GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

Trustee Handbook

2016

Acknowledgements

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This Trustee Handbook provides only a general outline of the law and should not be considered legal advice.

Dear Library Trustee,

Congratulations on your appointment as a trustee of your public library! As you embark on this important role in your community, I would like to express my appreciation for your willingness to work to provide exceptional public library service to all residents. The public library is the heart and soul of every community, and the board of trustees ensures that it remains strong, vibrant and relevant to users with a wide variety of needs, hopes and dreams.

The library is open and welcoming to all, serving the educational, recreational and informational needs of its community. Its role in educational support, family literacy, economic development and community anchor cannot be overstated. With your commitment to advocating for library resources and to advising and supporting the library administration and staff as representatives of your community, our libraries will continue to be strong and successful across Georgia.

Library trustees own a special place in my heart, as they freely contribute their time and energy to this Board because they believe in the importance of free and strong public libraries in their communities. This generosity and dedication is vital to our success, and you are a wonderful example of the difference one individual can make in the world.

On behalf of my colleagues at the Georgia Public Library Service, I extend my gratitude for your leadership and service. We hope that this trustee handbook will be helpful during your tenure on the Board. Please call on us if we can assist you in any way.

Julie Walker
State Librarian

A Unit of the University System of Georgia

1800 Century Place, Suite 150
Atlanta, GA 30345-4304
tel 404.235.7200 fax 404.235.7201
www.georgialibraries.org

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Introduction

A trustee is part of a decision-making team that includes the rest of the trustees and the library director. For a board to function effectively, all members must bring enthusiasm, preparation and dedication to the task and have a firm understanding of the different roles played by the board and by the director and library staff.

This handbook consists of basic information needed by you, the trustee, to be an effective board member and library advocate. Each chapter includes sources of additional information that can help if you run into an issue or question not addressed.

Since the governance models of Georgia libraries are quite varied, the information supplied in various chapters won't necessarily apply to your type of library. We recommend that you consult your library's attorney if you have any questions about how the laws apply to your library. The information presented in this handbook is in no way to be considered as legal advice.

If you are unsure of the type of library you represent, you can:

- Ask your library system director
- Contact the Georgia Public Library Service office or search the online directory

How to use this handbook

Each chapter has its own focus and can be used individually as:

- Reference for specific questions
- Discussion starters for exploring topics that the board is interested in learning more about
- Guide to further resources on specific topics

or grouped into these themes:

- Chapters 1-4 What it means to be a trustee
- Chapters 5-8 Board meetings
- Chapters 9-11 Working relationships
- Chapters 12-16 Trustee duties
- Chapters 17-20 Working with others

Chapters 1, 3, 7 and 11 are especially well-suited as orientation tools for new board members.

You are embarking on important work that will have an impact on your community for years to come. Best wishes for a rewarding and effective term of service!

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What Is a Library?

Mission

The library's mission is to provide access to the world of information and ideas. In the past, that information was in manuscripts or books. The first libraries were scarce and expensive because they opened before the invention of the printing press, when books were painstakingly copied out by hand. Libraries served as archives and chained these rare volumes to the tables.

Times have changed. We are inundated with information 24 hours a day. Libraries no longer need to serve as guardians of a scarce resource. The role of the modern library is more about community impact than collections. Today's libraries are community centers and community builders connecting people to ideas. Libraries facilitate knowledge creation and are places of social engagement and learning. Today's library patrons should see opportunities to contribute and have a voice in the library. In the words of David Lankes: "*Bad libraries build collections, good libraries build services, great libraries build communities.*"

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the federal agency that oversees federal funding for libraries in the United States, recognizes public libraries as providing, at a minimum:

- Organized collection of printed or other library materials, or a combination thereof
- Paid staff
- Established schedule in which services of the staff are available to the public
- Facilities necessary to support such a collection, staff, and schedule
- Supported in whole or in part with public funds

Georgia has expanded on the IMLS definition to also include:

- The library has a governing board with a written constitution and bylaws, hires or appoints the library director and delegates to the director full responsibility for administering and managing the library, and ensures that library statistics and financial records are kept
- Offers sponsored public programming such as storytimes, book clubs, etc.
- Assistance in the use of library resources from qualified staff for general reference and information purposes as defined by library system policy
- Provides access to internet services on at least one computer dedicated to patron use

- Has minimum essential bandwidth needed to conduct business and provide public access computing
- The facility complies with building, fire, safety, sanitation and other federal, state and local codes and legal requirements with at least one well-maintained public restroom

Library systems in Georgia are established by county or municipal governments, or by agreement between or among them.

- County library systems serve only one county and have one or more buildings.
- Regional library systems serve two or more counties that share central operations for cost-effective delivery of services.
- There are also a few independent municipal libraries that do not belong to regional or county library systems (i.e. Smyrna). These locations are not eligible for state aid.

Core Principles

Libraries across the world adhere to a set of core principles.

Access
All information resources that are provided directly or indirectly by the library, regardless of technology, format or methods of delivery, should be readily, equally and equitably accessible to all library users.

Confidentiality/Privacy
Protecting user privacy and confidentiality is necessary for intellectual freedom and fundamental to the ethics and practice of librarianship. Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) §24-12-30 states that circulation records are confidential.

Democracy
A democracy presupposes an informed citizenry. The First Amendment mandates the right of all persons to free expression. The publicly supported library provides free and equal access to information for all people of the community the library serves.

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

Diversity

Libraries value our nation's diversity and strive to reflect that diversity by providing a full spectrum of resources and services to the communities we serve

Education and Lifelong Learning

To promote the creation, maintenance, and enhancement of a learning society, libraries encourage their members to work together with educators, government officials and organizations. These collaborations initiate and support comprehensive efforts and ensure that school, public, academic and special libraries in every community cooperate to provide lifelong learning services to all.

Intellectual Freedom

Libraries uphold the principles of intellectual freedom the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. Libraries resist all efforts to censor library resources and provide free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Intellectual freedom encompasses the freedom to hold, receive and disseminate ideas.

> *Censorship*
>
> The suppression of ideas and information that certain persons-individuals, groups or government officials – find objectionable or dangerous. The censor wants to prejudge materials for everyone. The United States Supreme Court has ruled that there are certain narrow categories of speech that are not protected by the First Amendment: obscenity, child pornography, defamation and "fighting words" or speech that incites immediate imminent lawless action. The government is also allowed to enforce secrecy of some information when it is considered essential to national security, like troop movements in time of war.

The Public Good

Libraries are an essential public good and are fundamental institutions in democratic societies.

Preservation

Preservation of information resources is central to libraries and librarianship.

Service

We provide the highest level of service to all library users. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

The American Library Association (ALA) endorses the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement, and the Freedom to View Statement. Copies of these statements are in the appendix. The core principles embodied in these ALA documents remain the foundation of libraries worldwide.

In addition to these principles, libraries must also adhere to federal and state laws such as copyright compliance, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the USA Patriot Act and the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

As a trustee and steward of the public trust, one of your duties is to ensure that your library adheres to these principles and follows federal, state and local laws.

Sources of Additional Information

- Lankes, David R. *Expect More: Demanding Better Libraries for Today's Complex World*. San Bernardino, CA: R. David Lankes, 2012.
- Minor, M.A. and Georgia Public Library Service. *Legal Issues in Georgia's public libraries, 2nd ed.* 2013.
- Library Laws in Georgia
    - Duties of Board of Trustees
    - Acceptable Use Policy for Internet Usage at Public Libraries
    - Unlawful Taking or Destruction of Materials
    - Civil Liability of Agents & Employees
    - Security & Immigration Compliance Act
    - Mandatory Reporting
    - Smokefree Air Act

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Types of Boards

There are two types of boards of trustees—governing and advisory. A governing board is one that has the final authority and responsibility for the library and its services. The governing board has both *legal* and *fiduciary* responsibilities, hires and fires the library director, sets policy, determines the library mission, and is **directly accountable** to the public.

An advisory board has the responsibility *to give input* into the library's planning process, policy setting, and marketing plan. An advisory board **does not** have the same legal and fiduciary responsibilities as a governing board, but the members are still representatives of the community and are extremely important volunteers and advocates for the library.

Regardless of whether the board is governing or advisory, both boards do have responsibilities in common. Both should know and understand the local ordinances and state laws that impact the library and its operations. Both boards should be familiar with the library's budget and where the funding is derived. Both boards should promote the library's budget to the funding authorities. Both boards should be involved in the planning process and both should have input into the developing of library policy. The most important role, however, is that both boards should be strong library advocates.

Selection and Makeup of the Board

Georgia law establishes how members of library boards are chosen, their term of service, and their duties and responsibilities.

Appointments to library boards are made by all governmental agencies that financially support the library on a regular basis. Supporting agencies may include cities, counties and school boards. The number of funding agencies will vary from county to county. Board structure (e.g., number of members, terms of office) is set forth in the constitution, which will specify how many members the board will have and define what funding agencies appoint members.

In regional systems, the governing board is constituted of representatives from each county board. In both cases, board members serve staggered terms for continuity of service.

Anyone is potentially qualified to be an outstanding library trustee, but most library trustees are selected for the library board because of their interest in the local community and the library. Often, the library board recommends individuals to the appointing authorities to fill board vacancies. All government

agencies that regularly contribute to the library make appointments to the library board as specified in the board's constitution.

A new library trustee should bring a strong interest in the library and its welfare. Board members need to have personal experience, skills and talents that will benefit the library and its services to the community. Balanced representation should characterize the library board with a representation of both men and women and representation from all community groups.

Ideally, the library board will work with all of the appointing bodies to ensure adequate representation of the library's service area by identifying individuals for appointment who complement existing board members. Potential or new trustees need to know that service on the library board will take time and energy. Trustees serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred during library-related business.

Typically a library board of trustees is composed of five to seven members, although the number of funding agencies and the board's functions will determine its size. The chair position should be rotated among board members. One good way to involve board members in the work of the library is to appoint members to standing committees reflecting the authority of the board. Special committees may be appointed to deal with special situations.

The funding agencies can help the library in an infinite variety of ways. They may help with purchasing, or with private fundraising 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 county services. For example, the library director may attend department head meetings with other administrators. Just as the county is a partner in providing library service, the library can be a strong partner in providing county service to the community.

Sources of Additional Information

- Minor, M.A. *Constitutions and Bylaws for Georgia Public Libraries.* Georgia Public Library Service, 2012.
- Doyle, Robert P. and Robert N. Night. *Trustee Facts File, 4th ed.* Chicago: Illinois Library Association, 2012.
- Hopkins, Bruce. *The Legal Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards; a Guidebook for Board Members, 2nd ed.* Washington: BoardSource, 2009.
- Moore, Mary Y. *The Successful Library Trustee Handbook, 2nd ed.* Chicago: American Library Association, 2010.
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The Trustee Job Description

General Function

Participate as a member of a team (the library board) to protect and advance the interests of the broader community by effectively governing the operations and promoting the development of the local public library.

Qualifications

- serious commitment to the provision of library services within your community
- ability to attend regularly scheduled board meetings and be an active member of the library board
- willingness to become familiar with Georgia library law, standards for libraries and policies for the public library state grants programs
- commitment to the principles and practices for ensuring that the library provides broad and equitable access to the knowledge, information and diversity of ideas needed by community residents

Principal Activities

1. **Prepare for and attend regular board meetings.**
   The library board meeting will be the primary opportunity for you to contribute to the development of your library. To get the most from the meetings and to be able to share your skills and knowledge, you must attend each meeting after having read and thought about the issues and topics that will be discussed. While you and your fellow trustees are busy people, the full board is required by state law to meet at least four times a year to conduct business. The bylaws indicate how often the board meets. You can contribute to the library by assuring that the meetings are properly announced in accordance with Georgia's open meetings law.

2. **Approve the budgets presented by the library director and assume responsibility for the presentation of the library's fiscal needs to its supporting agencies.**
   One of the library board's most important responsibilities is to work to obtain adequate financial support so that the library can provide a meaningful program of services for the residents of the area. As a trustee, your focus should be on those services and what is required to provide them to the public in the most beneficial manner. In most library systems, the director prepares a budget for board approval. Once a determination is made as to how much money will be needed, the request must be carefully and accurately prepared and then presented to the various funding agencies; for example, the county commission or city council. Trustees

should attend these meetings when budget requests are presented so that they can answer questions about need and account for how previous appropriations benefited the citizens and the community. After funding has been approved, the library board must monitor the use of these public funds to assure that they provide what was intended.

Each year, the library's financial statements are required to be audited or have an attestation engagement for agreed-upon procedures (AUP). All financial activity for the system, including that of affiliated libraries, must be included. The report should be made available to all governing board members annually and must be filed with Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS).

3. **Participate in the development and approval of library policies. Review policies on a regular, systematic schedule.**

   Money pays staff, buys materials and maintains the facilities, but a library cannot operate successfully without policies. These policies govern library programs and assure consistent treatment of all users and at the same time protect the resources of the institution. Developing and adopting these policies are important responsibilities of a library board. Each trustee acts as a contact with other members of the community and has the chance to hear about concerns or desires relating to the library. The comments you receive from the public can help you and the other members of the board address the community standards through thoughtful and fair policies. Understanding the feelings of community members and the challenges the staff faces in operating the library can prepare you to participate with other board members and the director in defending policies that may provoke controversy. As needs, processes and services change within the library, there will be a need to review, revise and add policies. It can be helpful for the board to establish a routine procedure for reviewing policies to be sure that they remain current. This is often accomplished by the board looking at individual policies at meetings throughout the year.

4. **If you are a governing board member, you will hire, supervise and evaluate the library director.**

   There may come a time when the library board must hire a new director. If this is required, deciding how the process is conducted and who is finally selected will be among the most important decisions a library board will ever make. A library director can be around for many years and have a significant impact on the tone and quality of library service. The library director often becomes the personification of the entire institution, so it is important that this task be given serious consideration and that each trustee take an active role in selecting and then welcoming and orienting the new director. Finally, in order to assure that you do not have to go

through this process unnecessarily, the library board needs to establish a regular procedure and schedule for assessing the administration of the library and providing suggestions for improvements. Your willingness as a trustee to participate in these processes will greatly contribute to the library's overall effectiveness.

The first step in hiring a director is identifying the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the position. Georgia requires that the director be eligible for state certification at the G-5 level or higher, that is, hold at least a master's degree in library science from an institution accredited by the American Library Association. Management skills are essential. The director's job description should be reviewed and updated as needed.

Advisory boards can be asked to take part in hiring a new director, but the final decision on hiring, firing and evaluating the library director falls under the responsibility of the governing board.

5. **Act as an advocate for the library through contacts with civic groups and public officials.**

Gathering information on community needs will certainly put you in contact with your community; the purpose of that activity is to focus development energies. Other kinds of contacts are also important, however and their purpose will be to raise awareness of the library and promote its services. At the core of effective politics is relationships. Since local politics are personal, your contacts on behalf of the library with public officials will advance the cause of your institution. In the same way, building rapport and networking with civic and service groups will advance your cause with the community and potential individual supporters. This is an area where an individual trustee can directly help the library in a significant way.

