COLORADO TRUSTEE MANUAL

Produced by the

Colorado State Library



COLORADO
Department of Education
Colorado State Library

INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES

Cover Photo: Silverton Public Library

Hello Library Trustee,

We are thrilled to welcome you to the Colorado library community. Serving on your local library board of trustees offers a unique opportunity to shape your community's future.

As a trustee, you are part of a decision-making team that includes your fellow trustees and the library director. Enthusiasm, preparation, and dedication are the hallmarks of an effective board. It is important for you to understand the different roles played by the library board, director, and staff.

Our intention in creating this manual is to highlight the key components of being a member of the board of trustees in any community. This includes having a strong understanding of the Public Library Standards, Colorado library law, and best practices. Additionally, this manual will provide opportunities for you to take what you are learning and apply it to your local library situation.

The manual is divided into a variety of topics. Each topic will be introduced to create a base level of understanding. The public library standards and any library laws that are associated with this topic will be highlighted for easy reference. Additional resources that allow for a deeper understanding of the topic and guided practice will also be provided. As a state library, we plan to connect with you as a board. Until then, we want to make sure that you have information at your fingertips. Please reach out to your director or the state library if you have any questions as you navigate through this information.

For a library board to truly excel, intentional and deliberate conversations coupled with open communication are not just beneficial – they are essential. Your dedication to proactively shaping the future of your library system through strategic planning, a clear mission, and a compelling vision empowers the director to effectively manage operational needs. This collaborative leadership will be the catalyst for a flourishing community.



Jean Heilig
Interim Colorado State Librarian



Tiah Frankish
Library Development Director

Table of Contents

Chapter One

What is a Public Library? 5

Chapter Two

I Am On The Board! Now What? Roles and Responsibilities 18

Chapter Three

Meetings, Committees, and More 32

Chapter Four

Succession Planning, Recruiting, Onboarding, & Development of Trustees 50

Chapter Five

Budgeting & Finance 59

Chapter Six

How Do I Know a Good Policy? 77

Chapter Seven

Being Strategic: Evaluation and Planning 90

Chapter Eight

The Board as an Employer 108

Chapter Nine

Impact and Relevance 119

Chapter Ten

Library Support – Fundraising, Foundations, & Friends 136

From Volunteer to Visionary 143

Resources 144

CHAPTER 1
WHAT IS A PUBLIC LIBRARY?

The public library's mission is to provide access to the world of information and ideas. The role of the modern library is more about community impact than collections of books. Libraries are places where all community members see themselves as welcome, with opportunities to contribute and have a voice. Today's libraries are community centers, where a community grows as people connected to ideas and resources.

RELATED COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARD(S)
ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

IN THIS SECTION WE WILL EXPLORE:

The Definition of a Public Library 6
A Public Library Board 8
Types of Public Libraries and Their Associated Boards 8
Decision Making with "Library" in Mind 9
Summary 16
Try This 17

THE DEFINITION OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the federal agency that supports and oversees federal funding for libraries in the United States, defines and 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 the 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

COLORADO

Colorado's public libraries are established and maintained according to the Colorado Library Law and subject to other legal requirements. Colorado law incorporates the federal definition of a public library and adds to it. C.R.S. § 24-90-103(5.5). This definition determines eligibility for state library funding, services, and resources. It is also used to determine which libraries are required to provide statistical data, called the Public Library Annual Report (PLAR).



Boulder Public Library

Colorado public libraries are tasked with ensuring that the public has equal access to information and materials (C.R.S. §24-90-102). Under Colorado Library Law, the state librarian must develop public library service standards to guide public library development (C.R.S. §24-90-105(2)(a.3)). Below are the minimum criteria set forth in the service standards required for entities wishing to be defined as a public library in Colorado.

ACCESS & SERVICES

- Have an ongoing collection budget from local tax funds and a collection management plan for the purchase of materials and electronic access.
- Provide at least one device with public access to the Internet, a printer, an email address, a website, an online information catalog, and databases.
- Be open to the public a minimum of 20 hours each week. These hours will include morning, afternoon, evening, and/or weekend hours based on users' and potential users' disposable time. All service outlets of libraries providing multiple access points must be open to the public for no fewer than 20 hours a week.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Be legally established under Colorado Library Law (C.R.S. §24-90-101 et seq.)
- Comply with Colorado Library Law, as well as any federal, state, or local laws that affect library operations.
- Have a dedicated space that meets the criteria of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applicable to libraries.
- Submit statistical data for the Public Library Annual Report to the State Library on time.

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT

- Provide free access to basic services as defined by written policies regarding lending, borrowing, and circulation services as approved by the library's Governing Authority.
- Have paid staff present during all hours of service. Pay of staff must be based on the cost-of-living standards within the community.
- Prepare and utilize a long-range strategic plan for continuous improvement.

RESOURCE SHARING

- Be a member and fully participate in the Colorado Libraries Collaborate (CLC) program, extending privileges and services to state residents according to the CLC agreement.
- Comply with the Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States and adopt the Colorado Interlibrary Loan Best Practices for lending and borrowing materials through the statewide interlibrary loan network according to that code.
- Be a member of the Colorado Library Consortium (CLiC) and use its services as appropriate.

A PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

In Colorado, there are two types of public library boards – governing and advisory. Both types of boards are comprised of citizen volunteers known as “trustees,” “directors,” or “board members,” who guide & govern public libraries. They are the link between the library and the community, and they represent all members of the public. Each trustee brings their own strengths, skills, knowledge, and experience to the board. The board as a whole should represent a broad spectrum of the community.

The role of a library board is to set the library's policies and goals, hire and evaluate the library director, and oversee the library's general management. The board also advocates for the library within the community and with local government.

Effective library trustees are engaged with the community. They understand the library's role in the community and the political process. They are also willing to take on the responsibilities of public office.

Library boards that recognize the public library's role in the community build stronger partnerships. They work with other organizations to provide services that meet the needs of the community.

TYPES OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND THEIR ASSOCIATED BOARDS

The type of legal framework under which a library is established and organized is called the *legal basis*. Different laws apply to the different library types. A public library in Colorado has one of these four legal bases.

LEGAL BASIS	# OF PUBLIC LIBRARY JURISDICTIONS IN COLORADO
Municipal Government (city, town, or village)	38
County/Parish	11
Library District	56
Multi-Jurisdictional (school/public combined, city/county)	7
TOTAL	**112**

Within these four legal bases, the Library District is the only library type that is a governmental entity with its own governing authority. For a library district, the board of trustees is the library's governing authority and constitutes its own local government body. The responsibilities of a library district's board of trustees include fiduciary, facilities, and organizational systems. The library director reports to the library board of trustees, and staff are employees of the library district.

Public libraries that have a legal basis other than 'Library District' report to the governing authority for the local entity to which the library belongs (e.g., the city council, county board of commissioners, or other local leadership) and generally are referred to as an advisory board. The scope of these boards' authority often is set forth in an agreement or charter. Typically, these libraries use the local governmental fiscal, human resources, facilities, technology, and other organizational systems. Trustees of an advisory board are responsible for knowing which legal duties and authority have been granted to the board versus those that have been retained by the government authority to which the advisory board belongs. The advisory board of trustees should have on file all local agreements, charters, and memoranda for understanding between the library and its governing authority. These should also be sent to the State Library for our archives.

DECISION MAKING WITH "LIBRARY" IN MIND

In Colorado, a board of trustees, whether a governing board or an advisory board, must not only make decisions that follow the law, but must also consider decisions with the values and ethics of public libraries in mind. Trustees must "think library."

The core values of librarianship embodied in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and Freedom to View Statement are 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.

CORE VALUES OF LIBRARIANSHIP

ACCESS

Access allows everyone in the community to obtain library resources and services with minimal disruption. Library workers create systems that ensure members of their community can freely access the information they need for learning, growth, and empowerment, regardless of technology, format, or delivery methods.

EQUITY

Library workers play a crucial role in fostering equity by actively working to dismantle barriers and create spaces that are accessible, welcoming, and beneficial for all. This is accomplished by recognizing and addressing systemic barriers, biases, and inequalities to create inclusive library environments where everyone can benefit from the library's offerings and services

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND PRIVACY

Intellectual freedom empowers people to think for themselves and to make informed decisions while respecting each individual’s dignity and independence. Library workers encourage people to cultivate curiosity and form ideas by questioning the world and accessing information from diverse viewpoints and formats without restrictions or censorship. The right to privacy is a crucial safeguard to this freedom, ensuring everyone has the right to develop their thoughts and opinions free of surveillance.

PUBLIC GOOD

Public good means working to improve society and protect the rights to education, literacy, and intellectual freedom. Libraries are an essential public good and are fundamental institutions in democratic societies. Library workers provide the highest service levels to create informed, connected, educated, and empowered communities.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability means making choices that are good for the environment, make sense economically, and treat everyone equitably. Sustainable choices preserve physical and digital resources and keep services useful now and into the future. By supporting climate resilience, library workers create thriving communities and care for our common good for a better tomorrow.

LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT

The American Library Association affirms the following propositions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

FREEDOM TO VIEW STATEMENT

As stated by the American Library Association:

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore, these principles are affirmed:

- To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
- To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
- To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
- To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
- To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

SUMMARY

Public libraries play an essential role in building strong and vibrant communities. They provide a place where people can come together to learn, connect, and grow. Libraries are a valuable resource for people of all ages, and they are an important part of the fabric of our communities.

As a steward of the public, your responsibility is to ensure that your library adheres to these principles and laws. As a trustee, you can help ensure that your library meets the needs of your community. You can do this by listening to the community, supporting the library's programs and services, and advocating for the library.

TRY THIS

What type of public library do I serve as a board member?

- ☐ Municipal government (City, town, or village)
- ☐ County/Parish
- ☐ Library District
- ☐ Multi-jurisdictional (school/public combined, city/county)

I am member of a(n)

- ☐ governing board.
- ☐ advisory board.

My term of office is _____year(s).

Who does the library serve? What is its jurisdiction or legal service area?

- You can review a map of the legal service area with the Colorado State Library.
- You can review community data from the US Census office or reach out to the Colorado State Library.

From where does the library receive its funding?

- You can review revenue in your library's budget or annual audit.

CHAPTER 2
I AM ON THE BOARD! NOW WHAT?
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Congratulations! You have been appointed to your local public library board. Now what? Effective library governance is essential for fostering strong leadership and community impact.

Colorado public libraries are central hubs in their communities. They provide free and equal access to educational, informational, and recreational materials and resources in a variety of formats. It is the responsibility of a public library board of trustees to ensure that the public library's policies and budget support the mission and the community and provide access and services to all community members.

The library director brings the library vision, mission, and values to life. Where do vision, mission, and values come from? The board. A library director is the employee of the board, and it is the role of the library director to put the vision into action. Clearly defining the separation of these roles is critical for the library to be an efficiently managed community resource that uses public funds to provide high-value library services to all.

The powers and duties of public library boards of trustees are defined in the Colorado Revised Statutes under Colorado Library Laws §24-90-108 and §24-90-109. Additionally, various other laws apply to libraries, depending on the library type. For example, a municipal library may be subject to municipal laws and any governing charters. It's important to be familiar with the library type for the board you serve and the scope of the governing laws.

The following sections are intended for informational purposes and not intended as legal advice. Libraries and trustees should consult their own legal counsel for legal advice.

RELATED COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARD(S)
ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE

IN THIS SECTION, WE WILL EXPLORE:

Roles of the Board of Trustees 20
Separation of Roles: Trustee and Library Director 21
Working together: Trustees and library director 22
What Role do Trustees have with the Friends and Foundation? 22
Some statutes to keep in mind 23
Officers 25
Bylaws 26
Annual Report 27
Summary 28
Try This: Situations 29

ROLES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trustees are responsible for providing the vision and direction of the library now and sustaining it for the future. The library director and staff are then responsible for putting that vision into action. As a trustee, you represent all members of the community. It is important to foster public trust by being effective stewards of public funds and being open and transparent in your decision-making.

Trustees have four distinct roles: Leadership, Governance, Stewardship, & Management.

LEADERSHIP

Planning, creating the organization's culture, setting an example, and promoting to the community.

approving a mission-driven strategic plan and other long-range plans
exemplifying ethical and value-driven behavior
setting an example for the community through volunteerism and financial giving
promoting the organization to the community

STEWARDSHIP

Monitoring results and adjusting along the way.

expenses and revenue concerning the budget
progress on the annual operational and fundraising plan

GOVERNANCE

Assuring that structures are in place for continuity in meeting the mission and delivering the strategic plan.

bylaws
policies of effective management and legal compliance
committees with clear lines of authority and duties
an annual budget, operational plan, and fundraising plan
an annual executive director evaluation and compensation review system
guidelines for effective board meetings

MANAGEMENT

Making sure the board is doing its job.

recruiting board members, selecting officers, and nominating committee members
orienting board members and officers
holding each other accountable for following through on board commitment

SEPARATION OF ROLES: TRUSTEE AND LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Notice in the Role of Boards section on the last page the use of the words planning, assuring, and monitoring. The trustee's role is to set the direction, check the quality, and provide feedback. Who then determines the actions? It is the library director. It is very important that trustees respect this separation. As the board creates the vision, the library director puts the vision into place. The library director is the sole employee of the board. All other staff are under the direction and supervision of the library director.

Let's consider an example: the Library Collection. Who does what when it comes to the library's collection? What specific books should be in a library's collection? How do the library board of trustees and library director share responsibility for the library collection? Review the chart below.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Establish a policy based on the core values of librarianship and the community that identifies criteria for books in the collection, weeded from the collection, and the process for the public to request reconsideration for items in the collection.

Budget funds for the development of the collection.

Review reports to evaluate that policy and budget are being followed.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Purchase items for the collection based upon policy criteria.

Establish weeding and inventory procedures.

Conduct audits on collection to ensure it is representative of the policy.

Purchase items within the budgeted allocation.

Maintain accurate documentation for board reports and adjust processes as needed.

In the example above, the board provides the direction, and the director acts. What happens, then, when a member of the public recognizes you as a library trustee and comes to you asking why a particular item is or is not in the collection. The trustee's best course of action is to recommend the individual speak with library staff. Why not answer yourself? The individual is not asking about the policy. The individual is asking about an item. If the community member wishes to discuss the policy, then speaking to the trustees is the right action.

WORKING TOGETHER: TRUSTEES AND LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Keeping in mind that the library director is the employee of the board of trustees, a positive working relationship is necessary. Identifying clear lines of communication and expectations between the board of trustees and the library director is appropriate. All communication with the staff should occur through the library director.

