**

*Trustee Essentials: A Handbook for Wisconsin Public Library Trustees* <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/trustee-essentials-handbook>

Your library system staff: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/directories/systems>

The staff of the Division for Libraries and Technology: <https://dpi.wi.gov/dlt/staff>

Chapter 43, Wisconsin Statutes: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/statutes/Stat0043.pdf>

Gordon, Rachel Singer, *The Accidental Library Manager*. Medford, N.J., Information Today, Inc., 2005.

Written for librarians in management positions without management training. Includes a broad spectrum of management practices and theory, approaches to working with staff and the public, money management, as well as ethical and philosophical issues.

Reed, Sally Gardner. *Small Libraries: A Handbook for Successful Management*, Second Edition. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2002.

Provides an overview of concepts and general practices of library administration, but not nuts and bolts information. Divided into five major chapters: Creating a Political Base, Personnel, Collection, Building, and Service. Appendixes include worksheets for policies. A good guide for directors and trustees in a community establishing or considering its first library.

Weingand, Darlene E., *Administration of the Small Public Library*, Fourth Edition. Chicago, ALA, 2001.

Good, broad overview of public library governance and administration, including planning, marketing, policies, finance, and resource sharing.

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# AE 3: Who Runs the Library?

## **This Administrative Essential covers:**

- Responsibilities of the library director
- Responsibilities of the library board
- The division of labor between the library director and the board
- Responsibilities of the municipal government
- Sources of additional information

The public library provides a large number of services to meet the needs of a diverse population. This requires the cooperative efforts of the library's trustees, the library director and staff, and representatives of the municipal government as well as others in the community. When all members of the team know their responsibility and carry out their particular tasks, the library can accomplish its mission effectively. When one of the players attempts to take on the job of another, friction may cause a breakdown.

## **Responsibilities of the director**

While the library board is charged with the full responsibility for deciding what services the library will provide, and setting policy to regulate service for the benefit of all, it is you, the library director, who should be delegated responsibility for supervising day-to-day operations of the library.

The library board appoints a librarian who shall appoint other employees. This charge of the legislature sets up a clear chain of command between the library board and library employees. You are the chief operating officer of the library, reporting to and typically serving at the pleasure of the library board. All other employees report to you. You are the person who is in charge of the library. Your duties include (but are not limited to):

1. Oversight of the library budget and preparing reports as required by the board.
2. Managing of library collections, including selecting all library material according to policies approved by the board, oversight of the cataloging and classification of library material, and the operation of automated systems.

3. Hiring, training, supervising, and scheduling other library personnel.
4. Supervising circulation of material and record keeping.
5. Cooperating with the board, community officials, and groups in planning library services and publicizing library programs within the community.
6. Supervising the maintenance of all library facilities and equipment.

Depending on the size of the library, you will provide public services either directly or with the assistance of other staff. In all cases, you are an ambassador to the community, the technical consultant to the board, a politician representing the library to municipal officers, and a person skilled in public relations. The days are long gone, even in the smallest library, where all that the director is expected to do is to check out books and greet the public.

## **Responsibilities of the library board**

The separate roles and responsibilities of each member of the team are spelled out in Wisconsin Statutes under Section 43.58, which is titled "Powers and Duties." The primary responsibilities of trustees assigned here include

- Exclusive control of all library expenditures.
- Purchasing of a library site and the erection of the library building when authorized.
- Exclusive control of all lands, buildings, money, and property acquired or leased by the municipality for library purposes.
- Supervising the administration of the library and appointing a librarian.
- Prescribing the duties and compensation of all library employees.

This charge from the legislature provides library boards, but not individual trustees, with considerable discretion to operate libraries as they deem necessary independent of direct control by other municipal players—city councils, town boards, mayors, village board presidents, etc. In providing this governance structure for libraries, the legislature was attempting to keep library operations under direct citizen control and as far as possible outside the political sphere of government. Compared with other appointed boards, library boards have extraordinary powers and responsibilities. Many other appointed boards can only recommend actions to an elected board or council higher up the ladder of government. Library board



actions are made independently of any further approval by other government bodies or officials as long as such actions are within statutory authority.

The independent authority granted to public library boards is intended to protect the historic role of the public library as a source of unbiased information.

## **The division of labor between the library board and the director**

The library board decides what services the library will provide and to what lengths you and the library's staff may go to provide those services. However, it is up to you, to create the procedures needed to carry out the policies of the board and ensure that services are provided effectively and efficiently. While the board alone can decide how many employees the library should have, according to Section 43.58(4) it is you, the library director, who hires and supervises other staff. Except in extreme situations, library trustees should not be discussing library business with employees other than you. The library board may solicit library staff input on your performance as part of a formal evaluation process.

Administration of the budget and expenditure of funds is a frequent source of misunderstanding regarding the division of labor between boards and directors. Section 43.58(2) states that "The library board shall audit and approve all vouchers for the expenditures of the public library." This statement is sometimes interpreted by individual boards to mean they must negotiate the necessity of every purchase with the library director, whether the purchase is an expensive computer system or a two-dollar box of pencils. Fortunately, in most libraries, the director is given reasonable latitude to administer the budget and expend funds according to board guidelines. The library board must review expenditures and keep an eye on the flow of funds, but should trust the judgment of the director when it comes to which books to purchase or which is the most economical office supply vendor.

## **Responsibilities of municipal governments**

The most frequent source of misunderstanding between library boards and their municipal government regards expenditure of funds. This is actually one area where the statutes are quite clear on what is to happen. After you or a staff member make a purchase of a material or service, an invoice will be received from the vendor. You will then prepare a group of invoices for review at the monthly meeting of the library board. Usually, you will also provide a list of the invoices along with a financial statement indicating how much money will be left in each line of the budget after payment is made. According to Wisconsin Statutes Section 43.58(2),



"The library board shall audit and approve all vouchers" and forward these to the appropriate municipal or county financial officer. The municipal or county officer must then pay the bill. No further approval is necessary by any municipal or county body or official.

At times, municipal and county boards believe that this procedure outlined in statute causes them to lose control over library spending. They are, after all, accustomed to approving the expenditures of other city/county departments. In fact, municipal governments maintain a great deal of leverage over library boards, since it is the municipal body that decides on the amount of the annual appropriation for library service. It is the chief municipal officer—mayor, village president, county board chair, etc.—who appoints the library board in the first place. Budgets may be cut in future years or trustees may not be re-appointed in cases where there is too much dissension between the library and its governing municipality. Therefore, close cooperation and communication between the two is essential.

One final point on finances: while the library board has full authority over the expenditure of funds, it is the municipality that holds the money. The library board may take out a bank account and/or entrust library funds to a financial secretary, but only for donations and other private funds. All other funds must be deposited in the municipality's (or county's) library fund. The library board has control over the use of the money in the municipality-held library fund, but it does not sign the checks or maintain physical control over the actual dollars and cents in the fund.

Besides acting as the "banker" for the library, municipalities can help out the library in an infinite variety of other ways. They may help with purchasing, or with private fund raising for a building addition; they may provide invaluable consulting on building maintenance issues; in many smaller communities they may even take over building maintenance for the library. By the same token, the most successful libraries are often partners in promoting municipal service agendas. For example, although you work for the library board and not the municipal or county executive, it will be beneficial to attend department-head meetings with other administrators. It is also a good idea for you to attend at least some meetings of the municipal or county governing board and to give a periodic report on library activities. The library may provide services on behalf of the municipality, such as maintaining the village web page. Just as the municipality is a partner in providing library service, the library can be a strong partner in providing municipal service to the community.

Another area where misunderstandings can occur between library boards and their municipal or county governing bodies is the area of personnel. This stems from the fact that library boards have the legal authority to prescribe the duties and

compensation of all library employees. A library board may choose to make library employee compensation and personnel policies consistent with those of the municipality or county, but they are not required to do so. In some instances there are important reasons why the library's policies should differ from those of the municipality or county.

## **Sources of additional information**

Trustee Essential 2: Who Runs the Library? in *Trustee Essentials: A Handbook for Wisconsin Public Library Trustees*: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/trustee-essentials-handbook>

Your library system staff: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/directories/systems>

The staff of the Division for Libraries and Technology: <https://dpi.wi.gov/dlt/staff>

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# AE 4: Working with the Library Board

## **This Administrative Essential covers:**

- Administrative support for the library board
- Leadership issues
- Communication with the board
- Director and board relationship
- Recruitment of new board members
- Continuing education for trustees
- Orientation of new board members
- Sample Trustee Orientation Checklist

## **Administrative support for the library board**

It is your responsibility to provide administrative support for the library board. You will play an important role in preparing for and ensuring effective library board meetings (See AE 7: Effective Library Board Meetings). You will play a key role in the initial development of the library budget (See AE 13: Developing the Library Budget). You will provide support to the library board in the development and adoption of library policies (See AE 15: Policies and Procedures). As the library faces new issues that impact it, you will prepare background materials and present options and recommendations for dealing with those issues. You should make the library board aware of library laws and other laws that pertain to their actions so that the laws will not be violated.

## **Leadership issues**

As library director you must be an effective leader if the library is to succeed and improve its service to the community. The library board also has a leadership role. At different times and in different situations you or the library board will play the primary leadership role. Your job description and library policy statements will often define the situations in which you are expected to lead. You play a leadership role by motivating and supporting library staff and volunteers, by being active in the community, by representing the interests of the library in state level forums on

library issues, and by keeping the library board informed about opportunities for improving library services. The library board will often play the primary leadership role in dealings with local and/or county government. Both you and the library board lead by advocating for better financial support for the library and keeping the community informed of library developments. While you always need to be prepared to lead, you need to have a clear understanding of and respect for the board's statutory leadership authority and responsibility.

## **Communication with the board**

As library director, it is your job to keep the library board informed of what is going on in the library, of what are the needs of the library, of what problems the library is and will be facing, and of what are the upcoming issues that will be impacting the library. At every library board meeting, you should report to the board on these matters. If a crisis arises relating to the library, it is important that you alert the library board chairperson and other board members as quickly as possible.

## **Director and board relationship**

You will want to work to develop a positive relationship with your library board. A relationship in which there is mutual trust, respect, and support will greatly benefit the library. It is very important that you take time to get to know each board member and his or her style, perspective, and special concerns and interests.

As in any relationship, there will be times when you and the library board disagree on certain things. These disagreements should be handled in a non-personal way. Discussion should be focused on issues and not on personalities. You should make the case for your position as effectively as possible, but should not overstate or be inflexible in that position. In the end, it is the library board that will make the final decision about library policy issues and service priorities.

Although uncommon, there is the possibility of a severe disagreement between you and the library board. In some instances, you may feel strongly enough about an issue to want to comment publicly about it. If this occurs you may wish to seek advice from an outside party such as the system director, a DLT staff member, or under some circumstances an attorney.

## **Recruitment of new board members**

It is in the best interest of the library to have board members who are dedicated, effective, who understand the value of the library, and who are committed to the

mission of the library. You can play an important role in the recruitment of new board members with these qualities. This role includes identifying library users and members of library support groups who have exhibited strong support for the library and leadership qualities. These names of these individuals should be brought to the attention of the library board and then, with board endorsement, forwarded to the municipal executive for consideration.

Although the you and the library board should be proactive in identifying and recommending individuals to serve on the library board, the municipal or county governing body had the ultimate appointment authority and may not wish to accept those recommendations. That is their prerogative and should be accepted as such.

To ensure the appointment process proceeds effectively, you need to keep track of board member terms and always notify the municipality or county in advance of the end of a term.

## **Continuing education for trustees**

Serving as a library board member is a complex and demanding position. Doing a good job as a library board member requires knowledge of a wide variety of issues. You will play an important role in the continuing education of the library's board members. Well educated and trained board members will make your job as library director much easier, and you should do everything you can to facilitate their continuing education. The education of library board members begins with an effective orientation (See below). Board meetings can be used as opportunities for educating board members on their responsibilities and on important local, state, and national library issues. The Trustee Essentials publication distributed by DLT is an excellent tool for educating board members. DLT also maintains a Web site that provides informational resources for trustees: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors>

The public library system can assist in trustee continuing education and often provide workshops for trustees. You should promote the participation of your board members in the Wisconsin Library Trustees Association of the Wisconsin Library Association ([WLA](#)) and in conferences of WLA and its divisions.

## **Orientation of new board members**

All new library board members should receive an orientation. The orientation should take place, if possible, prior to the new board members first meeting. You, the library board chair, and possibly other library board members and staff will participate in this orientation. As library director you will need to assemble a

variety of background and resource materials for the orientation session. These include among others the board's by-laws, previous board minutes, the Trustee Essentials publication, the library's most recent annual report, and the library's long range plan.

## Sample Trustee Orientation Checklist

By-laws and format of library board meetings
Expectations for library board member participation
The library's long range and/or strategic plan
Review of current issues facing the library
The library's budget and financial situation
Overview of the Trustee Handbook
Library board powers and relationship with the municipality and/or county
Chapter 43
Open meeting requirement
Role of the library director
Public library system membership
The statewide library network
Policies on the selection and review of library materials
Other library policies
Friends of the Library

## Sources of additional information

*Trustee Essentials: A Handbook for Wisconsin Public Library*

Trustees: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/trustee-essentials-handbook>

Your library system staff: [http://pld.dpi.wi.gov/pld\\_wissdir](http://pld.dpi.wi.gov/pld_wissdir)

The staff of the Division for Libraries and Technology: <https://dpi.wi.gov/dlt/staff>

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# AE 5: Effective Library Board Meetings

## **This Administrative Essential covers:**

- Preparation of the meeting agenda
- Director's report
- Legal requirements
- Conduct of meetings
- Effective decision-making
- Continuing trustee education at meetings
- Sources of additional information
- [Sample Board Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Sample Annual Library Board Calendar](#)

## **Preparation of the meeting agenda**

To a great extent, the work done before each library board meeting will determine the effectiveness of the board.

You and the board president need to work together in preparing materials to be sent out to board members before each meeting. Typically, you will contact the library board president to discuss planned agenda subjects (including any items required because of previous board action). (See attached Sample Board Meeting Agenda.) The board president is given the opportunity to add agenda items. Board members wishing to have an item brought before the board should contact their board president.

You are usually delegated the responsibility for drafting the agenda and other materials to be included in the board mailing. Those materials should include minutes of the previous meeting, the monthly financial report, monthly bills, a detailed agenda and any other background materials needed to adequately inform the board. Providing detailed written information to the board before meetings allows board members time to consider carefully the issues to be discussed at the meeting. In addition, mailing written reports to the board prior to the meeting (such

as the director's report and any committee reports) will save valuable meeting time for board questions and discussion.

You need to send these items out to board members in sufficient time for them to review prior to the board meeting. Board members can contribute best if they have taken the time to adequately study the agenda and background materials before each meeting.

## **Director's report of monthly activities**

You should make a report at each library board meeting that covers what is going on in the library and includes information and on current and potential issues facing the library. If you or your board president anticipate that the board will want to discuss items in your report, then you should specifically list those items on the agenda. See AE 19: Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law.

## **Legal Requirements**

You can help ensure that the library board follows the law in conducting their meetings. The Wisconsin open meetings law places specific requirements on the content and type of public notice to be made before every board or committee meeting. The law also requires that meetings be open to the public unless the board follows the legally required procedures to hold a closed session. You and the board need to be sure to avoid conflict of interest situations.

Wisconsin's Public Records Law requires that written meeting minutes be kept and be made available to the public. At a minimum, meeting minutes must indicate board members present and all motions that were made and the result of any votes taken. Except for votes on the election of board officers, any board member can request that a roll call vote be taken on any vote, with the vote of each member recorded in the minutes.

Only legally appointed library board members can vote on board matters. Some library boards may consider certain officials ex officio board members, such as the library director or city manager. No official or any other person is an official library board member or is legally authorized to vote on library board matters unless he or she has been legally appointed according to the relevant portions of Chapter 43.

## **Conduct of meetings**



You can work with your library board president to ensure that library board meetings are conducted effectively. Effective board meetings can begin with a quick review of the agenda to make sure there is adequate time to cover all items and to modify the order of business if necessary. Effective board meetings move at an appropriate pace. Time for questions and full discussion is allowed, but the president makes sure discussion remains focused and decisions are reached. The president also needs to ensure that a few members do not dominate discussions, that all members have a chance to be heard, and that accountability for follow-through is assigned as needed.

## **Effective decision-making**

You and the library board president need to keep in mind that legal responsibility for overall library operations rests in the library board, not individual trustees. Therefore, it is important for the board president to use leadership techniques that promote effective group decision-making on the part of the entire library board, not decision-making by a few board members, or you as library director, or any other individual.

Board meetings are the place for library board members to raise questions and make requests of you and/or staff. Individual trustees should never make such requests or demands on their own & library trustees are members of a governing body and must act as a body. Individual trustees, however, should not hesitate to raise concerns or questions at board meetings. By raising questions and/or concerns, board members may help the board avoid rushing into an action without appropriate consideration of all of the ramifications or alternatives.

A "public comment" period during the meeting is not required, but it can be a helpful way for the board to hear about particular public concerns or needs. To avoid open meetings law violations, the board should limit itself to answering basic questions from the public and place any matter on a future meeting agenda if additional discussion or deliberation on the issue is needed.

## **Continuing trustee education at meetings**

You should promote the use of board meetings as an effective arena for continuing trustee education. For example, time could be set aside at a board meeting to review and discuss one of this series of Trustee Essentials or a chapter of the Wisconsin Public Library Standards. You or an appropriate staff member could make presentations to inform the board more fully about library operations and services. Outside experts, such as municipal personnel specialists, elected officials, or public

library system staff, can be invited to make presentations about areas of interest or concern to the library board.

## **Sources of Additional Information:**

*Trustee Essentials: A Handbook for Wisconsin Public Library*

Trustees: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/trustee-essentials-handbook>

Your library system staff: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/directories/systems>

The staff of the Division for Libraries and Technology: <https://dpi.wi.gov/dlt/staff>

Sample Board Meeting Agenda ([Below](#))

Sample Annual Library Board Calendar ([Below](#))

Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition) or The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure by Alice F. Sturgis, revised by the American Institute of Parliamentarians

Wisconsin Department of Justice Website (open meetings) [www.doj.state.wi.us/dls/open-government](http://www.doj.state.wi.us/dls/open-government)

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## Sample Board Meeting Agenda

Below is a sample board meeting agenda. Wisconsin's open meetings law requires that the meeting notice include the time, date, place, and subjects to be discussed and/or acted upon at the meeting. (See [\*Trustee Essential #14: The Library Board and the Open Meetings Law\*](#) for more information on agenda, notice, and posting requirements of the law.)

### NOTICE

Hometown Public Library Board Meeting

Date,

Time

Place

**Note:** Please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ if you need accommodations to attend the meeting. [Include TDD number, if you have one.]