6. **Become familiar with principles and issues relating to intellectual freedom and equitable provision of public library services.**

Public libraries in our country and state are founded on the principle that for a democracy to function properly it must have an educated electorate and to be educated, people must have free access to the broadest possible array of information and ideas. Libraries, along with other institutions such as the press and the judiciary, have long stood as protectors of the individual's right to have the information that he or she requires to thrive in and contribute to society. Regardless of these basic rights, though, sometimes people seek to limit the access of others to certain ideas and presentations. It is a responsibility of the library board, and each member of that board, to make a commitment to the community's freedom of inquiry and expression and to be prepared to address calmly and

respectfully the challenges that may come before you. While the board must have a carefully devised process for addressing challenges and speak in a single voice on censorship issues to the public and the media, it is up to you as a trustee to take the time to become informed about the principles and issues. While it is said that a public library without something to offend everyone is not doing its job, it is not the job of the library board to offend, but rather to defend the rights of each citizen to search for the truth through his or her own journey. The nation's and the library's future relies on unrestricted access to information.

7. **Assist in the formulation and adoption of a strategic plan for the library. Periodically review and revise strategic plan.**
   Working through the budget process, developing policies, studying community needs and making contacts with individuals and groups prepare you for the valuable process of formulating plans for the library's future. Your library may be accomplishing great things already, but as the world changes, the library must change with it. Trustees, as the citizen representatives with detailed information about how the library functions, are in an ideal position to assist with planning. Your important role in planning will be to investigate, along with the library director, different planning options and then decide on the most appropriate process for your library. If additional resources are required to fulfill the plans, you can also help to establish the amount and identify sources. Finally, once proposed plans are approved by the full board, you can continue to participate by being active in the annual review of the library's plan, during which you can suggest revisions that will keep the library on course. A plan is a means to an end, and it will be the active participation of each trustee in the planning process that will offer ongoing strength and insight to the library board as it pursues its responsibility for library development.

Sources of Additional Information

- United for Libraries
- The Georgia Public Library Service Trustee Listserv
- Checklist for Effective Library Trustees, page 11

Checklist for Effective Library Trustees

- Be active and informed about library matters in general and of those affecting your library. Ask questions of the director and study the issues.

- Attend all board meetings and be fully prepared to participate knowledgeably.

- Question issues until you understand. Don't be reluctant to vote no on a proposal you don't understand or are uncomfortable about.

- Be a team player and treat your fellow board members with respect.

- Support board decisions even if you disagree. It is your responsibility to ask questions, to be as informed as possible, and to discuss openly in order to come as close to consensus as possible. A democracy works by the rule of the majority. Seek reconsideration in the future if circumstances change.

- Understand the roles of all involved - the board, director, staff, Friends, patrons, etc.

- Conflicts of interest by any board member are the concern of all members of the board. A trustee or family member may not receive any gain, tangible or intangible, in dealing with the library.

- Advocate for the library in every manner possible.

- Understand and respect the role of the director and support the director's administrative decisions.

- Always remember that your job is to provide the highest quality library service possible for your community.

CHAPTER FOUR
Who Runs the Library?

4

The mission of most public libraries is to support the educational, recreational and informational needs of the community. Everyone is welcome at the library, from the preschooler checking out his first book to the middle-aged breadwinner continuing her education by taking a class online.

Providing a large number of services to meet the needs of a diverse population requires a large supporting cast including trustees, the library director and staff. When all members of the team know their responsibility and carry out their particular tasks, the library can run like a well-oiled machine. When one of the players attempts to take on the job of another, friction may cause a breakdown.

If there is a mantra for governing boards, it is: "The board sets policy, the director operates the library with the assistance of staff." What does this really mean and what are the differences?

Sometimes the line between policy and operation is very thin and the differences are subtle. Basically, the board of trustees and the library director work as a team, just as the director must construct a team with staff. In order to work successfully, there must be a process of two-way communication, consultation and trust.

Community Involvement

If the trustees and the library director are to fulfill their responsibilities, both must be active in the community. Both must know the community to develop those policies and practices that bring the best possible library services to their community.

The board is likely to represent a variety of community connections. These connections can provide avenues to knowing and understanding the community and to advocacy for the library.

Trustees have a responsibility to stay informed, and the best way to do that is to regularly attend board meetings and to read and understand information presented to them about the library and its operation. They also have a responsibility to actively listen to community residents. It is equally important that they advocate for the library with community residents and with local, state and federal governmental representatives. In order to do this, trustees will need to answer questions and to explain library policies and practices. They need to work as a team with the library director because some questions, especially about library practice, are best directed to the library director. The director and staff must also be prepared to explain library policies and actively advocate for the library.

Developing Policies

There are several levels of decision-making involved in policymaking. There are many times when the board will ask the library director to analyze impacts before it

establishes a policy, and there will be times when the director will consult the board before proceeding with a specific course of action.

Often the director will call the board's attention to a need for policy in a specific area and may draft language for the board to consider. In other instances the board may identify a need for a policy and will either ask the director to draft language for board discussion and action or they may jointly develop specific language.

Sometimes the director will make decisions related to library operations and will simply inform the board of her/his actions, or perhaps ask for their consent for a proposed course of action. This latter course of action is probably wise in situations where it is not initially clear whether additional policy decisions will need to be made or where the distinction between practice and policy is not entirely clear. Discussion can usually clarify the issues and decisions can be made, often by consensus. Certain kinds of decisions may be delegated to the director.

Examples of Director and Board Roles and Responsibilities

Let's elaborate on the respective roles and responsibilities of trustees and director with several examples. Especially in large libraries, some of the tasks or decisions that are identified as the director's may be delegated to managerial or supervisory library staff.

Mission/Roles of the Library in the Community

It is the governing board's responsibility to determine the mission and roles of the library after a planning process that includes a great deal of input from residents of the community, and in coordination with the library director. These fundamental decisions need to be articulated in a mission statement and supported by policy and planning.

Once those fundamental decisions are made, it is the board's responsibility to hire a director who is in agreement with and can support the chosen roles. A more specific example of how this works: Board policy or the library mission states that the library is to be user friendly and a place where people feel welcome. It is the library director's responsibility to make it happen. It will involve setting expectations regarding attitudes of staff toward the library customers, training for staff, and establishing library practices and procedures that make users feel welcome and satisfied with their library experience. These are all responsibilities of the director.

Budget, Contracts, and Grants

The board approves the library budget, as drawn up and recommended by the director, but it is based on goals set by the board. The budget corresponds to the annual work plan for the director and staff. The board may suggest general policy directions for the budget, but the director in consultation with staff decides what is possible within budget constraints, and how best to meet the full range of needs. The director expends money within approved budget parameters and keeps the board informed. While trustees may review and approve bills/invoices each month, they

should not approve individual expenditures. The board should be informed by the director of any major changes needed in the budget and the proposed changes must have board consensus. Trustees should not be involved in adjustments made to budgets as long as those adjustments are within general budget parameters as approved by the board.

Contracts and/or grants should support the library's strategic plan. In some systems, the board approves all contracts but the contract or grant specifics will be drawn up and recommended by the director. Trustees must be kept informed of potential contracts or grants, and should provide input regarding the content or parameters of impending contracts or grant documents. Whether to apply for a particular grant or enter into a contract may be a policy matter, and then the board will make the final decision. There may be instances where the board determines that it is appropriate to delegate to the director the responsibility for signing agreements on behalf of the library.

Personnel

The board establishes overall personnel policies such as guidelines for salary and benefits, hiring practices and other personnel actions. The director implements personnel policies. Trustees should not become involved unless personnel policy changes are called for.

The library governing board hires the library director and sets salary and benefits. In this process, the board may seek input from library staff and/or community residents, but the ultimate decision rests with the board. In turn, the director hires library staff and the board is not involved in interviewing or selection. The board approves the salary schedule as drawn up and recommended by the director. It is the director's responsibility to decide where a job classification will be placed on that salary schedule.

The board must conduct an annual review of the administration of the library. The board and director should jointly set goals and expectations for the coming year. The annual review of the administration of the library will be based on how well those goals and expectations have been achieved. See Chapter 10 for more guidance on evaluating the director. The director should carry out annual performance reviews of library staff, set goals for staff performance and determine staff training needs. The board approves policies for staff training, attendance at conferences, workshops or classes, travel reimbursement and the like, but they are not involved in staff review.

Disciplinary actions related to library staff are a responsibility of the library director. Although the board sets disciplinary policy as part of overall personnel policy, board members should not become involved in specific disciplinary actions. Complaints made directly to board members must be referred back to the director for action. The director should always consult the library attorney on any disciplinary actions that may reach the point of hearings before a commission or a lawsuit. Trustees must certainly be kept informed and will probably need to approve expenditures for attorney fees.

Disciplinary action or firing of a library director is, of course, a governing board responsibility.

Collections, Hours, and Services

These are operational procedures that are the responsibility of the library director. The board of trustees sets the goals in its adopted plan and defines strategies for collections, access and services, but it is up to the library director and staff to implement the actions that meet these goals. Board members should never make operational suggestions to the library staff. Additions or changes to collections or services should be discussed with input from the library director at a regular board meeting.

Community Relations and Publicity

The library should have a public relations and marketing plan that encourages partnerships and cooperative ventures with community organizations. Public relations are a shared responsibility between the board and the staff and the message must be consistent.

Conclusion

It is up to the *director*, as the hired professional, to create the procedures needed to carry out the policies of the board and ensure that services are provided effectively and efficiently. The library board approves the director's recommendations for services. While the *board* alone can decide how many employees the library should have, it is the *director* who hires and supervises other staff. Except in extreme situations, library trustees should not be discussing library business with employees other than the *director*. The library board may solicit library staff input on the director's performance as part of a formal evaluation process.

Administration of the budget and expenditure of funds are frequent sources of misunderstanding regarding the division of labor between boards and directors. The library board must monitor the use of public funds, but this shouldn't be interpreted by individual board members to mean they must negotiate the necessity of every purchase with the library director. 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 materials to purchase or which is the most economical office supply vendor.

Sources of Additional Information

- Moore, Mary Y. *The Successful Library Trustee Handbook*, 2nd ed. Chicago: American Library Association, 2010.
- Reed, Sally Gardner and Jillian Kalonick*. The Complete Library Trustee Handbook.* New York, Neal –Schuman Publishers, Inc., 2010.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Board	The Director
Employ a competent and qualified library director	Act as the technical adviser to the board; recommend needed policies for board action; hire personnel and supervise their work
Determine and adopt written policies to govern the operation and program of the library	Carry out the policies of the library as adopted by the board
Determine the purpose of the library and secure adequate funds to carry on the library's program	Suggest and carry out plans for extending library services
Know the program and needs of the library in relation to the community; learn standards and library trends; cooperate with the library director in planning the library mission, and support the library director and staff in carrying it out	Prepare regular reports embodying the library's current progress and future needs; cooperate with the board to plan and carry out the library mission
Establish, support and participate in a planned public relations program	Maintain an active program of public relations
Assist in the preparation of the annual budget	Prepare an annual budget for the library in consultation with the board and give a current report of expenditures against the budget at each meeting
Know local and state laws; actively support library legislation in the state and nation	Know local and state laws; actively support library legislation in the state and nation
Establish all library policies particularly those dealing with books and material selections, Internet Use Policy, ADA, etc.	Select and order all books and other library materials
Attend all board meetings and see that accurate records are kept on file at the library	Attend all board meetings other than those in which the library director's salary or tenure is under discussion; may serve as secretary to the board
Attend regional, state and national trustee meetings and workshops, and affiliate with the appropriate professional organizations	Affiliate with the state and national professional organizations and attend professional meetings and workshops
Be aware of the services of the Georgia Public Library Service	Make use of the services and consultants of the Georgia Public Library Service
Report regularly to the general public and if an advisory board, to the governing board	Report regularly to the library board, to the officials of the local government, and to the general public

Source: Virginia G. Young, *The Library Trustee: A Practical Guide, 5th ed.* American Library Association, 1995

5

Organizing the Board for Effective Action

Constitution & Bylaws Basics

A constitution establishes the fundamental principles of an organization. It's a short document that broadly defines and describes the library board. Changing the constitution should be a rare occurrence.

Library board bylaws are the specific, detailed guidelines established by the library board that govern the board's own activities. Well-crafted bylaws help provide for the smooth and effective functioning of a library board. Because of their importance and level of detail, there should be a way to change them as needed.

The library's constitution and bylaws must comply with all relevant statutes. One of the requirements for the public library state grants program is that each governing board reviews the constitution and bylaws at least once every four years. All board meetings and board committee meetings must also comply with Georgia's Open Meetings Law (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1). State and federal laws supersede any local library bylaw provisions.

At a minimum, your library constitution should spell out:

- The name and location of the library system
- The library's purpose
- How many members the board has and how they are appointed
- What officers the board will elect and their titles
- State the library's contracting authority
- How the constitution can be changed

At a minimum, library bylaws should detail:

- The date, time and place for library board meetings. Public library boards are required to meet a minimum of four times each year.
- How to call a special or emergency meeting and when the board may go into closed session
- Definition of a quorum and attendance requirements
- The duties of the officers
- What standing committees are appointed, how they are appointed, and what they do (examples: personnel and finance)
- Provision for amending bylaws

Crafting Your Library Board's Bylaws

Because bylaws are so fundamental to effective (and legal) library board operations, great care must be taken when developing new bylaws or amending existing bylaws. The language of the bylaws must be clear and unambiguous since imprecise language can result in confusion and have unintended consequences.

For example, the bylaws should make clear that actions by the board's committees are advisory only. A library board committee cannot act on behalf of the full board—only actions by the full board have legal authority. Likewise, individual board members and board officers can perform official actions on behalf of the board only with specific authorization from the full board.

When your board wants to develop new bylaws or amend existing bylaws, it is recommended that a special committee be appointed to develop drafts for full board review. To change your bylaws, you must follow any procedures required by your current bylaws. Library system staff may be available to review drafts of new or amended bylaws.

Report changes to your bylaws to the Georgia Public Library Service. By state law (O.C.G.A. § 20-5-47c), all bylaws must be on file with GPLS.

Sources of Additional Information

- Bylaws Checklist for Library Boards, page 19
- *Robert's Rules of Order* (chapter on the development and amendment of bylaws) or *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* by Alice F. Sturgis
- Ingram, Richard T. *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C.: BoardSource, 2009.
- Kissman, Katha. *Taming the Troublesome Board Member*. Washington, D.C.: BoardSource, 2006.
- Moore, Mary Y. *The Successful Library Trustee Handbook*, 2nd ed. Chicago: American Library Association, 2010.
- Carver, J. *Boards that make a difference*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- Minor, M.A. *Constitutions and Bylaws for Georgia Public Libraries.* Georgia Public Library Service, 2012.

Bylaws Checklist for Library Boards
Since every library system is different, there is no one set of sample bylaws that could cover the options. This checklist is from the Constitution and Bylaws for Georgia Public Libraries handbook by Marti A. Minor.