Other areas in which the board of trustees and library director should work together include:

- developing a strategic plan
- recruiting, orienting, and onboarding new trustees
- ensuring public trust through transparent communications and public reports
- meeting with elected officials, community leaders, and other stakeholders to educate on the impact and relevance of the library
- complying with federal, state, and local laws, codes, and ordinances
- tracking effectiveness of library services and collections

WHAT ROLE DO TRUSTEES HAVE WITH THE FRIENDS AND FOUNDATION?

Public libraries are fortunate to have many active supporters including individuals who are part of Friends or a Foundation. While all advocate and promote awareness of the library, these entities are separate from the board of trustees. The Friends and Foundation are focused on fundraising or supplementing public funding for the library with donations. The trustees should support their efforts by attending events and championing fundraising. See Fundraising, Foundations, and Friends (hyperlink) for more information.

SOME STATUTES TO KEEP IN MIND

COMPENSATION

In the State of Colorado, a trustee cannot receive a salary or other compensation for services as a library trustee by law (C.R.S. §24-90-108). Necessary expenses incurred for things such as conference registration, travel reimbursements, and meal stipends can be paid by the library. Trustees may also obtain reimbursement for mileage incurred to attend board meetings.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Colorado statutes establish a code of ethics for public officials. (C.R.S. § 24-18-101, et seq.) These laws set ethical standards on topics such as conflicts of interest, prohibitions against personal financial gain, and disclosure requirements. Library board trustees should follow these ethical standards. [1] Trustees must carry out the duties for the benefit of the community the library serves and its people, not their own self-interest.

When considering conflicts of interest and personal financial gain. The basic premise, or "sniff test" to consider is, does this decision provide a direct economic benefit to a business or other undertaking in which a trustee has a direct or substantial financial interest? A conflict of interest occurs when either a vote or an attempt to persuade others to vote occurs. This includes but is not limited to:

- disclosing or using confidential information acquired during official library duties to further one's own personal financial interest;
- accepting gifts or services for personal benefit of substantial economic benefit to influence a trustee's decision; or engaging in a business in which the trustee is a majority owner or substantial financial interest as counsel, consultant, representative, or agent.

Failure to disclose a conflict of interest can be a crime in certain situations. When a board member exercises "any substantial discretionary function in connection with a government contract, purchase, payment, or other pecuniary transaction," the board member must disclose a known potential conflicting interest 72 hours in advance of the

[1] It appears library board trustees would be subject to most of the requirements in § 24-18-101 *et seq*., based on the definition of "local government official" in § 24-18-102(6), C.R.S. However, even if parts of these state laws don't apply to library board trustees, it would be best practice for library board trustees to adhere to these ethical standards.

transaction by giving written notice to the secretary of state and library governing board. C.R.S. 18-8-308 (1) & (2). Failing to disclose this type of conflict is a class 2 misdemeanor. C.R.S. §18-8-308(3). It is best practice for the individual with a conflict of interest to step out of the board meeting during the discussion and vote.

If an individual has a relationship with an entity but does not have a fiduciary conflict of interest as defined in law, it is best practice to note the relationship prior to the vote. Err on the side of caution regarding the perception or appearance of a conflict.

PUBLIC RECORD

The Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) provides that all public records are open for inspection by any person at reasonable times, unless there is a specific legal exception that permits or requires an entity to deny inspection of the records. (C.R.S. §24-72-201 to 205.5). What is a public record? The definition includes all writings, papers, photographs, and electronic mail made, maintained, or kept by any state or local government thus including public libraries. There are exceptions – some of which relate to library user records; however, as a rule, err on the side of considering all communications you make as a trustee to be potentially releasable, *including* records kept on a personally owned, private device

SURETY BONDS

Colorado statute requires libraries to obtain protection against dishonesty, theft, or fraud from trustees. These are referred to as surety bonds and fidelity bonds.

It is common for a library district to obtain and file a single blanket position schedule bond (combination surety bond and fidelity bond), identifying the required amounts for each trustee. Due to the financial stewardship placed upon the position of Treasurer, the bonded amount is greater than the rest of the trustees.

For library districts, the surety bond and fidelity bond requirements are satisfied if the district buys crime coverage (C.R.S §24-14-102(2)).

OFFICERS

The board of trustees, immediately after their appointment, must elect officers. The role of officers is to ensure that the function of running the board goes smoothly.

Colorado Library Law requires boards to elect a president and secretary and other officers as deemed necessary (C.R.S. §24-90-108(6)). The typical board includes a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Bylaws must identify how officers are appointed or elected and the duties and roles of the officers C.R.S. §24-90-109(1)(a).

PRESIDENT

Responsibilities include:

- setting the agenda with the library director
- chairing board of trustee meetings
- appointing committees and committee members
- de facto member of all committees
- primary spokesperson for the board and
- enter legal contracts for the library

VICE PRESIDENT

It is typical to have a vice president should the president not be able to fulfill their duties.

SECRETARY

The secretary is responsible for the recording and posting of minutes of all board meetings.

TREASURER

The treasurer of the board typically leads the finance committee.

The finance committee assists the board of directors in overseeing the organization's financial health including:

- accurate financial records including bank reconciliation
- budget development
- strategic financial planning
- cash flow and investments

BYLAWS

All library boards must adopt bylaws, rules, and regulations for their own guidance and policies for governance.

Per state law, C.R.S.§ 24-90-109(1)(a), a board's bylaws must include:

1. Length and Number of Terms,
2. Good Cause for Removal,
3. Designation of Officers,
4. Rules and regulations for conducting a meeting,
5. Rules for public participation in meetings,
6. Procedures for amending the bylaws.

LENGTH AND NUMBER OF TERMS OF BOARD MEMBERS

Colorado Library Law does not set term limits; however, the governing authority may specify term limits in the bylaws.

Terms of trustees should be staggard to ensure experience, diversity, and fresh perspectives. A trustee is appointed for the length of term specified by the governing authority or, in the case of a library district, by the bylaws adopted by its board of trustees. Three years is a typical term length.



GOOD CAUSE FOR REMOVAL OF A TRUSTEE

State law provides that a library trustee may be removed only by a majority vote of the appointing legislative body or bodies and only upon a showing of good cause as defined in, but not limited to, the bylaws adopted by the board. C.R.S. § 24-90-108(5).

Bylaws must define what constitutes good cause for removal. Some examples may be:

- multi-meeting absenteeism
- not following policy
- violation of law
- no longer being a resident of the library's legal service area

There are no legal requirements for when an individual should resign from their position as long as they meet the qualifications of a trustee. A trustee should voluntarily resign if they are unable to fulfill their duties.

DESIGNATION OF OFFICERS

- Officers can be appointed by the president or elected by the full board. Bylaws must identify whether officers will be appointed or elected.
- Manner of appointment or election must also be included in the bylaws. Consider this as the process that takes place including length of term.
- Recommend including roles and responsibilities of officers.

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR CONDUCTING A MEETING

(See Chapter 3: Meeting, Committees, and More for additional information)

- Quorum attendance at meetings
- Voting
- Board's relationship to the director and staff

RULES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS

Include rules for public comment including time limits, expectations, and when it occurs.

PROCEDURES FOR AMENDING THE BYLAWS

Bylaws must be filed with the legislative body for each participating governmental unit and the state library (C.R.S. § 24-90-109(1)(a) & § 24-90-105 (1)(m)).

ANNUAL REPORT

Using data for decision making and celebration is a key premise of Colorado public libraries. Statute requires public library boards to complete an annual report at the end of each calendar year to their governing authority (board of county commissioners, town/city, or county). (C.R.S. §24-90-109(2)). This report highlights the library and must include:

- the condition of its trust during the year,
- the sums of money expended,
- the purposes of the expenditures,

- other statistics and information as the board of trustees deems to be of public interest.
- Libraries often wait until after the mandatory annual audit (see Budget & Finance Chapter 5) takes place to provide a verified true and accurate financial statement of the library.

Additionally, the library must also complete a report to the state library. This is referred to as the Public Library Annual Report (PLAR). This data is publicly accessible at LRS.org. There are many tools available for trustees to access their own library's data as well as other libraries to act and make data-driven decisions. The Library Research Service (LRS) team is available to help trustees understand available data.

The annual report and completion of PLAR are often completed by the library director. Keep in mind, the completion is under the trustee's purview so when presenting the report, it is best practice that trustees assist the library director in presenting and be familiar with the content of the reports. This is an excellent opportunity to celebrate and educate the public on the impact and relevance of your public library.

SUMMARY

The role of the board of trustees is to provide a public library that is an efficiently managed community resource that provides high-value library services to all through the effective stewardship of public funds. Library trustees play a crucial role in shaping the vision and governance of the library, ensuring that policies, financial stewardship, and ethical leadership guide its operations.

While trustees set strategic direction and monitor progress, the library director is responsible for executing these plans, maintaining collections, and overseeing staff. A strong and transparent working relationship between the board of trustees and the library director supports long-term success, with clear communication and defined responsibilities. Legal considerations such as conflict of interest disclosures, financial protections, and officer roles help uphold integrity and public trust.

Together, trustees and the director create a thriving library that serves the needs of the community while adhering to ethical and legal standards.

TRY THIS: SITUATIONS

The best way to approach situations that come your way as a trustee is to practice and be prepared. Read through the scenarios on the next page and consider how you would respond based on the roles and responsibilities of a Colorado public library board trustee.

CHALLENGE TO MATERIALS

You are at the supermarket. Someone approaches you and asks you, as a library trustee, what your opinion is of keeping pornographic books in the library where children can be damaged by them. How do you respond?

PROGRAM POSSIBILITY

At the Colorado Association of Libraries Annual Conference (CALCON), you become aware of a work skills virtual reality program that allows individuals to earn pre-apprenticeship certifications in plumbing, electrical, or construction. You'd like to offer the program at your library. How do you go about this process?

STAFFING

A staff member is concerned about benefit package changes and reaches out to you to set up an appointment.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

As an active and engaged trustee who cares about financial stewardship, you see an opportunity to purchase sell furniture from your store through the Friends to be used in the library. Consider how to proceed.

CHAPTER 3
MEETINGS, COMMITTEES, AND MORE

Colorado public library boards of trustees follow law, policy, and procedures to carry out their responsibilities, including conducting themselves in meetings with respect, accountability, and integrity while moving the organization forward into the future.

Public library boards are a local governmental entity, whether an advisory board or a governing board. Transparency and engaging in the community represented are core components of Colorado government. Colorado statutes emphasize this responsibility and must be followed.

The following sections are not comprehensive and not intended as legal advice. Libraries and trustees should consult their own legal counsel for advice.

RELATED COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARD
ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE

IN THIS SECTION WE WILL EXPLORE:

Effective Meetings 33
Parliamentary Procedures 34
Motions 34
Open Meeting Requirements (Sunshine Laws) 36
Executive Session 38
Types Of Meetings 39
Agenda Requirements 40
Minutes 42
Board Report 42
Quarterly (or more often) Financial Reports 42
Committees 43
And Remember… 44
Summary 44
Try This 45

EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

Board meetings occur to provide oversight, make strategic decisions, and ensure accountability of the library. The board of trustees discusses and decides on matters that provide guidance to the library director for operational decisions and future endeavors. A meeting means any kind of gathering convened to discuss public business in person, by telephone, electronically, or by other means of communication (C.R.S.§24-6-402(1)(b)).

Effective meetings are meetings that are

- productive
- focused
- efficient

Meetings are effective when all trustees can express their opinion. A clear agenda, enough time to review materials prior to the meeting, and a set expectation for behavior and engagement during meetings ensure meetings are effective.

The library director or designee must be in attendance for all board meetings. This individual is generally considered an ex-officio member meaning they can participate as if a trustee; however, the library director does not have a vote. The library director's role is head administrator of the library and is responsible for implementing the board's policies and communicating the board's decisions to the staff and public. The library director's presence ensures communication and coordination between the governing body and the library's operation.

The president of the board is typically the meeting chair. It is their responsibility to keep the meeting moving.

Remember

The Board acts as a body; individual board members do not have the power to act alone.

Each trustee can contribute to the effectiveness of meetings by:

- coming prepared, having reviewed all meeting materials in advance
- bringing full attention and participation
- staying concise, speaking professionally, and working within the agenda
- understanding and complying with the law

- sharing time with others and welcoming diverse perspectives, including through a facilitated public comment segment
- speaking only for oneself
- following up on decision items as necessary to ensure accountability and transparency

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES

To ensure board of trustees meetings run smoothly and efficiently a set of rules (identified in the bylaws) must be followed. These rules allow each trustee to have a voice, allow for debate, and make informed decisions. Robert's Rules of Order are the frequently accepted procedures adopted.

MOTIONS

A formal way to bring forward a proposal for the board's consideration and approval is done through a motion. A trustee should make a motion when proposing an action, decision, or agenda item to be discussed and voted on during a meeting. Motions that are typically made at every meeting include:

- approving the meeting agenda (or amending and approving it)
- approving the consent agenda
- adjourning the meeting

PROCESS

Bringing an item to vote is a straightforward process designed to ensure efficient and fair discussion. Here's how it generally unfolds:

When a trustee wants to introduce an action item for consideration, they make a motion. This formally proposes an action or idea to the board.

Once a motion is made, another trustee needs to second the motion. This simply indicates that there's enough initial interest for the item to be discussed further. If a motion doesn't receive a second, it's not discussed, which helps focus on topics with broader interest.

With a motion made and seconded, the Chair opens the floor for discussion and debate. This is your opportunity to delve into the details of the proposed item.

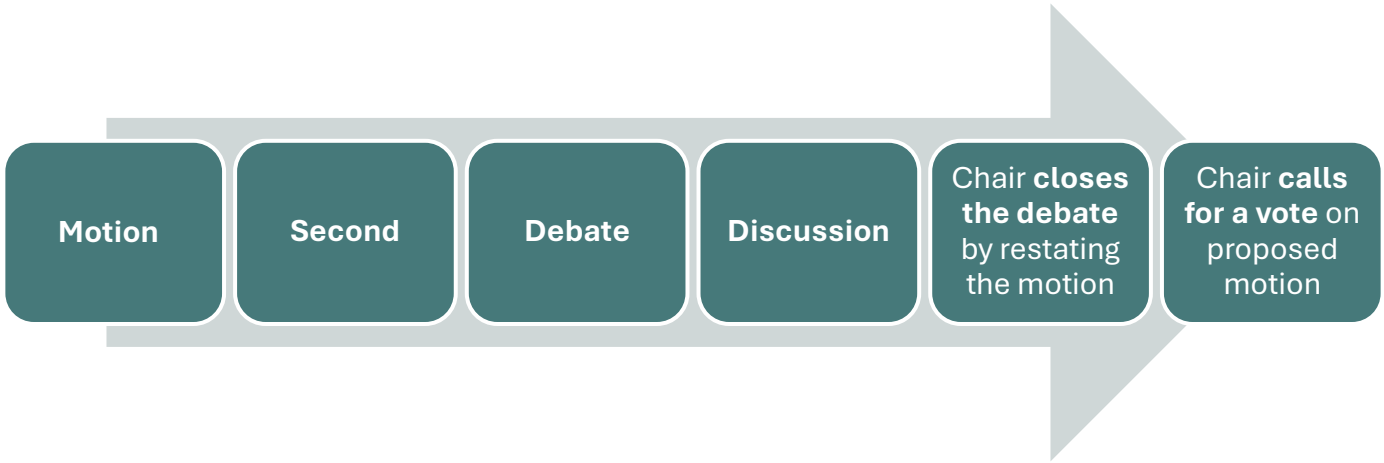
To keep discussions organized and productive, please remember:

- all comments and questions should be directed to the Chair
- to ensure everyone has a chance to speak, trustees should generally refrain from speaking a second time until all other trustees who wish to speak have had their initial turn

The Chair will guide the discussion and determine when the debate concludes. This ensures ample time to explore the topic without it becoming overly lengthy.