1. Call to Order
2. Roll call and introduction of guests
3. Approval of minutes of previous meeting [Provide copy of minutes to board members in advance of the meeting.]
4. Director's report and statistical report *Library Director* [Provide copy of reports to board members in advance of the meeting.]
5. Financial report *Library Director and/or Board Treasurer or Financial Secretary* [Provide copy of report to board members in advance of the meeting.]
6. Audit and approval of monthly expenditures [Provide list of bills to board members in advance of the meeting.]

7. Committee reports or other reports [such as a report on legislative or other statewide issues] [optional—include on agenda only if there is actually something to report]
  8. Subject matter of issue to be considered by board [for example, "Consideration of revised library collection development policy"]
  9. Additional issues to be considered by board [Be reasonably specific about all subject matters to be considered by board.]
  10. Public comment period [This is not required, but it can be helpful for the board to hear about particular public concerns or needs. To avoid open meetings law violations, the board should limit itself to answering basic questions from the public and place the matter on a future meeting agenda if additional discussion or deliberation on the issue is needed.]
  11. Board continuing education session to be held to review and discuss [for example] *Trustee Essential #14: The Library Board and the Open Meetings Law*
  12. Roll call vote to hold **closed session** for board consideration of the performance evaluation and compensation of the library director as authorized by Wisconsin Statutes Section 19.85(1)(c).
  13. Reconvene in open session
  14. Approval of the performance evaluation and compensation of the library director.
  15. Adjournment
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## **Sample Annual Library Board Calendar**

(Note: The time frame for some of the activities listed below may be different for your library and municipality. Of course, your annual calendar should list the dates of your monthly library board meetings.)

### **January**

Director meets with personnel committee to review his/her annual goals and objectives and progress report on his/her prior year annual goals and objectives (see December).

Board conducts annual performance review of director.

### **February**

Annual report reviewed, approved, and forwarded to municipal [or county] governing body, library system, and DLT .

Nominating committee appointed.

Appointing authority notified about upcoming expiring board terms and provided with a list of board-recommended appointees.

### **March**

Library long-range plan and technology plan reviewed and revised, if necessary. Discussion of budgetary implications of plan activities that are scheduled for next year.

### **April**

Appointments of new board members made by the municipality [or county].

Provide prior year usage and expenditure statistics to county [or to system or county library board to compile the statistics and forward them to county] as required by Wisconsin Statutes Section 43.12. Necessary statistics are due to county by July 1.

Continue discussion of budget goals/needs for next year.

## **May**

May 1. New member board terms begin.

Orientation sessions held for new board members.

Board annual meeting held, board officers elected.

Director provides board with preliminary recommendations for budget priorities for coming year, and recommended adjustments to staff salary schedule. Board discusses, revises (if necessary), and approves preliminary recommendations for budget priorities for coming year.

## **June**

Director provides board with draft budget for coming year. Board discusses and directs any needed changes.

## **July**

July 1. Due date for providing prior year usage and expenditure statistics to county.

Budget and funding request approved for upcoming year.

## **August**

Discussion of needed trustee continuing education.

## **September**

Apply for exemption from next year's county library levy.

Board representatives attend municipal [or county] budget hearings to explain and advocate for budget.

## **October**

Library policies reviewed and revised, if necessary.

Trustee continuing education session held during meeting.

Municipality [or county] approves library appropriation.

## **November**

Budget revised, if necessary, based on actual funding approved.

Library policies reviewed and revised if necessary.

Long-range planning committee appointed, if necessary, and given charge and timetable.

Trustee continuing education session held during meeting.

## **December**

Director provides board with his/her annual goals and objectives and progress report on his/her prior year annual goals and objectives.

Library policies reviewed and revised, if necessary.

Trustee continuing education session held during meeting.

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# AE 6: Orientation of a New Library Director

If you are a new library director you should expect to receive an orientation to your new job from one or more members of your library board and from a representative or representatives from the public library system to which the library belongs. The nature of your orientation will depend to a significant degree on your prior library experience and training and on your familiarity with the library and the community in which it is located. The library board president and/or other library board members have a responsibility for introducing you to the library staff, to key local officials, and to the library community in general if these are not already known to you. This handbook may be utilized by the library board and/or the public library system as a basis for your orientation. There will be overlap in the two orientations. In many libraries there will also be other library staff members who can assist in your orientation.

You should also be aware that some public library systems have much more substantive continuing education programs that provide training and orientation for new public library directors.

Since the quality and extent of your orientation will depend on others, you will need to be prepared to fill any gaps in the orientation through your own initiative.

## Library Director Orientation Checklist for Library Boards (B) and Systems (S)

Personnel and employment issues	
B	Appointment letter and conditions of employment
B	Employment benefits
B, S	Public library administrator certification
B	Job description
B	Expectations and evaluation of the library director
B	Library and municipal (or county) relationship
B	Working with the library board and library board meetings



B	Personnel policies and procedures
	<b>Financial issues</b>
B	The library budget and financial situation
B, S	Financial procedures
	<b>Planning issues</b>
B	Mission of the library
B, S	The library's public service philosophy
B	The library's long range and/or strategic plan
B, S	Wisconsin Public Library Standards
B, S	Public library annual report
B, S	Library technology issues and planning
	<b>Library policies</b>
B, S	The library's collection development policy
B, S	Internet access, services and policies
B	Other policies and procedures
	<b>Public library system and state library network issues</b>
B, S	Public library system membership
S	Role of the public library system and the DLT
S	Compliance with public library system requirements
S	Benefits and services of the public library system
B, S	Public library system technology services
S	Shared automation

S	Interlibrary loan
S	Public library system delivery service
S	Public library system continuing education
	<b>Legal issues</b>
B, S	Chapter 43
B, S	Open meetings law
B, S	Public records law
B, S	Ethics and conflicts of interest
S	Copyright
B, S	Americans with Disabilities Act
	<b>Other issues</b>
B	Library facility issues and problems
B, S	Library advocacy and public relations
B	Friends of the Library and/or Library Foundation
B, S	Sources of additional assistance

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# AE 7: Library Director Certification

## **This Administrative Essential covers:**

- Wisconsin's Public Library Director Certification Law
- Your responsibilities
- Summary of certification requirements
- Recertification and Required continuing education
- Sources of additional information

## **Wisconsin's Public Library Director Certification Law**

The Wisconsin Legislature has declared that it is the policy of the state to provide laws for the development and improvement of public libraries. Librarian certification has been part of Wisconsin law since 1921, when the legislature, at the urging of the Wisconsin Library Association, passed the first comprehensive state public librarian certification law. The concern was that the public libraries of the state be headed by qualified library personnel, assuring a high level of professional management and administration of Wisconsin's library resources, programs, and services.

Wisconsin's current public librarian certification law reflects a continuing interest in ensuring that qualified personnel direct Wisconsin's public libraries. The law requires a broad educational background, as well as coursework designed to focus on the issues and concerns relevant in a public library setting. The law also recognizes the need for public librarians to increase their skills and knowledge and be prepared for the challenges and responsibilities of library service in this information age by mandating relevant continuing education.

## **Your responsibilities**

It is your responsibility to acquire and to maintain appropriate certification as a public library director from the Wisconsin Division for Libraries and Technology. Only libraries with properly certified library directors can be members of a library system. When you were recruited by the library board to serve as the library director, the library board should have made clear that eligibility for certification was a condition of your employment, and your employment contract and/or letter of appointment should have specified this condition of employment. If you do not

acquire and maintain appropriate certification it will be cause for disciplinary action and possible termination.

It is essential that you apply for certification as quickly as possible after you are hired. If you meet all of the general education requirements and all of the library education requirements, you can apply for a regular certificate at the proper grade immediately.

If you meet all of the general education requirements but not all of the library education requirements for the grade level you will be eligible for a temporary public librarian certificate. Temporary certificates are valid for only a limited time period before they must be replaced with regular certificates. **Note:** *An uncertified new library director needing a temporary certificate must apply for it within three months of the date of hire.*

## Summary of certification requirements

A regular certificate is valid for a period of five years, with legally prescribed requirements for recertification every five years. The required level (grade) of certification depends on the population of the library's community. The certification grades and their corresponding educational requirements and populations are:

**Grade I:** library system directors and library directors of public libraries representing a population of 6,000 or more.

*Educational requirements:* Bachelor's Degree and a Library and Information Science Master's Degree from an institution accredited by the American Library Association (ALA).

*Note:* Temporary certification will be granted for one year to applicants for Grade I certification to allow completion of the Library and Information Science Master's Degree.

**Grade II:** library directors of public libraries representing a population between 3,000 and 5,999.

*Educational requirements:* Bachelor's Degree plus twelve semester credits for the following courses:

- Public Library Administration
- Selection of Materials

- Organization of Materials
- Reference and Information Services

*Note:* Temporary certification will be granted to applicants for Grade II certification in order for them to complete the four required courses. Temporary certification will be renewed annually for up to four years (i.e., three renewals), provided that the candidate shows progress towards completing the educational requirement.

**Grade III:** library directors of public libraries representing a population under 3,000.

*Educational requirements:* for initial certification, 54 college semester credits (including at least 27 in the liberal arts and sciences) plus twelve semester credits for the following courses:

- Public Library Administration
- Selection of Materials
- Organization of Materials
- Reference and Information Services

*Note:* Temporary certification will be granted to applicants for Grade II certification in order for them to complete the four required courses. Temporary certification will be renewed annually for up to four years (i.e., three renewals), provided that the candidate shows progress towards completing the educational requirement.

*Special provisional certificates* are granted in certain circumstances, such as for an individual who is employed as the administrator for a public library in which he or she was originally certified at the appropriate grade level but who is no longer properly certified due to population growth. Special temporary certificates are granted to individuals who were previously certified and whose certification has been expired for at least one year and who have not served as the administrator of a public library or public library system in Wisconsin during that period.

## **Recertification and required continuing education**

Library directors are required to participate in continuing education activities in order to maintain their certification. These activities may be library system workshops, college courses, Wisconsin Library Association general and unit conferences, or a variety of other educational programs—as long as the activities

are directly related to the individuals' position or will permit advancement in the profession. Librarians should report their continuing education activities to their library system continuing education validator annually. Every five years, as part of the recertification application process, librarians must report their participation in continuing education activities. Library directors in all grades must participate in 100 hours of continuing education over the five-year period.

The Division for Libraries and Technology recommends that, at a minimum, every library should budget sufficient annual funds for the continuing education needed to maintain the library director's certification and improve his/her knowledge. Payment of certification fees is recommended, as well as paid leave time and payment for other expenses needed to pursue continuing education.

## **Sources of additional information:**

[Wisconsin Public Library Director Certification](#). Department of Public Instruction.

[TE 19: Library Director Certification](#) in *Trustee Essentials: A Handbook for Wisconsin Public Library Trustees*

Your library system continuing education validator  
(<https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/certification/consultants>)

Division for Libraries and Technology's Public Library Certification Consultant, Shannon Schultz, [shannon.schultz@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:shannon.schultz@dpi.wi.gov), or at (608) 266-7270.

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# AE 8: Public Services

Public services are those activities undertaken by the library which benefit the library user directly. These services often involve interaction between library users and library staff.

## **This Administrative Essential covers:**

- Library service philosophy
- Library service to children
- Library service to young adults
- Library service to adults
- Library service to people with special needs
- Reference and information services
- Public access computers
- Measuring library service
- Sources of additional information
- Library service philosophy

The public library which you direct is a public service organization. It is supported by public tax dollars because it provides a benefit to the public. You need to be ever mindful of this fact. Library services should be designed to meet the needs of the public and to be as convenient and as easy to use as possible. A retail model in which the library user is viewed as a customer is a good one. You want to satisfy the needs of the customers of the library as fully as possible. Although the customer is not always right, the library's customers should always be treated with courtesy and understanding. The library staff should always be friendly and helpful in serving the public.

The public library serves the entire community not just those who are current users of the library. You need to develop strategies for making non-library users into library users. Sometimes this involves extending the services of the library beyond

the walls of the library building. It also involves the marketing of the library's services (See AE 18: Library Advocacy, Public Relations and Marketing).

Since no library can do everything, it is important that you and the library board establish service priorities for the library. This is especially the case in smaller public libraries. For instance, many smaller libraries try to emphasize their role as a popular materials center.

In directing and providing services to the public you need to take into account that the library serves all age groups. Services are provided to people throughout their lives, from birth to death. This presents a significant challenge to you and the staff of your library. How you respond to this challenge depends largely on the size of the library's staff and collection.

## **Library service to children**

Services to children constitutes a substantial part of the services of every public library but especially the services of small and medium sized public libraries. Depending on the size of your library, you may or may not take an active role in providing library service to children and young adults. Often, another staff member will have a primary responsibility for library service to this age group. Although you may not be the primary provider of service to children, as director you should demonstrate leadership in this vital area by providing encouragement and by seeing that adequate facilities and resources are made available to those who do.

Within this age group there is a significant developmental span of which you and the library staff must be aware. Collections and programming need to be appropriate to the child's developmental stage. More and more public libraries are developing services for children in the birth-to-five age group and to the parents and caregivers of these children.

Programming is an essential part of library service to children and you need to plan for this. These programs range from "lap sits" and "toddler time" to pre-school story times and regular story hours. If you are someone on your staff is not able to present children's programs, you may be able to recruit volunteers from the community to assist with programs.

Use of the public library by children is especially high in the summer when school is out. Your library will almost certainly participate in the DLT sponsored statewide summer library program or a system sponsored program to promote reading and library use in the summer. DLT and your system will assist you planning for this important activity.



## **Library service to young adults**

Large public libraries are most likely to have a special service program for young people in their teens. However, even if your library is small it should develop at least some services to respond to the needs of this age group. A designated collection of materials selected to appeal to this age group would be a good start. A library program or programs designed to appeal to young adults is another way of serving this group. How about establishing a young adult advisory group to help plan some activities or provide advice on library services.

A primary reason for many young adults using the library is to gather information for school assignments. You should work to make this a positive experience for young adults. Work with teachers and school librarians to ensure that students don't have false expectations of what kinds of resources are available in your library.

Many schools now have student community service programs. Identify library projects that students could assist with.

## **Library service to adults**

You should know that adults constitute the library users group with the greatest age span and that their library service needs will vary greatly. A significant number of adults who come into the library are there to find a good book or audio-visual item for themselves or someone in their family. You can facilitate their search by effective arrangements and displays of your adult collections of materials and by providing staff assistance.

If you are not already aware, you will soon be aware that many adults come to the library to make use of its resources "in house". They may come for the purpose of reading current magazines and newspapers which can't be checked out or they may just come for a quiet place to study. Others are there to find information on a particular topic (see "Reference and information services" below).

## **Library service to people with special needs**

There are people in your community who may be reluctant to use the library or who may have difficulty using the library. These people fall into all age groups and have a variety of special needs. Their special need may relate to poverty, level of literacy, aging, mental illness, mobility, a speech or hearing disability, a cognitive disability, or a vision disability. There is a growing population in Wisconsin with limited or

even no English speaking ability. You need to be able to respond to the needs of these individuals for information and library services.

DLT has identified six general strategies which you can use to overcome the barriers to use by adults with special needs. Similar strategies can be used to overcome barriers to use by children and young adults.

1. Include adults with special needs and their families and advocates in planning, implementing, and evaluating public library services.
2. Welcome adults with special needs and their families and advocates to the public library in a responsive, sensitive, and appropriate manner.
3. Offer a diverse range of resources, services, and programs that are relevant to the lives of adults with special needs and their families and advocates.
4. Collaborate with community agencies to provide the best possible services to adults with special needs and their families and advocates.
5. Ensure that public library collections, services, and buildings are fully accessible and inviting to adults with special needs and their families and advocates.
6. Market public library services, collections, and programs to adults with special needs, their families and advocates, and the community.

## **Reference and information services**

One of the primary functions of a public library is to help library users obtain the information they are seeking to satisfy a personal need. That need may relate to a school assignment, a business or professional problem, a hobby, or just curiosity about a particular topic. Although the library user may be able to satisfy their information need on their own by consulting the library's resources, often they will need additional assistance from the library's staff. Sometimes the library user's information need is simple, but it may be more complex. Your training and the training of your staff will determine how successfully the complex information needs of library users are satisfied. Therefore, it is imperative that you and your staff take advantage of continuing education opportunities that will improve your skills in this area.

Even if your library has a limited onsite collection of reference materials, you will have access to enormous reference and information resources through the Internet.

These resources include the DLT BadgerLink online databases of thousands of magazines and newspapers.

Every Wisconsin public library participates in a public library system that contracts with a resource library for reference assistance. If you or the library's staff are unable to successfully satisfy a library user's information need, you can seek assistance from the system resource library yourself or you can direct the library user to the resource library for assistance. The state's public library system resource libraries are in turn backed up by the DLT Reference and Loan Library.

## **Public access computers**

Your library will most likely have a number computer work stations for use by the public. These work stations can be used to gain access to the library's online catalog, to access online digital databases, and to gain access to the Internet. The public demand for access to these workstations for the purpose of accessing the Internet is usually very high. You will need to ensure that library policies are in place to ensure the best use of these workstations by the public. In particular your library needs to have an acceptable use policy which outlines the parameters for accessing the Internet using library computers. One significant issue which your library board will need to resolve is whether computers in the library will be filtered or not (see AE 25 Freedom of Expression and Privacy Policies). Because of the demand for Internet access, you may need to establish procedures for scheduling use of computer workstations.

## **Measuring library service**

It is important to measure and evaluate the services of your library. Information gained from measuring library services can be used to help you plan for and deliver better library services. This information can also be useful to you in justifying additional funding support for the library.

Every public library in Wisconsin is required to submit an annual report of its activities to DLT . In order to complete this report you will need to collect statistics on the services which your library provides to the public. This information is then submitted to DLT over the Internet. DLT and your public library system staff will provide substantial assistance to you in collecting library statistics and in completing the library's annual report. After your library's annual report is submitted to DLT , the information in it is tabulated with the information from other libraries in Wisconsin and the nation. The results can be used by you to compare your library with other libraries of similar size. DLT also uses this data as a starting point in the development of standards for public libraries.

## Sources of additional information

*Wisconsin Public Library Standards*, Fifth Edition, 2010,  
DLT. <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/library-standards>

*AE 9: Accessibility* (<https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/administrative-essentials/accessible-services>)

The DLT Summer Library Program, <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/yss/summer-program>

DLT publication: *Adults With Special Needs: A Resource and Planning Guide for Wisconsin's Public Libraries* (<https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/yss/serving-special-populations/adults-with-special-needs/2002>)

DLT publication: *Public Library Services for Youth with Special Needs: A Plan for Wisconsin* (<https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/yss/resource-guide-2002> )

DLT Web page for public library statistics: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/data-reports/service-data>

Your library system staff: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/directories/systems>

Division for Libraries and Technology staff <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld#contact>

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# AE 9: Accessible Library Services

## **This Administrative Essential covers:**

- Library services to people with disabilities
- The Americans with Disabilities Act
- Mobility impairments
- Blindness and vision impairments
- Deafness and hearing impairments
- Developmental delays / brain injury / mental illness
- Sources of additional information
- Library services to people with disabilities

Your library should be prepared to serve anyone who is eligible to use your library regardless of their physical or mental abilities. Not only is this something which is an integral part of the philosophy of service of public libraries, it is the law (see ADA below). While it may not appear that there are people who live in your community with physical or mental disabilities, this is a false perception. Even if it were true that there was no one in your community with a specific type of disability, your library would still need to be prepared to serve them because the population of your community is ever changing. Because of an aging population, it becomes increasingly likely that there will be more people with physical or mental disabilities in your community in the future.