1. Officer Duties
The officers of the board of trustees are identified in the library's constitution. In the bylaws, you will specify what duties are assigned to each officer. Beyond the traditional roles these officers fill, what are their responsibilities? Be specific.
   Chair
   - lead meetings
   - vote always or just for tiebreaker
   Vice Chair
   - fills in for chair
   - think of specific duties this officer can do; it is an often overlooked position
   - could be the parliamentarian
   Secretary (specify if this office will be held by an appointed board member, the library director, or other library employee)
   - keep the minutes
   - note attendance
   - provide notice to members of meetings
   - print and distribute agenda
   Treasurer
   - periodic reviews of documentation re: (a) all monies received and deposited; (b) approval of accounts payable invoices and receipt of goods or services; and (c) the library director's approval for and disbursement of funds
   - maintain an account of all receipts and expenditures
   - present a financial report at each quarterly board meeting
   - report on monitoring activities performed during the preceding quarter

2. Fiscal Year
   - If a member library, may coincide with regional library's fiscal year
   - What is the fiscal year of your municipal funding organizations?

3. Meetings
   - How often? When? Where?
   - How will notice be given?
   - Reference Open Meeting laws and note legal exceptions

- What number constitutes your quorum?
- What is an acceptable method of attendance, i.e., teleconference, etc.?
- Penalties and procedure for nonattendance
- What is your preferred order of business?
- What parliamentary procedural manual will govern?

4. Committees

Identify standing bodies and specify the job to be accomplished by each

Possible Standing Committees:

- Executive
- Budget and Finance
- Personnel
- Building and Grounds
- Strategic Planning
- Nominating
- Provide for the creation of ad hoc committees

5. Library Director

- Other than those provided by law, what are the duties?
- What board functions will be delegated to the director?
- How and when will director performance be evaluated?

6. Amendment

- Note procedure for amendment to the bylaws
- Include vote requirement, i.e., simple majority, two-thirds, etc.

6

Developing Essential Library Policies

Policies guide the daily operation of the library and the decision-making of the library director and staff. Essentially, policies provide the framework for library operations and services. Carefully developed policies help ensure high-quality library service that provides for community needs, wise use of library resources, and fair treatment of library staff and library users.

Library boards should approve policies to cover many issues, including the services offered by the library (such as the hours the library is open to the public), circulation of materials, selection of books and other resources, confidentiality of patron records, and use of electronic resources. There are certain policies that the library is required to have to maintain eligibility for state aid, including a personnel policy and board bylaws.

Both advisory and governing boards should work with the library director and staff to develop policies. Boards are responsible for approval and periodic review of policies.

Every public library must have a collection development policy that supports ideals of freedom of expression and inquiry. These are two of the bedrock principles of our country. A sound collection development policy assures the continuous growth of a collection appropriate to your library's mission and goals, while recognizing the diversity of your community. The collection development policy outlines the sources used to select materials, which is essential information in the event of a challenge.

Challenges to library materials and policies do occur. It is essential for every library to have a written policy that specifies how complaints will be handled, including a procedure to be used by concerned citizens with a complaint/concern form. A sample policy and a sample Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form is located in the appendix.

Policy Development Steps

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

1. Director, with staff input, develops recommended policies.
2. Board discusses, revises (if necessary), and approves policies.
3. Director makes sure staff and public are aware of policies.
4. Board reviews policies on a regular cycle so all policies are reviewed at least every three years (perhaps one or two policies could be reviewed per meeting until all of the policies have been reviewed and revised if necessary).

The library board must approve all policies in properly posted public meetings. 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 strategic plan. You should be satisfied that a policy is legal, clear and reasonable and that all ramifications (including the effects on the public image of the library) are understood.

After a new policy is established, it is important that the policy be clearly documented and available to staff and public. It is helpful for a library to gather all library policies into a policy manual available to all staff and readily available to all library users. Many libraries are now posting their policies on their websites to help make the public more aware of the library's services and policies.

Although disagreements during the development of policies are natural, each board member should support the implementation of policies once they are established. Challenges to policies are most common on the topics of material selection and public internet access.

Legally Defensible Policies

It is important for policies to be legal. Illegal policies can open the library to liability. 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 paying board members for attending meetings would be contrary to Georgia O.C.G.A. § 20-50-44 which requires that members of the board of trustees receive no compensation.

> *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.

Policies vs. Procedures

In addition to a policy manual, many libraries find it helpful to compile procedure manuals, especially for covering complex activities like the selection, ordering and processing of new materials. Procedure manuals outline the steps necessary to accomplish various tasks and therefore are especially valuable to new staff.

Procedure manuals are the best place to outline fee and fine schedules and any penalties because changes don't require formal board approval with public meeting notices. For example, if you decide to raise your photocopy fee from 10 cents to 25 cents, it's much easier to update your procedures instead of going through the formal policy approval process.

Procedures must conform to the policies approved by the library board. While it is true that the library board is responsible for the entire administration of the library, your library will operate most effectively if the board delegates responsibility for the development of procedures and the day-to-day supervision of library operations to the library director. A properly trained library director is well-equipped to handle this responsibility. Micromanagement of library operations by the board is, in almost all cases, an unnecessary use of the board's time and a practice that can undermine the authority of the library director.

Required Library Policies

- Collection Development (includes materials selection criteria, disposal of outdated or damaged materials, gifts and donations, special collections, patron requests, and challenges)
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
  - Children's Internet Protection ACT (C.I.P.A.) compliance is required for all libraries that receive E-rate support.
- Personnel Policy
- Technology Plan
- Use of the Facilities for libraries with meeting rooms
- Availability of Library Services for all in the library's service area

Recommended Library Policies and Plans

- Mission Statement
- Personnel Classification Plan
- Circulation Policy
- Strategic Plan
- Facility Plan
- Emergency Plan
- Disaster Preparedness Plan

- Financial Policy
- Conflict of Interest

Dealing With Challenges to Materials and Policies

One of the most difficult tasks you may face as a public library trustee is that of dealing with an objection to materials in the library's collection, or an objection to library policies. This is why it is essential for every library to have a written policy in place that specifies how complaints will be handled, including a procedure to be used by concerned citizens.

The policy should be written so that it calls for at least the initial steps of the process to be handled by staff; and in many, if not most, instances the issue can be resolved at that level. However, there may be times when the library board becomes involved more directly. Again, what is most important is for the board to have a policy and a corresponding procedure for dealing with either circumstance.

Regardless of the level of board involvement, it is important for you as a trustee to be committed to the principles of freedom of expression and inquiry that are fundamental to the role of public libraries. The entire community benefits collectively when democratic institutions uphold the right of access to information. Public libraries are for everyone and for every inquiry, and as such must include materials with varying points of view and a wide range of subjects. However, throughout history there have always been those who seek to limit what others may read, see or listen to. When this occurs in a public library setting it must be addressed thoughtfully and carefully by those ultimately responsible for all library operations: the library board.

The Trustee Role in Dealing With Challenges

So what is your role when a complaint against a specific book, video, music CD or policy is made? In many communities (especially smaller ones) you may receive the complaint personally through a phone call or a face-to-face conversation rather than as an item of business at the next board meeting. If this happens, you will be better able to respond appropriately because there is a policy already in place.

An important first step is to communicate with the library director about the complaint. This means that you should not express your own personal views to an individual citizen, but should instead refer the complaint to the director promptly. Inform the citizen that there is a policy for handling objections, and explain that you are not individually responsible for deciding what will be done. Make sure the challenger understands there is a process and that they have the right to use that process.

In other instances, the complaint may be made directly to the library director, either verbally or in writing. In both cases, the objection may become a formal

challenge if it cannot be resolved through conversation. You and your fellow trustees should be informed by the director that a challenge has been received and kept informed of its status. When the challenge is elevated to the trustee level it then becomes an agenda item.

If a formal challenge has been received, it may become known to the general public, sometimes generating debate in the media and among other public officials. This can create great stress for library trustees, for you may be contacted for your opinion by members of the public or by the media, or even by members of the library's funding agencies. Again, it is your responsibility not to engage in public debate as an individual. Your library's policy for dealing with challenges should specify that all deliberations involving trustees will be made at open board meetings. It should also specify that there is an official spokesperson (often the library director, sometimes the board chair) who will give out all information, especially to the media.

Public Hearings

Most challenges are resolved before they become issues of public debate. Depending on your challenge policy, occasionally the library board may decide to hold a public hearing at which testimony is taken. This process must be carefully and thoroughly crafted to allow both sides of the issue to be heard. (The ALA's *Intellectual Freedom Manual* has an excellent section on planning a public hearing.) While the steps of this process need not be spelled out in your library's policy, there should be a statement that refers to the process.

If a hearing is held, it is important for trustees to listen carefully and not to participate in the debate. They should also defer any decision on the challenge to a later meeting. This meeting should be scheduled fairly soon after the hearing but allow enough time for trustees to consider the issues that have been raised in a less emotional atmosphere.

Regardless of how the challenge ultimately arrives before the trustees, it is probable that you will eventually make your views known through a vote that will decide the outcome. This is the time to make a public statement giving the reasons for your vote. Such a statement is not obligatory, but it gives trustees a forum to reiterate the principles of intellectual freedom, and why you do (or do not) support them in this instance. Once the board has decided the outcome, there is usually no further recourse for action by the challenger except a court case.

A formal challenge can be an opportunity for growth for all parties: the challenger, the library director and staff, and perhaps most of all for trustees. Having a policy in place that describes the process to be followed and the responsibilities of the various participants in a challenge will make it much easier for you and your fellow board members to deal with attempts at censorship.

Sources of Additional Information

- Minor, Marti A. *Personnel Policies for Georgia Public Libraries.* Georgia Public Library Service, 2012.
- Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and Filtering
- American Library Association Challenged Materials
- Your library's legal counsel
- American Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Manual
- Recommended Library Policies for Georgia Public Libraries, page 27

Recommended Policies for Georgia Public Libraries

Current, effective library policies are essential components for a strong organization. In addition to the required policies listed above, library boards often adopt local policies and procedures on the following topics:

Library Operations Policies:
- Building Maintenance
- Circulation
- Unattended Children
- Customer Behavior
- Copyright
- Displays
- Filtering
- Interlibrary Cooperation
- Investment
- Patron Materials Requests
- Problem Patron
- Public Relations
- Record Retention
- Social Media
- Tobacco Use
- Weapons in the Library

Personnel Policies:
- Absenteeism and Tardiness
- Bereavement Leave
- Breaks
- Conferences and Meetings
- Conflict of Interest
- Disabilities or ADA
- Dress Code
- Drug Free Workplace
- Educational Assistance/ Tuition Reimbursement
- Emergency Closing
- Employee Privacy
- Employment of Relatives
- Equal Opportunity Employment
- Evaluations / Performance Appraisal

- Expense Reimbursement
- Family Medical Leave Act
- Grievance
- Health/Other Insurance
- Hiring/Recruitment
- Holidays
- Inclement Weather
- Internet/Email Use
- Job Descriptions
- Jury Leave
- Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse
- Meal Periods
- Mileage Reimbursement
- Military Leave
- Personal/Other Paid Leave
- Overtime
- Payroll Deductions
- Performance Improvement
- Professional Memberships
- Retirement
- Salary Payment
- Salary Increases
- Sexual Harassment
- Sick or Personal Leave
- Substance Abuse
- Termination of Employment
- Unpaid Leave
- Vacation Leave
- Voting Leave
- Workplace Violence
- Workweek

Board Policies:
- Accounting
- Audit
- Availability of Public Records
- Open Records
- Board Bylaws
- Board Expense Reimbursement
- Code of Ethics
- Records
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Fund Balance
- Handling of Library Funds
- Expenses & Oversight
- Investment
- Procurement/ Purchasing
- Public Relations
- Sponsorship/Partner
- Training or Orientation of Board Members
- Whistleblower

Effective Board Meetings & Participation

7

Preparation Is Key

To a great extent, the work done *before* each library board meeting will determine the effectiveness of the board. Board members can contribute best if they have taken the time to adequately study the agenda and background materials *before* each meeting.

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

The library director is usually delegated the responsibility for drafting the agenda and other materials to be included in the board mailing. 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, sending 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.

A library board has broad authority to manage the affairs of the library, but it is a **collective authority**. Individual trustees, regardless of their position on the board, do not have the power to command the services of a library staff member, nor to speak or act on behalf of the library unless they have been specifically granted that authority by a vote of the board.

A direct result of this collective authority is the need for the board to speak with one voice once a decision has been made. Debate, discussion and even disagreement over an issue are an important part of policy development and the decision-making process. However, once a decision has been made, every trustee has an ethical obligation to publicly support it.

The First Amendment protects the rights of a trustee who disagrees so strongly with a board decision that they must speak out publicly against it. However, in such instances the individual must make it clear to all concerned that they do not represent the library and, indeed, may wish to seriously consider resigning from the board if such action interferes with their ability to fulfill their responsibilities as a trustee.

Library Board Meetings

Meetings are conducted under the rules set forth in the library's bylaws. In order for all trustees to be properly prepared for the meeting a packet should be sent via mail or email no less than one week before the meeting date. The packet typically includes the meeting agenda, minutes of the previous meeting, financial reports, the schedule of bills to be paid, proposed personnel actions, committee reports and the director's report. Background information on the issues before the board should be distributed as well. A sample agenda is located in the appendix.

All trustees are expected to come prepared to participate fully in meeting discussions and actions and to be familiar with the activities of the committees to which they are assigned. Using the talents and skills of every board member creates a more productive board.

Regular attendance at board meetings is essential. A successful library board needs every trustee at every meeting. The board chair and the library director should be notified in advance if your attendance is not possible. A trustee who misses meetings frequently may not completely understand the issues at hand and valuable meeting time can be lost bringing that trustee back up to speed. An uninformed trustee also cannot make the best possible decision when it comes time to vote.

While the Georgia law does allow certain governmental meetings to be held via teleconference, library board meetings are not one of them. Georgia law (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 g) permits an individual to attend meetings via telephone conference calls only under emergency conditions or when a person cannot attend for health reasons or absence from the jurisdiction. Except in these limited conditions, you must be present for meetings.

Far too often boards tolerate frequent absences by a board member to the detriment of the board and the library. Georgia law (O.C.G.A. § 20-5-42 d) provides that a board member shall be removed for failure to attend three consecutive regularly scheduled meetings. The bylaws should include this requirement and the procedure for removal. A trustee who has difficulty in regularly attending meetings may wish to seek other opportunities to help the library rather than serving on the board.

The most effective boards concentrate their time and energy on a few issues that will have a major impact on the library's future. Activities that can be completed by individual trustees outside the meeting (such as reading the minutes) should not take up valuable time at a board meeting.