Once the discussion is complete, the Chair will "state the question," meaning they will repeat the exact wording of the motion that was originally made. This ensures clarity about what's being voted on.

Finally, a vote will be held, and the board's decision will be determined by the outcome.



Roberts Rules of Order allows the chair to make second motions but discourages it for larger bodies to encourage impartiality. It can be awkward with small boards to expect the chair to never bring motions.

A motion can be withdrawn by the individual making the motion, indicating to the chair that they would like to withdraw the motion. If no other trustee objects, the motion is withdrawn.

A motion can be amended by any trustee before the vote. Once the trustee clearly states the amended motion, the chair calls for a second, and the process continues as above.

Keep in mind, motions should use wording that demonstrates what is intended to occur. A second on a motion does not mean that the trustee agrees with the motion. It means that the trustee is willing to open up the item for discussion. If no second occurs, no discussion/debate can occur.

An effective board of trustees maintains cohesion. After a policy or rule is adopted by the majority vote of the library board, do not criticize or voice your opposition publicly.

CONSENT AGENDA

Some meeting agendas include items that rarely require discussion in a consent agenda. Typically, a consent agenda includes minutes and financial reports. In one sweep, all items can be approved as one. A motion is made to approve the consent agenda. It is seconded and then voted upon. If discussion is needed for clarification or correction, a motion should be made to pull the item out of the consent agenda and then follow the typical process for discussing and approving an item.

RECORDING MOTIONS

Motions must be recorded in the minutes. When recording a motion include:

- motion and name of person moving
- second and name of person moving
- vote outcome -- including how each member voted and whether the item was approved or not.

OPEN MEETING REQUIREMENTS (SUNSHINE LAWS)

Colorado's Open Meetings Law, sometimes referred to as a "Sunshine Law" (C.R.S.§ 24-6-402), applies to meetings of the library board of trustees including gatherings such as work sessions, study sessions, and committee meetings.

A **quorum** is the minimum number of trustees that must be present for your board of trustees to make a decision; this must be defined in the bylaws. A meeting must be open to the public when a quorum or three or more members, whichever is fewer, of the board of trustees meets to discuss public business or at which formal action may be taken. C.R.S. § 24-6-402(2)(b). Board action can only occur during open meetings.

Open meeting means the meeting is open to all members of the public --reporters, attorneys, and any other representatives. While the meeting is open for members of the public to witness, the public only has the opportunity to address the board during Public

Comment. Additionally, the public is not allowed to disrupt the meeting or prevent business from happening.

Do not try to circumvent open meeting requirements! Open meeting requirements prohibit **one-on-one conversations** that occur amongst **3 or more** trustees regarding public business. For example, if trustee A has a conversation with trustee B about a potential policy decision. Then trustee B has a conversation with trustee C about the same topic, the open meeting requirements have been violated.

Open meeting requirements *do not* apply to places where public business is not the primary purpose of meeting such as a chance meeting or social gathering. Additionally, if three or more trustees attend a professional conference they must refrain from discussing specific business or affairs of the public library amongst themselves.

ELECTRONIC REQUIREMENTS AND TELEPHONE

Any electronic communication, such as email and text message, is required to follow the Open Meetings Law. When using email communication, it is best to only use it for announcements such as reminders for board meetings or sending out the agenda and board packet. Board members should not deliberate board business via email. When using email communication blind carbon copy (BCC) trustees so no inadvertent back and forth communication takes place.

Per statute, attendance of a trustee can be made by telephone conference or other electronic means as long as the trustee can hear and be heard. C.R.S. § 24-6-402(1)(b).

RECORDING MEETINGS

If a library board electronically recorded the minutes of its open meetings on or after August 8, 2001, then the board must continue to electronically record the minutes of its open meetings. C.R.S. § 24-6-402(2)(d.5)(II)(A).

The use of recording devices at open meetings by audience members is neither prohibited nor permitted by the Colorado statutes. Boards of trustees may prescribe rules for the use of recording devices, such as specifying the location where recorders must be positioned and restricting recordings which interrupt or interfere with the conduct of the meeting. Be consistent in your approach.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Colorado statute allows limited times for a library board of trustees to hold a meeting without the public present. This is referred to as an executive session. During a public meeting, two-thirds of the quorum present must affirmatively vote to enter executive session.

The law provides only eight (8) specific reasons why an executive session can occur; seven (7) of those reasons apply to public libraries. The motion to announce an executive session must specify the statutory basis for the session (C.R.S §24-6-402(4)) and identify the specific matter to be discussed. If there is more than one topic to be discussed in the executive session, then each must be announced during the open meeting. This must be included in the agenda and in the minutes.

1. The purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer, or sale of any real, personal, or other property interest (C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(a));
2. Conferences with an attorney for the public entity for the purpose of receiving legal advice on specific legal questions (C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(b));
3. Matters required to be kept confidential by federal or state law or rules and regulations (C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(c));
4. Specialized details of security arrangements or investigations (C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(d));
5. Developing strategy for negotiations, instructing negotiators, and determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations (C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(e));
6. Personnel matters (with exceptions)[2] (C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(f));

Make a motion to enter executive session including statute allowing, specific matter, and attendees.

Stay focused on topic identified for session and do not take action.

Electronically record the executive session; destroy 90-days after the session.

Record motion to enter executive session including details in first bullet, vote, time started, and time ended in the minutes. Attendees invited in should also be included.

[2] **Note:** This is not an opportunity for closed door general discussion. The exception pertains to discussion of personnel matters concerning a specific individual. Also, the person being discussed must be made aware they are being discussed. The person cannot insist upon being present in the session, but the board of trustees may allow the person to sit in the executive session. If the person objects to the discussion being in executive session, then the board of trustees must either hold the discussion in the open meeting or not hold the discussion at all.

7. Consideration of documents protected by the mandatory nondisclosure provisions of the Colorado Open Records Act (C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(g)).

No adoption of policy, position, resolution, rule, regulation, or other formal action can occur in the executive session.

What happens in an executive session is confidential. During the executive session, an electronic recording (tape, digital, etc.) must occur unless the purpose is to confer with an attorney. Handwritten or typed notes are no longer accepted. The recording is to be preserved for 90 days (C.R.S. §24-6-402(2)(d.5)(II)(B & E)). The electronic record is not open for public inspection unless the board consents to disclosure or a judge order that the record be made public. For this to happen, a person would have to bring a legal challenge establishing that the board violated the Open Meetings Law.

Prior to entering the executive session, the start time must be recorded in the minutes. Upon exiting the executive session, the end time must be recorded in the minutes.

TYPES OF MEETINGS

REGULAR MEETING

Colorado Library Law does not require boards to post their annual meeting schedule; however, best practice is to set a regular calendar of meetings. A meeting schedule demonstrates transparency to the public and a desire for community participation through regularity. These meetings are referred to as regular meetings. See Notice of Meetings below for meeting notice and agenda posting.

ANNUAL MEETING

A designated annual meeting is best practice to review the annual progress on strategic priorities, financial picture, and key updates relevant to the library. Reviewing the results of the board of trustees' annual self-evaluation may also be done. This meeting is a good opportunity to intentionally invite the community to attend and celebrate the work of the public library.

SPECIAL MEETINGS & STUDY SESSIONS

Special meetings are meetings that have at least a 24-hour posting; however, they take place outside of the regularly set meeting schedule. A vote can occur during a special session if the meeting is properly posted and a quorum of trustees is present.

A study session is a meeting where trustees, often in conjunction with staff, engage in in-depth discussion and information about a specific topic. Information may be presented to the board during a study session; however, the board of trustees can take no official action. Executive sessions cannot take place during a study session.

AGENDA REQUIREMENTS

LIBRARY BOARD AGENDAS TYPICALLY INCLUDE:

- Opening of meeting & attendance
- Consent Agenda
  - Minutes of last meeting
  - Financials
- Public Comment
- Information
  - Library Director Report
  - Committee & Special Committee Reports
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Adjournment

An agenda allows for a clear, predictable order for board of trustees meetings. The Colorado Open Meetings Law (C.R.S.§ 24-6-402) sets agenda posting requirements including timelines and location. The intent of these laws is to require transparency.

DRAFTING THE AGENDA

At least one week before each meeting the president and library director should develop the agenda. This allows for a balance of board priorities and the library's operational needs. The agenda should follow a template the board uses consistently.

Type of meeting, date, time, and location of the meeting (including virtual location if available) should be identified at the top of the agenda. Each section of the agenda should have a proposed length of time spent on the section to help keep trustees on task.

It is best practice to define action items and outline motions in the agenda when known in advance.

Draft agendas with the board packet (reports, updates, and proposals) should be provided to the trustees to review one week prior to the meeting. This allows informed decision making, preparation for sticky situations, and notification if there is a conflict of interest.

Do not discuss any of the items outside of the board meeting. All questions and discussions must take place during the board meeting

POSTING THE AGENDA

Statute directs local governments to transition from posting physical meeting notices to posting meeting notices in digital spaces such as websites. See C.R.S.§24-6-402(2)(C) for factors that may affect posting online and allow for physical posting.

When posting on a public website, a backup physical location is needed in case of digital outage. Postings are encouraged to be linked to social media. Agendas should be made available free of charge to the public. .

Postings must occur at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting and require the Postings must occur at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting and inclusion of specific agenda information if available (C.R.S. §24-6-402(2)(c)(I)).

The library must keep a list of all people requesting notice of all meetings or meetings when certain specified policies are discussed. Once a person has requested individualized notice, they are to be included on the list for two years. Individuals on this list must be provided with reasonable advance notification of meetings (C.R.S. §24-6-402(7)).

MINUTES

Minutes must be taken of the meeting and promptly recorded. This is the responsibility of the trustee's secretary. Under CRS 24-6-402(2)(d)(I) minutes must be available for public inspection. Minutes must include any proposed policy, position, resolution, rule, regulation, or formal action that occurs and be promptly recorded.

Absences of a trustee must be recorded in the minutes. Additionally, staff and public attendees should also be recorded.

The minutes must be kept in a visual text format that can be transmitted electronically. Board minutes must be kept indefinitely. (C.R.S. § 24-6-402(2)(d)(II))

BOARD REPORT

As the board must make decisions regarding the public library, a board report is key to communicating relevant information and statistics from the library director to the board of trustees. A board report also provides trustees with information to educate and share with community stakeholders and leaders. Information included in the board report should represent the time between board meetings.

Items to include:

- Progress on strategic priorities and statistics
- Financial picture of the library
- Key updates relevant to the library
- Items about what is happening in the greater library world (around the state or federally)

QUARTERLY (OR MORE OFTEN) FINANCIAL REPORTS

As financial stewards, it is important that each trustee is aware that money is spent appropriately. What does appropriate mean? That the funds are available, fall within appropriated funds, and are being spent consistently with the library's financial policies.

A financial report should provide you with information comparing budgeted amounts to actual amounts spent. The financial report should explain anomalies and large expenditures.

Financial reports should also demonstrate available funds. Bank documents should support the amount of funds available. When reading a financial report, look at the available balance of funds. Confirm that these funds are actually in the bank accounts they should be.

As a trustee, you may be asked about the financial status of the library. If you are uncertain, ask questions during the meeting to make sure you are able to answer. Further directions on reading a financial report can be found in Budgeting & Finance chapter.

COMMITTEES

Committees are small working groups of the board of trustees that focus on a specific area of the board's responsibilities. The board may have standing committees as well as ad hoc committees determined based on need. The president of the board of trustees has the authority to designate committees and individuals in them.

Typical committees include finance, policy, and strategic planning. Ad hoc committees might relate to a special project, such as a building project or executive director review.

The board president determines who is on the committees. It is important to consider who the members of the committee are. Is there a benefit to having a committee open to all library staff or a staff representative who is not the library director? What about members of the community? The president determines this.

Best practice has the library director attend all committee meetings. The president is a de facto member of all committees.

Each committee must designate a head of the committee. This individual sets the agenda, chairs the meeting, and provides updates to the board of trustees. Reminder, if 3 or more trustees are on a committee, the meetings must follow Open Meetings Law requirements including 24-hour posting notice.

AND REMEMBER…

A few key actions will ensure the board stays on track.

- An effective board maintains cohesion. After a policy or rule is adopted by the majority vote of the library board, do not criticize or revoice your opposition publicly.
- Respect confidential information. Until officially released, do not divulge information regarding future board actions or plans.
- Observe the communications and information policies of the board and library.
- Speak as a member of the board and refer questions about policies to the library director or appropriate library representative.
- Observe ethical standards with absolute truth, integrity, and honor, and disqualify yourself immediately whenever the appearance of a conflict of interest exists.
- All actions by the board must be approved by a quorum of the board at a regular meeting.
- Do not hold board meetings without the library director.
- Follow the Open Meetings ("Sunshine") Laws.
- Assume your full responsibility as a board member. If you are unable to attend meetings regularly and complete work delegated to you, resign so that an active member can be appointed.

SUMMARY

A successful library board meeting requires effective communication and participation from all trustees, with a clear agenda, pre-review of materials, and established expectations for behavior. The board's role is to provide oversight, make strategic decisions, and ensure accountability by guiding the library director through their operational choices and future plans. The library director, who does not have a vote, must be present to facilitate communication between the board and the library's operations. Trustees should come prepared, actively participate, and adhere to meeting guidelines to ensure productive and focused discussions.

TRY THIS

Regular **self-assessment** ensures that trustees are accountable to the organization and its stakeholders. Take a moment to complete the Library Trustee Self-Assessment on the following pages. You will use your responses as you navigate the next chapter to identify strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results.