This Administrative Essential includes an overview of some approaches your library can take in serving people with specific types of disabilities. DLT has a much more extensive treatment of this topic in their publication [\*Adults With Special Needs: A Resource and Planning Guide for Wisconsin's Public Libraries\*](#).

Publicity for your library should routinely include a phone number (and a TDD number if available) to call if special accommodations are needed.

Your library should have at least one computer workstation that is adapted for use by library users with disabilities, including access to those in wheelchairs. The minimum requirements for an accessible computer workstation are:

- a 19" or larger monitor
- an input device, such as a trackball, as an alternative to a mouse
- a keyboard cord longer than 3 feet
- screen reading software with headphones
- software to magnify the screen .

Your library's Web site should and public access catalog (if your library has one) should be designed to be as accessible to as many people as possible.

Your library's collection should include resource materials on physical disabilities. Fiction collections for all ages should include books that feature adults and children with disabilities.

## **The Americans with Disabilities Act**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990 to ensure that people with disabilities would not be denied access to the services and buildings that everyone else has access to. The act also established laws to protect the rights of employees with disabilities (see AE 11: The library as employer). This Administrative Essential deals with that part of the ADA that requires that all library services must be accessible to people with disabilities.

As library director you are responsible for being aware of the requirements of the ADA and staying abreast of current issues related to making library services accessible. If deficiencies exist, you need to present options for resolving them to the board for its consideration. The board has a responsibility to assure that the library and its policies are in compliance with the federal ADA. The municipal or county government of which the library is a part has a legal responsibility for complying with the ADA and the library board should notify the governing body of deficiencies and possible solutions.

While the best way to meet ADA requirements to provide accessible library services is to have an accessible building (see AE 22: Library Building Accessibility), the requirement to provide accessible services is not dependent on a building's being accessible. Public library services must be made available in some way even if the building is not accessible. The best way to provide access to most library services is to have an accessible building. Some accommodations can and must be made until

such time as the building is remodeled or a new building is constructed. Provision of certain services may require accommodations even if the building is accessible.

Information related to specific types of disabilities that may require accommodations to make library services accessible is provided in the following sections.

## **Mobility impairments**

People who use wheelchairs, crutches, and/or braces may have difficulty accessing library services, even if they can get into the building. Other people may also need accommodations, if they have limited ability to walk, or to reach, or grasp, or turn pages. If the building itself is not accessible, the problem of providing access to services is more complicated. Some libraries offer services by phone and make selections for their patrons and then either bring the materials out to the people who cannot come into the building or else deliver them to their homes. Some libraries offer a drive-up window with customized service to make pickup and delivery easier for people with disabilities—and provide a great convenience to the general public. Many libraries offer outreach services to nursing homes. One helpful service public libraries can provide is to refer people with severe mobility limitations to the Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, from which they can borrow recorded materials and automatic page turners if they are unable to hold a book or turn pages.

Tables and seating areas should be designed so those patrons who use wheelchairs have adequate access to them. Computer workstations can be adapted in several ways to make use of computers easier for people who use wheelchairs. The table must accommodate wheelchairs in terms of height and legroom under it. A long cord can be added to the keyboard so it can be lifted down onto the tray of a wheelchair. A trackball can be added as an alternative to a mouse, or in addition to one. Trackballs are easier for some people to manipulate. The service desk is required to have at least one section that is no higher than 36 inches. Service animals must be allowed to accompany their owners in public buildings. The library may ask the person who has the animal if it is a service animal required because of a disability. However, the individual is not required to produce documentation.

All library patrons, including those who have any type of disability, should be welcomed, and staff should try to talk directly to them, rather than to friends or family who may be with them. Children with physical disabilities should be welcomed at programs that are developmentally appropriate for them. Accommodations at story hours or other programs should be made to help every



child feel comfortable, accepted, and an active participant in the program. Some collections include toys adapted for children with mobility impairments.

## **Blindness and vision impairments**

Public libraries frequently act as an intermediary in connecting people who are blind with the Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, where they can receive audio recordings of books and braille materials. Computer workstations can be adapted with software that reads the text aloud. This feature would also be very helpful to people with learning disabilities, adults who are just starting to learn to read, and people who are learning English as a second language. The library's web page can follow universal design recommendations, so that it can be read easily by people who use a screen reader.

The library can purchase or borrow descriptive videos (which describe the action in a video when there is no dialog). Library materials in braille and/or on tape can be added to the collection. The library's regular collection of audiobooks, CDs, and computer software can be made accessible to patrons who are blind if clear braille labels are added. Brailist organizations can do this for the library at very little cost. Large-print materials should be available for both adult and child patrons who have some vision but can more easily read large-print. Library brochures and fliers should be routinely printed in large print, or large print versions should be made available. Audio materials may also be of interest to patrons who have limited vision. The library can also, upon request, be a referral point to the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Janesville, especially if the patron is a child.

Computer workstations can easily be adapted for large print, often using the features built into the standard computer, although larger monitors also help. The ability to change the background colors and contrasts is also very helpful. Many libraries offer in-house magnifiers; some allow them to be checked out. An intensely bright table or floor lamp that can be moved around in the library is a very useful accommodation. Some libraries have machines that can enlarge photos or text. Some have machines that can read text out loud. Computer scanners can also be used to scan and then enlarge text and images. Photocopy machines can be used to enlarge pages of text for people who use large print. Some libraries have adapted toys for children who are blind or who have severe vision impairments.

## **Deafness and hearing impairments**

As with many disabilities, the biggest barrier to service for people who are deaf is often other people's attitude. People who are deaf may use sign language, read lips,



use an interpreter, write their communication, or use a combination of all of these when they want to access public library services. Service desk staff need training to understand how best to offer services to people who are deaf or who have a significant hearing loss. The library is required to provide reasonable accommodation to the method which the patron wants to use to communicate.

Programs for both adults and children and all public meetings should routinely include sound amplification by the use of a microphone. This single accommodation is typically enough to meet the needs of most people who are hearing impaired. A closed sound system (which amplifies the sound only for the person using the equipment) can also be used. Libraries must provide an interpreter for any programs or meetings when one is requested.

It is difficult for people who use a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD or TTY) to call for reference service unless the reference desk has access to a TDD. Signs should be posted indicating the library has a TDD, and people who need to use one should be allowed to use it. Often a hearing family member needs to call home to communicate with someone who may be using a TDD, and having one at the library makes this much easier. Some libraries use the state Relay Service for the Deaf as an alternative to having a TDD. That is acceptable as long as the staff is trained to use the service and the number is readily available at all service desks.

Libraries should routinely flash their lights when announcements are made, especially for emergency announcements, and to warn patrons that the library is closing soon. Flashing lights is a technique commonly used with people who are deaf to get their attention. It alerts the patron that something important is happening. Adaptations can be made in story hours to help a child who is deaf or hearing-impaired get more out of the program. Some libraries circulate special toys that light up or vibrate for children who are deaf. Libraries often order open- and closed-captioned videos. All libraries should have current information on deafness and hearing loss in their collections.

## **Developmental delays / brain injury / mental illness**

People who have a developmental delay, have suffered a brain injury, or have emotional or mental illness may need accommodations when they are in the library. Staff should be trained to treat all patrons with respect, to enforce all rules fairly, and to be tolerant of behavior that may be unusual but not threatening or may be involuntary. Staff should strive to make all patrons feel welcome in the library.

Age restrictions for programs are sometimes relaxed for people who have developmental delays and for whom the programs might be appropriate for their

mental age rather than their chronological age. Extra assistance and reminders are sometimes needed when patrons with developmental or emotional disabilities attend programs and meetings at the library. The library can be an important resource for families who have a member with a developmental delay, a brain injury, or an emotional illness. More importantly, the public library has a role in making the family and individual feel accepted and a part of the larger community. Being at a public library is a very "normalizing" experience.

## **Sources of Additional Information:**

DLT Special Needs Web Page: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/yss>

DLT publication: *Adults With Special Needs: A Resource and Planning Guide for Wisconsin's Public Libraries* (<https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/yss/serving-special-populations/adults-with-special-needs/2002>)

DLT publication: *Public Library Services for Youth with Special Needs: A Plan for Wisconsin* (<https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/yss/resource-guide-2002>)

Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, 813 West Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53233, 414-286-3010

Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, 1700 W. State Street, Janesville, WI 53546, 800-758-6161

Wisconsin School for the Deaf and Educational Service Center for Deaf and Hearing Impaired, 309 W. Walworth Avenue, Delavan, WI 53115, 262-740-2066

Great Lakes DBTAC, University of Illinois–Chicago, 1640 West Roosevelt Road, Chicago, IL 60608, (312) 413-1407, <http://www.adagreatlakes.org>

U.S. Department of Justice, Americans with Disabilities Act ADA HOME PAGE  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>

U.S. Department of Justice ADA information page, [Commonly Asked Questions about Service Animals in Places of Business](#)

Toll-Free ADA Information Line

Call to obtain answers to general and technical questions about the ADA and to order technical assistance materials:

800-514-0301 (voice), 800-514-0383 (TDD)

Your library system staff: [http://pld.dpi.wi.gov/pld\\_wissdir](http://pld.dpi.wi.gov/pld_wissdir)

The staff of the Division for Libraries and Technology: <https://dpi.wi.gov/dlt/staff>

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# AE 10: Technical Services

## **This Administrative Essential covers:**

- Technical services
- Library automation
- Selection and acquisition of materials
- Organization and cataloging of library materials
- Circulation of materials
- Interlibrary loan
- Delivery of materials
- Processing and repair of library materials
- Sources of additional information

## **Technical services**

Technical services are the "behind the scenes" activities that a library undertakes to effectively deliver library services to the public. These services include the processes and procedures which are necessary to order library materials, to classify and catalog those materials, to get the materials ready to put on library shelves. These services also include the activities that are necessary to control the lending and return of library materials. Other technical services include the activities related to acquiring materials from libraries in behalf of your library users and the repair and preservation of library materials.

## **Library automation**

How technical services are carried out in your library is significantly impacted by the nature and degree of automation that exists in your library. Library automation impacts the acquisition, cataloging, circulation, and interlibrary loan functions of your library. Your library may have a stand alone automated library system or your library may be part of a shared automated library system which is administered or coordinated by your public library system. The specific functions included in the automated system will vary depending on the vendor and the functions which your

library has selected. Only a few public libraries in Wisconsin do not have any of their library functions automated. If your library doesn't participate in a shared automated library system, it is likely that it will consider doing so sometime in the future.

Library automation decisions are among the most important you and your library board will make. These decisions are often expensive, but they have the potential for significantly improving library service to your community. The implementation of a library automation project whether a shared system or a stand alone system will also be one of the most challenging projects you will undertake as a library director. Fortunately, your public library system and DLT are able to offer you significant assistance with library automation.

## **Selection and acquisition of materials**

You and your staff will be responsible for selecting library materials to add to the library's collection. These decisions should be consistent with the library's collection development policy (see AE 24: Collection Development). Once you have made your decisions on what to purchase, you will need to order the items. In most instances this will be through a commercial book and media jobber. There are several large national library jobbers. These jobbers offer libraries significant discounts on the retail prices of books and other library materials. The State of Wisconsin through DLT negotiates group discounts for Wisconsin libraries. Depending on the jobber, the actual ordering process may occur online using the Internet. If your library belongs to a shared automated system, the system may have an acquisition module that facilitates the ordering process.

Although your library will be purchasing most of its materials, many libraries receive materials as gifts. Many of these materials are not suitable for adding to the library's collection, and can be placed in one of the library's book sales. However, it may be worthwhile to add some gifts to the collection. Many libraries expand their collection of popular paperback books this way.

## **Organization of library materials**

You will want to organize library materials in your library so that the library user can easily find what they are looking for when they come to the library. A key tool for making this possible is the library's catalog of library materials. Traditionally this catalog has been a card catalog in which information about a book or other item is printed on a paper index size card. As libraries have automated, the card catalog has been increasingly replaced by an online public access catalog.

Whether your library has a physical card catalog or an online catalog, your library will need to acquire a catalog record for each item that is added to the library's collection. The catalog record will have complete bibliographic information on the item. If the record is in electronic format, it will almost always conform to a universal standard for catalog records called MARC (Machine Readable Cataloging). Your library can obtain catalog records in several ways.

Some of the major library jobbers will supply catalog records for items in your order in either printed or electronic format.

If your library participates in a shared automated library system, it will be relatively simple to just add your library's holding to an existing library record if the item to be cataloged is already in the shared catalog.

There are also software programs that enable you to capture catalog record information in MARC format from large catalog databases such as that of the Library of Congress that are accessible over the Internet.

A key part of the catalog record is the classification system used to arrange materials on the shelf in your library. The classification system which your library uses is probably the Dewey Decimal Classification System.

## **Circulation of materials**

A significant part of the business of your library is the circulation or lending of library materials. Your library's circulation system plays a key role in making the lending and return of library materials efficient and in maximizing the use of your library's collection. Circulation is the function that is usually automated first in a library, and it is likely that it is automated in your library. If your circulation system is part of a shared automated library system, you and your staff will receive support from the owner/coordinator of the shared system. If you have a stand alone system, you and your staff will be responsible for dealing with any problems relating to maintaining the system.

If your library's circulation system is not automated, you will need to be aware of the need to collect circulation statistics in a number of different categories and to establish reliable procedures for doing this. These statistics are important in tracking non-resident library use which may be required for reimbursement.

It is important that your library have in place good policies and procedures relating to the lending and return of library materials (see AE 15: Policies and Procedures).

Policies need to be established for the loan periods for various types of materials and on whether fines will or will be not levied for the late return of materials.

## **Interlibrary loan**

Your library, no matter how large, will not have sufficient resources to meet all the needs of your library's users. Libraries have traditionally been willing to share their resources with other libraries through interlibrary loan. In taking advantage of interlibrary loan in behalf of your library's users it is important to remember that interlibrary loan is intended to supplement not replace your library's collection. It should not be abused. Respect the generosity of other libraries that loan their materials and return them promptly.

Wisconsin has established regional and statewide networks to facilitate the sharing of library resources. At the regional level, it is your public library system that has the primary responsibility for this function. At the state level, DLT has that responsibility. DLT also will refer interlibrary loan requests to libraries in other states.

If your library participates in a shared automated library system, interlibrary loan between libraries that participate in the system will be relatively simple. Often the library user will initiate the interlibrary loan process, and the item will be delivered to your library (see "Delivery of library materials" below) for pick up by the library user who requested it.

## **Delivery of materials**

One of the benefits your library receives from the public library system which it participates in is the delivery of materials between libraries within the system area and within the state. Some public library systems own their own delivery vehicles and provide staff to operate the delivery system. Other public library systems contract with another entity to provide this service. Some library systems may charge for supplementary delivery services.

The delivery systems which operate within a system area are connected to a statewide delivery service which is operated by the South Central Library System under contract with Wisconsin's other 16 public library systems and the DLT .

Sometimes it may be necessary to use the mail system instead of delivery to acquire and return materials through interlibrary loan.

You and your library staff need to take proper precautions to insure that materials sent through the delivery system are properly packaged and handled to avoid damage to the materials.

## **Processing and repair of library materials**

Your library will need to have in place a procedure for processing new library materials. Most major library jobbers have an option to purchase pre-processed library materials, and this is a good option for smaller libraries.

Those materials in your library that receive a high level of use will inevitably suffer wear and tear. You will need to make decisions as to whether to repair or discard such items. If the decision is to repair the item, there are several major library supply vendors that can provide you with the materials to repair book and other items in your collection.

## **Sources of additional information**

Administrative Essential 24: Collection Development

Your library system staff: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/directories/systems>

Division for Libraries and Technology staff: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld#contact>

Chapman, Liz. *Managing Acquisitions in Library and Information Services*. Third Edition. 2004.

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# AE 11: The Library as Employer

## **This Administrative Essential covers:**

- Role of the board and role of the director
- Legal issues in hiring and employment
- Lines of communication
- Board meetings on personnel issues
- Staff compensation
- Promotions
- Personnel policy
- Library employee unions
- Grievance procedures

The most important determinant of library service quality is the training, experience, attitude, and motivation of the library staff. Developing and maintaining a high-quality library staff requires careful decision-making and cooperation by both the library board and the library director.

## **Role of the board and role of the director**

The library board is charged with the responsibility of hiring and supervising the library director, and the board's responsibilities extend to issues that affect all library staff (see *Trustee Essential #5: Hiring a Library Director*) and *Trustee Essential #6: Evaluating the Director*. But it is the library director who hires and supervises all other library staff, although the library board has the legal responsibility to establish their duties, and compensation.

While both the library board and the library director have significant personnel responsibilities, the library will operate most effectively if the two parties cooperate and communicate on important personnel matters, while avoiding intrusion into each other's area of responsibility. Keep in mind that:

- The library director can and should recommend personnel policy changes, but can implement only policies officially approved by the board.
- The library director has the authority to hire staff to fill positions authorized by the library board and to supervise those staff, but should keep the library board informed of important personnel issues and consult with the board, if possible, before making significant personnel decisions.
- The library board has the legal responsibility to approve job descriptions and compensation plans, but the director should have latitude to set compensation and make personnel changes within that framework.
- The library will run most effectively when the director is delegated the responsibility for the day-to-day assignment of staff duties although

If a trustee repeatedly approaches library staff for information on library operations or try to direct the activities of the staff, ask the library board president to discuss the matter with the trustee. If the board president is interfering inappropriately in day to day operations, you should bring the matter up with the board president or direct your concerns to other members of the board. Another less direct approach is to schedule a discussion at a board meeting about *Trustee Essential 2: Who Runs the Library?* and use the discussion as a forum to address your concern.

## Legal issues in hiring and employment

The library director should detailed job descriptions for each position. These should be approved by the library board after being reviewed for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (<http://www.ada.gov/>), the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act, and Wisconsin's equal rights provisions and [Fair Employment Law](#). The job descriptions should be reviewed and updated at regular intervals, particularly before filling a new or vacant position.

The ADA requires reasonable accommodations in three areas of employment. The first involves the job application process. People with disabilities may only be asked questions asked of all applicants. Certain types of questions are not allowed. For instance, all applicants should be told the essential job functions and then asked whether there was any reason why they could not do perform those functions. But it would not be acceptable to single out someone who uses a wheelchair and ask how that person would do a particular task.