Board meetings should:

- Focus the board's attention only on issues that really matter

- Use the board's time and structure to pursue those issues
- Be certain that the board has the information it needs at the right time
- Ensure that the board works as an effective unit

At Meetings

Managing an effective meeting is the duty of the board chair. Effective board meetings 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 chair makes sure discussion remains focused and decisions are reached. The chair 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. Meetings are managed better with ground rules. Every board should develop/review a list of ground rules at the beginning of each year. The list below provides sample ground rules that various committees have used. Your board may wish to incorporate some of these or develop new ones.

- Start and end meetings on time
- Be respectful
- Come prepared and ready to contribute
- Listen to others and don't interrupt
- Question assumptions
- Make decisions based on clear information
- Capture decisions and action items
- Establish an ending time for the meeting and stick to it

Board meetings generally should be completed within two hours. If meetings consistently last longer, issues can be referred to committees or the director for further study or tabled for action at subsequent board meetings.

All meetings of the library board or its committees must be open to the public and conform to the Open Meetings Law (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1). The bylaws should specify the public notice given and instances when the board may go into closed session. Closed meetings of the board are justified when discussing the future acquisition of real estate, to consult and meet with legal counsel pertaining to pending or potential litigation, or to discuss or deliberate (but not to vote) upon the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a public officer or employee.

When dealing with the public or the media, trustees need not feel pressured in having to come to an immediate decision or make an immediate statement on an issue. Remember that what is said in an open regular public meeting can be quoted in the media. A good rule of thumb is to remember that individual board members should never speak for the whole board and that questions from the

media should be referred to the spokesperson for the library whether it's the board chair or the library director.

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. 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.

Effective Decision-Making

It is important 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 chair 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 the library director, or any other individual.

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

Taking an interest in board effectiveness is every trustee's responsibility. Your goal should be to create an environment that will produce quality services for the community coupled with a mindset of continuous improvement. A sample board effectiveness form is included in the appendix. It can start an interesting discussion about areas that may need to be improved.

Continuing Trustee Education

Board meetings can be an effective arena for continuing trustee education. For example, time could be set aside at a board meeting to review and discuss one of the sections of the *Georgia Public Library Standards* and this handbook. Online webinars on trustee issues are also available. Staff members can be invited to make presentations to inform the board more fully about library operations and services. Outside experts can be invited to make presentations about areas of interest or concern to the library board.

Sources of Additional Information

- Trustee Training Videos developed by Wyoming State Library
- Georgia Public Library Standards

CHAPTER EIGHT
Open Meetings & Open Records

8

Georgia's Open Meetings Act (O.C.G.A. § 50-14) and Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. § 50-1-70) keep the public informed of the actions taken on their behalf by governmental agencies. To this end, all meetings of the governing authority of every local government agency (including library boards) must be held in places reasonably accessible to members of the public and must be open to the public, except as expressly provided by law.

Georgia's open meetings law provides specific requirements for meeting notice, accessibility of meetings, the conduct of meetings, and legally holding closed sessions. Violations carry significant penalties, so careful adherence to these requirements is essential.

Georgia's open records law requires that documents prepared or received by a public agency be accessible to the public. The definition of document includes email, text messages, papers, maps and photographs.

Open Meetings

- Public notice of all library board and library committee meetings, including the time, the date and place, is required at least one week in advance.
- An agenda of all matters expected to be discussed must be posted at the meeting site, at least two weeks in advance.
- Summary minutes, final minutes and executive session minutes are required for every meeting, including committee meetings.
- Summary minutes must be made available to the public within two business days of the meeting and include who attended and actions taken.
- Voting on all personnel matters must be in an open meeting.

The difference between summary minutes and final minutes is in their level of detail. Summary minutes include a list of subjects acted on and who attended the meeting. Final minutes must:

- include what agency members were present,
- describe each motion,
- list who made and seconded each motion, and
- record all votes.

If a vote is not unanimous, the votes of each participant must be recorded.

Closed Meetings/Executive Session

- Executive sessions may be called during an open meeting by a motion that indicates the precise nature of the business to be conducted. Only matters contained in the motion may be considered in the executive session.
- Going into executive session requires a vote.
- Library boards may hold a closed meeting to discuss:
    - hiring, compensation, evaluation or disciplinary action for a specific employee,
    - acquisition of real estate by the library,
    - pending or potential litigation with legal counsel who must be present.
- The board chair must sign a sworn affidavit showing the reason for the executive session and that the closed part of the meeting was limited to the identified activity. A sample form is in the appendix.
- Any vote in closed session on real estate or litigation is not binding until a subsequent vote is taken in an open meeting.

For example, the board can discuss the hiring of a new director in a closed session, but can only vote on that personnel matter during an open meeting. That requires at least a 14 day notice and a spot on the agenda.

Special Meetings

- Special meetings can be held with at least 24 hours' notice, and immediate notification of the county's legal organ, a specified newspaper.
- That 24 hour notice should include a written notice at the place of the regularly held meeting and notice by telephone, facsimile or email to local broadcast or print media outlets that have requested it.
- The minutes must describe the notice given and the reason for the emergency.

Failure to Comply

Any person at a meeting that does not comply with the open meetings law may be subject to a criminal fine or civil penalty, up to a $1,000 fine for the first violation and a $2,500 fine for each additional violation within 12 months. Attorney's fees may be added to these fines. Any contract, resolution or other action taken by the board without compliance will not be binding.

Open Records

- Library user records are private. Libraries may not share information that shows what items individuals have checked out.
- The law provides that a person has the right to inspect and copy any public record within a reasonable time of making the request.

- Documents that are available must be produced within three business days.
- A copy fee of up to 10 cents per page may be collected.
- Reasonable charges for search, retrieval and direct costs may be collected, with certain limitation.
- Personnel records are subject to disclosure, although exempt material such as home address, medical information and social security numbers may be redacted.
- Failure to comply with this law may lead to fines of up to $2,500 and an obligation to pay the complaining party's legal fees.

Sources of Additional Information

- Minor, Marti A. *Georgia's Open Meetings/Open Records Laws: A Guide for Public Librarians*. Georgia Public Library Service, October 2012.
- Check your county's Legal Organ
- Your library's attorney

The information presented in this chapter is in no way to be considered as legal advice. If you have specific questions, you should always consult your attorney.

9

Hiring a Library Director

The most important decision a governing board can make is the selection of a library director. The director must be able to work effectively with the board to professionally manage the library and reflect the ideals of the library and the community it serves.

When starting this process it is appropriate for the board to ask themselves a number of critical questions about the library, the library board and the type of leadership they require. Such questions might include:

- What qualities do you value in your library director?
- What are the most important skills your director must possess?
- What roles do you see the director playing with the board, the staff and the community?
- What significant initiatives and challenges do you foresee for the library in the next five years?
- Do you prefer a well-experienced director or are you willing to give bright young talent a chance?
- Would you prefer (or not) a local resident?

All too often library boards look for the easy way out, the simplest or quickest choice or the cheapest alternative. Competent leadership of the library is essential for its efficient management and future success. Choosing the wrong director will result in more work for the board and a disappointing library. Every library deserves a qualified library director who is respected by the board and community and is appropriately compensated.

In Georgia, governing library boards have the authority to hire, supervise and, if necessary, fire the library director. The library director, in turn, has responsibility for the hiring and supervision of library staff and volunteers.

The library board has the legal authority and responsibility for determining the compensation and general duties of the director. The board, with input from the director, determines what other positions the library might need.

State funding of professional and allied professional positions ensures that every library in the state is directed by a trained, experienced librarian and that essential allied services are handled by individuals with graduate degrees from accredited programs, or the appropriate level of education and training to ensure consistently high-quality service across the state. In Georgia, the state reimbursed position guidelines set a minimum and maximum salary range for these state-funded positions. A director supplement is allocated to each library system and may be added to the director's salary.

Library trustees must comply with state and federal laws that prohibit discrimination in hiring. Any written or oral questions to be asked of job candidates should be reviewed in advance by a person familiar with state and federal employment and discrimination law.

Open meeting and open record laws also affect the hiring process. While the interviews and discussion of this personnel matter can take place in a closed session, votes on personnel matters can only occur during an open meeting. According to O.C.G.A. § 50.17.72.a.11, all documents concerning as many as three candidates under consideration must be available for inspection at least 14 days prior to the meeting where the final action or vote will be taken.

The Long-Term Effects of This Decision

Not all library boards will face the responsibility of selecting a new director. However, trustees who undertake this process must understand that it is singularly important and will have far-reaching and often long-term effects. Be prepared for a great deal of diligent effort. This work will be worthwhile when you succeed in hiring the best person for the job.

What to Look for in a New Director

A library director is the chief administrative officer of the library. The director is responsible both for day-to-day management of the organization and for assisting the library board with "big picture" issues like planning and policymaking. In developing the job description and assessing candidates, consider the following:

- experience working with library boards and governing bodies
- knowledge of budget preparation, policy development, administration and employee supervision
- library experience in the following areas: public service, technical services and public relations
- demonstrated leadership ability and dependability

Georgia state law (O.C.G.A. § 20-5-45) requires that any person appointed director must hold at least a Grade 5(b) librarian's professional graduate certificate, as defined by the State Board for the Certification of Librarians.

ADA Compliance

The ADA requires reasonable accommodations in three areas of the employment process. 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 perform those functions. It would not be acceptable to single out someone who uses a wheelchair and ask how that person would do a particular

task. 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 involves 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 third area requires equal access to whatever insurance and benefits are offered to other employees.

The ADA does not require employers to drop essential functions of a position in an effort to accommodate a person with disabilities. Employers are not expected to provide personal items not available to other employees, but certain accommodations might be expected, such as adjustable chairs, wrist pads, or modified phones. If you have specific questions, you should always consult your attorney.

Steps to Follow When Hiring a New Director

1. Contact the State Librarian who will be happy to assist you through the process of developing a job description and posting the job on the Georgia Public Library Service job listings.
2. Appoint a hiring committee to develop or revise a draft job description, job ad, etc.
3. Review the library's strategic plan (if you have one) and analyze progress in reaching the goals and objectives. Knowing where the library needs to go will help you define the qualifications needed in the next director.
4. 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.
5. The board checks references of applicants, evaluates qualifications and arranges interviews with promising candidates (paying part or all of necessary travel expenses). 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.
6. The board should make clear to candidates any probationary status, performance evaluation and salary adjustment procedures, and all other terms of employment.
7. In addition to contacting listed references, the board 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. If you

plan to do this, you should first get written permission from the candidates.

8. The board may go into closed session to interview applicants or discuss the hiring decision, but no votes can be taken during a closed session. The board must make available the names of up to three finalists at least 14 days before taking an official vote in an open meeting to make an offer.

9. Once the board has made a hiring decision, it contacts the selected applicant and confirms the appointment and starting date in writing. It promptly notifies applicants not selected. The employment contract and/or letter of appointment should specify that as a condition of employment the director obtain and maintain the required state certification.

10. Establish a thorough orientation program for the new director, similar to that described for trustees.

11. Conduct a review the director's performance and attainment of goals and objectives annually.

Sources of Additional Information

- *A Library Board's Practical Guide to Finding the Right Director*. Detroit Suburban Librarians' Roundtable Succession Planning Committee, 2005.
- *The Trustee Toolkit: Hiring a new library director* by COSLA, the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies.
- Cole, Jack and S. Mahmoodi. *Selecting a Library Director*. St. Paul: Friends of the LDS Library, 1998.
- Georgia State Board for the Certification of Librarians
- State Reimbursed Position Guidelines
- Sample Interview Questions for Library Director Candidates, page 39

Sample Interview Questions for Library Director Candidates

1. Tell us about your background, including your education, work experience, special skills and knowledge.

2. Why did you apply for this position? Why are you the right person for this job?

3. What is your proudest achievement?

4. Explain your previous experience working for a board.

5. What strengths do you have that would serve you best in this position?

6. What is an area of improvement that you would like to make in your professional life?

7. How would you describe your management / supervision style?

8. Tell us how your previous administrative experience will assist you in this position.

9. If you had control over creating the ideal work environment for you, what would it be like? What would the people who you work with be like and what qualities would you like the board and library to have?

10. What is the biggest challenge you've had to deal with on the job?

11. Tell us about a project or accomplishment of which you are very proud and why. This can be related to experience that you are seeking, such as grants writing, building renovation, automation, etc.

12. What do you think are the major issues facing libraries today?

13. Are you able to meet the requirements for this job? When could you begin work here?

14. What questions do you have for us? Is there anything else that you would like to add?

CHAPTER TEN
Evaluating the Director

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Evaluating the library director is often one of the more difficult tasks faced by a governing library board of trustees, but it doesn't need to be. It is only difficult when a board is unsure of the process to follow.

The board–director relationship is not a manager–employee relationship. It is a partnership for the purpose of running a highly important community organization: a public library. Rather than evaluating the director, you need to evaluate the administration of the library. This approach enables the board and the director, as a team, to design steps that will enhance the development of the organization.

A well-executed performance review is the culmination of formal and informal communication carried out throughout the year regarding the activities of the director. Problems are best brought to the attention of the director as they occur, rather than stored up for the annual review. Success, accomplishment, and simple hard work and dedication should be acknowledged as it is observed, as well as at the annual review.

Who Should Carry Out the Review?

Though it is the board as a whole that is responsible for oversight of library operations and the activities of the library director, many boards decide to delegate this task to a committee. Whether the whole board takes part or a committee does the work depends on the makeup of the board and the time available to board members. Often a board may have experienced managers or human resource professionals among its members. Other board members may be less experienced in personnel management. The key here is consistency and deciding ahead of time who will take part. At any rate, the *entire* board should review, discuss and approve the final written evaluation.

Those charged with carrying out the evaluation should avoid relying on chance comments from library employees. Comments solicited from employees *with the knowledge of the director* can be helpful when solicited in a formal, organized fashion. Board members should bear in mind that the director is hired to manage the daily operations of the library on behalf of the board and community. The chain of communications should always flow from library employees through the director to the board.

The Basis for the Review

The performance review should be based on three factors:

1. The success of the library in carrying out service programs.
2. The director's performance as it relates to a written job description.

3. A list of objectives for the preceding year jointly written and agreed upon by the director and the board.

The director's job description should be kept up to date and be a realistic statement of the work that needs to be done. The director needs to know what is expected. For example, what role will the director play in fundraising? Is the director the primary fundraiser, or is a volunteer or member of the board the primary fundraiser? Is the director expected to work a service desk? A director should not be faulted for failing to do something that was never officially decided at the time of hire or at a later board meeting.

Including a discussion of the director's job description at the time of hire and during the annual performance review provides an opportunity to change the job description as the needs of the organization change. Job descriptions need to change as technology and environmental factors affect them. The library director is the resident authority on what is new at the library and how tasks change in light of new priorities. Board members can learn a lot about the library by discussing changes in staff job descriptions with the director.

Establishing a list of objectives for the director is important to assure continued growth for the director as an individual as well as for the organization. Some objectives may be project oriented, such as completing a weeding of the collection in the coming year, or upgrading the automation system. Other objectives may be more personal, such as those contributing to professional development. Though the director should be the one primarily responsible for suggesting his or her objectives for the coming year, they should be discussed and agreed upon by the board.