LIBRARY TRUSTEE SELF ASSESSMENT

BOARD DOCUMENTS

(*ITEMS ARE STATUTORILY REQUIRED)

Bylaws*	☐ We have ☐ I can locate ☐ The public can access without a CORA Request
Strategic Plan/Strategic Priorities	☐ We have ☐ I can locate ☐ The public can access without a CORA Request
Financial Plan	☐ We have ☐ I can locate ☐ The public can access without a CORA Request
Capital Plan	☐ We have ☐ I can locate ☐ The public can access without a CORA Request
Financial Audit*	☐ We have ☐ I can locate ☐ The public can access without a CORA Request
Library Policies*	☐ We have ☐ I can locate ☐ The public can access without a CORA Request
Annual Report	☐ We have ☐ I can locate ☐ The public can access without a CORA Request

LEADERSHIP

I can share the goals of the library's strategic plan or strategic priorities.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

I can share with others our library's current actions towards the strategic plan or strategic priorities.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

I know the library's core values and ethical standards that drive my decision making.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

I visit the library and participate in library programs or events.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

I promote the library with local community leaders, stakeholder groups, or public officials by sharing our impact and relevance at least 2 times a year.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

I have established a relationship with my local and state representatives, and discuss library issues with them, advocating for their support.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

I belong to a state or national library organization and/or attend conferences.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

I can share the goals of the library's strategic plan or strategic priorities.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

I have read one or more national library organization journals or blog posts over the past six months.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

I am aware of legislation, trends, issues, and emerging risks affecting public libraries.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

GOVERNANCE

Bylaws are followed.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

Library policies allow effective management and legal compliance.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

I am a member of a board committee.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

I understand and respect the distinct roles and duties of the library director, the library board, the Foundation, and Friends.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

I route my requests of staff through the library director.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

The library director is consistently evaluated.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

A compensation review has occurred.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

I am prepared for board and committee meetings by reviewing the board packet prior to meetings so I can ask relevant questions and make better decisions.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

I meet my attendance obligation for board and committee meetings.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

I ask relevant questions and contribute to discussion about library business during board and committee meetings.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

After speaking, I allow all other trustees to speak before speaking again.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

STEWARDSHIP

I am able to answer questions about the expenses and revenue of the budget.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No☐ Uncertain

I am aware of our reserve funds, rough amounts, and purpose behind. ☐ Yes

☐ Sometimes ☐ No☐ Uncertain

I review at least quarterly the budget to actuals and spending to know the financial standing of the library and where funds are being spent.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No☐ Uncertain

I can summarize the key findings including the financial picture and recommendations of the library.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No☐ Uncertain

MANAGEMENT

I seek out and recommend potential trustees.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No☐ Uncertain

I participate in orienting new trustees.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No☐ Uncertain

I follow through on my board commitments.

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No☐ Uncertain

I support other trustees by … (Fill in the blank)

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No☐ Uncertain

CHAPTER 4
SUCCESSION PLANNING, RECRUITING, ONBOARDING, & DEVELOPMENT OF TRUSTEES

Succession planning is one piece to ensure the sustainability of a public library. The board of trustees makes decisions to act in the community's best interest by leveraging their collective expertise, adhering to the core values of librarianship, and maintaining legal compliance. Succession planning is the responsibility of the board of trustees with support of the library director. A succession plan helps your board recruit effectively, train appropriately, and continually develop based upon reflective practice. It ensures the library board of trustees is thinking strategically.

The following sections are intended for informational purposes and not intended as legal advice. Libraries and trustees should consult their own legal counsel for legal advice.

RELATED COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARD:
ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

IN THIS SECTION, WE WILL EXPLORE:

Trustee Job Description 50
Recruiting 50
Selection 51
Trustee Development 54
Summary 56
Try This: SOAR Analysis 56

TRUSTEE JOB DESCRIPTION

You have job descriptions for each position in your library. Do you have a job description for your trustees? Providing a simple, clear communication tool when speaking with prospective candidates ensures individuals are aware of what it means to be a library trustee. A job description provides this.

There are specific legal requirements for the roles and responsibilities of a public library board of trustees in Colorado Library Law (C.R.S §24-90-109). If a governing board, these roles and responsibilities are granted to them. If an advisory board, review establishment documents to determine responsibility or provide recommendations to the governing authority.

Vision, strategic planning, fiduciary responsibility, and employing a library director are the basics to include in the job description. See previous chapter and Colorado Library Law (C.R.S. §24-90-109) for detailed specifics

A job description should include:

- 1-3 sentence description of the board of trustees' purpose
- roles and responsibilities
- requirements
- qualifications (knowledge, skills, abilities)
- time commitment

RECRUITING

Recruiting as part of succession planning is constant. It is not done only when a new trustee is needed. The ongoing process of building relationships, identifying potential candidates, and recruiting community members ensures that there will always be a full board.

The board of trustees must consider the following questions when seeking new trustees:

- What is in the immediate and long-term future of the library? Capital campaign, mill levy, new building project?
- Given the roles and responsibilities of the board, consider the assets on the board.
    - What are the strengths and assets in knowledge, skills, and abilities the board currently has?
    - Is there an opportunity to add a specific knowledge, skill, or ability that would benefit the board?

- When reviewing community demographics, is the board representative of the community it serves?

- Are there pipeline organizations to recruit trustees? Consider teen advisory council, Friends, or Foundation as well as engaging with local young professionals organizations whose members may want to take a more active role in the community.

When recruiting prospective candidates, it is important to seek the right fit for the board. After identifying potential needs of the board and library community as whole, plan on casting a wide net for your marketing plan. The goal of library marketing is helping community members be aware of the library's role in the community and for them to engage, value, and support library offerings. When recruiting candidates for the board, you want to ensure that community members are aware of the benefits of serving their community as a library trustee.

While the library board of trustees does not appoint new trustees, it is important to have individuals at the ready to ensure that candidates who best meet the board's needs and believe in library values are available for appointment.

SELECTION

As part of your succession plan, selection of new trustees follows the process as detailed by the governing authority. Trustees are always appointed, never elected. How candidates are selected and recommended for appointment varies depending on the agreement or bylaws between the governing authority and the library.

Colorado Library Law's only restrictions are the number of trustees (between five (5) to seven (7) trustees as determined by the governing authority) and appointees must reside within the legal service area of the library (C.R.S. §24-90-108(1)).

PROCESS

For a municipal or county public library, trustees are appointed by the mayor with the consent of the legislative body or by the board of county commissioners. For library districts, Colorado Library Law (C.R.S.§24-90-108(2)) requires a Recommendation Committee make recommendations to the governing authority for the appointment of

the initial library board of trustees. After the initial board is created, the law continues to allow two options for recommending trustees - either continue with the Recommendation Committee structure used for the initial appointments or the governing authority can pass the authority of recommendation to the library board of trustees. This should have been identified in a written agreement created within ninety days of establishing the library (C.R.S.24-90-107-2(e)(II)) and should also include a process for renewing appointment of currently appointed trustees.

Review documents between your library and governing authority to confirm process for recommending trustees.

In most cases, the board of trustees acts as the Recommendation Committee. This means the library leads the recruiting process and makes a recommendation of the best candidate to fit their needs and wants.

Yes, trustees are volunteers; however, it is important to know who you are selecting. Interviews provide a means to further get to know a candidate. This can be done either with the full board during a public meeting or with a smaller subcommittee of no more than two trustees (see Open Meeting/Sunshine Law).

Post the opening and obtain applicants:

- verify minimum legal requirements are met
    - Reminder, Colorado Library Law requires applicants to live within the service area of the public library
- review the candidates letter of interest and resume

Ideally, a candidate should attend at least one board of trustees meeting prior to selection. This allows the candidate to understand:

- how the board functions and trustees interact with each other, library director, and public;
- expectations of trustees regarding preparation and engagement;
- what it is like being a local government official.

Goals of the interview:

- verify that the skills, knowledge, and abilities of the candidate are the strengths and assets needed by the board;

- identify community connections;
- consider if past experience meet the needs of the board/community;
- ability to fulfill the time expectations of the board;
- and, finally is the candidate familiar with the library's mission, vision, and values as well as the role of trustee.

While there isn't a specific Colorado law mandating criminal background checks for library board members, it's a good practice for libraries to complete them. The criminal background check should be completed before a candidate is formally recommended by the Recommendation Committee to the governing authority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The agreement establishing the Recommendation Committee should detail how it will forward recommendations to the governing authority. Different processes exist with public libraries and governing authority, some examples are:

letter of recommendation to the governing authority, including cover letter and resume or CV

interview by the governing authority of the candidate

APPOINT PROCESS AND REAPPOINTMENT

By law, the governing authority has 60 days to appoint or reject the candidate put forth by the Recommendation Committee. If they do not act on the recommendation within 60 days, the candidate is legally considered appointed (C.R.S. §24-90-108(c)). It is important to document when the 60 days starts in order to have evidence if no action by the governing authority occurs.

There are no term limits outlined in the Colorado Revised Statutes for library trustees.

About four to five months in advance of a trustee's term expiration, it is best practice to obtain a written statement from the trustee as to whether the individual does or does not wish to be reappointed.

If the trustee desires reappointment, evaluate the trustee to determine if a recommendation for reappointment is warranted. While it is appreciated that all trustees are volunteers, each trustee contributes to the efficient and effective functioning of the board.

Once an evaluation is completed, a recommendation for or against reappointment should be made to the Recommendation Committee. The reappointment process of the Recommendation Committee should then occur. Often, this is a simpler process than an appointment. The process should be documented in the written agreement between the library board of trustees and the governing authority, and the reappointment process should be consistent over time.

TRUSTEE DEVELOPMENT

As the board considers succession, building in ways to enrich and develop the learning of the board is essential. One of the major roles of a trustee is to act as a steward which is the act of taking responsibility to oversee and manage. Trustees should engage in a constant reflective cycle of development, evaluation, and training in order to efficiently manage community resources that provide high-value library services to all, through the effective stewardship of public funds.

ONBOARDING

The goal of onboarding is to understand the library's history, culture, and mission to be good stewards of the library as well as know the expectations and legalities associated with being a local government official. Ideally, the newly appointed trustee has already attended a board meeting or two, so has some familiarity with how the board operates and board priorities.

Onboarding should include:

- a tour of the library(-ies)
- history of the library
- review of budget and board packet documents to fill fiduciary responsibility role
    - know the financial status of the library
    - act in the best interest of the library
    - identify potential conflicts of interest
- review policies
- review the strategic and other long range plans
- access to library board packets, organizational chart, contact information of the director, and trustees
- expectations and procedures for efficient board meetings
- separation of duties between trustees and the director
    - direct all queries through president

    - director is employee of the board not individual trustees
- Golden Rule - board as one voice

The responsibility of onboarding new trustees is primarily the responsibility of the board of trustees; however, it may be shared with the library director. It is critical to complete onboarding with fidelity.

DEVELOPMENT

The continuing education of the board of trustees ensures that all members stay abreast of the greater library world and are effective board members.

- At least one annual goal for the board's continuing education and performance in alignment with the library's strategic plan should occur each year.
- Integrates annual board continuing education and performance related to the values and ethics of the library profession.
- Participate in the legislative and policy processes at the local, state, and national levels to strengthen the future of libraries discussed further in this book.

Colorado State Library (CSL) and the Colorado Library Consortium (CLiC) provide training for trustees focusing on ethics and governance.

SELF-EVALUATION

An effective board is a reflective board. The board should complete a self-evaluation annually based on the job description. A simple annual survey, answered by each trustee individually, and reviewed by a committee or the board president and library director fits the need. See the previous chapter for Library Trustee Self-Assessment in the Try This section for an example.

The board of trustees should review the survey results and develop goals based on the results. Additionally, the self-evaluation provides guidance for the ongoing development of the boar

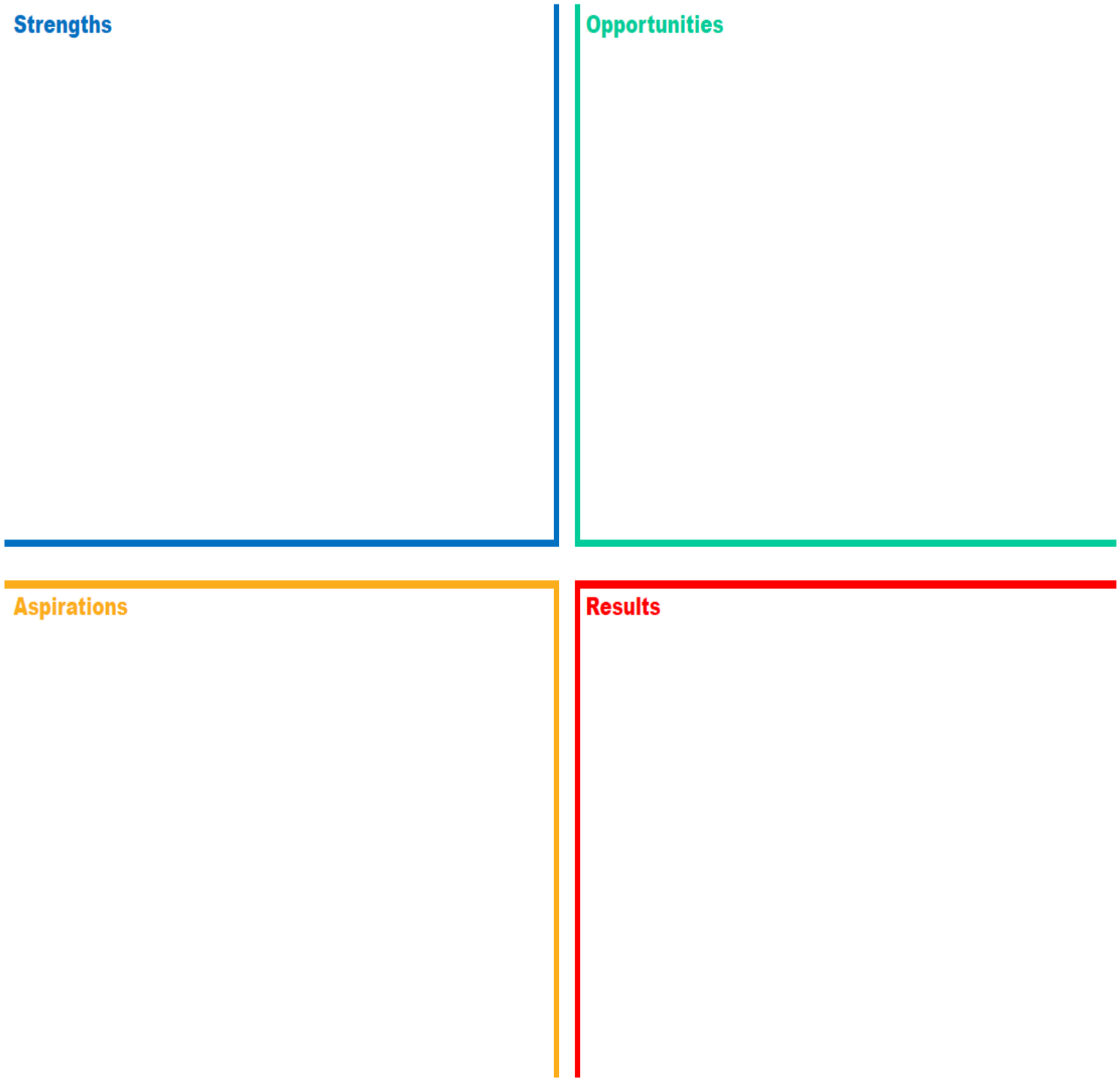
SUMMARY

Succession planning is a key element to the sustainability of a public library. It is important for each trustee to know their roles and responsibilities of being a trustee, participate in ongoing training and self-evaluation, as well as consider the future of the board through the recruitment of future trustees and the recommendation of candidates to the governing authority.