Examples of questions that can and cannot be asked during an interview are included at the "Access for All" web site maintained by Cornell University (see

below). The site defines "essential functions" as "fundamental job duties of the employment position the individual holds or desires. The term does not include the marginal functions of the position." Job descriptions should be written so that the essential functions are clear. If pre-employment testing is required, then accommodations must be made, if needed, for people to take the test.

The second area requires reasonable modification or adjustments to the work environment or job procedures and rules, to allow a qualified person with a disability to do the work. The library is not required to eliminate an essential job function in making an accommodation, nor is an employer required to lower production standards. A reasonable accommodation might be removing a barrier, modifying a workstation, restructuring the job or schedule, acquiring a piece of adaptive equipment or technology, or reassignment to another vacant position for which the individual is qualified. But the employer does not have to make an accommodation that would impose an "undue hardship," defined as an "action requiring significant difficulty or expense." Nor are employers expected to provide personal items not available to other employees (such as wheelchairs or prostheses), but certain accommodations might be expected, such as adjustable chairs, wrist pads, or modified phones.

The third area requires equal access to whatever insurance and benefits are offered to other employees. The ADA also requires employers to make "reasonable accommodations" to make available the "benefits and privileges of employment" to employees with disabilities that are enjoyed by other employees. Examples are access to lounges, auditoriums, training facilities, parties, or services.

The U.S. Department of Justice page on the ADA is: <http://www.ada.gov/>

U.S. Department of Labor compliance assistance with the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act: <https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/hrg.htm>

## **Lines of communication**

Library staff members are supervised by the library director, or, when appropriate, by department heads or supervisors in the library's hierarchy. While the library director reports to and is supervised by the library board, library staff should report to the director or to others under the director's direct supervision.

While trustees will want to know who the library employees are and what they think about the library and its policies, services and collections, trustees must be very careful to avoid undermining the authority of the director. Except in unusual

circumstances, communication between the board and staff about library business should be carried on through the library director.

Since the library board may want input from the staff on certain issues, the board should solicit such input through the director. Similarly, if the board requires input from the staff during the process of evaluating the library director, the information should be collected in a consistent manner using specific questions.

## **Board meetings on personnel issues**

In addition to the library board's review of the library director, there may come occasions where personnel issues must be brought before the board. While most library board business must be conducted in open session, there are occasions where the board may convene in closed session to discuss specific personnel issues.

The library board should annually review the performance and compensation of the library director and can do so in closed session. Wisconsin Statutes s. 19.85(1)(c) permits convening in closed session for "Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility."

The board may also convene in closed session to consider disciplinary actions, with certain limitations. The provision in s. 19.85(1)(b) permits a closed session for the purpose of "Considering dismissal, demotion, or discipline of any public employee" and taking formal action, with one caveat. The employee must be formally notified of the hearing and any meeting at which final action may be taken. The notice must state that the employee has the right to demand that the evidentiary hearing or meeting be held in open session.

Keep in mind that the language of the exemptions to the open meetings law specifically refers to a "public employee," not to a position of employment in general. Consequently, the library board cannot convene in closed session to discuss a position vacancy, benefits and compensation for employment, or personnel policies for positions in general, unless for the specific purpose of discussing strategy for collective bargaining (s. 19.85(1)(e)). But the board can convene in closed session to discuss the qualifications of and compensation to offer a specific candidate for a job opening. Also, ratification or final approval of a collective bargaining agreement must be done in open session.

The library board may also need to consider a personnel issue as part of a grievance process. Your library personnel policy should clearly state how grievances may be brought and the process to be followed. Generally speaking, employees should bring

matters of concern about the physical environment in which the employee works, and conditions of the specific position, procedures to be followed, relationships with other workers or supervisors, and library rules and regulations to the attention of the library director. Occasionally, an employee may be unsatisfied after bringing complaints to the director and may feel that further action should be taken. In such circumstances an appeal to the library board is appropriate. Sometimes the library director is the problem, or part of the problem, that an employee wishes to address, and the situation is of a sensitive nature or involves serious legal concerns. In such cases, a grievance should be addressed in writing to the library board president who can then take up the matter with the library board at the next board meeting or at a special session. The meeting may be conducted in closed session if it meets the requirements of the exemptions to the open meetings law.

Additional information on library board meetings and the open meetings law can be found in Administrative Essential #19, "Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law" and in Trustee Essential 14, "The Library Board and the Open Meetings Law."

## **Staff compensation**

The ability to attract and retain high-quality staff depends partially on competitive and fair wages and benefits for library staff. Compensation for employees should be competitive with compensation provided by similar-sized libraries in Wisconsin and nationwide (see the Sources of Additional Information section below for sources of this data). Compensation for library staff should be in line with other community positions that require similar training and responsibilities.

Justifying and obtaining adequate and competitive compensation for library staff can be challenging, particularly in a tight municipal economy. Sometimes the work of library employees is misunderstood or under-appreciated. The Allied Professional Association of ALA has information and a toolkit that is useful in establishing and justifying competitive compensation plans to boards, municipal government, and the public.

## **Promotions**

It is not unusual for a library to promote an existing employee into a vacancy rather than to advertise broadly and hire a candidate from outside the organization. It is good to give existing employees opportunity for advancement, and many collective bargaining agreements will stipulate that positions must be posted within the organization before being advertised. However, be sure that you follow established hiring procedures and that the employee being promoted meets the minimum qualifications required for the job description for the position. Past evaluations

should also document that the employee being promoted has better than average performance, since promotion can be considered a reward for good job performance.

## **Personnel policy**

It is the responsibility of the library board to approve a personnel policy for library staff that formally establishes compensation and benefit policies, as well as rules and conditions of employment for library staff. The policy should include the mission statement of the library, employment expectations, staff development and continuing education opportunities, and evaluation and discipline processes, including termination and grievance procedures. It is important for these policies to be gathered into a written personnel handbook available to all library staff. The policy must be kept up-to-date and regularly reviewed by the library board. These written policies ensure that all employees are treated according to the same rules.

Many state and federal laws govern the relationship between employer and employee, and it is essential that the library's personnel policy comply with these laws. (For more information, see Trustee Tool A: Important State and Federal Laws Pertaining to Public Library Operations.) Your municipality or county may have a personnel department that keeps up to date on these laws. Knowledgeable individuals should review all proposed changes in the personnel policy as well as all job descriptions. To simplify maintenance of their personnel policies, many library boards adopt the personnel policy of their municipality as the library personnel policy, subject to those changes approved by the library board.

The library board should also approve a salary schedule that covers all staff and written job descriptions that list the essential job duties of each position, any educational and experience required, the physical and mental requirements of the job, and the salary range. Carefully prepared job descriptions not only will help the library comply with Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which deals with employment issues, but also provide an objective basis for performance evaluation to support promotion or discipline. For more information about the employment-related requirements of the ADA including a sample job description, see Trustee Essential #5: Hiring a Library Director.

Sample personnel policies are available from the Wisconsin Public Library Policy Resource Web Page.

## **Library employee unions**



The right to bargain collectively is guaranteed by federal and state law. The library board must not take actions that interfere with library employees' legal collective bargaining rights. No library administrator or board should seek to prevent an election or the formation of a bargaining unit, and certain rules must be followed if a majority of the library staff wishes to engage in collective bargaining.

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB, <http://www.nlr.gov/>), is the Federal agency that administers the National Labor Relations Act. It is charged conducting elections to determine whether or not employees want union representation, and with investigating and remedying unfair labor practices by employers and unions. Labor and management both have the right to petition the NLRB if either believes that an irregularity or a violation of labor practices has occurred.

In Wisconsin, collective bargaining practices are subject to rulings by the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission (WERC, <http://werc.wi.gov/>). The WERC has ruled on a number of occasions that the library board (and not the municipality) is considered the "employer" of library employees for collective bargaining purposes. Therefore, it is the library board (or a designee of the library board acting under library board supervision) that negotiates with any union(s) representing library employees. An individual familiar with Chapter 43, library board concerns, and collective bargaining law should handle all labor negotiations on behalf of the board. Knowledgeable individuals should assist in the development of library board collective bargaining strategy. The library board must ratify any union agreements involving library employees.

The library board may not abrogate or delegate its legal responsibilities for establishing library policies and personnel policies or for determining the duties and compensation of all library staff. In addition, the library board may not take away the library director's legal authority to hire and supervise all other library staff.

The library board may wish to employ the services of an experienced labor negotiator. Designating a member of the board or the library director as the chief negotiator may be unwise since it is unlikely that person will be familiar with the intricacies of labor law, whereas the bargaining unit will be represented by a professional negotiator employed by the union. The director or board member may also be placed in an adversarial role or take requested changes under negotiations as personal criticism. The friction across the bargaining table may translate to the work environment and affect the rapport required to effectively manage day-to-day operations.

Library directors, as well as trustees, may be uncomfortable working with third-party labor negotiators, fearing the negotiator will offer concessions unacceptable to management. But negotiations follow a clearly established procedure, with the negotiator's powers clearly delineated. Typically, the negotiator reviews proposals submitted by the bargaining unit with the library administration, the board, or a subset of both, depending on how the board delegates responsibilities for negotiating. And any final proposal has to be formally ratified by the library board in an open meeting.

If negotiations reach an impasse, typically the two parties will agree to mediation, followed by binding arbitration if an agreement cannot be reached. The American Arbitration Association (AAA, <http://www.adr.org/>) is an independent nonprofit organization offering resolution of a wide range of disputes through mediation, arbitration, elections and other out-of-court settlement techniques. AAA maintains mediators and panels of disinterested parties who have qualifications in a wide range of specialties, familiar with precedents that have been established through negotiations in similar settings, such as public libraries.

## **Grievance procedures**

The board should establish a grievance or complaint procedure within the personnel policy to address staff complaints about employment issues. Trustees should direct employees who have complaints about the director, policies, or operations to discuss the situation first with their supervisor or the director. If that does not resolve the issue, staff should be encouraged to follow the established policy. Only in extreme situations should staff complaints go directly to the board.

## **Sources of additional information**

The Allied Professional Association of ALA (<http://www.ala-apa.org/>)

Christopher, Connie, *Empowering Your Library: a Guide to Improving Service, Productivity, & Participation*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2003.

Contains chapters on motivation, creating shared vision and trust, the manager's role, interpersonal and team skills, and empowered library leadership.

Evans, G. Edward, *Performance Management and Appraisal: a How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians*, New York, Neal-Schuman, 2004.



Concentrates on the performance appraisal process, background, different methods and attributes. Includes a CD-ROM with appraisal forms in Word and PDF formats.

*Position Classifications for Public Libraries*, Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries, Personnel and Professional Concerns Committee

*Practical Help for New Supervisors, Third Edition*, Chicago, American Library Association, 1997.

Survey has chapters by various authors on such topics as Interviewing, orientation, performance appraisal, nonmonetary rewards, communication skills, conducting meetings, time management, diversity, and conflict resolution.

*Salary and Fringe Benefit Survey*, Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries, Personnel and Professional Concerns Committee

*Staff Development: A Practical Guide, Third Edition*, Chicago, American Library Association, 2001.

Provides guidelines and methods to develop a staff development program, determining goals and competencies, developing trainers, and conducting programs.

Trotta, Marcia, *Successful Staff Development: a How-To-Do-It Manual*, New York, Neal Schuman, 1995

Wisconsin Public Library Policy Resource Web Page  
at <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/policy-resources>.

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# AE 12: Managing the Staff

## **This Administrative Essential covers:**

- Staff selection
- Staff training
- Supervision and discipline
- Evaluation
- Personnel records
- Continuing education for library staff
- Volunteers

The most important determinant of library service quality is the training, experience, attitude, and motivation of the library staff. Developing and maintaining a high-quality library staff requires careful decision-making and cooperation by both the library board and the library director.

## **Staff selection**

The library board selects and appoints the library director, but the director "shall appoint such other assistants and employees as the library board deems necessary." Once the library board has approved job descriptions and positions to be filled, the library director must recruit and select qualified people to fill vacancies. The following steps are provided as a suggested course of action.

1. The director should contact the library system, which has experienced staff who can assist with the hiring process. The library's municipality may have personnel resources that can assist and support the library in the hiring process, although the library should not turn over to the municipality its legislated duty to hire staff, supervise employees, and set compensation. The municipality also may be able to help post advertisements, review job descriptions, and receive applications, but the library director and board should review applications, screen candidates, conduct interviews, contact references, and make the appointment.

2. Before posting a vacancy to be filled, the director should review hiring and promotion guidelines in the library's personnel policy, as well as any collective bargaining contract that may apply to library staff. Depending on the size of the library and the level of the position, the director may wish to appoint a search and screening committee to assist in the process.
3. The board must approve a position description that reflects the necessary qualifications and duties of the job. A competitive salary range and fringe benefit package must be established if you hope to attract qualified applicants.
4. To avoid any appearance of discrimination, advertise the job in the local newspaper. Also post the job description broadly enough to attract qualified candidates for the job. These might include email list services in your library system, the [Wisconsin Library Association's library jobs board](#), the [DPI Library Classifieds job board](#), and the [American Library Association's Joblist](#) on the Internet.. An abbreviated job description can be posted, with a link to a full job description and application materials on the library's web site.
5. The director or the search committee should then screen the list of applicants, first winnowing out those who do not meet the minimum qualifications. Then the candidates should be ranked and a manageable number selected to consider for interview. Some hiring committees elect to check references before inviting candidates for interview; others incorporate reference checks with final evaluation of candidates.
6. Determine how the interviews will be conducted. The interviews should be conducted between the candidate and a panel representing the library to bring broader perspective to the selection process. To avoid any question of impropriety and to provide defense against legal claims by disgruntled candidates, the director should never conduct interviews alone. The panel should consist of the director and another library staff or a board member, or with either the full or a subset of the hiring committee. A uniform list of questions should be developed for use in the interviews and for contacting references. Be sure to have these questions reviewed by someone knowledgeable about employment and discrimination law.
7. The candidates should be informed of probationary process, performance evaluation and salary adjustment procedures, benefits, and all other terms of employment. These should be reviewed when negotiating with the candidate selected for the job.

8. In addition to contacting listed references, the director or screening committee may wish to contact current or past colleagues of the top candidate or candidates to get a more complete picture of the qualifications of the applicant. Be sure to first obtain written permission from the candidate to contact employers.
9. Once the director or committee has made a hiring decision, contact the selected applicant to offer the job. If accepted, confirm the appointment and starting date in writing, along with any other terms of employment. Then promptly notify applicants not selected.
10. A six-month or one-year probationary period is a common personnel practice; specific periods may be designated in the library personnel policy or bargaining contract. The new employee and director or supervisor should mutually determine short- and long-term goals for this period. They should then meet at regular intervals to evaluate performance regularly throughout this period.
11. Assuming successful completion of probation, the supervision and evaluation responsibilities continue. Reviews of the employee's performance and attainment of goals and objectives should be carried out annually.

## **Staff training**

Effective training and orientation of new employees is essential to their incorporation into library operations. Besides introducing the employee to other staff and the facility, the supervisor should be sure the employee knows how to access employee benefits and resources. The personnel policy should be reviewed so that the employee understands procedures.

Depending on the job duties and responsibilities, as well as the employee's level of experience, orientation might stretch out over several weeks. For others with broad experience specific to the job, a simple review of library policies and procedures and exposure to the tools and resources may be sufficient. Be sure that any training of new staff includes clear explanation of policy related to the confidentiality of public library records, s. 43.30.

## **Supervision and discipline**

Ideally, well trained employees should be able to carry out the well-defined functions of their positions without supervision. Day-to-day operations of the library can be attended to by the staff and the director can focus attention on long-range planning, deal with problems and special issues, and work with the board on

policy review and mission of the library. But some level of regular supervision is necessary for the benefit of both the employee and the library. The director, as a supervisor, should be aware of the conduct and behavior of the staff in order to adjust and modify the job duties and tasks for efficient operations, or the behavior and performance of the staff to best accomplish the assigned duties, provide appropriate levels of service as defined by the board, and keep the library operating legally and in accordance with established policy.

The key to effective supervision is determining the appropriate amount to confirm appropriate and effective operations without being intrusive or controlling. Supervision can make the employees feel that management cares about them and their work. But too much supervision can become overbearing and can stifle creativity and personal initiative. Supervision should be a two-way communication that also allows the staff to have input on processes, and to make suggestions for better operation of the library and improved public service.

Good training, appropriate supervision, and targeted coaching will minimize the need for discipline. But despite your best efforts in directing the activities of your staff, you need to have discipline options available to you and these should be outlined in the personnel policy. Progressive discipline is designed to address ongoing refusal or failure to perform normal duties. Examples of issues that can be addressed through discipline are unsatisfactory performance, chronic absenteeism or tardiness, unprofessional conduct, insubordination, or violation of established procedures or policy. Using progressive discipline does not necessarily mean you cannot terminate an employee for a first offense. Some misconduct is of such a serious nature that continued employment is not warranted and may actually be a danger or liability to the library. But in most cases, unacceptable behavior results in a warning or sanction and repeated offenses result in escalating disciplinary action, only leading to termination if the employee does not respond to discipline. Options available under a progressive discipline policy include verbal reprimands, written warnings, and suspensions of varying lengths.

Supervision of staff should include documentation of observed and reported employee behavior issues, work deficiencies, as well as positive comments and accomplishments. These will help you establish a balanced point of view to fairly praise or redirect activities. Managers may keep their own informal records to keep tabs on an employee's job performance. These may include notes of minor incidents or infractions to establish a pattern of behavior and to reference when intervention is required. Verbal directives or reprimands should be noted for reference, if necessary, in a future written reprimand.

Documentation becomes formal in nature at the point of a written reprimand and the directives or memoranda should be filed in the employee's personnel file.

## Evaluation

Formal evaluations of library employees should be conducted by their supervisors on a regular basis, and at least once per year. Traditionally, the process consists of two components. First, the supervisor should prepare a written evaluation, using an established format, of the employee's performance in conducting duties as described in the job description. The second component is an interview between the supervisor and employee to discuss the written evaluation and establish steps to modify performance for the coming year. The director or supervisor should also review job descriptions with the staff during performance evaluations. Changes should be submitted and approved by the library board.

Setting specific performance measures or project goals for the forthcoming year is a good way to establish an objective means to improve job performance. The supervisor and employee can determine the frequency to review progress during the year. Poor performance can be corrected through a formal process that focuses on the job and its tasks, not on the employee and personality.

Having regular written evaluations that focus on job performance makes discipline less confrontational as well. By having regular and formal feedback, the employee knows better what is expected, and the supervisor or director has opportunities to take corrective measures, initiate disciplinary processes, or adjust duties, schedules or processes to address incomplete, incorrect work or unacceptable behavior. Because the cost of hiring and training employees can be expensive, it is generally best to correct work patterns with existing staff than to terminate employees and hire anew. But if an employee needs to be fired when other measures have failed, the library should have adequate documentation to support the termination.