The objectives of the director should be closely related to the strategic plan of the library. Establishing objectives can be an exercise in creativity in searching for new ways to improve the library. Failure to attain some objectives does not necessarily indicate poor job performance. Many times, outside factors may have prevented success or a director may simply have been too ambitious in the number of projects planned for a year. Some objectives may not be reached because they were experimental in nature. The important factors to remember when evaluating objectives are progress, initiative and the willingness of the director to expand the limits of his or her work and understanding. A director who accomplishes all of their objectives may be an exceptional employee or may simply have been quite conservative in what he or she set out to do.

Assessing the degree to which the director contributes to the success of the organization can be especially helpful to library boards as they evaluate the director. Library board members are continually viewing the library from the outside, since they do not participate in the daily management of the organization. Good board members are library users who experience library services first hand. As community leaders, they are aware of the image of the library within the community. The library board needs to be able to examine the

resources of the library and the resourcefulness of the director and see how these have been utilized to manage library services successfully.

Examining resource management is a far more reliable tool for reviewing the library director than relying on subjective comments from individuals. The board has a variety of resources at its disposal by which to evaluate resource management. The monthly financial statement and statistical reports are good examples. The board should select a method that works best for your situation; a sample evaluation is located in the appendix.

How to Conduct the Review

Areas to be evaluated should provide a comprehensive view of the library's operations. These five areas are general in nature; additional categories could cover special circumstances, like construction projects:

- Customer Service and Community Relations
- Organizational Growth
- Administration and Human Resource Management
- Financial Management and Legal Compliance
- Board of Trustee Relationship

When conducting the annual formal performance review, it is very helpful to have the director fill out review forms as a self-assessment. The members of the board, or the review committee, should individually fill out the evaluation form, and then the results should be summarized. By comparing assessments, the director and board can easily establish areas of agreement and work to resolve disagreements.

This will provide the board with a picture of how the organization is functioning and will shape the evaluation process. If the summation shows:

- The organization is functioning well, your evaluation process should focus on motivating and supporting the director.
- Everything is basically OK, but some specific things need to be addressed, then clarify the board's expectations through the evaluation process, and also offer support and motivation.
- The organization is functioning unsatisfactorily, identify the issues, determine what is needed to get the organization on track, and create a timeline for progress reports.

All discussions of the director's job performance should be carried out in legally posted closed session meetings. Once the board has developed some agreement on the functioning of the organization, they should meet with the director, either as a full board in executive session or a committee. The

discussion can use the summation as an outline. Take this opportunity to discuss areas of weakness within the organization, then, with the director, develop goals to improve the organization. Also use this opportunity to tell your director if they are doing well in areas; no one likes their successes to go unnoticed.

The formal evaluation of the library director should take place at the next regularly scheduled board meeting. It should be conducted in an objective, businesslike manner with a predetermined agenda, but should not be so austere as to be intimidating. Specific examples should be used to illustrate the evaluation and free discussion should be encouraged. Adequate time should be allowed to thoroughly explore all issues and the meeting should be free of interruptions. There should be a thorough summing-up by the spokesperson of the proceedings. The evaluation should be followed with a planning session to develop the basis for the next review.

The director's self-assessments may or may not be considered part of the permanent record; however, the director should have the opportunity to respond in writing to reviews placed in his or her permanent file. Written comments should always be part of the permanent record and be kept with the director's personnel files. No performance review should ever be placed in a personnel file without the knowledge of the director. The director should sign the review indicating that he or she has been given the opportunity to read and discuss the evaluation. Signing a review should not be construed as agreement.

The basis of the evaluation should be the up-to-date job description and the annual performance objectives agreed to by the director and board. There are many forms available for your adaptation and use when evaluating a director. Samples are included in the appendix.

Firing the Director

Many governing boards feel the only time they need to evaluate the director is when things are going badly, but by then it is too late. The director evaluation should be an annual event and the best and easiest time to begin is when thing are going well. Since Georgia is an "employment at-will" state, the board can remove the director without cause, but there can be costs associated with that decision. To remove a director you need to build a clear paper trail documenting how you have communicated your dissatisfaction to the director, provided opportunities for improvement, and provided a warning notice if improvement has not happened. This process needs to be done through written communications with the director. Addressing this issue only during an annual evaluation could draw out the process by three years or more.

Please keep in mind that the Georgia Public Library Service is available to you for advice and consultation if you have questions or concerns regarding the

performance of your director, or if you require assistance in mediation. Contact the state librarian to discuss how GPLS can support your governing board with employment issues.

Governing an effective library is a complex job that takes hard work and dedication. Make your efforts count by regularly evaluating the state of the organization. This will help to make your job as a trustee more fulfilling and create the best possible library for your community.

Sources of Additional Information

- United for Libraries, a division of ALA, has sample evaluations available online

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The Library Board & Library Personnel

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 require careful decision-making and cooperation by both the library board and the library director.

Role of the Board / Role of the Director

It is the library director who hires and supervises all other library staff, but the library board has the legal responsibility for establishing the duties and compensation, as well as the personnel policies, for all library staff.

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:

- 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's unsolicited intrusion into the director's responsibility to select and supervise staff can undermine the authority of the director and create discord and disorganization in library operations.

Staff duties and compensation are another area where cooperation is essential. The library board has the legal responsibility for establishing staff duties and compensation, but the director has the responsibility for the day-to-day assignment of staff duties. The library director brings recommendations for changes in staff compensation to the board.

Lines of Communication

While trustees will want to know who the staff 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 if he/she is going to be able to manage effectively. Trustees should direct staff who have complaints about the director, policies or materials to discuss the situation with their supervisor or the director. If that does not resolve the issue, the staff should be encouraged to follow the library's grievance or complaint procedure provided in

the library's personnel policy. Only in extreme situations should staff complaints go directly to the board.

Since the library board may want input from the staff on certain issues, the board should solicit such input through the director. In addition, the library board may decide to obtain library staff input on the director's performance as part of a formal evaluation process.

Except in unusual circumstances, communication between the library board and library staff about library business should be carried on through the library director. Going behind the director's back undermines the trust necessary for effective and orderly operation of the library.

Staff Compensation Levels

The ability to attract and retain high-quality staff depends partially on competitive and fair wages and benefits for library staff. Compensation for library staff should be competitive with compensation provided by similar-sized libraries in Georgia and nationwide. Compensation for library staff should be in line with other community positions that require similar training and responsibilities.

State reimbursed positions have a minimum and maximum range plus benefits that may vary with cost-of-living adjustments in the future.

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, rules and conditions of employment for library staff, etc. It is important for these policies to be gathered into a written personnel handbook available to all library staff. These written policies ensure that all staff are treated according to the same rules. This written personal policy is also a requirement for participation in the public library state grants program.

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. Knowledgeable individuals should review all proposed changes in the personnel policy.

The library board should also approve a salary schedule that covers all staff positions and written job descriptions that list the essential job duties of each staff position, any educational and experience requirements, the physical and knowledge requirements of the job and the salary range. Carefully prepared job descriptions will help the library comply with Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which deals with employment issues.

Continuing Education for Library Staff

It is recommended that the library adequately budget for staff continuing education such as workshops, webinars, conferences and other professional activities, including paid work time for attendance, registration fees and travel costs.

Certified librarians are required to earn 10 hours of acceptable continuing education during the two-year period preceding each biennial renewal date as a condition for license renewal. Librarian licenses must be renewed by June 30 in even-numbered years.

Sources of Additional Information

There are several online resources including:

- Annual nationwide Public Library Data Service Statistical Report (PLDS)
- Georgia's public library statistics are compiled in Current Look each fiscal year
- Library job postings in Georgia
- Georgia Renewal and Continuing Education requirements for certified librarians
- Georgia Department of Labor
- Federal Laws Prohibiting Job Discrimination: Questions and Answers

CHAPTER TWELVE
Developing the Library Budget

The proper administration of library funds is one of the basic functions of the trustees. It is also an important legal responsibility. The tasks related to finance are:

- Budget preparation
- Budget presentation
- Budget implementation
- Capital improvement budget
- Management of endowment funds and trust funds
- Audit

The library budget is a tool for turning library plans into reality. The budget determines the services that will be offered by your library and the resources devoted to each library program. A carefully developed budget will ensure that available funds are effectively utilized to realize your library's service objectives.

Budget preparation should reflect the objectives set by the trustees in their planning process. Both library director and the board of trustees should be involved in the formulation of the budget. It is the responsibility of the trustees to evaluate how well the budget addresses the needs of the library.

The balanced budget should be detailed enough to assure that the money will be spent in the manner agreed upon, but not so detailed that all the money is tied up in accounts from which it cannot be transferred without requesting permission from the board. Once the budget is formulated, every board member should be fully informed and prepared to answer any questions that may arise in daily contacts or be able to refer the questioner to someone representing the board who can.

Presentation of the budget to the appropriate community governing body is the responsibility of the library director or a representative of the board of trustees. If a trustee is presenting, the library director should be present to provide supporting information. In either case, it should be clear to the government officials that the budget has the unanimous support of the board.

Implementation of the budget is usually delegated to the library director. The trustees have the final responsibility to review and evaluate the process of implementation through the receipt of periodic reports.

In addition to the operating budget, the trustees should consider the capital improvement needs of the library and acquaint themselves with the resources available for such funding. Because library boards are responsible for making decisions in regard to trust funds, it is important for trustees to know about the options available in the investment and management of these funds.

The Budget Development Process

The first step in developing a library budget is to look at what the library hopes to accomplish in the next year. The availability of a current strategic plan will make this step much easier, because the plan documents your community's needs and the library activities necessary to meet those needs.

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 necessary because of increased costs, increased usage, and/or new services that will be offered. Additional resources for new services can also be made available by shifting resources from a lower priority to a higher priority service.

Draft budget documents are prepared by the library director and library staff. A sample format for a basic library budget is included at the end of this chapter, and additional budget examples are in the appendix. The library board and/or library board finance committee may have input into development of budget drafts. The board of trustees will then review the draft budget(s) with the director, propose changes and finally approve a finished budget.

After the written budget documents are approved by the board, the final step in the budget process is securing the funding needed to carry out the planned service program. Trustees, as volunteer public representatives, are especially effective budget advocates. Trustees should be involved in presenting, explaining and supporting the library budget that was approved by the library board.

The board may need to make budget changes if the funding needed to balance the budget is not secured. 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.

Sources of Funding

One of the most important responsibilities for library trustees is determining the appropriate level of funding for the library and working to secure that funding.

Fines may be a source of library revenue, but the policy of charging fines is the subject of debate concerning their effectiveness in encouraging the return of materials, along with their public relations effects. In establishing a fines policy, a library board should consider not only the possible revenue but also the potential negative public relations effects. PINES libraries follow PINES policies addressing charging fines. See Chapter 17 for more information on PINES.

Library boards can choose to recover unique, identifiable costs from customers for specific transactions that exceed basic library services. Examples could include photocopying or charging a deposit for the use of library facilities or

property, in accordance with the library system's policy on the use of library facilities.

Library systems may choose to charge an annual non-resident fee for a library card for those who reside outside the service area of the library system. PINES libraries follow PINES policies addressing nonresident fees.

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. Donors will stop donating, volunteers will stop working, and granting organizations will stop awarding grants to your library if they see that their efforts are resulting in reduced public funding for the library instead of improved service.

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 funding body member can understand what is being presented.
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.

Types of Budget

Line item and program budgets
These are two of the most popular styles of budgets. The line item budget is organized around categories or lines of expenditures and shows how much is spent on the various products and services that the library acquires. The program budget, designed to assist with planning, is organized around service programs (such as children's services, young adult services, reference services) and helps the library board and director see how much is spent on these

individual areas. A program budget is usually arranged in a line item style, so that the individual categories of expenditures for each program are also presented.

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; utilities 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. These would include new or remodeled library buildings, major upgrades of technology, and usually the purchase of computer hardware. You should present the operating and capital activities separately within your library budget. (See attached *Sample Library Budget* for an example.)

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, grants, 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).

Sources of Additional Information

- Sample Format of a Basic Library Budget, page 52
- Dropkin, Murray, Jim Halpin, and Bill La Touche. *The Budget-Building Book for Nonprofits: a Step-by-Step Guide for Managers and Boards*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007.

Sample Format of a Basic Library Budget

(Line item budget format)

Operating Income	2014 Actual	2015 Budget	2016 Budget Request
Local funding	$34,700	$35,500	$36,300
Funds carried forward	$0	$600	$525
Fines	$700	$900	$945
Donations	$500	$500	$500
Fees/other	$100	$100	$105
Transfer from endowment	$24,000	$24,050	$24,625
Operating Income Total	$60,000	$61,650	$63,000
Operating Expenditures	**2014 Actual**	**2015 Budget**	**2016 Budget Request**
Salaries and wages	$24,150	$24,700	$25,650
Employee benefits	$16,750	$17,000	$16,350
Books	$6,465	$6,700	$7,035
Periodicals	$1,330	$1,400	$1,470
Audio books and e-books	$950	$1,000	$1,050
DVDs	$380	$400	$420
Software and databases	$475	$500	$525
Contracted services	$950	$1,000	$1,050
Staff, board continuing education.	$950	$950	$1,050
Public programming	$475	$500	$525
Utilities	$3,800	$4,000	$4,200
Maintenance	$475	$500	$525
Supplies	$1,425	$1,500	$1,575
Operating Expenditures Total	$60,000	$61,650	$63,000
Capital Income	**2014 Actual**	**2015 Budget**	**2016 Budget Request**
Local funding	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000
Endowment	$1,000	$2,000	$2,000
Capital Expenditures	**2014 Actual**	**2015 Budget**	**2016 Budget Request**
Equipment replacement	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000
New shelving		$1,000	$1,000
Capital Expenditures Total	$2,000	$3,000	$3,000
Total of All Expenditures	**$62,000**	**$64,650**	**$66,000**

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Managing the Library's Money

The library board has ultimate responsibility for all aspects of library financial management—from budgeting to spending to financial reporting. Your community will be more willing to provide the resources necessary for high-quality library service when they know library finances are carefully controlled and monitored.

The board controls and monitors library finances by:

- Careful development and approval of the budget
- Review and approval of library expenditures
- Review and monitoring of quarterly financial statements
- Development of policies for the handling of gifts and donations
- Accurate financial reporting
- Careful attention to financial audits, reviews or compilations by a qualified CPA

Approval of Library Expenditures

The library board has control of the expenditure of all moneys collected, donated or appropriated to the library fund. The board exercises this control through the approval of the budget, the establishment of financial policies, and the review and approval of quarterly financial statements.

Basic library financial procedures are as follows:

1. The library board approves the annual budget and any budget adjustments necessary during the year. The library director is delegated authority to make purchases within the budget and according to board-approved purchasing policies.
2. The library staff is responsible for preparing a quarterly summary of all library expenditures and a quarterly balance sheet and income statement.
3. Each quarter, at a regular board meeting, the library board reviews and approves the financial statement.
4. 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 for any payment or withdrawal out of a library-held trust or gift account.