TRY THIS: SOAR ANALYSIS

In order to provide guidance on professional development as well as identify potential target markets for selecting candidates for the board of trustees, take the results from the Library Trustee Self-Evaluation from Meetings, Committees, and More chapter and complete the SOAR analysis on the following page.

A SOAR analysis is a planning tool focused on assets to consider strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results. Once you have completed the analysis, determine what goals, development, and skill sets the board has and needs to best serve the community.


Strengths
Opportunities
Aspirations
Results

CHAPTER 5
BUDGETING AND FINANCE

Libraries earn the public trust by being accountable and transparent about the use of public money—a core function of library governance mandated by state law. Financial stewardship is demonstrated when governing and advisory library boards approve an annual budget based on the strategic plan, review monthly financial statements that include comparisons to budgeted amounts, and establish strong financial policies and procedures.

The following sections are not comprehensive and not intended as legal advice. Libraries and trustees should consult their own legal counsel for legal advice.

RELATED COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARD
BUDGET & FINANCE

IN THIS SECTION, WE WILL EXPLORE:

Fiscal Responsibilities of Trustees 60
Budget Planning and Preparation 60
Capital and Equipment Planning 61
Reserve Funds and Legal Compliance 62
The Process – Library Districts & Other Taxing Entities 63
The Process – Advisory Boards 64
(Municipal, County, & multijurisdictional) 64
Developing a Draft Budget, Costs, & Analysis 65
Presenting a Draft Budget and Notice 66
Adopting a Budget, Appropriating Funds, and Setting Mill Levies 66
Amending the Budget 67
Tips For Successful Budget Planning 68
Annual Audit 70
Long Term Planning 71
Monthly Board Reports 72
Investments and Banking 73
Financial Policies 73
Other Financial Odds & Ends 74

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

Trustees are legally responsible for overseeing library finances. Colorado Library Laws (C.R.S. § 24-90-109; § 24-90-112; & § 24-90-112.5) clearly lay out these fiscal responsibilities.

Accountability and awareness are keys to meeting fiscal responsibilities. This is true no matter the type of board, advisory or governing. Governing Boards *adopt* and *control*; Advisory Boards *advise* and *advocate* to the governing authority.

You cannot make wise budgeting decisions unless you are aware of how the library is funded, what it costs to run, and what its needs will cost.

Each board member should:

- ☐ Know the library's financial base (funding sources, endowments, reserves, TABOR implications).
- ☐ Know the local, state, and federal authorities allocating library funds.
- ☐ Understand the financial needs for maintenance, growth, and expansion.
- ☐ Understand the basics of legal and reporting requirements for library funding.

BUDGET PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Critical Staffing Note

When budgeting, you must consider staff wages and salaries at this early stage.

Do not allow necessary increases for utilities and media (costs often outside library control) to force a reduction in staff compensation, as library staff are the library's number one resource.

Budget preparation must reflect the objectives set by the trustees in the library's long-range plan. Both the library director and the board must be involved in formulating the budget. It is the responsibility of the trustees to evaluate how well the budget addresses the needs of the library.

For library districts, specific actions and dates must be strictly followed. The Division of Local Government (DLG) publishes a budget calendar each year.

PLANNING AND DIRECTION

The first step is to look at the library's goals for the next year. The board must provide clear directions on the following key decisions *before* a draft budget is prepared:

BUDGET METHODOLOGY

Will the director build a Zero-Based Budget (starting from zero and justifying every expense for the coming year) or an Incremental Budget (building upon the previous year's budget)?

REVENUE INCLUSION

Should gifted money and fees be included in projected revenues for expenses, or are those too volatile?

RESERVE STRATEGY

Will the board determine to add to reserves, utilize the full projected funding, or authorize the use of existing reserves?

CAPITAL AND EQUIPMENT PLANNING

Trustees should actively consider the library's capital improvement needs, such as major building maintenance projects (e.g., a new roof), and be familiar with available funding resources. To manage these expenses, the library should:

- Develop a capital budget to save and replenish funds specifically for major projects.
- Establish a contingency fund to address unexpected major system failures.

The library director, in collaboration with the board, must establish an equipment replacement schedule and budget. This capital asset replacement plan establishes a schedule of assets (facilities, It, vehicles) based on estimated useful lives, purchase year, and amount to be saved each year until the asset is due to be replaced. When acquiring new products, determine their lifecycle and budget for repairs and spare parts that may be needed beyond the warranty period.

The technology infrastructure requires continuous monitoring for maintenance and cybersecurity. Public and staff computers should be replaced every three to five years. To manage costs, consider a phased replacement strategy, such as grouping purchases by branch or by type (e.g., all public computers), rather than waiting for an emergency or relying solely on grants when equipment is obsolete.

RESERVE FUNDS AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Auditors typically do not provide a specific reserve fund amount or percentage for a public library. This margin of flexibility exists because a public library collects funds to expend for the public good, but it must also account for potential emergencies, continuity of service, long-range planning needs, and volatility of existing revenue sources.

Decision-making on the appropriate reserve amount must be part of your long-range planning process.

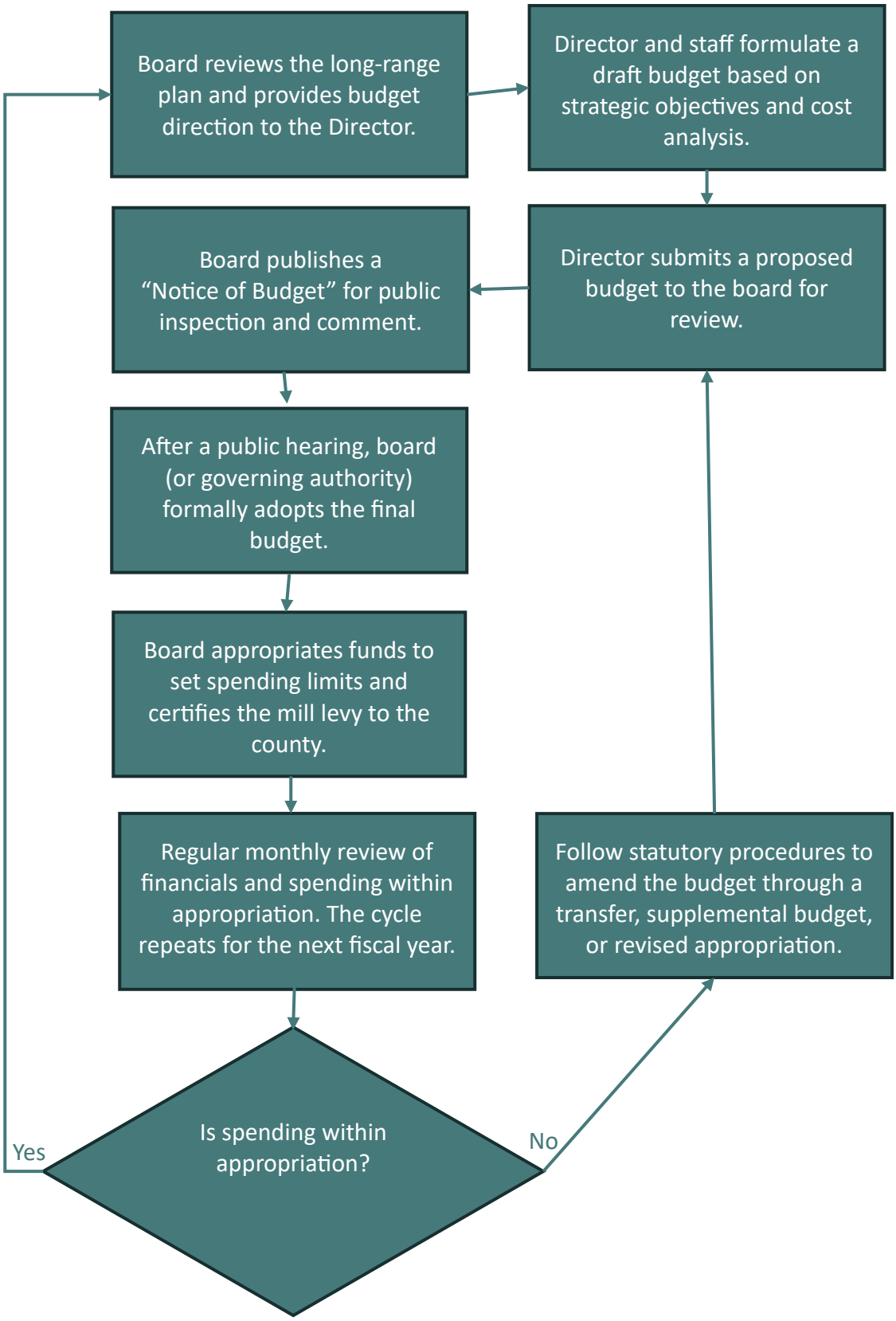
Additionally, library districts in Colorado must understand the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR). TABOR significantly impacts how local governments operate, affecting the administration's ability to manage revenue, spending, taxes, and debt. Library Districts should always consult with legal counsel on any TABOR-related matter. While many libraries' constituents voted to remove limits on property tax revenue, these actions were erased in 2024 by the Colorado state legislature. HB24B-1001 reinstated a two-year 10.5% property tax growth limit on local government entities. If library districts wish to remove the limit, they must ask voters to approve a ballot measure waiving the limit and include specific language from the law in the ballot.

Because library boards are responsible for making decisions about trust funds, it is important for trustees to know about the options available in the investment and management of these funds.

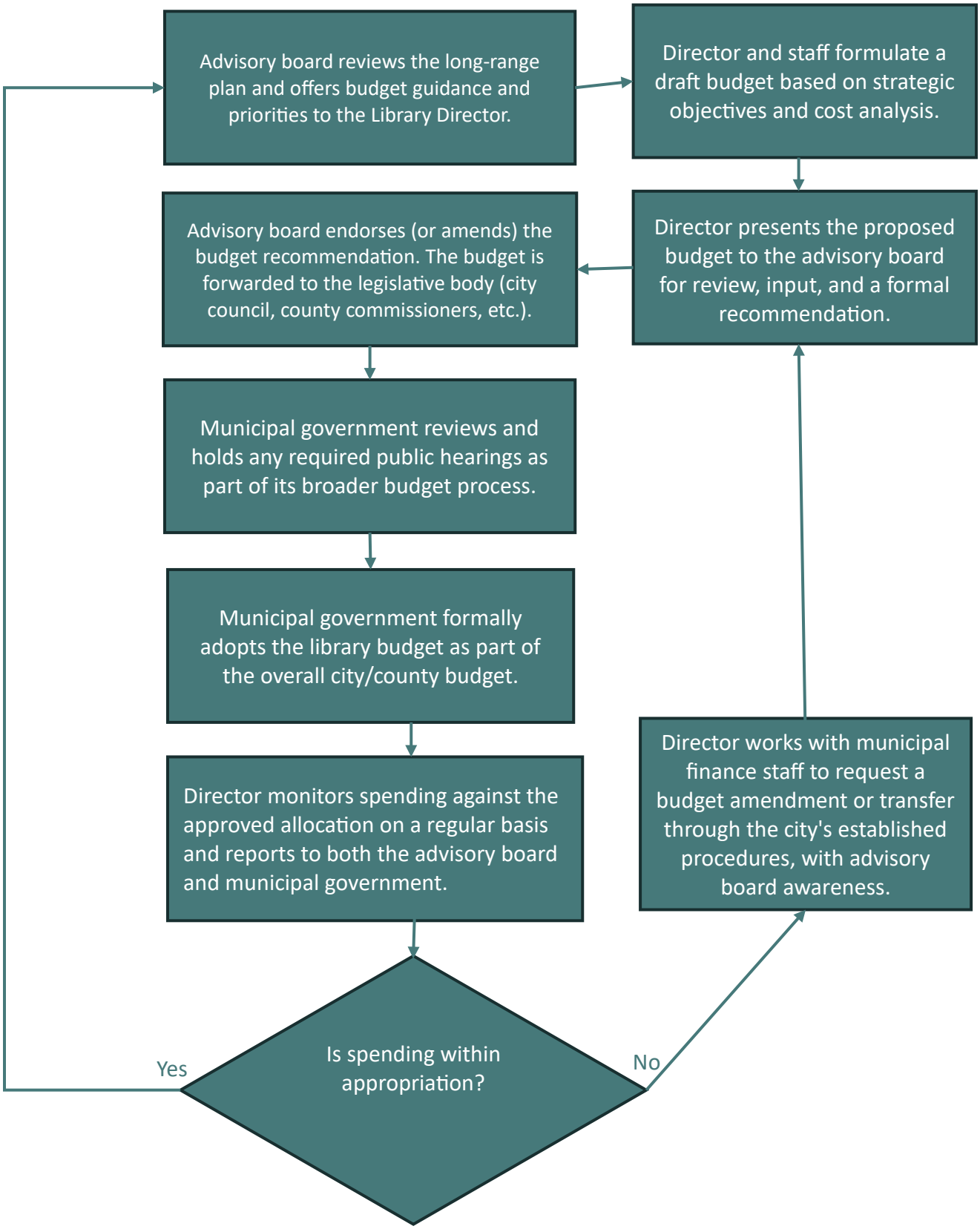
The library budget is a tool for turning library plans into reality. The budget determines the services that will be offered by your library and the resources devoted to each library program. A carefully developed budget will ensure that available funds are effectively utilized to realize your library's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

On the following two pages, the budgeting process is detailed out. This is meant to be a high-level overview of the process. Please refer to establishment documents, bylaws, memorandum of understanding, and intergovernmental agreements to further guide you in your budgeting process.

THE PROCESS – LIBRARY DISTRICTS & OTHER TAXING ENTITIES



THE PROCESS – ADVISORY BOARDS (MUNICIPAL, COUNTY, & MULTIJURISDICTIONAL)



DEVELOPING A DRAFT BUDGET, COSTS, & ANALYSIS

INTENTION (BOARD)

The first step in developing a library budget is to look at what the library hopes to accomplish in the next year, as laid out in the library's strategic or long-range plan. This plan should already document your community's library service needs and the library activities necessary to meet those needs.