Recent criticism that traditional annual performance appraisals are not productive for either employees or management has led to alternative evaluation methods that rely more on goal setting, dialog, and coaching, and less on criticism and rankings. Many options can be found in human resource literature. Common among many is to establish expectations the director and employee have for the job, the specific work to be performed, and how performance will be measured. They establish a common understanding of how to assess progress toward those expectations and goals through regular communication and coaching, and how to incorporate different options or change goals as tasks or circumstances change. Progress is documented throughout the process and during a more formal annual appraisal the

participants can incorporate annual and long range goals and chart a course of action for the subsequent year that is driven by the library's mission and budget.

## **Personnel records**

Wisconsin's public records law provides special rules for the handling of staff personnel records, and Wisconsin's open meetings law has special rules for library board proceedings involving collective bargaining and other personnel issues. See *Administrative Essential #18: Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law* (also *Trustee Essential #14*) and *Administrative Essential #19: Wisconsin's Public Records Law* (also *Trustee Essential #15*) for more information.

## **Continuing education for library staff**

Library staff members, regardless of their level of employment, should have the opportunity to continue to expand their knowledge of library practice, communication skills, and library technology related to their job responsibilities through participation in workshops, conferences, and other continuing education activities. It is recommended that the library adequately budget for staff continuing education and professional activities, including paid work time for attendance, registration fees, and travel costs. Wisconsin library directors must participate in continuing education as required by Wisconsin librarian certification and recertification rules. (See *Administrative Essentials #7: Library Director Certification*.)

## **Volunteers**

Many public libraries cannot survive without volunteers. But neither can libraries survive on volunteers alone. A library can effectively use volunteers to supplement and support the activities by regular library staff. But there are some duties that are best left to trained employees who are adequately compensated for their time and experience. Too much reliance on volunteers to complete traditional library services such as circulation and reference leaves the library vulnerable to sporadic levels of service, inadequate control of service quality, and possible liability for providing inaccurate or incomplete information.

The library should have a clear volunteer policy that establishes the types of work a volunteer may and may not perform. It should also outline the expectations the library makes of volunteers and what the volunteer can expect from service to the library. Be sure to clearly designate the requirement that all library staff, including volunteers, protect the privacy of public library records as required in s. 43.30.



Consider a form for volunteers to sign acknowledging that they have read and acknowledge the terms of the policy, and that they acknowledge that, by volunteering their service, they have no expectation of special consideration for future employment opportunities in the library. Some libraries also have volunteers complete an application and go through a screening process.

Check with the library's insurance carrier or risk management coordinator to ensure there are no liability issues in having volunteers perform regular functions at the library. Be sure that the volunteer policy addresses special situations such as seasonal volunteers, temporary community service assignments, service group projects, and court-assigned community service. Be careful that none of the volunteers' duties conflict with regular duties of employees covered under a collective bargaining agreement. Finally, be sure no substantial compensation is given or credited to volunteers that would require that the library pay workers compensation insurance. For instance, allowing patrons to work off excess fines, waiving fines or fees for volunteers or giving them reduced rates for services may be considered a form of compensation and thereby require workers compensation insurance.

## **Sources of additional information**

Christopher, Connie, *Empowering Your Library: a Guide to Improving Service, Productivity, & Participation*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2003. Contains chapters on motivation, creating shared vision and trust, the manager's role, interpersonal and team skills, and empowered library leadership.

Evans, G. Edward, *Performance Management and Appraisal: a How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians*, New York, Neal-Schuman, 2004. Concentrates on the performance appraisal process, background, different methods and attributes. Includes a CD-ROM with appraisal forms in Word and PDF formats.

*Position Classifications for Public Libraries*, Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries, Personnel and Professional Concerns Committee

*Practical Help for New Supervisors, Third Edition*, Chicago, American Library Association, 1997. Survey has chapters by various authors on such topics as Interviewing, orientation, performance appraisal, nonmonetary rewards, communication skills, conducting meetings, time management, diversity, and conflict resolution.

*Salary and Fringe Benefit Survey*, Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries, Personnel and Professional Concerns Committee



*Staff Development: A Practical Guide, Third Edition*, Chicago, American Library Association, 2001. Provides guidelines and methods to develop a staff development program, determining goals and competencies, developing trainers, and conducting programs.

Trotta, Marcia, *Successful Staff Development: a How-To-Do-It Manual*, New York, Neal Schuman, 1995. Covers development of formal training, ongoing training, and mentoring as methods for development.

Volunteers in Libraries, by Rashelle Karp. Chicago, American Library Association 1993. 0-8389-5756-0. (out of print).

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# AE 13: Developing the Library Budget

## **This Administrative Essential covers:**

- The process of budget development
- Sources of funding
- Donations and grants
- Desirable budget characteristics
- Terms and distinctions
- Sample format of a minimal library budget

The development and execution of the library budget is one of the library director's most important tasks. The process should be integrated with the planning and evaluation of library services. Once reviewed and approved by the library board, the budget serves as a roadmap for the delivery of library services in the subsequent year. This chapter will outline a typical procedure for creating and approving the library budget. The next chapter will discuss the execution and administration of the budget.

*Why budget?* Although library boards are vested "exclusive control of the expenditure of all moneys collected, donated or appropriated for the library fund," the municipality is empowered to levy a tax or appropriate funds to operate a public library. Consequently, the library fund is included in the budget of the municipal body that established the library. While there is no statutory requirement that libraries develop budget requests to submit to their governing authorities, most municipalities require them, and a carefully considered budget is one of the responsibilities you have in your role as a steward of public funds. In order to operate effectively and maximize your ability to obtain appropriate local funds, you and your board should create and follow a budget each year.

By going through a formal budget process, you, your library board, and your municipality establish a fiscal foundation for library operations. The budget process provides you with an opportunity to request necessary funding for established services, as well as supplemental support to address increased use or provide new services. The budget also creates a way to track required revenues and reportable expenditures. Finally, since the municipality is required to hold a public hearing, it allows public input on municipal services, including the library.

Some municipalities may not invite input on the library appropriation, choosing instead to budget a minimal amount or a fixed sum. But Wisconsin law requires that "every municipality shall annually formulate a budget and hold public hearings thereon," s. 65.90(1). Consequently, even if municipal officers want to budget a fixed sum for library operations, the budget process and the public hearing requirement may be the library's only opportunity to request additional funds.

## **The process of budget development**

The first step in developing a library budget is to consider what the library hopes to accomplish in the next year. The availability of a current long-range plan will make this step much easier, because the plan should already document your community's library service needs and the library activities necessary to meet those needs. If you have a long-range plan, ask your board to review it and make any necessary adjustments or revisions (see *AE 16: Planning for the Library's Future*). You might solicit suggestions from library staff on what additional materials or personnel may be required or ways to adapt current resources to meet the service plan. Then discuss with the board how the library's goals may affect the budget-what resources will be required to carry out the service plan, and whether the goals are still reasonable, considering the current economic climate.

The second step is to determine the total financial resources necessary for what the library wants to accomplish in the coming year. Often, increased funding is required because of higher costs, increased usage, or new services that will be offered. Funding for new services can also be made available by shifting resources from a lower priority service that can be reduced or eliminated to a higher priority service. Project the amount of other revenues you might expect based on past use or current trends. Using information from your municipality and vendors, try to gauge appropriate increases for regular budget items such as health benefits, retirement, energy costs, and subscription rates. You should be able to estimate the county payment for non-resident use. If you have contract income from neighboring communities, you should ascertain whether any change may occur.

You and library staff should prepare draft budget documents for your board following the format used by the municipality or county (see attached Sample Format of a Minimal Library Budget for an example). The library board president or a finance committee may have input or guidelines for the development of budget drafts. The board of trustees will then review the draft budget with the director, propose changes, and eventually approve a final budget.

After the written budget documents are approved by the board and submitted to the municipality or county, the final step in the budget process is securing the funding

needed to carry out the planned service program. You or the board may be asked to make a presentation to the governing body of the municipality or its finance committee. Trustees, as volunteer public representatives, are especially effective budget advocates. Trustees may help to justify budget requests and request support from the municipality's governing body. And because the municipality is required to hold a public hearing on the budget, library supporters and advocates can express support for the library budget that was approved by your board. (See also *AE 18: Library Advocacy Public Relations and Marketing*.)

The municipal governing body must adopt a budget in time to submit to the county clerk for the tax levy. If the funding requested by the library is not appropriated by the municipality, the board may need to make adjustments to the final library operating budget. Budget changes may also be required during the budget year if, for example, certain expenditures are higher than expected, or costs are lower than expected.

*Typical budget calendar:*

- *February-March:* the director reviews the annual report and the previous year's data to ascertain trends, patterns, and changes.
- *Spring:* Library board reviews long-range plan and library service goals in light of trends.
- *Mid-year:*
  - Library director and board review expenditures and revenues to determine if current budget is on track.
  - Municipality begins budget process, establishing budget calendar and guidelines.
  - Director reviews budget guidelines and obtains direction from the board for budget preparation.
- *Late summer:* After discussion, director drafts a preliminary budget for the board.
- *Late summer/early fall:* Board reviews preliminary budget and approves or revises the budget. The director makes adjustments to the budget based on board input and submits the board-approved budget request to the municipality.

- *Fall:* Budget is reviewed by the mayor, administrator, or finance committee, who may request additional information from the director or board. Municipality holds a budget hearing, reviews budget, and may make amendments. Public may comment on programs or services before a final budget is approved.
- *Year end:* Depending on municipal appropriation, the director and board may need to adjust expenditures.

## **Sources of funding**

*Local tax support:* The bulk of the funding for most Wisconsin public libraries is provided by the municipality or county that established the library (or, in the case of a joint library, each of the municipalities).

Fines may be a source of library revenue, but the practice of charging fines is the subject of debate in the library community. Some argue that fines' effectiveness in recovering materials is questionable, the revenue stream is minimal compared to other sources, and fines can create ill feelings among borrowers, or discourage use of the library. Others say that, without fines, patrons would not consistently return materials on time. In establishing a fine policy, a library board should consider not only the possible revenue but also the potential negative public relations effects.

Under Wisconsin Statutes Section 43.52(2), public libraries may not charge fees for information-providing services. Fees and charges for such things as making computer printouts and using a copy machine are permitted. Most fees, charges, and sales by public libraries may be subject to the Wisconsin sales tax and any county and special sales taxes

*County support:* Under the county funding section of the law (Wisconsin Statutes Section 43.12), counties are required to pay each public library in the county or in an adjacent county at least 70 percent of the cost of library services provided to residents of the county that do not maintain a public library. The only exception to this requirement is counties with a population over 500,000. Cost calculations for this requirement are to be based on total library operating expenditures not including capital expenditures and expenditures of federal funds. Some counties provide higher levels of support, or may have additional agreements to reimburse for cross-municipal borrowing (compensation when the borrower from one community that provides library service instead uses another community's library).

Other county library funding considerations:

- Municipalities can exempt themselves from the county library tax if they tax themselves for library service at a higher tax rate than the county. [Wis Stats. 43.64(2)(b)]

*State funds:* While Wisconsin does not directly fund public libraries with State funds, library systems are operated with funds appropriated by the State, based on the library's system membership, and your library system may provide grants or project funds to member libraries.

*Federal funds:* The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) program supplies seed money for projects that improve library services. The Wisconsin LSTA program is administered by the Division for Libraries and Technology in the Department of Public Instruction. Libraries can apply for grants in specific competitive categories. Other non-competitive categories are available to library systems, which may be distributed to member libraries.

## **Donations and Grants**

Grants and gifts can be an excellent source of supplementary funds for special projects. In addition, community citizens are often willing to make significant donations to cover part or all of the costs of a new or remodeled library building.

Grants or donations should never be used to justify reducing or replacing the community's commitment to public funding. By doing so, you risk disenfranchising your benefactors-donors may stop giving, volunteers may disappear, and granting organizations may cease awarding grants to your library if they see that their efforts are resulting in reduced public funding for the library instead of improved service. (See also [TE 24: Library Friends and Library Foundations.](#))

## **Desirable budget characteristics**

There are four practical characteristics that your budget document should include.

1. *Clarity:* The budget presentation should be clear enough so every board member, every employee, and every municipal governing body member can understand what is being represented.
2. *Accuracy:* Budget documentation must support the validity of budget figures, and figures must be transcribed and reported carefully, without variation from the documentation.

3. *Consistency*: Budget presentations should retain the same format from period to period so that comparisons can be easily made. All budgets are comparative devices, used to show how what is being done now compares with what happened in the past and what is projected to happen in the future.

4. *Comprehensiveness*: Budget reports should include as complete a picture of fiscal activities as is possible. The only way to know the true cost of the library operation is to be certain that all revenue and expenditure categories are included within the budget.

## **Terms and distinctions**

### *Types of budgets:*

A *line item* budget is probably the most common form, listing specific revenue sources (such as levy, county payment, fines, print & copy, etc.) and expenditure categories (such as personnel, supplies, equipment, print materials, AV, serials, etc.)

A *program* budget (sometimes called *cost center* or *product* budget) is further broken down into particular program or project areas of service such as reference, collection, and programs (which may have further divisions such as youth, adult, and outreach).

A *Zero base* budget (more common in private industry than in local government) requires that each program be justified each year.

### *Types of guidelines for budget development:*

When your municipality issues budget instructions, the guidelines may fall into the following categories. *Steady state* (or *cost to continue*) assumes no changes in the budget or allows only an increase for inflation. *Controlled growth* establishes a determined percentage for the total increase in expenditures. *Selected growth* establishes targeted or permitted increases (e.g., no new personnel but added funding for wage increases and health insurance). *Overall reductions* (what we dread most) calls for a set percentage for total decrease in expenditures, whereas *selected reductions* targets specific decreases (e.g. reduced staff hours; lower expenditures for materials and supplies; reduced hours and personnel).

Note that sometimes two types are combined. For instance, guidelines may allow increases for a set wage percentage increase and health insurance increases, but require a reduction in other expenditures. And, keep in mind that, while the municipality may establish budget goals with specific budget freezes in certain categories, it is ultimately the library board's authority to determine how the



municipal appropriation and other available funds may be used to address library service needs in the community.

### *Operating vs. capital costs*

In planning for the financial needs of the library and recording financial activities, it is important to keep operating and capital activities separated for reporting purposes. Operating activities are those that recur regularly and can be anticipated from year to year. Included as operating expenditures are staff salaries and benefits; books and other media acquired for the library; heating, cooling, and regular cleaning and maintenance of the building; and technology support contracts. Capital activities, in contrast, are those that occur irregularly and usually require special fundraising efforts or municipal borrowing. These would include new or remodeled library buildings, major upgrades of technology, or the purchase of expensive equipment or furnishings. Many municipalities have cost thresholds for purchases or projects to be considered capital expenses, such as projects in excess of \$5000. You should present the operating and capital activities separately in your library budget. Some municipalities may have separate budget processes for capital requests, since they may borrow for large projects, then include the debt retirement in the general budget.

### *Revenue vs. expenditures*

In both operating and capital budgets, you will need to show revenue (or income) and expenditures. Revenue should be broken down by the source of the funding—for instance, municipal appropriation, county reimbursement, system state aid, grant projects, gifts and donations, fines and fees. Expenditures are sometimes grouped in categories with lines representing similar products or services—for instance, personnel costs (salaries, wages, benefits, and continuing education), general operating costs (including office supplies, utility and communications costs, building and equipment maintenance, and insurance), contract fees (such as shared automation system), and collection costs (broken down into print materials, audio and video materials, and electronic services).

### *Municipal accounting vs. library accounting*

As specified in state law, municipalities or counties make payment from the library fund only upon authorization of the library board. [Wis Stats. 43.58(2)] Since the municipality must hold the funds, it will also keep records of how those funds are used. This municipal accounting should be available to the library board upon request. However, even though your city, village, or county is performing this accounting function, it is advisable for the library to also maintain its own set of records. This will allow the board and director to know the status of finances in a



timely manner (if there is a delay in getting figures from the municipality) and to help assure that there are no mistakes in how the municipality has recorded transactions and balances. In addition, there are types of funds (gifts, bequests, devises, and endowments) which can be managed directly by the library board; if the board chooses to manage these funds it must, of course, keep records for accountability. [Wis Stats. 43.58(7)] (See also Administrative Essential #14: Managing the Library's Money.)

## Sources of additional information

*Library of Michigan Financial Management Guide*, Chapter 6, "Budgeting," Lansing Michigan, Library of Michigan, 2014. Available here: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hal\\_lm\\_finmanref3\\_66296\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hal_lm_finmanref3_66296_7.pdf)

DPI article, "Sales Tax Issues for Wisconsin Public Libraries:" <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/legislation-funding/sales-tax>

Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant program: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/lsta>

## Sample Format of a Minimal Library Budget

Note: This simplified budget roughly corresponds to the *Wisconsin Public Library Standards* 2005 minimum operating budget of \$60,000. Actual amounts will vary depending on local needs.

Operating Income	2005 Actual	2006 Budget	1st 6 months 2006	2006 year end estimate	2007 Budget Request
Municipality	\$ 34,700	\$ 35,500	\$ 35,500	\$ 35,500	\$ 36,300
County	\$ 22,000	\$ 21,800	\$ 21,800	\$ 21,800	\$ 22,000
State / library system	\$ 950	\$ 950	\$ 1000	\$ 950	\$ 1,050
Federal (LSTA)	\$ 550	\$ 800	\$ 385	\$ 800	\$ 1,050
Funds carried forward	\$ 0	\$ 600	\$ 500	\$ 600	\$ 525
Fines	\$ 700	\$ 900	\$ 390	\$ 900	\$ 945

Donations	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 360	\$ 500	\$ 500
Fees/other*	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 45	\$ 100	\$ 105
Transfer from gift fund	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 0	\$ 500	\$ 525
<b>Operating Income Total</b>	<b>\$ 60,000</b>	<b>\$ 61,650</b>	<b>\$ 59,980</b>	<b>\$ 61,650</b>	<b>\$ 63,000</b>
Operating Expenditures	<b>2005 Actual</b>	<b>2006 Budget</b>	<b>1st 6 months 2006</b>	<b>2006 year end estimate</b>	<b>2007 Budget Request</b>
Salaries and wages	\$ 24,150	\$ 24,700	\$ 13,100	\$ 24,700	\$ 25,650
Employee benefits	\$ 16,750	\$ 17,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 17,000	\$ 16,350
Books	\$ 6,465	\$ 6,700	\$ 3,900	\$ 6,700	\$ 7,035
Periodicals	\$ 1,330	\$ 1,400	\$ 600	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,470
Video materials	\$ 950	\$ 1,000	\$ 400	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,050
Audio materials	\$ 380	\$ 400	\$ 300	\$ 400	\$ 420
Software and databases	\$ 475	\$ 500	\$ 200	\$ 500	\$ 525
Contracted services	\$ 950	\$ 1,000	\$ 450	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,050
Staff, board continuing education.	\$ 950	\$ 950	\$ 650	\$ 950	\$ 1,050
Public programming	\$ 475	\$ 500	\$ 200	\$ 500	\$ 525
Telecommunications	\$ 1,425	\$ 1,500	\$ 450	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,575
Utilities	\$ 3,800	\$ 4,000	\$ 2,800	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,200
Equipment repair	\$ 475	\$ 500	\$ 300	\$ 500	\$ 525
Supplies	\$ 1,425	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,575

<b>Operating Expenditures Total</b>	\$ 60,000	\$ 61,650	\$ 33,700	\$ 61,650	\$ 63,000
Capital Income	<b>2005 Actual</b>	<b>2006 Budget</b>	<b>1st 6 months 2006</b>	<b>2006 year end estimate</b>	<b>2007 Budget Request</b>
Municipality	\$ 2,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Capital Expenditures	<b>2005 Actual</b>	<b>2006 Budget</b>	<b>1st 6 months 2006</b>	<b>2006 year end estimate</b>	<b>2007 Budget Request</b>
Equipment replacement	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,200	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
New shelving		\$ 1,000	\$ 200	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
<b>Capital Expenditures Total</b>	\$ 2,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 1,400	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Total of All Expenditures	\$ 62,000	\$ 64,650	\$ 34,750	\$ 64,650	\$ 66,000

\*State law requires that all information-providing public library services be provided free of charge. (See *Trustee Essential #8: Developing the Library Budget* for details.)