The library director oversees the day-to-day procurement process based on the policies the board implements.

Financial Statements

To facilitate the board's monitoring of library finances, the director should present financial statements that the library board and the general public can understand. The library director is required to provide quarterly financial reports that include:

- Total income and expenditures last quarter and year-to-date
- A balance sheet that lists assets, liabilities and fund balances and the total budget

Additional reports, such as budget summaries, may also be provided. To oversee the finances adequately, the board should study financial statements carefully, ask questions, and be sure that they understand any unexpected or unusual expenditures or budget developments.

Gifts and Donations

For any funds in library custody, it is important that a library adopt policies for financial practices and controls that meet audit or AUP (agreed upon procedures) requirements. Libraries holding substantial funds should have an investment policy approved by the library board.

For some libraries, a significant source of income is from gifts and bequests. Building a tradition of honoring persons with a gift to the library is a form of giving that trustees can encourage in the community. Some libraries have worked with lawyers, doctors and funeral directors to assist them in making recommendations about giving to libraries. Many organizations earmark some of their funds for an annual gift to the library or a special gift in support of a particular service or need.

Library boards are required to have a policy on acceptance of gifts. The policy should address issues such as these: If funds are designated for a special purpose, should the library have the right to refuse the gift if the purpose is unsuitable? Is it best to accumulate cash funds in an endowment and draw upon the income? Can the library board refuse to take a gift, like a statue it doesn't need? If the purpose is no longer valid, how can the board liberate funds it accepted for a specific purpose?

Having policies responding to these questions will avoid misunderstandings about donations with donors.

Other Funding Sources

As funding needs arise, many libraries seek grants from foundations, corporations, endowments and government agencies. Local businesses are another option. Boards can solicit funds from these businesses directly or determine if a business has a community support program. Some libraries have established separate library foundations, which function as a separate entity. A

foundation can attain nonprofit tax status (known as 501(c)3) from the Internal Revenue Service, so that gifts are tax deductible for the donors. For more information on grants and foundations, visit the Foundation Center at www.fdncenter.org.

Local Funding

For most library systems, the majority of funding comes from local agencies. This may include support from municipalities, counties and school districts within your service area. The total operational support from local sources must be equal or greater than the operating support from the previous year. This maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement ensures that your library has ongoing support.

Your library may receive funding from a special purpose local option sales tax (SPLOST) for a defined project. These funds are for major capital outlay projects such as land purchases and buildings. A SPLOST is passed by a county commission, usually with the agreement of any city councils, and voted on by residents in a referendum. The SPLOST increase to the local sales tax lasts five years, and must be voted on again if funds are still needed. SPLOST funds can serve as the local match for state capital outlay and construction grants, but not for maintenance of effort requirements.

State Grants

The governing board for the library system has the sole authority to apply for and receive any grants administered by the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS).

State Reimbursed Positions

State funding of professional librarian positions, as well as the essential support staff in areas of finance and technology, allows all of Georgia's public libraries to provide a high level of public library service.

State reimbursed professional positions have a minimum salary range that can change each fiscal year with funding changes or cost-of-living adjustments. Your library may choose to use up to 50 percent of the funding allocated for professional positions to fund support staff.

See the State Reimbursed Position Guidelines in the appendix for more information.

Public Library Materials Support

When available, this grant is used for purchasing materials for the library, such as books, and the cataloging and processing of the materials. Any purchases must be within the guidelines provided in the library's collection development policy.

Public Library System Services Grants

This grant is used for the general operation of library services, including library programs and supplies.

It cannot be used for land acquisition or construction, or to supplement the salaries of state-reimbursed positions.

Capital Outlay and Construction Grants

The Capital Outlay and Construction Grant program is a matching-funds program primarily for new library construction. It also serves to provide financial aid for full-facility renovations and large additions to existing facilities. Funding for the grants is allocated by state legislation and funded by General Obligation bonds through the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC).

Major Repair and Renovation Grants

The Major Repair and Renovation (MRR) Grant program is also a matching-funds program. Its aim is to assist library facilities with deferred maintenance projects and improvements. Typical projects range from structural issues and roof repair to HVAC replacement and re-carpeting projects. It also assists with upgrades needed to help libraries meet the Americans with Disabilities Act's (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design.

The MRR program requires a 50 percent commitment of the total project costs specifically associated with the project from the requesting library system's stakeholders. These funds are then matched by state funding if available that fiscal year. In an instance where a library facility has been left inoperable by a catastrophic event, such as fire or tornado, up to a 90 percent state match may be requested and approved.

State Grant Forms

In order to receive any of the state funding described above, the library board must approve and sign several different forms. It is normally the library director that prepares any reports and forms, but it is the library board's responsibility to ensure that every report and form is accurate. The governing board chair's signature signifies board approval for:

- Annual Report
- Prior Year State Grant Completion Report
- Current Year Application for State Aid
- Current Year Certifications
- Signatory Authority

Please note that the signatory authority form must be signed each July, or when a new library director is hired. More information, instructions and forms on the

State Funding Formula, State Reimbursed position guidelines, and Policies for State Grants are available on the GPLS website.

Audit or AUP

Additionally, each year the library's financial statements are required to be audited or have an attestation engagement for agreed-upon procedures (AUP). Audit rules are set by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), a national organization that sets the accounting and financial reporting standards for local government agencies. The procedures in the AUP process are set by GPLS each year and help ensure the accuracy of the financial information reported by the library system each year.

No matter which one your library does, each is required to be conducted by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) currently licensed to practice in the state of Georgia and to include all the funds controlled directly by the library board, such as gift funds or endowments.

The library board should examine audit or AUP reports and carefully follow any recommendations. The director provides a copy of the report to each funding agency. If deemed necessary by GPLS, a corrective action plan must be filed and implemented for any findings or exceptions noted in the report.

Safeguarding the Organization's Assets

According to state law (O.C.G.A. § 20-5-50), each library board that handles finances must have a current fiduciary bond that covers the library director, treasurer of the board, or any other officials and employees authorized to handle library funds.

The governing board must acknowledge and accept its responsibility for safeguarding the organization's assets. The finance committee, working with the library director, should develop written financial policies for the organization. These policies should then be reviewed, understood and approved by the board as a whole. Policies should cover:

- Internal controls and procedures, which should be updated when there are major changes in organizational structure
- Travel reimbursement
- Bids for services
- Conflicts of interest
- Contractual agreements
- Fund balance
- Gifts of securities
- Independent audits
- Investment guidelines for operating and endowment funds
- How much a given item may vary from the budget before it becomes a matter for board review

- Contingency plans for a sudden organizational trauma

When the board develops and approves a policy, it must be monitored. Monitoring compliance with financial policies is one of the primary tasks of the finance committee and should be added to the committee's list of annual tasks.

Every nonprofit organization should have in place conflict-of-interest policies for staff and board. For staff, the policy should appear within the personnel policies. The board policy can be developed by the committee or by staff and approved by the board.

Sources of Additional Information

- Example of an Auditor's Opinion, page 59

Example of an Auditor's Opinion

An unqualified or "clean" auditor's opinion as recommended by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants:

Independent Auditor's Report
Board of Directors
NYZ Nonprofit Organization, Inc.
City, State

We have audited the accompanying statement of financial position of the XYZ Nonprofit Organization, Inc. (the Organization), as of December 31, 2013 and 2012, and the related statements of activities, changes in net assets, and cash flows for the years then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Organization's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audits in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatements. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the XYZ Nonprofit Organization, Inc., as of December 31, 2013 and 2012, and the results of its operations and its cash flow for the years then ended, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Auditing Firm Name
City, State
April 21, 2015

Source: National Center for Nonprofit Boards

Library Standards

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The development of the Georgia Public Library Standards was guided by the belief that Georgia's public libraries mission is to provide organized access to information and services that meet the educational, informational, recreational and cultural needs for the people of Georgia. All Georgia residents need and deserve at least a minimal level of library service. The standards provide a way to objectively measure and evaluate library services and also provide a pathway to optimal library service.

Due to tremendous advances in information technology and the spirit of collaboration of libraries in Georgia, even the smallest library can offer access to an almost unimaginable quantity of both electronic and print information resources. But while this new environment presents great opportunities, it also presents great challenges. Today's library staff must master not only the skills and knowledge necessary to provide traditional library services, but also the new and constantly changing skills and knowledge required to utilize the latest in information technologies. Challenges also face the trustees and other officials responsible for securing the funding and other resources necessary to provide library service that meets current needs and expectations.

The Georgia Public Library Standards attempt to cover the services, resources and other needs for library service that should be available to all residents of the state. Georgia's public library standards are entirely voluntary, but every library in Georgia is encouraged to meet the essential standards and strive for optimal library services.

How to Use the Standards

The simplest way to use the Standards is as a checklist and schedule reviews at your board meetings. If your library does not meet certain standards, you can work with your library director to develop a plan to work toward achieving those standards in the future.

Library Planning and the Standards

It is most effective to use the Standards as a tool to assist with a locally developed strategic planning process. Your local planning committee can use the Standards to gather information about the library and the community at the beginning of the planning process. The Standards can also help the planning committee establish objectives for your library's strategic plan.

Sources of Additional Information

- Georgia Public Library Standards
- Georgia Library Annual Report data

Notes

Planning for the Library's Future

The Importance of Planning: Why Plan?

How often do you leave for the grocery store without a list and come back without the one or two things you absolutely needed? Nobody would ever think of building a house or starting a business without a plan. Your library also needs a strategic plan to guide actions toward your community's goals.

Information technology, publishing and the book industry, and society itself are in the middle of the greatest series of changes since the invention of the printing press. In 1990, few libraries had computers. Now they are everywhere. Library services need to reflect changes in our communities. They cannot exist in a vacuum. The library board or director that refuses to plan is like the shopper going to the store without a shopping list. The library may well be offering dozens of services that are not really needed by the community, while failing to offer the one or two services that might provide a great benefit.

Planning for libraries is a process of envisioning the future of both the community and the library and setting a direction for library movement toward that chosen vision. Planning helps the staff and board understand the situation of their community, set priorities, and establish methods for achieving those priorities. The planning document provides a record of the decisions made during that process. The document also becomes a guide for decision-making and action by staff and the board.

Planning Essentials—Getting Started

Size doesn't matter. Every library needs a plan, no matter how small or how large the library and community may be. However, just as a shopping list will be different for the single person and the family of 10, the process followed to create a plan will depend on the size of library and community involved in the project. Large and even many medium-sized libraries, or those libraries accustomed to planning, may have the resources and experience to undertake a full-blown process.

There are several strategic planning programs specifically for libraries, including Planning for Results and Rapid Results Planning. The process is less important than the fact that planning is carried out. First-time planners often want to follow a simplified process that is less time-intensive. Even a simplified process will help the board and staff gain vital information about the library and community, as well as the experience and confidence needed to expand the process during the next planning cycle.

Who Should Be Involved?

The minimum number needed to draft a strategic plan is one. However, just as the grocery shopper benefits from consulting household members before leaving for the store, the strategic plan for the library benefits from input from multiple individuals. The library director, with the help of staff, can be relied on to gather statistics about a community. Important statistics include:

- Population size of community broken down by age, gender, racial heritage, etc.
- The expected changes to the community's demographics in the future
- Economic factors regarding the community, such as household incomes and major employers
- Educational profile of the community

At the same time, the director and staff can gather facts about the library, including:

- What services are currently being offered
- How usage patterns have changed in the past few years
- Composition of the collection. How many books does the library own? How many audiobooks? DVDs? E-books? Children's books, etc.
- Age of the collection. What is the average publication date for each section of the collection?

By discussing these and similar facts about the library and the community, the staff and board can come to some basic conclusions about the library on which to plan future services. A library with a small large-print collection in a community with a stable, aging population may want to buy more large-print books, for example. A science collection with relatively few titles less than one or two years old needs updating.

One of the best ways to gather insight regarding your library is to see how it stacks up against current state recommended standards. Georgia Public Library Standards are not mandatory requirements from the state; rather they are suggestions for basic levels of service. See Chapter 14 for more information.

By talking to other stakeholders, library planners can add to the strength and reliability of their plan as well as obtain buy-in from the public. There is an endless list of individuals and groups that might be consulted as part of a basic planning process. Which ones you choose will depend on your particular situation. Suggested players include:

- The mayor, town manager or county commissioner (or equivalent)
- Municipal employees such as an economic development director, senior center director, or recreation department director
- Local teachers or PTA
- Civic groups such as Rotary, Kiwanis or Lions

- Other social/service organizations that represent growing minority populations
- Representatives of the religious community
- Current library users
- Those not currently using the library

You get the picture. The more people you talk to about the community, the more information you will have to create your strategic plan.

How Do You Gather Information?

Probably the most common mistake library planners make when consulting the community in preparation for a strategic plan is to ask people about the library. The real purpose of consulting all of these community representatives is to find out about them—what they are doing and what is important in their lives and work. The library staff and board are the experts in the broad array of possible library services. It is up to these experts to be creative in proposing new services or changes in services to meet emerging needs. The mayor and city council may be interested in developing tourism in a community, but they may never think of the library as a vehicle for collecting and disseminating local information of interest to tourists. If you ask someone what the library should be like, they will answer based on their preconceptions about what a library is. Instead, ask about community needs and then apply library resources to fashion the services to help the community fill those needs.

There are a variety of ways to ask this large array of players about community needs. One of the simplest but most effective is simply to invite them to the library or a neutral site and talk to them. Find someone who is experienced in facilitating conversations. Construct one or more groups built around particular interests, such as the needs of children in the community or the needs of immigrants. Assist the interviewer in eliciting the opinions of interested parties regarding what is important to them.

Library planners probably most often gather information by means of surveys. If you decide to use a survey, consider the following:

- What is the specific question you are trying to answer? What hypothesis are you testing?
- Don't ask questions simply for the sake of asking. If you ask whether the respondent went to college, for example, how will having the information affect your investigation? How will you use the information?
- Will your survey reach the target audience? Surveys done in the library are useless for learning the needs and opinions of nonusers. Current library users do not necessarily represent a cross section of the community.
- How will your survey be distributed?
- How will your survey be tabulated?

- Do a pretest. Make sure that your respondents have the same understanding of the questions you do.

Again, consider enlisting the help of someone experienced in writing and conducting surveys before you get started. This doesn't have to cost anything. You may find a volunteer at a local chamber of commerce or a nearby university, or a local resident who has conducted surveys as part of their business may be willing to help. If you write your own survey, at the very least have someone critique it for you. A poorly executed survey can have less value than no survey at all. It may even lead you to opposite conclusions from those you might have reached otherwise.