The board might then consider what type of budget should be built. Does the board want the director to build a budget based solely upon needs for that year (zero budget) or build upon the previous year's budget (incremental)? Should gifted money and fees be included in projected revenues for expenses, or are those too volatile? There are a variety of different methods to consider. The board should also advise the director on whether to add to the reserves, utilize the full projected funding, or consider utilizing reserves.

At the point that the board wishes to begin budgeting for the coming year, it should review the long-range plan and its chosen objectives, reflecting on the financial implications of the objectives for the coming year. The draft budget will then be one that reflects the needs of the library and the wishes of the board.

COST & ANALYSIS (FINANCE COMMITTEE/DIRECTOR)

The second step in the financial process is to determine the total financial resources required for the library's goals in the coming year.

The budgeting process differs for library districts compared to municipal, county, and multi-jurisdiction libraries. Library districts can directly obtain assessed property values from the county assessor's office to reliably project their available revenue. Other public libraries, operating as departments within a governing authority, may find their funding subject to the varying needs and demands of other municipal or county departments.

In this day and age, library staff are the number one resource a library has. Prioritize staff compensation early. Avoid letting rising utility costs erode wages; instead, budget for salary increases as essential, recurring expenses to protect your most valuable resource.

Rising costs, usage, or new services often require more funding. New initiatives can be funded by reallocating resources from lower priorities. The director and staff draft the budget, usually with board or finance committee input.

PRESENTING A DRAFT BUDGET AND NOTICE

The Local Government Budget Law of Colorado requires local government entities to adopt an annual budget and sets other related requirements. (C.R.S. § 29-1-101, et seq) Once a draft budget is prepared, the budget officer must submit the proposal to the governing board, as required by C.R.S. §29-1-105. The Local Government Budget Law mandates a specific format and content for the budget; requirements and sample forms are available on the DLG website.

Trustees, serving as volunteer public representatives, are especially effective budget advocates. They should be actively involved in presenting, explaining, and supporting the budget proposed to the library board, or, if the library operates with an advisory board, to the governing authority.

Per C.R.S.§29-1-106(1), a library district must approve and publish a "Notice of Budget" to allow the public time to review the draft and provide comment. Advisory boards should confirm with their governing authority to determine who holds the responsibility for this publication - the library or the governing body.

A note on Budget Advocacy

Budget advocacy should not occur only at budget time. The board and the library director should be constantly talking with the town manager and the community about the value that the library brings to the community. The first rule of effective advocacy is to establish a good relationship first before ever asking for money.

ADOPTING A BUDGET, APPROPRIATING FUNDS, AND SETTING MILL LEVIES

Following the public comment period, budget approval must take place. A library district is the final adopter of its own budget, while the governing authority (e.g., city council, county commissioners) is the final adopter of a budget submitted by an advisory library board.

The Local Government Budget Law (C.R.S. §29-1-101, et seq.) requires library districts to formally adopt, appropriate funds, set mill levies, and file the adopted budget. C.R.S. §24-90-109(q)(2) requires an annual report to the legislative body.

APPROPRIATING FUNDS

Due to TABOR (Taxpayer Bill of Rights), funds must be formally appropriated. The appropriation provides the legal spending authority for the budget. Essentially, the library governing board or governing authority must appropriate the revenues and reserves detailed in the budget to the specific purposes of library services. This act sets a legal limit on expenditures for operation, meaning spending cannot exceed the appropriated amount per C.R.S. §29-1-110. Regular review of spending by the library board is essential to prevent exceeding this limit.

SECURING FUNDING

(Certifying the Levy)

After the written budget documents are approved by the board and submitted to the governing authority (for city or county libraries), the final step is securing the necessary funding. Once a library board has adopted its budget, it can then **certify the levy** to the county. State statute outlines the deadline and required public information for this submittal (C.R.S. §39-5-128(1) and §39-5-125).

AMENDING THE BUDGET

A budget is an intended financial plan, but unforeseen circumstances often require changes. The board may need to amend the budget if the funding secured differs from the amount needed to balance the plan, or if actual expenditures or costs during the year are significantly higher or lower than anticipated.

Spending in excess of an appropriation is strictly prohibited by C.R.S. §29-1-110. The budget must be amended, as required by law, before expenditure exceeds the appropriation.

Types of budgetary changes include:

- Transferring Appropriated Moneys: Moving funds between different accounts, particularly if the original appropriation was made by fund.
- Supplemental Budget & Appropriation: Required to use unanticipated revenues, such as new grants or donations.
- Revised Appropriation: Occurs when revenues are lower than anticipated; the board may choose to reduce the appropriation to match the expected reduction in spending.

- Budget Contingency: Allows for the adoption of a contingency plan to address an unforeseen emergency (excluding those covered as a TABOR emergency).

AMENDMENT PROCEDURE

The steps to amend the budget for a budgetary transfer or a supplemental budget and appropriation include, but are not limited to:

1. Public Notice: Publish a notice of a public hearing to amend the budget.
2. Conducting a Hearing: Hold a public hearing on the proposed amendment.
3. Adopting the Amendment: Adopt the budget amendment through formal action (resolution or ordinance).
4. Filing: File a copy of the adopted resolution or ordinance with the Division of Local Government (DLG).

The notice for budget amendments must contain the same information as the original notice of budget for the regular adoption process (C.R.S. §29-1-106).

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL BUDGET PLANNING

(Adapted from: Massachusetts Public Library Trustees Handbook)

KNOW WHO DOES WHAT

A crucial first step is to establish authority and responsibility within the budget planning process. Written policies and procedures must clearly outline these roles. Budget development should not rest solely on the library director; it is a team process. Trustees are vital to both creation and approval because they serve as the library's key link to the community and local government.

UNDERSTAND THE BUDGET'S PLANNING CONTEXT

Budget development is central to the overall planning process, as the budget must directly reflect the library's purpose and priorities. The board defines these priorities in its strategic plan, and both the budget and funding requests must be clearly linked to this document's context and purposes. Board members should be prepared to explain the library's current activities, future goals, and expected outcomes to the governing authority and the public.

GIVE YOURSELF AND OTHERS TIME

Budget preparation requires sufficient time. Boards should develop budget planning calendars that allow the director and staff adequate time to formulate requests and recommendations, as budgeting, like planning, is a cooperative effort. Think long-range to identify or develop funding resources for future growth.

QUESTION EVERYTHING

Do not simply manipulate existing figures by adding or subtracting percentages. A budget is a tool for accomplishing specific goals. When a goal has been met, phase out the related program or project and advocate for shifting that funding to the next priority. Utilizing program budgets is an effective way to track goals and the costs required to implement and sustain them.

BE REALISTIC

Stay attuned to what is happening in the community and understand its ability to pay to determine realistic expectations. Be aware of the competing demands from other departments on the funding agency to understand your library's share in the context of the whole. Use data from the Colorado State Library's Library Research Services (LRS) Public Library Annual Report (PLAR) to benchmark your financial situation against comparable libraries.

DON'T RESTRICT YOUR BUDGET TO AVAILABLE FUNDING

Remember that funds can increase or become unexpectedly available. Be prepared to immediately utilize such resources. Position the library to find and use alternative sources of income, such as federal and state grants, donations, and sponsors. These alternative funds are often ideal for one-time projects or program start-up costs. Seek community support for these alternative funding efforts when appropriate. When securing and using external funds, ensure your municipality is informed and publicize the achievement.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Understand the library's mission and core accomplishments. Make the library and its needs understandable and accessible to the public. When presenting budget requests, avoid acronyms or specialized library jargon. Do not exaggerate or underestimate financial needs. If funding results in program cuts, ensure those cuts actually occur, as credibility is paramount.

Community members have a right to know how their tax money is spent. Make the budget easy to understand. Learn to use simple and familiar comparisons to illustrate the value patrons receive for their tax dollars. A compelling argument can often be made by presenting a per capita expenditure figure and comparing it to the average

cost of a restaurant meal or a hardcover book.

READ, LISTEN, AND LEARN

Learn from other agencies about their successful budget development and presentation strategies. Pay close attention to what works well and learn from the examples of others. Most importantly, listen actively to your funding agency to understand their requirements and what information impresses them.

ANNUAL AUDIT

Colorado state law requires local governments to submit to the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) an annual independent audit of financial statements. OSA releases a calendar annually identifying mandatory dates.

The independent auditor's report must be completed by a certified public accountant licensed to practice in Colorado. The independent auditor's report must be signed by the auditor or audit firm that performed the audit.

If a local government's revenue and expenditure are less than $1,000,000, an exemption to the audit may be requested (C.R.S. §29-1-604). The statute requires the application for an exception to be personally reviewed, approved, and signed by the majority of trustees and recommends that an approved resolution also be provided. The audit exemption request must be prepared by a person skilled in governmental accounting if the revenues or expenditures are less than $200,000. If between $200,000 - $1,000,000, an independent accountant with knowledge of governmental accounting must prepare the request for exemption.

REVIEWING YOUR ANNUAL AUDIT

Your annual audit will be presented by the preparer. When reviewing, consider big picture questions that the audit would demonstrate, such as:

- Are we receiving financial reports that are reliable and credible?
- Are funds being used for the intended purposes?
- Are we demonstrating good stewardship of funds?
- Are there discrepancies, errors, or potential risks?
- Do internal controls work?

Other audits that are not required but may be useful to aid in the effectiveness of the board include:

- Investment and purchasing
- Legal audit
- Liability audit
- Management, operations, and maintenance audits.

LONG TERM PLANNING

A core value of librarianship is sustainability. Planning for the future of the public library is a critical piece of being a library trustee. Financial sustainability ensures you leave the library in a better state than when you started. Additionally, it provides a plan so sponsors, partners, granters, donors, and other funders can be invited into special projects or supplemental funding.

It is smart to create a long-term financial plan (aim for at least three years). This plan should work hand-in-hand with the library's big-picture strategic goals, making it easier to figure out what resources you will need down the road for the community. You just track and update the categories and dollar amounts over time. A good plan helps you avoid scrambling for money later, too. When you buy new equipment, you should know the expected lifespan and budget for those inevitable repairs and spare parts after the warranty runs out. That little bit of foresight really helps keep those emergency (contingency) budgets minimal!

Potential levers to consider for long-term adjustments include both projections of revenue and projections of expenses. Consider your scenarios - worst case, conservative, and best case.

PLANNING MIGHT INCLUDE:

Projected demographics (population, housing)	Projected funding sources (property valuation, sales tax, investments, debts)	Current and future debt projections
Current and future maintenance/replacement	Current and future services and staffing	Inflation

MONTHLY BOARD REPORTS

The board reviews monthly financial statements that are tied to the annual budget. These reports should include current expenditure for each fund, year-to-date expenditures, remaining balances, and an explanation of any fund transfers. In many libraries, the board also receives a list of bills that have been paid in the current month. Good budget reports can help the trustees know what the library is doing with its resources.

Maintaining reliable bookkeeping software with scheduled funding updates, security, password access, and backup, rather than financial details saved on a single device, is best practice. In monthly or quarterly reporting, the board should review assets available, expenses paid, and the percentage of the budget expended. This software typically allows for a report that shows the percentage of the budget spent compared to the actual amount for the period being reviewed, as well as year-to-date. The intent is to thwart fraud as well as ensure the budget and, thus, the long-range plan is being followed.

The Board of Trustees must be aware of the library's financial standing. When reviewing the monthly or periodic financial reports, board members should ask themselves:

- Do these expenses make sense?
- Is anything out of place, unusual, or inappropriate?
- Are we on track to spend within our appropriated amount?
- Do we need to make any alterations to the budget?

If you are ever uncertain, ask questions during the public meeting when these items are reviewed. An effective board is one in which each individual fulfills the responsibility of reviewing the reports received, tracking expenses, and monitoring the financial health of the library.

INVESTMENTS AND BANKING

The intent of public funds is to be collected and used. Unless there is an intention for the funds, which can include future projects and budget stabilization funds, savings should be kept to a minimum.

Private donations to a 501(c)3 that supports the library do not hold the same requirements. Friends and Foundation groups that fall under that category are not required to meet the same obligations of public funds.

INVESTMENTS

Public funds may be invested in authorized investment vehicles (C.R.S. §24-75-601, et seq.). These vehicles are subject to rating categories and maturity dates. Potential investments include United States Treasury obligations and Colorado local government investment pools. Refer to the statute for other legal investments.

ELIGIBLE PUBLIC DEPOSITORIES (C.R.S. §11-10.5-101, ET SEQ)

The Public Deposit Protection Act (PDPA), protects public deposits at approved banks above the FDIC insurance limit. Approved banks are monitored and examined by the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, which requires these institutions to provide monthly reporting of public deposits and an annual audit.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

All libraries must establish policies and procedures for the library's financial management, including budgeting, purchasing, approvals, procurement, contracts, reimbursement, petty cash, donations, etc.

Library Districts should have additional policies and procedures, including records retention, budget processes, contracts, control of asset disposal, annual audits, and reserve funds.

Transparency in the use of public funds is a key element of local government in Colorado. In small, rural communities, it is difficult to find entities without a personal connection and potential conflict of interest with the library. Clear policies ensure decisions are fair and appropriate. Checks and balances within the processes ensure public funds are being used appropriately.

Contracts that the library enters into, including construction contracts, must contain certain language and meet certain statutory requirements. Bidding, appropriation clauses (C.R.S. §24-91-103.6), final payment (C.R.S. §38-26-107(2), §38-26-107(3), and §24-91-103(1)(b), and accessibility C.R.S. § 24-85-104 laws must be reviewed and applied.

Sustainability also comes into play when considering purchasing policy. Public libraries are primarily locally funded. Is it better to purchase something locally at a higher price if it is recycling money back into the local economy? What impact does this have on how the appropriate funds can be spent?

The board sets the vision through policy, and the staff puts the vision into operation.

OTHER FINANCIAL ODDS & ENDS

STATE GRANT FOR LIBRARIES

Colorado Library Law includes the State Grant for Libraries program. As of 2025, nearly $3 million is appropriated in the state budget to fund publicly funded school, public, and academic libraries. The purpose of the funds is for educational materials in libraries that support efforts to improve literacy and learning.

An application must be completed to receive these funds. Allotment is determined based on the community population. Once funds have been allocated, distribution of funds occurs through a request on a reimbursement basis.

Colorado State Library, which administers the grant, has staff available to assist with the application, eligible purchases, and completing the request for reimbursement.

STATEWIDE INTERNET PORTAL AUTHORITY

Statewide Internet Portal Authority (SIPA) simplifies the technology procurement and contracting process for Colorado governments. Suppliers are vetted and in a variety of fields, provide easy access to a wide range of IT products and services. SIPA connects your library with a variety of partners, helps with procurement, and offers grants.