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# AE 14: Managing the Library's Money

## **This Administrative Essential covers:**

- Approval of library expenditures
- Financial record-keeping/statements/reports
- Gifts and donations
- Sales tax
- Annual report
- Audit
- Sample Trust/Gift Fund Report

## **Approval of library expenditures**

Wisconsin law gives the library board exclusive control over the expenditure of library funds. It is the board's responsibility to review expenditures each month and approve them before the bills are paid.

43.58(2) The library board shall audit and approve all vouchers for the expenditures of the public library and forward the vouchers or schedules covering the same, setting forth the names of claimants, the amounts of each claim and the purpose for which expended, to the appropriate municipal or county financial officer or, in the case of a school district, the school district clerk, with a statement thereon, signed by the library board secretary or other designee of the library board, that the expenditure has been incurred and that the library board has audited and approved the bill. The municipal, county or school district governing body shall then pay the bill as others are paid.

Although the board-approved budget and policies should delegate authority to the director and staff to make purchases of library materials and for regular operation of the library, the board has the responsibility to review all purchases and monitor the budget during the course of the budget year.

Bills should not be paid until approved by the library board. This would suggest that, in order for the bills to be paid in a timely manner, the library board must meet each month. An exception is permitted for regular wages or salary or other recurring payments (such as utility bills, lease payments, and maintenance contract

fees), which may be paid and then audited and approved by the library board at its next regular meeting. [Wis Stats 43.58(2)(b)]

When auditing expenditures for approval, the library board does not need to review the individual bills, although the actual bills should be available for inspection if there is a question about the expenditure. The list of bills should include the date of the invoice, the account number for the expenditure, the vendor, a brief explanation of the materials or services purchased, and the amount to be paid. A sample schedule follows this chapter.

The municipal clerk, treasurer, or financial officer may be able to generate such a list of bills with the municipal accounting system, but be careful that the invoices are submitted and entered in an encumbrance, but are not released for payment until the clerk, treasurer or financial officer receives formal authorization from the library board. You may wish to maintain a parallel system for entering and tracking expenditures to be used for comparison with the municipal system. This may be done with a basic spreadsheet program, or with off-the-shelf accounting software.

The following basic library financial procedures are listed in *Trustee Essential 9*:

1. The library board approves the annual budget and any budget adjustments necessary during the year.
2. The library director is delegated authority to make purchases within the budget and according to board-approved purchasing policies.
3. The library director is responsible for preparing vouchers for all expenditures, a monthly list of all library expenditures, and a monthly financial statement.
4. At the monthly board meeting, the library board audits and approves payment of the expenditures, and reviews and approves the financial statement.
5. The board secretary, or other designee of the board, signs the vouchers and they are forwarded to the municipal clerk for payment.
6. Expenditures approved by the board for payment out of any library-held trust/gift fund accounts are made by the board treasurer or other designee of the board. It is recommended that board policy or bylaws require two signatures (one being the board treasurer or president) for any payment or withdrawal from a library-held account.

## **Financial record-keeping/statements/reports**

In order for the board to efficiently consider the library's overall budget status, the library director should submit a monthly financial statement that shows:

- A list of revenue (income) received during the prior month, as well as the total monthly and year-to-date income.
- Total funds available and anticipated receipts.
- A list of bills to be approved for the month (see above), sorted by budget categories.
- Accumulated expenditures for the year by expenditure category and total expenditures for the year.
- A list of all library accounts and their balances, including the library fund with the municipality, as well as any trust accounts the library maintains.

For any funds in library custody, it is important that a library adopt financial practices and controls that meet municipal audit requirements. Libraries holding substantial funds should have an investment policy approved by the library board.

## **Gifts and donations**

Wisconsin library law provides that library boards have exclusive control of all funds collected, donated, or appropriated for the library fund. [Wis. Stats 43.58(1)] Expenditures of funds held by the municipality for library purposes are made as approved by the library board, with actual disbursements made by the municipal treasurer. However, library boards can maintain both control and custody of gift and donation funds under certain conditions. Wisconsin Statutes s. 43.58 (7) provide three alternatives for the handling of gift, bequest, devise, or endowment funds provided to the library:

1. The library board may transfer the funds to the treasurer of the municipality or county that established the library.
2. The library board may deposit the funds with a public depository (a bank, credit union or savings and loan in Wisconsin, or the Local Government Investment Pool). A library board resolution must designate one or more public depositories to be used for these funds.

3. The library board may entrust the funds to a financial secretary (a library board member elected annually by the library board to serve in this capacity) who may invest the funds as permitted under s. 66.0603 (1m) or 112.10 (4); or may delegate investment authority for the gift, bequest, devise, or endowment as permitted under s. 66.0603 (2) or 112.10 (5).
4. The library board may pay or transfer the donation, bequest, or endowment to a charitable organization described in section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code whose purpose is providing financial or material support to the public library. Examples of such organizations might include the library's Friends group or foundation.

A financial secretary must be bonded for at least the value of the funds or property held. The financial secretary must also make at least annual reports to the library board showing in detail the amount, investment, income, and disbursements from any funds held. An annual report on all the library's donation and trust funds must be attached to the annual report provided to the municipality and the Division for Libraries and Technology.

## **Sales tax**

While sales *to* public libraries are exempt from the sales tax, sales *by* public libraries generally are not exempt from sales tax. Most public library sales, including sales of photocopies and computer printout charges, are subject to the Wisconsin sales tax and any applicable county or stadium sales taxes. Other library sales, such as sales of withdrawn books, used equipment, and used furniture, are also subject to the sales tax, as are library rentals, such as the rental of best-selling books and videos. Wisconsin Administrative Code section Tax 11.05 details the sales tax rules for state and local government agencies. Public libraries fall under the same general rules that apply to other state and local government agencies.

Library fines, including charges for materials that are not returned and charges for a duplicate library card, are specifically exempt from the sales tax. Also exempt are photocopy and records search charges made in response to an official public records request.

To simplify the collection of sales taxes, libraries (and other organizations) do not need to add sales tax onto their taxable sales and charges-they can consider sales tax as part of the price charged. However, to do this, customers must be notified by a sign, or receipts should be provided clearly stated that "prices include sales tax." If the prices include sales tax, taxes due are calculated not on total receipts, but on the receipts before taxes (for example, if total receipts are \$1000 including taxes, and

the applicable sales tax rate is 5%, taxes are due not on the full \$1000, but instead on \$1000 divided by 1.05, or \$952.38). When libraries submit funds from sales, fines, fees, etc. to their municipality, they should carefully indicate the funds that are taxable and the funds that are non-taxable.

Any organization making sales subject to the sales tax must have a seller's permit from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR). The library should track sales so that required returns can be filed with the DOR along with sales tax payments. If a municipality, or any of its sub-units (including the library), makes taxable sales, the municipality must handle the necessary filing and tax submission under its seller's permit.

Friends of the Library groups often conduct book sales and other sales as fundraisers. These sales may be exempt from the sales tax if they meet certain tests. Sales by non-profit organizations on less than 20 days per year or having total taxable receipts of less than \$15,000 per year are exempt "occasional sales" if the sales event does not involve an admission charge and paid entertainment, and the organization does not have and is not required to have a seller's permit for other purposes. A public library may also qualify for the "occasional sales" exemption if it meets the same tests as part of the municipality.

If a library contracts with a private vendor who owns and has control over the photocopy machines in the library, the vendor, rather than the library, is responsible for collecting sales tax. The same would be true for pay phones or vending machines owned and controlled by a private vendor.

Some organizations believe that if they call payments "donations," they can avoid the obligation to collect sales tax. To qualify as a donation, a payment must be totally voluntary, with no restrictions imposed on customers who do not pay the stated or suggested amount. For example, if a library requests a \$.10 donation per computer printout, the library cannot place any restriction on computer printouts made by people who do not make the donation. The DOR looks at the facts surrounding requests for donations to determine whether they are truly voluntary donations, or, instead, sales subject to the sales tax.

## **Annual report**

Each year the library is required to submit a report on its activities to the Division for Libraries and Technology and its municipal or county governing body.

43.58(6)(a) Within 60 days after the conclusion of the fiscal year of the municipality or county in which the public library is located, the library board shall make a report



to the division and to its governing body. The report shall state the condition of the library board's trust and the various sums of money received for the use of the public library during the year, specifying separately the amounts received from appropriations, from the income of trust funds, from rentals and other revenues of the public library and from other sources. The report shall state separately the condition of the permanent trust funds in the library board's control, shall state in detail the disbursements on account of the public library during that fiscal year and shall contain an estimate of the needs of the public library for the next succeeding fiscal year.

(b) The report to the division shall include data concerning library materials, facilities, personnel, operations and such other information as the division requests.

The report collects information to establish

- the certification status of the library director;
- the municipal appropriation for the library, used to determine that the library meets or exceeds minimal levels to qualify for library system membership;
- the relative amount of service to municipal residents and library users from outside the community;
- revenues and expenditures for the previous year (this information can be used to determine cost for services if the library must submit a statement to the county clerk for county payment for library services under s. 43.12).

Besides reporting information required by Wisconsin law, the annual report also collects data to be submitted to the National Center for Education Statistics for the Library Statistics Program. The Center, located within the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences, is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education. Information gathered for the annual report is also used to prepare the Wisconsin Public Library Standards. Finally, the annual report serves as the basis for the Wisconsin Public Library Directory, and provides the Division with a list and contact information for the library board.

The annual report filing information is distributed to public libraries through the library systems by the Division each January. Library directors must gather the necessary information on library finances, circulation, programs, services, personnel, and technology, to enter into the online report form. The report, along with the Public Library Assurance of Compliance with System Membership Requirements, must be approved by the library board and signed by the president

of the library board and the library director before being submitted to the Division via the library system. A separate "statement concerning public library system effectiveness" is prepared, approved by the board, and submitted directly to the Division.

It also is important that the library annual report include attachments detailing the status and activity of any and all trust funds held by the library, as required under Wisconsin Statutes s. 43.58(7)(d): "The treasurer or financial secretary shall make an annual report to the library board showing in detail the amount, investment, income and disbursements from the trust funds in his or her charge." The report must show the activities any gift funds or donations that the library holds. The report should also show donations, gift funds, or trust funds held by the municipality on behalf of the library or entrusted in a public depository (e.g., a bank or savings and loan facility). A sample Trust/Gift Fund Report follows this chapter.

## **Audit**

In most communities, public library financial records should be audited along with all other records maintained by the municipality or county that serves as the library's fiscal agent. Funds controlled directly by the library board, such as gift funds or endowments, should be audited annually by the municipality, county, or an outside auditor. If the municipality does not audit the library's financial records, the library board could request that they do so, or the board could budget for an outside auditor to conduct an annual audit of the library account. The library board should examine audit reports and carefully follow any audit recommendations.

For any funds in library custody, it is important that a library adopt financial practices and controls that meet municipal audit requirements. Libraries holding substantial funds should have an investment policy approved by the library board.

## **Sources of additional information**

Smith, G. Stevenson, *Accounting for Librarians and Other Not-for-Profit Managers*. 2nd ed.  
Chicago, American Library Association, 1999.

Explains fund accounting to people without bookkeeping backgrounds. Includes chapters on major fund groups. May be more information than necessary for small libraries whose municipalities maintain accounts.

*Ohio Public Library Accounting Handbook, 5th edition* Ohio Library Council, 2014. <http://olc.org/resources/publications/>

Public Library Service (PLS) Data, collected by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS): <https://www.ims.gov/research-evaluation/data-collection/public-libraries-survey>

Wisconsin Public Library Standards: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/library-standards>

Wisconsin Public Library Statistics: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/data-reports/service-data>

Instructions and Forms for the Wisconsin Public Library Annual Report: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/data-reports/annual-report>

## Sample Public Library Monthly Schedule of Bills

Date	Account	Vendor	Invoice #	Description	Amount
10/5	Children's books	Book Vendor, Inc.	1086	new children's books from reviews	\$433.40
10/5	YA Books	Book Vendor, Inc.	1086	new young adult titles from reviews	\$103.52
10/5	Adult fiction	Book Vendor, Inc.	1086	new adult titles from reviews	\$577.78
10/7	Replacements	Book Vendor, Inc.	1098	Replacement books	\$47.50
10/15	Gas & Electric	Central Power	847521	Service 9/10-10/10	\$875.50
10/15	Wages/Salaries	Sally Director		First half October salary	\$1500.00
10/15	Wages/Salaries	Jim Clerk		First half October wages	\$823.00
10/15	FICA			FICA withholdings first half October	\$177.71
10/17	Continuing Ed	WLA Association		Registration for annual conference, meals	\$210.00
10/18	Office Supply	Nibs Supplies	938203	Copier paper, toner, printer ribbons, other supply	\$398.28
10/20	Telephone	Tincan Telecom	03827	Billing 9/113-10/12	\$175.34
10/20	Contracted Services	J&E Cleaning	932	October cleaning charges	\$778.00

10/22 Periodicals	Sample Tribune	Paper delivery October- December	\$325.00
<b>Total:</b>			<b>\$6425.03</b>

## Sample Public Library Financial Statement

<b>Income/Revenues</b>						
<b>Income Source</b>	<b>Budget Amount</b>	<b>Month Received</b>	<b>Year Received</b>	<b>Not Received</b>	<b>% Received to date</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>APPROPRIATION</b>	\$179,500		\$179,500		100%	
<b>LSTA GRANT</b>	\$2500	\$790	\$1200	\$510	80%	Via library system
<b>COUNTY PAYMENT</b>	\$85,300			\$85,300	0%	
<b>COPIER/PRINTING</b>	\$1800	\$315	\$925	\$875	51%	
<b>ROOM RENTAL</b>	\$450	\$25	\$220	\$230	49%	
<b>GIFTS, DONATIONS</b>	\$1500	\$75	\$800	\$700	53%	
<b>SYSTEM PAYMENTS</b>	\$750	\$300	\$750	\$0	100%	Aid, SLP
<b>TRANSFERS</b>	\$2500			\$2500	0%	From fund balance
<b>OTHER REVENUES</b>	\$300	\$25	\$155	\$145	52%	rebate
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$274,600</b>	<b>\$1530</b>	<b>\$183,550</b>	<b>\$90,260</b>	<b>67%</b>	
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Expended this month</b>	<b>Expended this year</b>	<b>Balance</b>	<b>Percent Expended</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Personnel</b>						
WAGES/SALARIES						
FICA						
WISCONSIN RETIREMENT						

INSURANCE

CONTINUING  
EDUCATION

**Subtotal:**

**Building**

GAS & ELECTRIC  
UTILITIES

TELEPHONE

WATER & SEWER  
UTILITIES

CONTRACTED  
SERVICES

**Subtotal:**

**Materials**

BOOKS

PERIODICALS

AUDIO  
RECORDINGS

VIDEO  
RECORDINGS

ELECTRONIC  
RESOURCES

PROCESSING

**Subtotal:**

**Other**

AUTOMATION  
SYSTEM RENTAL

OFFICE SUPPLIES

PUBLIC NOTICES,  
POSTAGE

EQUIPMENT

EQUIPMENT  
MAINTENANCE

BUILDING  
MAINTENANCE

**Subtotal:**

**Total:**

## Sample Library Trust/Gift Fund Report

Note: A public library may maintain custody of gifts, donations, bequests, devises, or endowments. (See Trustee Essential #9 for details.) The library's annual report must show the amount and investment of and income and disbursements from any funds held by the library board.

Date	1-Jan Beginning Balance	Deposits (New Donations)	Interest Earned	Expenditures	Balance
Anytown National Bank CD #123456					
1-Jan	\$ 5,000				\$ 5,000
30- Dec			\$ 300		\$ 5,300
Anytown National Bank					

# AE 15: Policies and Procedures

## **This Administrative Essential covers:**

- Typical library policies
- Policy development steps
- Legally defensible policies
- Policy versus procedure
- Policies for Results
- Policy Audit
- Policy and procedure manuals

Policies establish a framework for efficient library operations, with clear directions for staff to operate the library. Understandable rules and regulations for the public also promote equitable use of the library's facility and collections.

As the library director, you may have started your job with a set of policies already in place. Or you may have discovered that the previous director and the library board gave inadequate attention to the library's policies and failed to review them regularly. Or perhaps few policies were in place and those gave no indication of when they had been adopted or reviewed. Occasionally directors discover that commonly accepted staff procedures do not consistently mesh with established policies. In such cases, the director should encourage the library board to review existing policies and consider others that may be appropriate to local needs.

The library board is responsible for adopting policies that govern the operation of Wisconsin public libraries. Wis Stats 43.42(2) provides that "Every public library shall be free for the use of the inhabitants" . . . "subject to such reasonable regulations as the library board prescribes in order to render its use most beneficial to the greatest number. The library board may exclude from the use of the public library all persons who willfully violate such regulations." Furthermore, Wisconsin law establishes that the library board has exclusive charge and control of the library budget and of the library facility and property. In addition, the library board hires the library director and establishes the duties and compensation of library employees. The board may wish to consider and develop policies for

- the public's use of the library and its resources
- the staff and director's duties in operating the library and maintaining the collection
- the conditions of employment and benefits for library personnel

Although the library board adopts policies, it is often the library director who is called upon to recommend policy and create drafts for the library board's consideration. Not only will the library director be involved with the policy development, but it will also be the director's responsibility to disseminate the resulting policies and implement procedures to carry them out.

It may seem like there will be little time left to do anything else in the library, but policy development and administration does not have to consume an inordinate amount of time. When done well, the resulting policies and procedures actually streamline library operations and save time otherwise spent unraveling problems.