A Plan Outline

OK, you've gathered all your information. What do you do with it? A simple plan might be organized like this:

Introduction:	Discuss the planning process: Who are you? What are your library and community like? How did you find this out? Who did you consult? How did you consult them? What did you find?
Mission Statement:	What vision of the community are you are trying to support? What is the library's role in supporting that vision? What is the reason the library exists?
Service Responses:	What are the specific services you will offer and why? Service responses are services typically offered by libraries such as basic literacy or lifelong learning.
Goals:	Once you've identified 4-5 service responses to concentrate on, the next step is to identify the goal. This is the outcome your target group will receive as a result of your program or service. Remember the focus is on the community NOT the library. If the service response is "Basic Literacy," then a goal might be "Foster love of reading in children."
Strategies/Objectives:	These outline the ways that the library will implement the goal, like summer reading programs, preschool storytimes, or lapsit programs.
Activities:	Activities are the specific actions taken to achieve the strategies/objectives, e.g. Contact schools, get

	SRP manual, get craft supplies, find speakers, find sponsors for prizes, etc.
Valuation:	How will you measure the impact these services are having on the target population? How do you know if you are doing it right? What are your alternatives if you are not?

The specific time frame your plan should cover will depend on how ambitious your plan is, or how many activities you hope to carry out. There is no magic formula that dictates that your plan should last five years, three years, or even one year. Do what makes sense for your library and your community. The most important thing you can do is to be adaptive. Follow your plan and revisit it along the way. Make sure it is taking you where you want to go, and revise it as necessary. At the end of the planning cycle, when all evaluations are in, start over. Create a new plan and perhaps go a little further in your information-gathering process.

Special Types of Planning

In addition to general strategic planning for the entire library, you may also want to consider planning projects focusing on special issues such as emergency or disaster preparedness.

Most libraries will rarely experience a severe emergency or natural disaster, but it is best to be prepared, just in case. Fires, floods, extreme weather, and hazardous material accidents can endanger lives, and it is important for libraries to have plans and/or policies in place for dealing with these types of emergencies. It is also important for staff to be trained to handle emergencies properly, including medical emergencies.

Plans and/or policies can also be established to prepare for recovery of library materials after an accident or disaster. See below for resources to help with accident and disaster preparedness planning.

Sources of Additional Information

- Strategic Planning tips from the New Jersey Trustee Association
- *Disaster Preparedness and Recovery*. American Library Association
- Conservation OnLine (CoOL), Disaster Preparedness and Response

Notes

Library Advocacy

One of your major responsibilities as a public library trustee 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 are making decisions on those issues. This information can be provided verbally or in writing. It may have such diverse objectives as shaping public opinion in a general way or influencing a specific vote on a library issue.

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

As a representative of the general public, you make a more effective case on the importance of adequate funding for the library than the librarian who is viewed as having a vested interest in a larger budget. Because public libraries have a unique place in local government, their needs may not be as readily understood by government officials, and a greater effort is needed to tell the library story.

Establish Priorities for Advocacy

Since the advocacy role is a basic duty of a library board member, it's important to channel these energies carefully. Early each year, the whole library board should decide which of its goals or positions to advocate most strenuously. Emphasis will vary by library. For instance, 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 you decide with other library board members what the areas of emphasis will be and how board members will go about advocating for 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.

Staying Informed

Your effectiveness as an advocate depends on being well-informed about library issues at the local, state and federal levels. Your library director is a good source

of information, as is the Trustee listserv. Watch the Georgia Public Library Service Continuing Education calendar for upcoming events and webinars of interest to trustees.

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.

If you choose to advocate a library-related position not agreed on by the board, be sure to make clear that you are speaking for yourself as an individual, not for the board.

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 and your fellow 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.

Sources of Additional Information

There are several online resources for advocacy, including:

- Georgia Library Association website
- United for Libraries website and online tools
- The GPLS Trustee Listserv
- Find your Georgia State Legislators
- Contact information for United States Senators
- Contact information for United States Representatives

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN
The Georgia Public Library Service

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The Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) is the state library agency in Georgia. It is a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, and its chief executive officer is the Associate Vice Chancellor for Library Development and Services, also known as the State Librarian. Our mission is to empower libraries to improve the lives of Georgians, and you are central to that goal.

GPLS administers both state and federal grants that annually total around $34 million. These funds support salaries for professional librarians, the maintenance and operation of facilities, and the purchase of technology infrastructure for libraries around the state.

The staff members of GPLS are here to provide professional support and technical assistance for the public libraries across the state. In part, we coordinate the annual Summer Reading Program, provide library services for the blind, and are available to consult with local library boards. See below for more information on the programs and services at GPLS.

PINES

Georgia Library Public Information Network for Electronic Services, or PINES, is Georgia's public library automation and lending network for 283 public libraries and affiliated service outlets in 142 counties. PINES serves patrons in all of Georgia's 159 counties. PINES is a national model of statewide service for library users and in cost savings for member libraries. Fifty percent of Georgia's population and more than 80 percent of Georgia's public library systems rely on the PINES network for their library service.

PINES creates a statewide "borderless library" that eliminates geographic and socioeconomic barriers and provides equal access to information for all Georgians. PINES cardholders live in every county in the state. Georgia public libraries depend on both the infrastructure and cooperative spirit of PINES to continue providing services that contribute to a more educated Georgia.

PINES facilitates collection sharing among member libraries. This means local public libraries are free to use their limited resources to develop collections tailored to the needs and interests of their communities. Rather than purchasing books that are already available through the PINES network, a local public library can choose to purchase books about the history of the local community or about industry and area job opportunities.

In addition to avoiding duplication of collections, PINES prevents duplication of staff, equipment and maintenance. These savings have allowed libraries to use funds on other needed resources and services for their patrons. PINES also provides automation, training and courier services to libraries for a fraction of the $20 million that would be required to pay for the same services on a system-by-system basis.

Information Technology

Georgia Public Library Service provides consulting services to assist libraries in the evaluation and selection of Internet Service Providers for the procurement of broadband. GPLS's IT department supports libraries in conducting vendor assessments and contract negotiations and with filing for E-Rate applications, the federal program that provides libraries a percentage discount on internet access. GPLS funds the non-E-Rated portion of broadband costs for each library system, ensuring that all patrons of Georgia's libraries, regardless of location, are afforded access to a high-speed connection to the Internet. Most libraries also provide access to a wireless network. GPLS also hosts cloud-based public access computers in the majority of Georgia's libraries, effectively increasing the numbers of computers for public use by 47 percent since 2012.

Along with email and web hosting, the IT department offers professional development and training to public library staff and a broad range of technical support for network, hardware and software technology issues.

Planning and Construction

The goal of Georgia Public Library Service's Planning and Construction group is to help communities around the state build new libraries or revitalize and renovate existing locations and to serve as a needed adviser and liaison with state funding agencies. Planning and Construction staff provide consulting services to public library systems and communities by meeting with library administrators and staff, community leaders, state legislators and any additional stakeholders responsible for library development.

Additionally, GPLS provides support in the development and implementation of public library design standards, library planning processes, feasibility determination, site analysis, and assistance in analyzing and coordinating project budget estimates.

The Planning and Construction program manages two major programs for funding libraries: Capital Outlay and Construction, and Major Repair and Renovation (MRR).

Capital Outlay and Construction Grants

GPLS's Capital Outlay and Construction Grant program is a matching-funds program primarily for new library construction. It also serves to provide financial aid for full-facility renovations and large additions to existing facilities. Funding for the grants is allocated by state legislation and funded by General Obligation bonds through the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC).

Major Repair and Renovation (MRR) Grants

GPLS's Major Repair and Renovation (MRR) Grant program is also a matching-funds program. Its aim is to assist library facilities with deferred maintenance projects and improvements. Typical projects range from structural issues to roof repair or replacement and from HVAC repair or replacement to recarpeting projects. It also assists with upgrades needed to help libraries meet the Americans with Disabilities Act's (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design.

The MRR program requires a 50 percent commitment of the total project costs specifically associated with the project from the requesting library system's stakeholders. These funds are then matched by state funding, if available, that fiscal year. In an instance where a library facility has been left inoperable by a catastrophic event, such as fire or tornado, up to a 90 percent state match may be requested and approved.

Continuing Education

The rapid pace of change in the library world emphasizes the need for libraries to become learning organizations that innovate and thrive in rapidly changing environments, and ones that support continuous employee learning. Georgia Public Library Service recognizes that in order for libraries to fulfill their missions and strategic goals, all staff members must be provided with relevant learning opportunities and support structures that will enable them to undertake their roles to the highest standards.

GPLS's Continuing Education and Training staff provides diverse programs that empower libraries to reach their full potential as learning organizations and to support library staff members in their professional development efforts.

Additionally, GPLS maintains the **State Library Collection** as a professional resource for Georgia's librarians and trustees. The collection includes materials on all aspects of library and information science and support services, including acquisition, cataloging, management and programming. Resources are available at www.gapines.org and can be sent to your local library via PINES or interlibrary loan.

Strategic Partnerships

Georgia Public Library Service partners with a number of state and private organizations to provide an additional layer of support and awareness for the state's public libraries. During the past decade, our partnership programs have educated and entertained thousands of Georgia citizens while saving more than $12 million in direct expenditures and providing hundreds of hours of free programming for public libraries.

GPLS also partners with several entities that provide free programming, free materials or both for libraries. These include the Georgia Council for the Arts, the Georgia Center for the Book, ZooAtlanta and its ZooMobile, and the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust.

GLASS

Through the Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS), Georgia Public Library Service provides library services for the blind and others whose physical abilities require the use of books and magazines in audio format or in braille.

Georgians have ready access to materials from the free national library program administered by the Library of Congress and the National Library Service for the Blind & Physically Handicapped (NLS). Reading materials and services for personal enrichment, education and entertainment— as well as any needed audio playback equipment —are sent to borrowers and returned by postage-free mail. Library users can search the online GLASS catalog for braille, recorded books and descriptive videos and place their requests. Reader advisers are available to help patrons in person or by phone.

The recorded book collection has moved from audiocassettes to digital formats that include digital cartridges as well as downloadable digital content via BARD, the Braille and Audio Reading Download system. BARD can be accessed via desktop computers and via the BARD app for mobile devices. Never before have readers had so many options for fast access to the books that they want to read. NLS is continuing work to digitize its entire collection over the course of the next several years. Staff members at GLASS network libraries are ready and willing to assist readers Monday through Saturday. The online catalog and BARD website are available 24/7.

Youth Services

GPLS plans and implements statewide family literacy programs including 1,000 Books B4 Kindergarten, Every Child Ready to Read®, summer reading and Prime Time Family Reading Time™. The latest research in family and early literacy is compiled and disseminated to libraries across the state. Children's services staff

incorporate this research into storytimes and other library programming for all ages. These programs help build a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

The benefits of youth services are numerous. From providing quality, literature-based programs for children and families to assisting teens with their informational needs, Georgia's public libraries strive to develop lifelong readers and learners. Through the services offered across the state, a community of support and advocacy is created for library personnel working with children, families and teens. Working in tandem, GPLS and library systems provide parents and caregivers with the best tools to help prepare their children for life and introduce them to a lifelong love of reading. GPLS acts as a consultant for systems developing new youth services initiatives or for systems continuing service for parents and children.

Here for You

GPLS provides leadership and facilitates collaboration and innovation in the broader library community. Our goal is to represent and support Georgia's public libraries both across the state and nationally. Please consider GPLS as your first-line resource for assistance and support.

Sources of Additional Information

The GPLS website at www.georgialibraries.org has more information, including the following:

- GPLS Staff Directory
- Who to Call at GPLS
- PINES
- Technology
- GLASS
- Youth Services

Notes

Library Accessibility

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Role of the Board / Role of the Director

The library board has a responsibility to ensure the library and its policies are in compliance with all laws, including the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All libraries are considered "places of public accommodation." The director has the responsibility to keep the board aware of current issues related to building and services accessibility. It is important that the board and director work closely to ensure equitable access to the library for all people in the community.

Accessibility is much more than physical access to the building. It is a demonstration of respect of the community as a whole. As libraries transition further into digital delivery, it is a pressing concern to assure that computers, computer interfaces and digital content are accessible to everyone in the community.

GPLS provides support for both building and service accessibility. The director of Library Planning & Construction provides advice on projects involving renovation and construction, and regularly consults on accessibility and facility design. The staff of Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS) provides the talking book and braille program in Georgia and serves as a resource for public libraries on accessible library services.

Everyone Benefits When the Libraries Are Accessible

Generally, when the topic of accessible buildings comes up, people tend to think that the benefit of the modifications is for people who use wheelchairs or walkers, or perhaps people who use leg braces or crutches. But the reality is that accessible buildings make life easier for everyone. Many people become at least temporarily disabled at some point in life. They may break an arm and not be able to open a heavy door. They may be using crutches because they broke a leg, had a hip replacement, or had surgery for a sports injury.

When parents arrive at the library with a child in a stroller, they appreciate being able to walk right in and not having to squeeze through aisles and around tables. Healthy, active seniors appreciate not having to struggle with heavy doors and having safety bars in the bathroom. Children appreciate service counters that are at their height and don't force them to stand on tiptoe or crane their heads to talk to library staff. Busy library staff appreciate doors that open automatically when they approach with an armload of heavy books.

Accessibility means more than making the library usable for someone in a wheelchair. Accessibility also involves accommodating needs related to impairment of vision, hearing, communication or intellect. Creating a culture of

accommodation and inclusion should be the goal of all libraries. Whether an impairment is permanent or temporary, it should not prevent a person from enjoying the resources of their public library.

Background on ADA Compliance

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal law passed in 1990. It is a civil rights law for people with disabilities that ensures people are not discriminated against because they have a disability. Two parts of the law apply particularly to public libraries. Title I requires equal employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Title II prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in state and local government service; this includes public libraries.

The law provides that all people, including those who have disabilities, have essentially the same rights of access to public buildings and services. The law requires certain universal design characteristics to make buildings accessible to people with disabilities. There are two sets of building specifications, the ADAAGs (ADA Accessibility Guidelines) and the ABAAS (Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standard). They are both enforced by the U.S. Access Board.

Since the passage of the ADA in 1990, building accessibility has been an essential component of new building construction and renovation of older facilities. Many older public libraries remain inaccessible. The law does require "reasonable" modifications to buildings but permits buildings to remain unchanged if the modifications would be too costly. However, modifications have to be included in any major building renovation or new construction.

Buildings should be surveyed for accessibility on a regular basis to assure that features designed to provide accessibility are still functioning as intended. Even the settled slab of a sidewalk can be a barrier to accessibility.

Accessible services are another matter to consider. The library is required to provide access to its services to people with disabilities. This requirement is not dependent on a building's being accessible; 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. But some accommodations can and must be made until such time as the building is remodeled or a new building is constructed.

Certain services may require accommodations even if the building is accessible. The library should make its willingness to accommodate different needs known to the community when promoting its services. A simple statement on an event flyer announcing the availability of accommodations promotes accessibility.

General Building Access Issues

All buildings open to the public must meet federal specifications, but government buildings are held to a higher standard by those specifications.

There are some specific regulations for public libraries, which are discussed below. There are also some exceptions for designated historical buildings. For details on each requirement, please refer to the Americans with Disabilities Act Technical Assistance Manual.