E-RATE

Also known as the Schools and Libraries Universal Support Program, E-Rate is a federal program that provides discounts on telecommunications and internet access for eligible schools and libraries. Administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company under the Federal Communications Commission. E-Rate can provide discounts or reimbursement for services and hardware. The intent of the program is to ensure schools and libraries have access to high-speed internet and telecommunications at an affordable rate.

COLORADO LIBRARY CONSORTIUM (CLIC)

As well as providing a statewide courier program, AspenCat integrated library system, and much more, CLiC is a 501(c)(3) that also provides cooperative purchasing and can act as a fiscal agency to aid grants management.

CHAPTER 6
HOW DO I KNOW A GOOD POLICY?

Policies provide guidance for decision making and operations for the library director and staff and ensure the rights and responsibilities of library users. Having good policies means you are setting your library up with organizational structure and good governance.

Library policies should consider the Library Bill of Rights and ensure policies provide access and reduce barriers. Legal, well-constructed policies that are evenly applied ensures the library is welcoming and protected.

There is a legal hierarchy for policy. Start with the federal laws, then Colorado Revised Statutes, and then any local authorizer pieces. Policies for employment, library resources, accessibility, and purchasing are required.

It is important that the library board of trustees undergo regular reviews of library policies, stay up-to-date on legislation that can impact library policy, and have the policies available for public access.

The following sections are not comprehensive and not intended as legal advice. Libraries and trustees should consult their own legal counsel for advice.

RELATED COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS

ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE
BUDGET & FINANCE
COLLECTIONS
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE
LIBRARY SERVICES & PROGRAMS
LIBRARY STAFF
MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS
RESOURCE SHARING

IN THIS SECTION, WE WILL EXPLORE:

What is a Policy? 78
Policy Review Process and Maintenance 78
Process for Creating Policy 79
Policy Development 82
Key Policy Areas and Law 84
Summary 86
Try This: Policy Development Framework 87

WHAT IS A POLICY?

A policy is a set of guidelines, rules, or plans of action adopted by a public library board of trustees. A policy defines general guidelines and principles. Policies answer the "why."

Policies allow the board of trustees to delegate authority and still retain ultimate responsibility and control by conveying a framework for decision making. It is the responsibility of the trustees to develop policy and evaluate the fidelity of implementation. It is not the role of the trustee to implement policies or determine procedures. Procedures, or the "how", is the responsibility of the library director and library staff.

There is one exception to the board of trustees identifying the "how" in policy -due process. Due process means following established legal procedures and rules to ensure fairness and justice for all individuals in legal proceedings. Due process aims to prevent unfair or arbitrary actions by the government. Public libraries are government entities. If a policy includes elements that might deny or interfere with a patron's access to the library or access to information, library policy should include a means for due process, a way a patron can respond or have a hearing to challenge the restriction.

Library boards of trustees need to adopt policies that speak to the operation of the board itself, operational policies, and personnel policies for library staff.

POLICY REVIEW PROCESS AND MAINTENANCE

As policy is the realm of the library board of trustees, it is important the trustees know them. A formal policy review by the full board ensures each trustee understands the rationale and legality of policies as well as the policy itself.

It is best practice to ensure a trustee position (Secretary) or committee is designated to ensure policy review. Policy review should take place on a set three-year cycle by the full board of trustees and library director. Some boards choose to complete all at once, some break down into sections and complete a section each year.

Tracking changes should be included in your policy review. Each policy should note the date of original adoption and the date of any subsequent amendments or reviews.

Legal requirements are updated and adjusted as needed.

Staff behaviors match policy.

Procedures are separate from policies.

Language is consistent and enforceable.

Access is available to all library users in an effective manner.

PROCESS FOR CREATING POLICY



First, the board of trustees must identify a need for a new policy. The recognition that there is a need for a new policy can come from several sources: board committees, a trustee, library director, and community members. Some of the conditions that cause the board of trustees to consider development of a new policy include the following:

- Issues arise which are not adequately/acceptably addressed by current board policies. Policies should address systemic issues, not just isolated incidents.
- Changes in operating practice have accumulated over time so that the current policies do not reflect reality.
- External changes and trends that have an impact on the public library and the community being served.
- Change in size, scope, services offered, or methods of delivery of services.
- Recent federal or state laws have created the need for adjustments in policy, e.g., wage and hour laws, equal employment, safety.
- Current policy does not adequately reduce ambiguity and ensure uniformity of decisions across the library.

When such new issues and questions arise, the first question for the board to ask is "What do our current policies say?" If the language of the current policies does not provide guidance, the next question is, "What policy should we adopt to cover this and similar situations in the future?"



Second, the board of trustees then assigns a committee to draft the new policy. After it has been determined that a new policy is needed, often it is the library director who is in the best position to draft policies for board review because the director is the link between vision and operations and is most aware of what is needed. However, since setting board policy is ultimately the board's responsibility, a board policy committee can also be effective. In either case, the board needs to clearly communicate to the developers that will write the policy draft its concerns and any preferences regarding how the new policy will be approached.



Third, the committee drafting the policy should gather input from relevant stakeholders, including all board members, outside experts when appropriate, and other stakeholders who would be impacted by the new policy or amendment. This is where it is key to consider the Library Bill of Rights and core values.



Next, develop a written policy statement that responds to the issue or question at hand. Be sure to check for policies from other libraries if available. It is good to start with broad statements and only go more specifically if it improves the policy. If a policy becomes too detailed, it is almost certain that the board has moved beyond policymaking and has dived into operations. The board of trustees should keep its policies at a broad governance level. A draft should be presented to the board to obtain informal feedback from the policy developer.

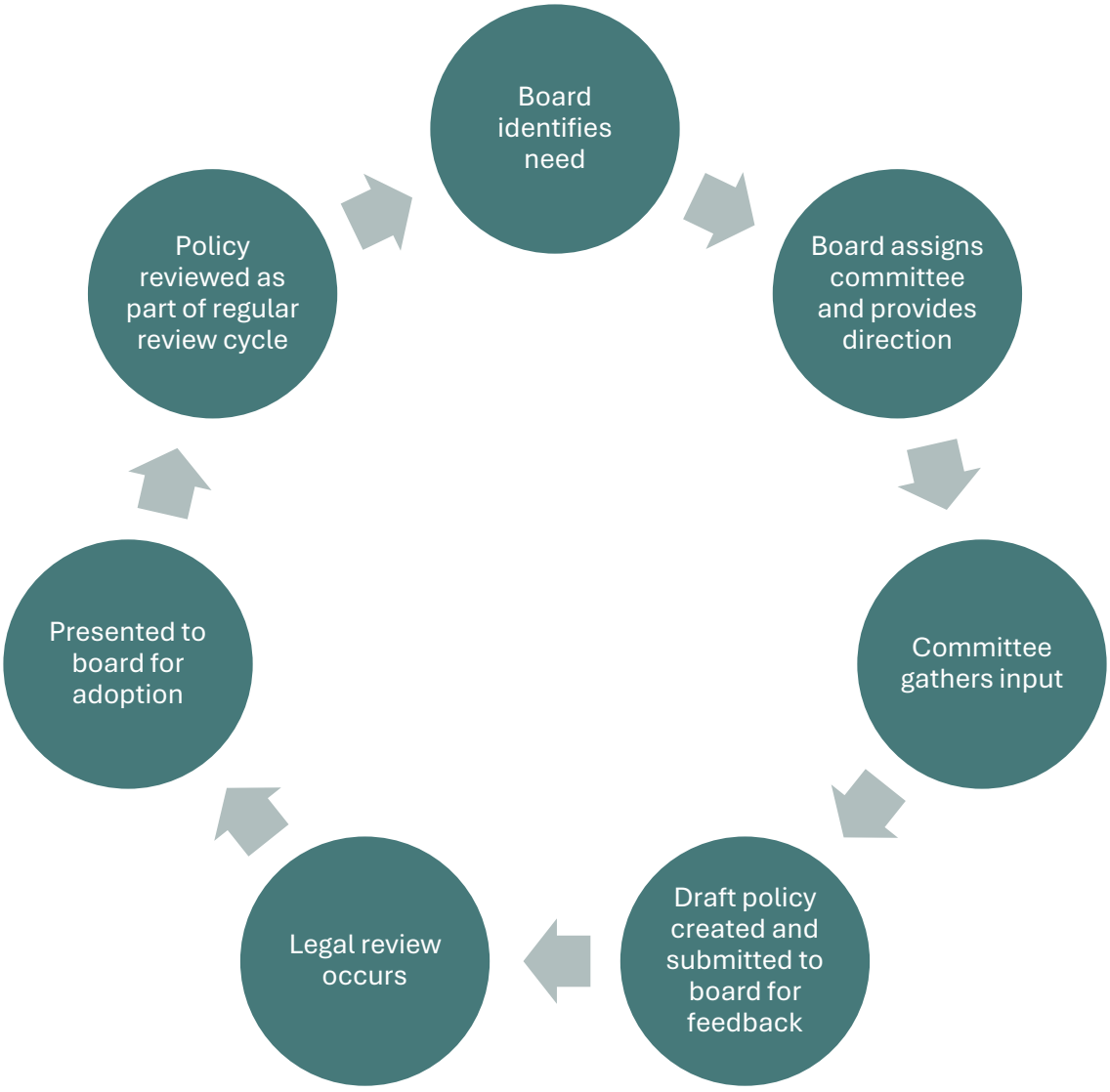


Then, legal counsel should review the draft policy. In some cases, depending on the nature of policy questions, once the drafting of policy begins, it may be important to bring the public library's legal counsel into the picture to review the policy draft. The attorney, who should be familiar with Library Law and regulations, should not write policy but will certainly have many helpful suggestions. Legal review isn't required for each draft of a policy but should occur prior to final approval.



Finally, the draft policy should be presented to the board for approval. Library policies should be approved by the Governing Authority, which may be the Library Board of Trustees, the County Commission, or the City/Town Council. Once approved, the policy should be posted appropriately.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

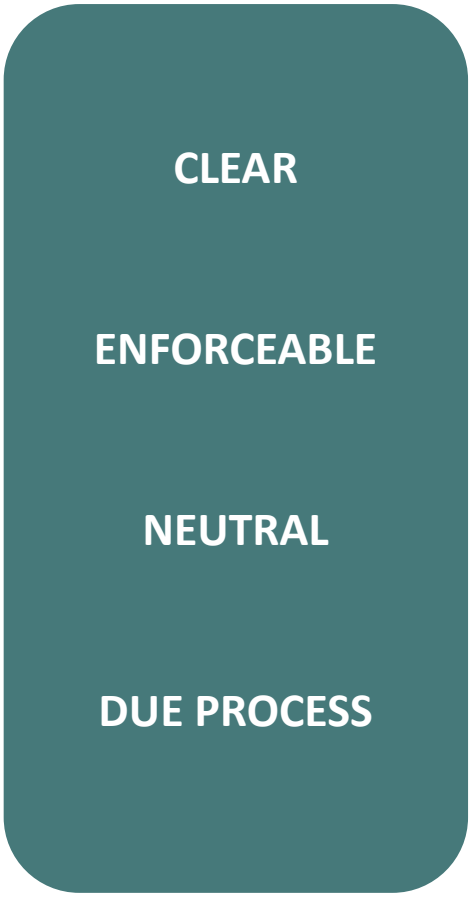


POLICY DEVELOPMENT

How do you actually write a policy? A policy committee drafts, reviews, and revises library policies, often with input from staff, library users, and the board. It is a collaborative effort ideally with potential legal counsel reviewing to ensure compliance.

According to United for Libraries, Well-Constructed Library Policies have the following characteristics.

Policies must be **lega**l. Policies must be compliant with applicable laws and regulations.



- They are **clear** - meaning the policies are easy to understand and follow. Every policy should include a clear statement of purpose. Language should be positive and avoid library jargon. Remember who your audience is.

- They are **enforceable** - so there is a way to determine infractions and clearly determine compliance versus non-compliance.

- They are content **neutral** - this means they do not take into account protected characteristics or information subjects. Policies cannot limit the use of library resources by belief, faith, criminal past, etc.

- They include **due process**, which includes the steps of notice, investigations, and appeal. Policies must be posted or available to those who must follow them, alleged violators must be advised of the policy infringed, violators must be able to appeal decision and/or punishment to the library board.

Each policy should include:

- **Purpose statement** is the reason why the policy is needed.
    - Provide notice to library users about protocols used in the public library (program access, collection development)

    - Clarify expectations for the public library users, staff, and the community such as priorities, uniformity in decision-making processes and values (qualifications for a library card, equal opportunity employer)
    - Compliance with applicable laws (privacy policy, decision making regarding library resources, protect civil rights immigration status).
        - If this is the case, be sure to include the statute or law.
    - Informal policies and standard practices need to be codified.
    - Predictability and fairness (rules governing the library, children's use of the library)

- **Applicability statement** Who or what the policy applies to as well as consequences of noncompliance.
- **Definitions**
- **Detailed policy statement** is the meat of the policy.
    - This is the actual position and rules on a specific topic. This should provide clear guidance for decision-making and behavior.
    - When determining your policy statement, keep in mind the direction provided by the board, regulation, Library Bill of Rights, and
- **Sources of help** that can give interpretations or resolve issues
    - Library director, library staff, American Library Association
- **Policy authority** if issued based on an outside authority
- **Related Forms, Policies, and References**

See the **Try This** activity at the end of this chapter for a policy framework to use when developing a policy.

Colorado State Library offers an online collection of policies from a wide variety of public library types for reference and guidance. These policies have not been vetted by Colorado State Library and are meant solely as a resource bank.

KEY POLICY AREAS AND LAW

The following is a recommended, though not a comprehensive list, of policies that every library board and every library should have, as appropriate to the local and organizational situation. Examples of policies can be found through the Colorado State Library.