## **Typical library policies**

Typical policies might include:

- Personnel (including grievance process, and utilization of library volunteers). Because of their complexity, the library board may wish to adopt the municipality's personnel policy and then delineate where the library's policy differs.
- Circulation (loan periods and renewal policies, holds and reserves, fines and damage charges, process for recovering overdue materials, confidentiality of patron records, inter-library loan, equipment lending)
- Collection Development (encompassing materials selection scope; responsibilities for selection; range and priorities for collection development; withdrawal of obsolete materials; gift and donation policy; censorship and reconsideration of library materials)
- Patron conduct (food and drink, harassment or threatening behavior, noise, unattended children)
- Facilities (including meeting room use, public notices and displays, hours of operation, security emergency procedures, and use of the copier and other equipment)



- Computer and Internet use

How many policies a library adopts and how they are sub-divided is up to the library board to determine based on the size of the library, the range of services, and local circumstances. The board and director may wish to review policy manuals from other libraries to establish the method for organizing most appropriate for the locality.

## **Policy development steps**

The following basic steps provide for careful development and review of library policies:

1. Director, with staff (and perhaps public) input, identifies need and develops recommended policies.
2. Board discusses, revises (if necessary), and approves policies.
3. Director makes sure staff and public are aware of policies.
4. Director and staff enforce policies uniformly.
5. Board reviews policies on a regular cycle so all policies are reviewed regularly.

The frequency of review for individual policies may also vary depending on local circumstances, but policies should be reviewed regularly, at least every three years. Perhaps one or two policies could be reviewed at each library board meeting until all of the policies have been considered, and, if necessary, revised. It is important that the library board approve all policies in properly noticed public meetings (see Administrative Essential #19: Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law for details) before the policies are implemented and enforced.

In consideration of policy matters, it is important that you give adequate time and attention to the many complex issues that may be involved. All library policies should promote the best interests of the community and be consistent with the library's mission and long-range plan. You should be satisfied that a policy is legal, clear, reasonable, and can be applied without discrimination (see "Legally defensible policies" below). Consider all ramifications, including the possible affect on the public image of the library—good policies should be in the public interest and promote a positive public image of the library.

After a new policy is established, it is important that the policy be clearly documented and disseminated to the staff and public. It is helpful to organize all library policies into a policy manual available to all staff and readily available to all library users. If the policy will alter or affect the public's use of the library (such as a reduction in hours open, or a substantial change to the fine policy), consider posting the change prominently or issuing a press release to publicize the change. Many libraries are now posting their policies on their web sites to help make the public more aware of the library's services and policies (see <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/policy-resources> for examples).

Although disagreements during the development of policies are natural, all library staff and trustees should work cooperatively in the implementation and enforcement of approved policies. Also, the staff and public should have some means of communicating exceptions, unusual circumstances, and complaints to the director. The director can convey appropriate issues for the board's consideration in amending or revising the policy. Challenges to policies are most common in the areas of material selection and public Internet access (for more information on dealing with challenges to policies, see Administrative Essential #24: Collection Development).

## **Legally defensible policies**

It is important for policies to be legal. Illegal policies can open the municipality to liability. (See Trustee Essential #25: Liability Issues, for more information.) Below are four tests of a legally defensible policy:

Test #1: Policies must comply with current statutes and case law. For example:

- A library policy charging patrons for use of computers in the library would be contrary to Wisconsin Statutes Section 43.52(2), which requires that public library services be provided free of charge.
- A policy that says the library's public meeting room cannot be used for religious purposes would be unconstitutional under a Wisconsin federal district court decision.

Test #2: Policies must be reasonable (and all penalties must be reasonable). For example:

- A library policy that says, "All talking in the library is prohibited, and anyone who talks in the library will permanently lose library use privileges," is clearly an unreasonable rule with an unreasonably harsh penalty.

Test #3: Policies must be clear (not ambiguous or vague). For example:

- A policy that says, "Library use privileges will be revoked if a patron has too many overdue books," is too vague to be fairly administered.

Test #4: Policies must be applied without discrimination. For example:

- If a library charges fines, it cannot give preferential treatment to some individual patrons. For example, if the library sometimes waives fines, that waiver must be available to all patrons on an equal basis—not just to friends of library staff or to politically important people.

Many libraries find that it is helpful when developing or revising policies to review the policies of other libraries. While it may be tempting to adopt another library's policy as written, be careful that you and your board consider local circumstances and practices and adapt the policy to your needs after careful consideration and review. Many examples of Wisconsin public library policies and other resources are available from the Wisconsin Public Library Policy Resources Page at <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/policy-resources>.

## Policy versus procedure

Traditionally, policies are approved by the board and then procedures are established by the director or management so that staff can apply general policies to specific situations. The policies establish and delineate general rules for library operations. Procedures, on the other hand, detail the specific steps that the library executes in implementing those policies. Policies make statements of what is being established and why. Procedures detail the specifics of "how," "when," and "who."

Recently, the Public Library Association has promoted a model where policies, procedures, and guidelines are all included in a policy manual format that incorporates the needs of the board, the staff, and the public.

## Policies for Results

In 2003, the American Library Association published *Creating Policies for Results: from Chaos to Clarity* in its PLA Results series. Written by Sandra Nelson and June Garcia, the book outlines a comprehensive series of steps to inventory library policies and regulations, assess and compile them, and create an effective policy manual.

Under the system, library policies have three or four components:

1. The *Policy Statement* explains WHY the library wants to establish a policy.  
Example: *The Hypothetical Public Library will not charge for the use or loan of materials it owns or obtains. However, the Library may assess fines or fees to encourage the return of Library materials and charge for services including, but not limited to, photocopies and meeting room rentals.*
2. The *Regulation* establishes the specific written rules defining the policy and establishing WHAT must be done. For the example above, the regulation for a loan policy might list the type and quantity of materials that may be borrowed, as well as the length of time for loan, the conditions under which renewals may be made, the circumstances under which fines would be assessed, and distribution of notices and bills.
3. The *Procedure* is a step-by-step outline of HOW the library will carry out the policies regulations. Usually written by library staff and approved by department heads or the library director, it is good practice to distribute the procedures to the library board as well so they are aware of the impact of the policy implementation. Make sure the procedure reflects achievable and expected practices. For our example, the procedure might delineate how overdue notices are generated and distributed.
4. Finally, *Guidelines* may also be necessary to give examples of best practices in specific circumstances or to delineate when exceptions may be made.  
Guidelines for the example above might describe the circumstances under which exceptions may be made, or how to deal with difficult situations at the circulation desk.

## Policy Audit

The full *Policies for Results* process may be more complex than is necessary or achievable for a smaller library with limited staff. But the process does include good suggestions for conducting a policy audit when current policies may not be collected together in a uniform form or where procedural inconsistencies may exist in executing the policies. An audit will help to determine what variant policies are in use, where they are kept, and what procedures are being used to carry them out. Then the most recent versions can be compiled into a single volume with a table of contents. As you and your board review, update, or add policies, they can be put into a standard format for consistency and ease-of-use. Be sure to indicate on each policy when it was first adopted, when it was last reviewed, and when the most recent revisions were made.

## Policy and procedure manuals

A combined policy and procedure manual provides an organized, single reference point for library policies and the procedures you staff needs to carry them out. But including all policies, procedures, and related guidelines may result in a volume of unwieldy proportions. Circulation staff may find it unnecessary to know about procedures for technical services. More and more, libraries are compiling their policies and related procedures online where they can be easily updated and readily located and searched. By posting policies on the Web, increased public access and awareness is achieved, assuming the policies can be easily located.

Keep in mind that the policy manual is the framework to support all your library operations. It is both an outline for services as well as a legal defense when those services are called into question. As legal documents, they are ultimately the board's responsibility, but it is the director's duty to ensure that staff and the public are aware of policies and that they are enforces uniformly and consistently.

## **Sources of additional information**

The Wisconsin Public Library Policy Resources Page at <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/policy-resources> includes examples of policies and links to other resources.

Nelson, Sandra S., *Creating Policies for Results: From Chaos to Clarity*, Chicago, American Library Association, 2003.

An exhaustively thorough manual for auditing, developing, and implementing library policies. Appendixes include comprehensive policy development templates including questions to consider on policy and regulations. May be more appropriate for mid-to-large public library.

Turner, Anne M., *It Comes with the Territory: Handling Problem Situations in Libraries*, revised edition. McFarland & Company, Inc., Jefferson, North Carolina, 2004.

Focuses on "behavior policies" and methods to contend with difficult patrons and situations. Also includes sample policies and procedures.

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# AE 16: Planning for the Library's Future

## **This Administrative Essential covers:**

- The importance of planning
- Planning basics
- PLA's New Planning for Results
- Wisconsin Library Standards
- County library standards
- Technology planning
- A plan outline

## **The importance of planning**

Library directors must work with their boards not only to enforce the library's policies, but also to operate and develop the library and its resources within the constraints of the budget. But to effectively carry out library operations, the director needs to have a well developed plan of service, as well as a clear sense of the library's mission.

Effective planning should be a coordinated effort between the library board, the director, as well as other library staff and members of the community. Although planning can be an uncertain process for some of those involved, the shared process can cause individuals to rethink how library services are provided, and the end result can be a shared community vision for the library. The plan will take into account the resources available to the library as well as community needs. If all parties involved in the process fully participate, the results can be fruitful and satisfying to all.

Planning provides a number of benefits to the library and its community, including

- Confirmation and articulation of the library's purpose
- Analysis of use, needs, and resources
- Establishing a framework for priorities and decision-making

- Identification of opportunities and problems
- Consideration of the community's needs in the development of the library's program
- Tangible evidence that the library is managed effectively
- Qualification for additional outside funding sources

## Planning basics

Each library board needs to determine the appropriate level of detail and complexity for their library's planning process. Such factors as the size of the community, the local planning resources available, the length of time since the last planning process, and other identified needs may affect the process. This brief chapter cannot substitute for planning resources, literature or consultants to lead to effective results, but directors can work with board members can determine what is needed and then take appropriate action to get there. A good planning process is analogous to a successful banquet recipe: the necessary resources, tools, and ingredients must be assembled; the appropriate cook selected; sufficient time allocated for mixing and cooking; then the community can be assembled to enjoy the results.

A strategic plan, no matter how elaborate or detailed, should include three essential components: a concise statement of the library's mission, clear indication the service to be provided to the customers, and a vision of the library in the future. A good mission statement is concise, general, clear, and memorable. The actions to achieve the services should be specific, achievable, and measurable. And the vision should be a coherent and inspiring vision of what the library will be at a specified point in the future.

If your library has a strategic plan that is regularly reviewed, adapted, and implemented, then the process may be fairly simple and straightforward. You might collect input from the community to determine if the library's mission and vision is still appropriate, and adapt the plan to newly perceived needs. If the library has not developed a plan in some time, then a more comprehensive process may be in store.

## PLA's New Planning for Results

In 2001, the Public Library Association published *The New Planning for Results: A Streamlined Approach*, by Sandra Nelson (Chicago: ALA, 2001). That work, further developed and refined by Sandra Nelson, became *Strategic Planning for Results* (Chicago: ALA, 2008). The books present a comprehensive planning process



for public libraries, with appropriate steps, time-frames, and necessary work forms to achieve results. The method encourages the use of a committee and facilitator and outlines a five-month process that involves assembling participants and information, determining the library's service responses, establishing goals and objectives, developing the final plan, informing the community, and putting it all into action.

The selection of an appropriate facilitator is an important consideration, and the right choice will depend on local circumstances. While it is tempting to hire a library planning professional to conduct the process, the cost can be prohibitive. Sometimes a community leader or local official has the skills to conduct the process, but if they do not, the result can be an outcome that is misdirected or poorly developed. While a library professional can bring certain knowledge of the field to the discussion, sometimes a facilitator who is not from the field can ask clarifying questions that help to provoke thought, challenge assumptions, or direct the flow of discussion. If you do not have budget to hire a professional, you may be able to recruit an experienced facilitator for little or no expense from your local businesses or schools. Your regional technical college may offer a quality assurance program or specialists to assist businesses and non-profits in the area.

## **Wisconsin Library Standards**

The [Wisconsin Public Library Standards](#) publication provides a useful tool in a library's planning process. At a minimum, the checklists can be reviewed periodically to determine that the library meets at least a basic level of service, that its policies and programs meet statutory requirements for library service and library system membership, and that its staff are adequately equipped and trained to provide service to the community. But the document can also be a valuable tool to help measure where the library is in relation to others and to help set a realistic target of where the library wants to be.

Small libraries may determine that more comprehensive planning processes, such as the PLA's Planning for Results, are too complex or involved to be considered for local needs. Libraries may wish to take on an abbreviated process based on the Standards document. The planning might involve steps such as:

- Use the checklists to target areas for improvement
- Use annual report data to compare your library against quantitative standards



- Use annual report data to extract comparable information for targeted comparisons

The planning group might combine such comparisons with a three-question process:

- *What business are you in?* Ask yourselves "who, what, where, why, how?"
- *What do your customers want?* Rely on the information you hear from public.
- *How do you get to what your customers want?* Be creative, build local relationships.

However you decide to go about your strategic planning, make it happen! Be sure to make the process inclusive of library staff, local officials, community members, and the business community. Be prepared to provide the necessary resources and information. Plan your planning so that the participants know how much involvement and responsibilities they will have. Once the plan is completed, promote it, execute it, re-allocate resources as necessary, measure and review results, and make appropriate adjustments, but not unilaterally. A good planning process includes a plan for evaluation and review. A strategic plan is never truly finished, since periodically the process should be repeated.

## **County library standards**

Counties may improve county-wide library services by establishing library planning committees to create a plan of service ensuring that public library services are available for all residents of the county. Those plans may also include minimum standards of operation for public libraries within the county, and the plan for library service can also require cross-municipal compensation among the libraries within the county. [Wis. Stats 43.11 (3) (d) and (e)]

If your county has adopted minimal standards as part its plan of service, you should work with your board to ensure that you have sufficient funding and resources to meet those standards each year, or your municipality could lose the right to exempt itself from the county library tax. [s. 43.64 (2m)]

## **Technology planning**

Computing and networking technologies, in all their various forms, are an integral part of almost all library services. To help make certain these technologies are used in an efficient and cost effective manner, libraries should develop a technology plan.

Ideally, any technology plan will be part of a broader long-range plan encompassing all library services.

Although technology plans are not required for a public library to qualify for E-rate discounts (the regional system technology plan is sufficient for member libraries), effective library plans should include components for technology since library services are so infused and influenced by the availability of computing resources, the Internet, and changes in information media formats. Besides addressing local needs for adequate workstations, training, and support, the plan should dovetail with the library system plan.

## **A plan outline**

This plan outline is based on five-month model in *The New Planning for Results*(Chicago: ALA, 2001).

### *Month 1: Plan to Plan*

1. Decide on the process to be used: The board commits to a process and determines a facilitator
2. The board establishes participants for the planning committee: The director or staff may arrange logistics, and coordinate invitations or recruit family members.

### *Month 2: Invent the Future*

3. Determine the Community Vision. Visualize success-what would it include? Articulate elements of the vision, those affected, the benefit & result.
4. Identify Community Needs: Collect data, conduct S.W.O.T. analysis, compare & prioritize statements or outcomes.
5. Determine the Library's Service Responses.

### *Month 3: Assemble Future*

6. Draft Goals and Outcomes
  - Goal: The outcome your community (or target group) will receive because the library provides a particular service response
  - Outcome: The way the library will measure its progress toward a goal.

7. Identify Activities: What is required to achieve the goals?

8. Determine Resources Required: Personnel, partners, materials, equipment, facilities, funding.

*Month 4: Inform Everyone*

9. Write the Plan, committee review, Board approval.

*Month 5: Move Into the Future*

10. Communicate the plan to staff, the governing body, and the community

*Ongoing: Re-allocate resource and implement the plan.*

## **Sources of additional information**

For more information consult [Trustee Essential 11: Planning for the Library's Future](#) and the Wisconsin Public Library Standards, <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/library-standards>

Matthews, Joseph R., *Strategic Planning and Management for Library Managers*. Westport CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2005.

Provides tools and techniques for managers for planning, including development of mission and visions statements.

Nelson, Sandra, *The New Planning for Results*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2001.

Nelson, Sandra, *Strategic Planning for Results*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2008.

A comprehensive planning process, including the expanded services responses, for public libraries, with work forms and resources. A companion volume, *Implementing for Results*, is planned for publication.

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# AE 17: Membership in the Library System

## **This Administrative Essential covers:**

- Benefits of library system membership
- History of Library Systems in Wisconsin
- Membership requirements for libraries
- Membership requirements for counties
- Required system services
- How to be a good system member

Before the development of Wisconsin's public library systems in the 1970s, many state residents had no legal access to any public library. In addition, the service available to many other state residents was substandard at best. The goal of library systems has been to provide all Wisconsin residents with access to the high-quality library service needed to meet personal, work, educational, and community goals.

## **Benefits of library system membership**

The basic dynamic of library system membership is simple, yet the results can be powerful: a public library agrees to certain membership requirements, including the agreement to serve all system residents equitably; in return, the library system provides a wide range of primarily state-funded services that enhance local library service. Ideally, through this relationship, all residents of the state gain improved library service, as well as the ability to use whichever library or libraries best serve their needs. Municipal libraries participate in library systems because residents benefit from this arrangement.

In return for agreeing to the membership requirements, membership in a system brings benefits to libraries and their patrons because state aid:

- expands and improves the interlibrary loan network and other resource sharing
- provides specialized staff assistance and continuing education opportunities to local library staff and trustees

- facilitates delivery services and communications
- guarantees mutual borrowing privileges
- expands the use of new technologies
- supports various other cooperative services and projects

## **History of Library Systems in Wisconsin**

Wisconsin's library system law, providing funding for coordinated regional library services, officially went into effect in 1971 when Senate Bill 47 was signed into law. The creation of public library systems fostered the establishment of a strong network of resource sharing and mutually beneficial interdependence. The actual creation and development of public library systems in Wisconsin was a voluntary and gradual process. No county or public library is required to be a member of a library system; yet, as of this writing, all of Wisconsin's 72 counties and over 380 public libraries are library system members. Wisconsin's seventeen public library systems developed in distinct ways in response to the needs of their member libraries and area residents. The systems have continued to evolve as changes in society, resources, and technologies create new demands and opportunities.

The seeds for regional library services had been planted years earlier and several regional services had coordinated cooperative services. In 1956, the American Library Association published *Public Library Service: a Guide to Evaluation with Minimum Standards*, which introduced the library system concept. That same year the United States Congress enacted the Library Services Act (LSA) to provide federal funding for extending and improving public library service to rural communities. The Wisconsin Library Association and the Wisconsin Free Library Commission submitted a plan for LSA funding. Also in 1956, twenty-five public libraries joined together to form the Southwest Association of Public Libraries. In 1959 they obtained LSA funding to establish an ordering and processing center serving five counties, the predecessor to the Southwest Wisconsin Library System. Also that year, a regional library system was established in northwest Wisconsin serving five counties, the precursor of the Northern Waters Library Service.