The law specifies how many parking spaces must be provided, the way the spaces must be painted, the wording on the signs for that parking area and their placement. Entrances must be modified or designed to make entering the buildings possible for persons who use wheelchairs or other mobility supports. Once inside, the aisles should be wide, doors easy to open, and tables, desks and computers accessible. Restrooms and fountains must be designed for safety and accessibility for persons with mobility impairments.

All public areas of the building should be accessible to those with physical disabilities (for example, someone who uses a wheelchair). However, if a staff person should become disabled, or a person with a disability is hired, all staff areas would have to be modified to make them accessible as well.

The regulations define an "accessible path" and specify the width of doorways and aisles, turn radius at certain points in the room, requirements for the floor surfaces, and the design of bathrooms. Lever door hardware must be used, rather than round doorknobs.

All levels of the building must be accessible, as well as all meeting rooms. The person with a disability should not be expected to leave the building and enter a lower level from an outside entrance; he or she should be able to get to different levels in the building using an elevator.

Specific ADA Regulations for Public Libraries

Public libraries must meet all the general requirements indicated above and address the following areas as well:

Reading and Study Areas	Certain percentage of the seating area must be accessible to people using wheelchairs so that they can sit at a table. Staff should remain attentive to furniture that can obscure paths in otherwise well-designed spaces.
Checkout Areas	At least one part of the checkout desk has to be a specific height for people who use wheelchairs. Security gates must accommodate wheelchairs.
Online Services	Library catalogs, databases and websites should be in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. WC3 guidelines provide webmasters with resources and tools to check library online presence for accessibility.

Magazine Areas	There must be access to these areas for people who use wheelchairs, and there is a maximum height for shelving in these areas.
Book Stacks	There is not a maximum height for the general book stacks, but the library staff must accommodate people by helping them get the materials they need. Adequate space between aisles must be maintained. Lighting should be sufficient as well.

Service Animals

The ADA requires respect and accommodation for people who rely on service animals for assistance. Service animals recognized under the ADA include any dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. They must be allowed to accompany their owners in public buildings.

A service animal is not a pet. Library staff may ask a person if the animal is a service animal required because of a disability and what task the animal has been trained to perform. Staff may not ask that the service animal be removed from the premises unless it is not being kept under control by the owner or is not housebroken.

Assistive Technologies

Technology offers a variety of solutions for a person with a disability. Library staff should be willing to offer assistance utilizing simple low tech solutions where appropriate and pursuing higher tech ones when they are required. Many digital devices have built-in features such as magnification and text-to-speech that make online resources, including e-books, easy for many more people to enjoy.

Tools for Life, Georgia's Assistive Technology Act program, provides technical assistance to agencies that serve the public and can make recommendations for adaptions and resources that may make the library more accessible.

Staff Training

With all of the issues relating to legal requirements, best practices, and advances in technology, staff training on these topics becomes imperative. **GLASS** is your first-line resource for library accessibility and can help develop best practices and assist with your library's training needs.

Types of Disabilities
That May Require Accommodations

Mobility Limitations

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, reach, grasp or turn pages. If the building itself is not accessible, the problem of providing access to services is more complicated. Many libraries provide services to meet the needs of persons in their community who are not able to visit the library due to illness or disability. Libraries may consider outreach services to nursing homes, day care centers and senior service centers. An effective telephone reference and customer support service can enhance services to persons who are unable to visit the library. Equally, a well-designed library website can provide access to library services to people who are unable to visit the library.

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. Library staff should feel comfortable asking a patron what will best fit their needs.

Blind and Low Vision

A print impairment may be due to low vision, vision loss, or the physical inability to hold a book and turn the pages to read. Public libraries frequently connect people in need with GLASS for accessible reading materials including "talking books" and braille materials. GLASS provides reading materials to people of all ages and includes materials mailed to patrons' homes as well as computerized access for easy download onto mobile devices. GLASS also provides embossed braille books to eligible enrolled readers in Georgia.

Public libraries do provide many services that blind and low vision patrons may enjoy. For example, most Blu-ray discs of feature films include an audio described option that provides a blind viewer with an artistically delivered narrative of the movie.

Public libraries should keep collections of large print books to meet the needs of persons with low vision who can still read print. Library brochures and fliers should be routinely printed in large print or have a large print version available. Audio materials may also be of interest to patrons who have limited vision. Computer workstations can easily be adapted for large print, often using the features built into the standard computer. Large computer monitors can make computer use easier for persons with low vision. The ability to change the background colors and contrasts is also very helpful.

There are many simple adaptations to library services that can make it easier for a person with low vision to use the library. Libraries can offer magnification

tools, ranging from hand lenses to video display magnifiers, to assist readers with low vision. An intensely bright table or floor lamp that can be moved around in the library is a very useful accommodation. 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.

Computer workstations can also be adapted with software that reads the text aloud. This feature would be very helpful to people with learning disabilities, adults who are just learning to read and people who are learning English as a second language. The library's web page should follow universal design recommendations, so that it can be read easily by people who use a screen reader. The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) has developed strategies, guidelines, and resources to make the web accessible to people with disabilities.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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, speech read, 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. Patrons should be allowed to decide individually how they want to communicate, and the staff should try to work with each patron to meet their needs.

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 hard of hearing. 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 public 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 staff are 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 hard of hearing 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 that 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.

Communication With Dignity and Respect

All library patrons should be welcome in their public library. Library staff should talk directly to the individual, 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. The library collection should include resource materials on physical disabilities. Some collections include toys adapted for children with mobility impairments. Promotional materials should include a phone number (and a TDD number if available) to call if accommodations are needed.

When libraries design buildings, websites and services with accessibility and inclusion in mind, the community has the opportunity to participate and enjoy all that the library has to offer. Whether it is curb cuts, accessible restrooms, adapted programs or assistive technology, libraries have an obligation to meet the needs of its community of users.

Sources of Additional Information

- GLASS Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services
- Georgia's ADA Coordinator Office
- Georgia Accessibility Code
- GPLS Construction and Planning resources
- Americans with Disabilities Act Title II Technical Assistance Manual
- ADA Title III Technical Assistance Manual
- Disability Law Center ADA Checklist for Libraries
- US Dept. Health and Human Services Section 508
- ADA 2010 Revised Requirements: Service Animals
- The US Access Board
- World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)
- *Pocket Guide to the ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2006.
- Roberts, Elizabeth Ann and Richard J. Smith. *Crash Course in Library Services to People with Disabilities*, Libraries Unlimited, 2010.

Notice: The information presented in this chapter is in no way to be considered as legal advice. If you have specific questions, you should always consult your attorney.

CHAPTER NINETEEN
Library Friends Groups

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Friends Organizations

Friends of the Library organizations exist in many Georgia communities. Friends organizations are groups of citizens who join together to support, improve and promote the library. Some are formally incorporated, not-for-profit bodies; some are informal groups of library supporters. Information about establishing a Friends organization and ideas for Friends activities and projects is available from the national United for Libraries group.

As volunteers who actively support the library, Friends can be extremely helpful to the library in a number of ways. Friends often offer financial support for a special library program or service, advocate for the library budget or library capital project, and volunteer assistance with children's summer reading programs and other services.

While the library board and the Friends share a common vision, they are separate, autonomous bodies—each with a distinct role. The two groups work together most effectively if they respect the distinct role of each organization. Below are a few suggestions that may help create an effective working relationship:

- Friends recognize that they do not perform a decision-making role for the library.
- The library board values and encourages input and opinions from the Friends.
- The library board appoints a liaison to the Friends (often the library director or other library staff member).
- Friends decide how to spend their funds only after conferring with the library director and library board or according to an established Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the library board.
- The library board provides the Friends with a "wish list" of items not included in the budget, to aid the Friends in their fundraising efforts.
- The Friends' activities support library board strategic plans and policies.
- The library board expresses appreciation to the Friends for their support and service.
- The library board invites and welcomes Friends to library board meetings, especially when discussing issues that may be of interest to the Friends.

Financial Support From Friends

It is important that library donations, including financial and material support from the Friends, be used to enhance or enrich library services. The availability

of Friends' support should never be the occasion for reducing or replacing the community's commitment to public funding. Donors will stop donating and volunteers will stop working if they see that their efforts are resulting in reduced public funding for the library instead of improved service.

Often, Friends groups will underwrite a pilot project for a year or two until the value of the new service is proven in the community. They might provide assistance in the furnishing and/or decorating of the library building beyond bare necessities. They might make special collection enrichment gifts to help the library keep pace with an unanticipated increase in the need for special materials (to better serve Spanish-language residents or daycare centers, for example). In addition, Friends groups often provide financial support for special programming.

In many communities, the library donates withdrawn books to the local Friends organization for sale to the public. This practice probably falls within the authority of the library board; however, because public property is involved, special care should be taken. The library board can enter into a written agreement, or memorandum of understanding (MOU), with the Friends that makes clear that all proceeds from sale of the books (and any other materials) be used to support the programs and services of the library. A sample MOU form is located in the appendix.

The Friends of Georgia Libraries (FOGL) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating an informed, statewide network of support for Georgia's libraries. Its annual workshop provides continuing education and networking opportunities for Friends members across the state. In addition to author visit grants, FOGL also presents awards that recognize Friends and advocates who strengthen Georgia's public libraries. Membership is available at both the individual and Friends group level.

Sources of Additional Information

- United for Libraries
- Friends of Georgia Libraries
- The Foundation Center has information on establishing a nonprofit organization

Orientation & Continuing Education

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Trustee Orientation

To carry out their duties effectively, new trustees must be informed about the library's services, needs and plans. They should also have an understanding of the legal responsibilities of the library board and the relationship of the board to the library's funders, to the library director and other library staff. A good orientation will provide new trustees with the answers they need to undertake their duties confidently.

The orientation program should be planned step by step by the library board, with the assistance of the library director. Orientation should start as soon as possible after the new board member is appointed, and preferably before their first meeting. This important face-to-face session serves to prepare recently appointed board members for their duties and helps them understand how the library operates. See the attached *Sample Trustee Orientation Outline* for ideas.

Learning on the Job

Regular communication with the library director, fellow board members, and trustees from other libraries can provide great on-the-job learning opportunities. When issues arise, feel free to ask for background information or a thorough explanation. Chances are, there are other board members who have the same questions.

High attendance levels at meetings, orientation sessions and other training events will help ensure knowledgeable trustees and a better library system. Trustees who visit the library frequently and observe library operations, including those "behind the scenes," have a better understanding of how policy and budget decisions will affect day-to-day business.

Trustee Continuing Education

Even the most knowledgeable and experienced library trustee needs continuing education to stay informed about new laws, new technologies and new possibilities for library service. Library services and library policies must constantly change to keep pace with our ever-changing times. Library leaders, including library trustees, who stay informed on these changes will be better able to provide high-quality library service to their community.

Your library director is your best first source of information on how you can learn more about library and board operations and how to better advocate for your community library.

One of the most valuable types of continuing education experience for trustees is attendance at system or regional workshops or at conferences such as the annual Georgia Library Association Conference. These larger gatherings give you the opportunity to share experiences and ideas with trustees from other libraries. Information about these forums and conferences is available on the Georgia Public Library Service website.

Because trustees are busy people with many commitments, it may be difficult to find the time to attend in-person workshops and conferences. Fortunately, there are many other ways to learn and stay informed. GPLS provides access to free online training sessions for staff and trustees to learn about a variety of library issues. These can be accessed via the GPLS Continuing Education Calendar of Events.

The Georgia Center for Nonprofits offers classes and resources on a variety of topics that may be of interest to library board members. The national organization, United for Libraries, also offers free and fee-based training programs.

Library News and Continuing Education Opportunities

Georgia Public Library Service News is published bimonthly by GPLS, and you can receive it via email or have a printed copy of the newsletter mailed to you.

E-mail discussion lists are great sources of library news and education opportunities. Join the Georgia Public Library Service Trustees listserv.

You can also join ALA's national e-mail list for trustees.

Other Continuing Education Ideas

One of the easiest ways to expand continuing education for trustees is to add a brief learning session to library board meetings. This way every trustee on the board is present and has the chance to be involved in brainstorming or problem-solving discussions on issues of importance to the library.

The chapters that make up this handbook can be used for short continuing education sessions held during regular or special board meetings. The meeting agenda should alert board members that a particular chapter will be reviewed at the next board meeting. Each board member should read the chapter in advance of the meeting and bring to the meeting any questions or thoughts concerning the issues raised by the chapter. Perhaps a board member with experience on the topic to be covered could lead the discussion.

Keep in mind that GPLS offers professional consulting services to library staff and boards. These consultants are knowledgeable about a wide range of library practices and issues, as well as new laws and new technologies that may be of

interest to your library. Consider inviting a GPLS staff member or other expert to lead a continuing education session at a regular or special board meeting.

Budgeting for Trustee Continuing Education

The annual library budget should include funding for trustee continuing education. Funding should be provided to pay the expenses for trustees to attend library-related workshops and send at least one trustee per year to the annual Georgia Library Association Conference. Funding should also be provided for at least one trustee's membership in the national association United for Libraries.

Sources of Additional Information

- Sample Trustee Orientation Outline, page 89
- United for Libraries training opportunities
- Georgia Center for Nonprofits
- GPLS Continuing Education Calendar of Events

Sample Trustee Orientation Outline

Your board's orientation program can generally follow these steps:

1. The board chair (or library director or other board designee) should contact the new trustee to welcome him/her to the board and schedule the orientation session.
2. Immediately send the new trustee a packet that includes:
    - a copy of this handbook
    - a copy of meeting ground rules
    - bylaws of the board
    - a list of board members, indicating terms of office and board officers
    - board committee membership lists
    - calendar of upcoming meetings

   At a later point, you may also wish to share the following information with the new trustee:
    - the library's latest annual report
    - the library's strategic plan and current technology plan
    - the library's policies
    - the library's current and previous year's budget
    - the board's meeting minutes for the previous six months
    - the director's reports for the previous six months
    - the latest monthly statistical report and financial report
    - an organizational chart of the library staff with names and titles
    - the library board's annual calendar, including legal requirements and deadlines
    - copy of the Georgia Public Library *Standards for Public Libraries*
3. The orientation should include a tour of the library, with the director, to introduce staff and discuss library programs and services.
4. The orientation should include meetings with the library director (and perhaps a library board representative) to discuss library services, library plans, and other important issues.

   A possible plan for the remainder of the orientation program could be as follows:
   a. A meeting/discussion with the library director to learn:
      - Brief history of the library system
      - Current use of the library and trends in use
      - how the library serves the needs of the community
      - how the library is linked to other community resources and other libraries
      - library laws and open meeting laws
      - professional issues, like intellectual freedom

- funding and budget process

b. A meeting/discussion with one or more board representatives to talk about:
    - Board member's role and responsibilities, including board Chair's expectations of trustees
    - Director's role and responsibilities
    - location, schedule, and conduct of meetings
    - library strategic plans, and the status of activities to meet the objectives of those plans
    - recent library accomplishments
    - resources and opportunities available for continuing education

Notes

The appendix is located online at www.georgialibraries.org/trustees/