In 1963, the Free Library Commission, WLA and the Wisconsin Library Trustees Association adopted *A Design for Public Library Development in Wisconsin: Standards for Measuring Progress*. The following statement from that document helps to convey the vision

"Simply stated, the library system concept means that only by working together, sharing services and materials, can libraries meet the full needs of their users. Each

public library, whatever its size, is an important link in a system of libraries joined together either formally or informally."

That document described a shared vision of public library systems that ultimately led to the development and adoption of 1971 Senate Bill 47 through a series of events.

- In 1965 the Wisconsin Library Commission was folded into DPI and became the Division for Library Services.
- In 1966 WLA approved a legislative study program calling for legislation to "implement the library system concept and interlibrary cooperation in Wisconsin.
- In 1968 the Library Development and Legislative Committee (LD&L) of WLA developed a report for the legislature.
- In 1969 that report was introduced as Senate Bill 363.
- The Senate Education Committee recommended the bill be revised, and
- In 1971 Senate Bill 47 was introduced and, after extensive legislative efforts by WLA, was passed by both houses.

The bill included the following declaration:

"Recognizing the importance of making quality library resources and services readily available to all of the citizens of Wisconsin, the legislature, through this act, seeks to modernize library laws for public and school libraries, to promote development and improvement of public libraries through library systems and to provide maximum opportunities for cooperation among all types of libraries in order to encourage the most effective use of the library resources in this state."

## **Membership requirements for libraries**

Membership in the library system has considerable benefits to the public library, but member libraries also have certain requirements and responsibilities. In addition, library systems provide a wealth of resources to assist public libraries and their directors in library administration and operation.

Your library must meet these six statutory requirements to be a member of a library system:

1. Your library must be established and operated according to the requirements of Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 43. Among other things, Chapter 43 requires that a properly appointed library board control the library building, library expenditures, library policies, hiring and supervision of the library director, and determination of the duties and compensation of all library staff. (See other Administrative Essentials for details on these requirements, including Administrative Essential 3: [Who Runs the Library?](#); 11: [The Library as Employer](#); 14: [Managing the Library's Money](#); 15: [Policies and Procedures](#); as well as Trustee Essential 18: [Library Board Appointments and Composition](#).)
2. Your county must belong to the library system and must meet the system membership requirements for counties (see "Membership requirements for counties" below).
3. Your municipal governing body (or county board for a county library) must approve a resolution authorizing your library to participate in the library system.
4. Your library board must approve an agreement with the library system to participate in the system and its activities, participate in interlibrary loan of materials with other system libraries, and provide to all residents of the system the same services, on the same terms, that you provide to local residents.
5. Your library board must employ a library director with the appropriate certification from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (see Trustee Essential 7: [Library Director Certification](#) for details), who works in the library at least 10 hours per week during which the library is open to the public.
6. The library must be open to the public a minimum of 20 hours per week and must expend at least \$2500 per year for library materials.

## **Membership requirements for counties**

Your county must meet these two statutory requirements to be a member in a library system:

1. Your county must approve a county library plan that meets the requirements of Wisconsin Statutes Sections 43.11(3) and 43.13(1) (see <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/legislation-funding/county-library-plan> for details of these requirements).



2. Your county board must approve an agreement with the library system to participate in the system and its activities and to furnish library service to county residents who do not live in a library municipality.

## **Required system services**

Library systems must provide the following in order to receive state aid:

- Technology and resource sharing planning
- Referral or routing of reference and interlibrary loan requests
- Electronic delivery of information and physical delivery of library materials
- Training for member library staff and trustees
- Professional consultant services
- Support for library service to users with special needs
- Backup reference, information, and interlibrary loan services from the system resource library
- Planning with other types of libraries in the system area
- Service agreements with all adjacent library systems
- Agreements with each member library that require those libraries to serve all residents of the system area on the same basis as local residents

The Division for Libraries and Technology monitors compliance with these requirements. Each library system is allowed considerable flexibility in developing specific library system service programs so that each system can best meet the needs of the residents of its particular geographical area and the needs of its member libraries. For example, a system in a largely rural area with many small libraries will probably need to devote more resources to professional consultant services than a system in a largely urban area. Each area of the state will have unique needs that the library system can help address.

## **How to be a good system member**

Having an effective library system is a result of not only the system staff but also the member libraries. You will get the most value from your system, and make the



system more valuable to all the members, by being aware of system services, utilizing them when necessary, participating in system projects and programs, and contributing to the system by serving on committees or advisory boards. There are four components to effective system participation:

*Evaluate:* Find out what your system has to offer and determine how those services might be useful to your library. Also learn the roles of the system consultants, and what role the system resource library provides through its contract. As you use the system and become familiar with other libraries in your region, you will be in a better position to contribute suggestions for system services in the future.

*Participate:* Systems not only provide direct services to libraries, but also provide a framework for collaborative activities among the member libraries. Besides delivery, training and interlibrary loan, systems have also leveraged developments in technology and communications to maximize the benefits of library automation through sharing of integrated library systems. Some systems have discount purchasing agreements with vendors for databases or technology support; others coordinate group purchase and rotation of certain collections among smaller libraries such as large print or audio books.

*Cooperate:* Be prepared to work as a team. Remember, while system participation is optional, the benefits can be substantial for your library and your library users. But a system cannot be all that each of its members desires. In order to maximize the benefits from limited resources, you and other members of the system will need to cooperate on services and may need to compromise to find a common ground.

Also, library systems are a vehicle to explore and develop cooperation among other types of libraries in the region. In order to foster resource sharing with special, academic, or school libraries, your system may ask its member libraries to consider resource sharing or services that have appeal to a broader constituency.

*Contribute:* When possible, be willing to assist your system by serving on special committees or on the system advisory board. Or your system may coordinate mentor or advisor programs among its members, to help direct requests for expertise to members who can offer help. You can also help your system by staying aware of developments in the library field and suggesting how they might be incorporated by the system or its member libraries. Finally, your library can also contribute to an effective system by having your board members or members of the community participate on the public library system board.

## **Sources of additional information**

Contact your library system staff. Contact information is available here:  
<https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/directories/systems>

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## Administrative Essential 18

### **Library Advocacy**

One of the responsibilities of a public library director is to act as an advocate for the library.

In simple terms, a library advocate is someone who understands the value and importance of public library service and who communicates that value and importance to the community, government leaders, and other decision-makers.

Your primary function as a library advocate will be to provide clear, accurate, and timely information on library issues to people who need it in order to make sound decisions on those issues. This information can be provided orally or in writing.

Libraries need their directors to act as advocates for several reasons. Pressures on local, county, and state budgets makes it harder than ever for libraries to obtain adequate funding.

Because public libraries have a unique place in local government, their needs may not be as readily understood by government officials as those of other units of government, and a greater effort is needed to tell the library story.

In addition, because library systems primarily provide “behind the scenes” services, an extra effort is sometimes needed to make government officials aware of their services and the value of those services to the public.

### **Establish priorities for advocacy**

Since the advocacy role is a basic duty of a library director, it’s important to channel these energies carefully. Early each year, the library board acting as a whole should decide which of its goals or positions to advocate most strenuously. Emphasis will vary by library. For instance, you and the library board might work for the adoption of an improved library budget, seek support for enhanced library technology, or inform the public of the need for a library building program. What is important is that your library board decides the areas of emphasis and how board members and the director will go about advocating those goals or positions.

Your goal as an advocate is to shape the local decision-making process, which requires an understanding of how decisions are made in the community and who must be influenced in order to achieve favorable outcomes.

## **Keys to Effective Advocacy**

- Cultivate relationships (particularly with decision makers and community leaders)
- Reach out to those that may not understand the importance of libraries
- Listen as much as you speak
- Be non-partisan when representing the library
- Know the political process at all level

## **Ways to act as an advocate**

As an advocate, you can influence decision-makers by:

- Speaking to civic groups about library needs and issues.
- Talking to friends about the library, its role in the community, and its needs.
- Writing letters to the editor of the local newspaper.
- Testifying at local and state budget hearings.
- Talking and writing to state and federal legislators about the needs of the library.
- Contributing to a library newsletter that is sent to decision-makers.

Your work as a library advocate is never done. Each success leads to a new area of effort. Library advocacy does not represent a narrow commitment to a single issue—it's an ongoing commitment to supporting library issues in a wide range of ways.

You should never advocate for one candidate over another in an election on library time or with library resources under any circumstances. If there is an important issue (such as your budget) on the table, you should not directly ask citizens to support your cause, but should instead invite them to "make their views known" and provide them with information as to what public officials to call and how to do so. This way you can avoid the perception of conflict but still get you the support you need.\*

A Friends of the Library group is also a good avenue for advocacy. Since it is a group of volunteers who actively support the library they may be in better position to make direct contact with local, regional, and state officials regarding specific issues.

### **Sources of Additional Information:**

You and your library board members are not alone in advocating for high-quality public library service. There are a number of groups that share your belief in the value of public library service and can provide information and support you in advocacy efforts. Some of these groups are listed below, along with other tools to help you advocate for your library.

Your library system staff

Division for Libraries and Technology (<http://pld.dpi.wi.gov/>)

Government Accountability Board (<http://gab.wi.gov/>)

Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) (<http://wla.wisconsinlibraries.org/>)

Wisconsin Library Trustees and Friends (WLTF) (<http://wla.wisconsinlibraries.org/wltf>)

United for Libraries (<http://ala.org/united/>)

Who Are My Legislators web page (<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/Pages/waml.aspx>)

Contact information for your United States Senators (<http://www.senate.gov/>)

Contact information for your United States Representatives (<http://house.gov/representatives>)

\*Based on WLA article by Peter Hamon.

# Administrative Essential 19

## Managing the Library Facility

The library board, under s. 43.58 (1), has exclusive control over the library facility. The day to day operation is delegated to the library director. In order for the director to maintain a well run facility regularly scheduled building checks should be conducted. In some instances the municipality or county may provide or coordinate services for the building. In other cases the library may be totally responsible for upkeep. Either way it is ultimately up library board to provide a safe and inviting facility to the public.

Although tight budgets and staff reductions may make it tempting to dispense with regular building checks and maintenance, the outcome is likely to be more expensive. Some routine practices can prevent failure of vital equipment; others help to maintain a safe and efficient operation, and may prevent accidents or possible fines when building or safety codes are overlooked.

Facility issues worth a regular review can be roughly split into three categories. The first encompasses the physical plant and its maintenance. The second relates to safety and emergency concerns. And the third area focuses on the public image of the library.

The detail and complexity of the periodic reviews of the building depends on the size of the library, the systems installed in the building, and the staff or financial resources available. But in all libraries, periodic building reviews enable issues to be identified and addressed before repairs become more costly. In the case of building safety, early correction of issues can prevent unfortunate accidents or costly lawsuits. And, ultimately, the library building will be more pleasant and serviceable to the community. Since maintenance and replacement costs can be anticipated it is a good idea to include them in the planning process. Some larger projects may require a sizable outlay and may need to be included in a capital budget rather than as routine maintenance in the operating budget.

### The Physical Plant

Library directors, especially new ones, can be surprised and overwhelmed by the complexity of modern library buildings. Even older buildings can have electrical, ventilation or plumbing systems that can challenge even an expert's skills. The director should first locate or compile an inventory of equipment and determine what periodic checks may be required. If the building has recently been built or renovated, documentation for any new fixtures, equipment and systems may have been compiled and provided by the contractor. If you are concerned that some essential maintenance issues may not be apparent, the city engineer or building inspector may be able to help identify issues to be included in the review plan. The library board or employees, past or present, may also be able to provide details or insights. If all else fails, request that the library board approve enlisting an engineering firm to review the building, inventory the equipment, and help develop a maintenance plan. Because the issues and needs of the library building may not differ from other municipal buildings, the library board or director should first check to see if the library can dovetail with the municipality's maintenance plan. Your city, town, or village may have maintenance or public works employees who can conduct routine maintenance such as changing filters, checking boilers, and lubricating air handlers either for no charge, at a reasonable fixed rate, or on a cost recovery basis. The municipal support might even extend to basic plumbing and electrical repairs. In other cases, the

public works department may be willing to assist in contracting for necessary service checks and repairs. Be sure that the library board is aware of any resulting agreements and how charges, if any, are to be assessed. In some cases, the costs or availability of direct municipal support may be such that the library is better off contracting with a private firm for maintenance or repairs. Some components of the building that might require periodic checks or maintenance include:

- Heating Ventilating and Air Conditioning. HVAC systems can be as simple as a boiler and windows that open, or incredibly complex with overlapping systems and controls that may be integrated into a computerized control system. But even a simple boiler may require semi-annual checks and water conditioning. Other systems can require lubrication, belt checking, cleaning, or balancing. Humidity control systems may require periodic checks of drain lines or cleaning to remove deposits. Outside or rooftop condensing units should be checked and cleaned. Ignoring routine maintenance of a component can lead to failure and repairs or physical damage that far exceeds the cost of maintenance, whereas periodic maintenance can improve efficiency and extend the life of the system components.
- Check the roof to ensure its integrity and utility. Flat roofs may require clearing of scuppers or central drains. Ignoring clogged gutters and downspouts can lead to interior flooding or damage. Be cognizant of the seed activity of trees in the area to protect against clogging of drains or equipment.
- Elevators and lifts require annual state safety inspections, but periodic (quarterly or monthly) lubrication and inspections by an elevator contractor can prevent failures and lead to a state inspection without incident. Be sure your elevator maintenance firm has adequate access to parts and supplies; you do not need to contract with the original vendor (and can save by obtaining competitive bids), but the technician must be familiar with your equipment and controls.
- Check other aspects of the building's exterior envelope. Windows and door seals, caulking and weather-stripping should be checked and repaired for energy efficiency and to prevent mold or other moisture damage. Exterior light sensors may require cleaning. Cracked or leaking gas-filled windows should be replaced to maintain their insulation value. Shrubby or trees may need to be trimmed to prevent interference with the building or roof. While rarely required, brick buildings should be checked periodically for tuck pointing or other mortar repair. Check for erosion or deterioration of the foundation.
- Computers that centrally control or operate systems, such as surveillance or HVAC systems, may themselves need to be maintained, upgraded or replaced. Internet connections or data lines for fire alarm or security monitoring should be properly maintained. Failing to renew a monitoring contract could expose the library to unnecessary risks.
- Regular sealing and restriping of the library's parking lot or driveway can extend its life. The municipality may be able to include the library's asphalt surfaces in its street maintenance program. Similarly the sidewalks should be regularly checked for cracks or heaving segments, and repaired as necessary.

### Safety Systems and Emergency Procedures

Some building safety issues require periodic walk-throughs to ensure a safe environment; others involve alarm or other systems that may require periodic maintenance.

- Fire alarm, sprinkler, and security systems may include interrelated components that require periodic safety checks to comply with local or state building codes. Smoke alarms must be tested

and certified. Also, fire extinguishers should be checked regularly and periodically recharged. Your city or village may be willing to include the library building in their testing or maintenance contracts. A walk through for fire safety may prevent a citation from the fire marshal. Your fire department may be able to assist identifying issues and review your fire safety and evacuation procedures.

- Check security and emergency lighting systems, whether outdoors, in areas where safety may be a concern, or inside, where batteries and bulbs on emergency backup lights may require replacement.
- Exits should be checked regularly to make sure that signs are in place and emergency lights are functioning, that doors are not blocked, and that locks are working properly. Doors equipped with alarms to prevent use except in emergencies may need to be checked. Alarms may have batteries that require replacement.
- First aid kits should be checked and refreshed periodically, in addition to disaster supplies. The library's emergency plan should be reviewed annually with the board and staff, and copies kept at predetermined places.
- Evacuation procedures should be reviewed and practiced at least annually. Tornado Awareness and Fire Safety weeks offer good opportunities to coordinate tests with municipal or county agencies. Review operation of fire extinguishers, defibrillators, or other emergency equipment with staff.
- Be sure that cleaning supplies (chemicals) are stored and labeled properly, with Material Safety Data Sheets available when appropriate.
- The city or village risk management (insurance) provider may provide training or free safety reviews and ergonomic checks of work areas. By addressing safety issues proactively, the insurer's exposure to claims is thereby reduced.
- Maintain a registry of keys issued; re-core locks as necessary to ensure building security. Check that file drawers or cabinets with sensitive or protected information are kept locked.

If you contract with a private company or service for periodic maintenance or safety checks, they might urge you to include full parts and labor coverage for repairs in the contract. Be aware that such contracts are a financial benefit to the vendor, and that, as equipment ages, the costs of such all inclusive coverage may become unnecessarily expensive. The library board could instead consider establishing a reserve fund for repairs, replenishing the reserve each year as it is depleted. Or the municipality may agree to provide funding for unanticipated expensive repairs (such as the complete failure of a major air conditioning unit) from a central contingency fund, rather than by annual appropriations to the library's own equipment repair fund. Local circumstances dictate the most prudent action.

### The Library's Image

The public does tell a book by its cover, and the public perception of the library is also colored by the initial visual impression. When conducting a walkthrough of the building for new board members, employees, or public officials, solicit their impressions of the library's organization and appeal-their fresh outlook may identify issues in the building that have blended into the background for you. Directional signs that once made perfect sense to the library staff may now be confusing to the newcomer. What is the general appearance of the shelving, displays and bulletin boards? Does the library have the outward appearance of organization and efficiency, with enough eye-appeal mixed in? The library should appear neither harshly institutional nor unnecessarily whimsical.



- Check periodically that signs are simple, straightforward, and readable from typical vantage points. Review shelf headings and classification indicators to ensure they still correlate to the collection. Consider a peer review to identify areas of the collection that could be more logically or clearly arranged. Conduct cleaning at off-hours or at times of minimal library use. Work out an appropriate schedule with your employee or contractor for light, regular cleaning as well as periodic thorough dusting and cleaning.
- Regular cleaning of carpets not only improves appearance but can extend the life of the carpet pile.
- Be sure to review the library for ADA accessibility issues. Watch that furnishings, shelving or carts have not encroached upon required aisle widths, or that the expansion of the collection has not placed materials in unintentionally inaccessible locations.
- Consider the outside appearance of the library as well. The exterior should appear inviting and welcoming. Make sure signs are clear and library hours readable from the street. Event signs should be simple and clear.
- Work with your board and municipality to develop a reasonable landscape program to provide an attractive and vital appearance. Local garden clubs, service organizations, or dedicated Friends of the Library members might be willing to help with annual cleanups, installations, or mulching.

By developing and implementing regular, periodic reviews and maintenance of the library facility, the building will operate more economically, efficiently, and continue to serve and delight library users for years to come.

### **Sources of Additional Information:**

Your library system staff

American Library Association Building Fact Sheet:

<http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=libraryfactsheet&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=25417>