BOARD POLICIES

- By-laws
  - Length and number of terms of board members
  - Good cause for removal of a trustee
  - Designation of officers
  - Rules and regulations for conducting a meeting
  - Rules for public participation in meetings
  - Procedures for amending the bylaws
- Director responsibilities and functions
- Colorado Open Records Act (CORA)
- Library finance
  - Purchasing
  - Investments
  - Financial development
- Long-range planning
- Library facilities

LIBRARY OPERATIONAL POLICIES

- AI Usage
- Privacy and Confidentiality
  - Patron records and upholding intellectual freedom, C.R.S.§24-90-119
  - Data Disposal
- Child Safety
  - Unattended children
  - Internet and youth
- Gifts, donations, and memorials
- Reciprocal borrowing

- Library Use/Behavior
  - User conduct
  - Weapons
  - Complaints
- Public demonstrations/petitions
- Interaction with law enforcement
- Political activity
- Accident, disturbance, vandalism
- Resource sharing and cooperation with other libraries
  - Schools
  - Interlibrary loan
- Access
  - Borrower privileges
  - Building and/or equipment
  - Meeting rooms, exhibits, displays, bulletin boards
  - Public computers
  - Digital Accessibility
- Standards for Decisions Regarding Library Resources (SB24-216)
  - Collection development: material selection, weeding
  - Programming
  - Reconsideration of library resources
  - Purchasing, selling, and retention of materials

LIBRARY PERSONNEL POLICIES

Staff benefits and privileges

- Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program (FAMLI)
- Leave Time
  - Vacation leave
  - Holidays
  - Sick/Medical leave
  - Bereavement leave
  - Parental leave
  - Educational leave
  - Leave without pay / family leave
- Professional conduct / staff responsibilities
- Development and training of staff

- Drug-free workplace
- Smoking
- Social media
- Political activity
- Work week
- Absenteeism and tardiness
- Overtime
- Salary / wage payment
- Timecards
- Expense reimbursement
- Termination of employment (resignation, dismissal, retirement, references)
- Organizational authority and responsibility
- Equal opportunity
- Americans with disabilities
- Sexual harassment
- Conflict of interest
- Grievance procedures
- Employment procedure
  - Educational qualification
  - Evaluation of staff
  - Promotions
  - Raises
- Emergency notification
  - Extreme weather
  - Emergency conditions
  - Volunteers

SUMMARY

Library policies create the framework for fair governance and daily operations. Developed and approved by library board of trustees, policies protect the rights of both staff and patrons while ensuring the library remains an accessible, welcoming space.

Policies must follow federal law, state statute, and local mandates and also adhere to the core principles of librarianship.

Boards should always consult legal counsel when drafting and reviewing policies.

TRY THIS: POLICY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Select one of your library's policies. Use the policy development framework to determine if all parts are identifiable in the policy and if the policy is still relevant.

POLICY TITLE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

APPLICABILITY STATEMENT

DEFINITIONS

POLICY STATEMENT

SOURCES OF HELP

POLICY AUTHORITY

RELATED FORMS, POLICIES, REFERENCES

DEVELOPMENT DATE _____

REVIEWED DATE _____

CHAPTER 7
BEING STRATEGIC: EVALUATION AND PLANNING

A long-term strategic plan envisions the future of the community and library. It charts a course to reach that future. Long-term planning enables the library to be strategic in setting priorities for budget and determining staff activities and performance, library services, and resources.

To be relevant and responsive to the community, public libraries engage in a continuous cycle of planning, operating, evaluating, and reporting. Plans developed from these efforts are for use, not placed on a shelf gathering dust. There is a continuous cycle of planning, operating, evaluating, and reporting on operations and services is used for continuous improvement, long-range strategic planning, and public accountability.

A formal strategic planning process includes input from diverse community members, leaders, and organizations as well as staff, volunteers, and partners to center planning on community impact.

The Colorado State Library as well as Colorado Library Consortium are able to provide support in all areas of the strategic plan process. Please reach out for assistance.

The following sections are not comprehensive and not intended as legal advice. Libraries and trustees should consult their own legal counsel for advice.

RELATED COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARD:
EVALUATION & PLANNING

IN THIS SECTION WE WILL EXPLORE:

Step 1: Identify the Purpose 91
Step 2: Who is involved in long-term planning? 92
Step 3: Data Collection 93
Step 4: Data Analysis 97
Step 5: Trends & Key Findings 99
Step 6: Values, Vision, Mission 100
Step 7: Strategic Priorities, Goals, and Objectives 101
Step 8: Action Plan, Measurements 101
Step 9: Reporting 102
Additional Plans in the Library: capital and disaster 102
Summary 103
Try This: Strategic Plan 104

LONG-RANGE PLANNING



STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE PURPOSE

There are multiple areas of the public library that can be considered for long-range, strategic planning. It might be that they are all lumped together in one plan or done separately.

Some examples:

- ☐ Collection
- ☐ Services
- ☐ Facilities
- ☐ Finances
- ☐ Marketing
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ Staffing
- ☐ Design
- ☐ Infrastructure

Is this plan to be for one, three, or five years? This timeframe balances ambitious goals with the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Keep in mind, good strategic priorities provide a strong foundation and direction, but flexibility and adaptability are critical.

Having a clear purpose gives direction for the right stakeholders to be included and appropriate data collection to be used for identification of strategic priorities.

STEP 2: WHO IS INVOLVED IN LONG-TERM PLANNING?

The board of trustees oversees the strategic plan development while the library director and staff implement the plan, track progress, and provide regular reporting to the board and other stakeholders.

Engaging the community is an important part of long-term planning. "Bad libraries build collections, good libraries build services, great libraries build communities," stated R. David Lankes, recipient of the American Library Association's 2016 Ken Haycock Award for Promoting Librarianship. Stakeholder engagement ensures the community has a voice in the process.

DO IT YOURSELF OR BRING IN A THIRD-PARTY ENTITY?

Organizations often bring in a third party to help with long-range planning, but it is not a necessity. Considerations whether to engage a third party include:

- Does someone on staff or on the board have data collection and analysis expertise?
- Is there time available?
- Will analysis be unbiased?
- Are you able to ask effective and probing questions?

It might be that a third party is needed for only part of the process. In Colorado, public libraries have access to no cost expertise through the Colorado State Library (CSL) and Colorado Library Consortium (CLiC) to aid in planning as well as the shared expertise of other libraries that have undergone the process.

WHOLE BOARD OR STRATEGIC PLAN COMMITTEE?

Everyone gets excited about developing the future version of the library. When deciding who is engaged in the process, be mindful of Open Meeting Laws as well as time needed to efficiently complete the planning process. Like policy development, have the full board determine the purpose of the long-range plan and who will be engaged. At this point, it might then make more sense for the board to charge a Strategic Plan Committee with next steps.

STEP 3: DATA COLLECTION

Once you have identified your purpose, complete a community needs assessment to determine the needs of the library patrons for current service as well as the needs of the community that the library can provide support. There is a wide variety of data sources including administrative data, people's sentiments, strategic plans of local community organizations (government, nonprofit), community data, library data, Friends, Foundations, employees. The list goes on. It is important to consider the purpose of the plan you are putting together when identifying what data sources you intend to use.

There are also a variety of methods you can use to collect data from those sources. Evaluation of current work, surveys, community and stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and community needs assessments completed by local groups in the last 18 months are typical. Consider using both qualitative and quantitative data to have a broad picture. This is a time-consuming process that allows for informed decision making.

EVALUATION OF CURRENT WORK

Value the work and success your library already has. It is important when planning to know where you are with what you currently have.

- What is your library's value?
- What is your vision?
- Who are the key stakeholders and their interests?
- Complete a SOAR analysis of your library data and the Colorado Public Library Standards. What are your strengths, aspirations, opportunities, and desired results?
- What progress, effectiveness, and successes does your library have?

SURVEYS

According to CSL's Library Research Services' "Library User Surveys: A How-To Guide", the first step is to consider what information you need and what are the characteristics of the people completing the survey.

Are you using a survey to measure how the library is currently doing or to seek ideas for what the library will be like in the future? Remember, most people aren't aware of the possibility of libraries. It is not their area of expertise. Additionally, keep in mind how long you expect people to take when answering questions. The guide emphasizes, "never collect more information than is absolutely necessary so as not to unduly burden survey respondents or create unnecessary privacy concern."

When writing your survey, it is important to write it with the user in mind. Surveys should be accessible and inclusive. Consider reading level, jargon, spoken language, comfort with technology, and age of intended respondents. Be sure to include the purpose of the survey on the survey so responders are aware. Lately, a note about using tax revenues has been used to demonstrate transparency and financial stewardship has appeared in surveys. This may cause some respondents to be conservative in their response rather than dream. A decision you should take into account when creating your survey.

Most public library surveys are anonymous. You will want to include some demographic information to help determine if your respondents are representative of your community. Some demographics to consider:

- Frequency of library use
- Library cardholder
- Distance to library
- Zip code
- Age range
- Household type
- Primary language

Distribution of surveys is as important as the survey itself. Be sure to use multiple methods as well as asking your community partners to share. Make it easy to access and be sure to have staff promote it wherever they are working during the open survey period. A 10-30% rate of return is generally recognized as a positive response. Monitor your responses. If you are lacking a demographic that you are hoping to obtain, push additional marketing into that population.

An excellent template of surveys can be found and personalized in the guide listed on the next page.

DESIGN TIPS AND TRICKS

*Adapted from Johnson, B. & Christensen, L. (2012). Checklist for survey construction. In *Educational Research* pp.180 – 181). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

After drafting your library's survey, have colleagues proofread it for clarity and assess the validity of the questions included.

Avoid questions that ask respondents to rank items (e.g., "rank the importance of the following library services to you from most to least important"). Not only are rankings hard to analyze, but they are also misleading as it's possible that all the items asked about could be of equal importance to respondents. A better approach is to ask respondents to *rate* items (e.g. "rate the importance of each of the following library services to you on a scale where 5 = extremely important and 1= not at all important).

Use lead ins for new or lengthy sections to orient and guide the user. For example, if your survey includes a demographics section, title it as such.

Refrain from using "double barreled" questions that combine 2 or more topics, such that the researcher cannot know which "barrel" of the questions was answered. For example, "Do you think that the library is important and would you support a mill levy for increased funding?" If the words "and" or "or" are included in your question, it might be double barreled.

Use short questions when possible.

Carefully consider the placement of each question and set of related questions.

Number the items consecutively from the beginning to the end.

Use plenty of white space to ensure that the survey is readable.

Use an easy-to-read font size and type.

Do not "break" your questions or carry them from one page to another.

Include open-ended questions so survey takers can fully express themselves, particularly when covering complex topics.

Include a closing statement. In addition to thanking customers for participating in the survey, this statement might also include contact information should respondents have any questions or concerns about the survey.

Consider how the findings of the survey might relate back to your library's mission, vision, and values. This will make you data more valuable for stakeholders within your organization.

Provide clear instructions.

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups provide an opportunity for probing into the results of your survey. Prior to hosting focus groups, begin your analysis of survey data to identify questions for inquiry. It gives you an opportunity to obtain in-depth insights into participants' opinions and experiences through guided discussion - to figure out the "why" behind the survey numbers.

Typically, a focus group is composed of 6-10 individuals with shared characteristics or experiences. They require careful planning and skilled moderation. It is necessary to craft questions prior to the meeting, establish ground rules, and manage group dynamics to foster dialogue.

It is useful to have two individuals not recognized as being from the library to lead the focus groups. Ideally, one asks the questions, and the second records a transcript of the discussion to use for analysis.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Community and stakeholder interviews are an opportunity for you to find out what people in your community are thinking about. Interviews are also a quiet way to let the community know you are an organization supporting the community and good financial stewards.

Once you've completed your data analysis and identified key findings and trends, it is important to share this back out with those who participated in the interviews, so they are cognizant that you utilized their time for a purpose and are taking action.

When conducting these interviews, do not ask about the library. You are not using them as an opportunity to find out how they use the library. These interviews are the time for you to find out what the community needs.

During your analysis, you can determine how the library can be of support.

Keep these interviews short and with few questions. When selecting questions to ask, be consistent. Your intent is to find out their opinions on:

- community strengths
- opportunities for making the community better
- aspirations for the community.

Should you still do them if your community has recently made a massive plan? Area strategic plans including county, town, community partners can help provide information on community needs. They are worth reviewing. If there are common needs that frequently occur (mental health care, childcare, affordable housing), perhaps ask your interviewees to consider other issues.

STEP 4: DATA ANALYSIS

When analyzing the data and looking for key findings & trends, it is critical to be non-biased in your review. Be open to surprises. Avoid confirmation bias. Look for trends and consider outliers. The goal of your analysis is to create an executive summary with areas of strength and recommended areas of opportunity.

The following is excerpted from CSL's Library Research Service "Library User Surveys: A How-To Guide" available online at lrs.org.

SURVEY DATA

How you analyze the data resulting from your survey is dependent upon how your survey was conducted, i.e., whether it was an electronic or paper survey, and upon the types of questions included therein. Some platforms used to distribute electronic surveys, such as Alchemer and Survey Monkey, have built-in features for data analysis as well. Regardless of your data collection method and the tools available to you, here are a few tips to keep in mind as you move into your analysis.

QUALITATIVE DATA

Qualitative data obtained through survey comments, focus groups, and interviews can be used as anecdotal evidence to emphasize or paint the picture of the numbers. More importantly, it can be analyzed through coding. CSL's Library Research Service provides a resource for this process in "Mapping the Methods: Content Analysis Part 1".

The key question that content analysis helps answer is, how do you categorize this textual data to best identify important patterns, anomalies, and relationships that answer your research question?

Tips

Ensure questions are clearly defined for your understanding of analysis.

Clean the data you have collected. This involves removing unnecessary or inaccurate data and organizing it so you can focus on the pieces that will be most useful to you.

Start by looking at basic descriptive statistics, meaning statistics that summarize your data. As well as being revealing in and of themselves, descriptive statistics can provide important context as you move into more complex analysis.

MEANINGFUL UNITS

Before you create codes for your data, it may help to condense text into sections that hold meaning, called meaning units. Don't let this step intimidate you. You still want these meaning units to be close to, if not literally, the text of the data. For example, perhaps someone's response to our example question includes the sentence, "I've always enjoyed the library, but it was a particularly great resource for me while raising my children." A condensed meaning unit you may take from this is "a great resource while raising my children."

It is important that your meaning units relate as directly to the text as possible, and you are careful not to over-interpret or otherwise misrepresent the responses in the data set.

CODES

You begin to interpret the data and take it to a slightly more abstract form with the next step, which is applying codes. An example of coding is taking the meaning unit "a great resource while raising my children" and assigning the label "family support." If these are not the specific words you would use to describe this meaning unit that is OK. Codes will vary person to person and also change depending on the focus of your driving question.

As long as you work diligently to keep the coding faithful to the text, while acknowledging and limiting your bias from previous experiences on the subject, codes will not be right or wrong. Many codes will be used repetitively throughout your data analysis. You may assign the code "family support" to other meaning units from other survey participants if appropriate. There will likely be certain codes that are used often and other outlying codes that are not. There is also no right or wrong answer for the number of codes that you use. It depends on the size of your data set and the variations within it.

It can be helpful to use your intuition while creating codes as long as you are still basing these labels in the text and staying aware of how your biases will affect their selection. Similarly, there may be aspects of a map you intuitively understand, but it wouldn't be very smart to throw the map away entirely and assume you know the way yourself.

While coding you may need to change meaning units that suddenly don't make sense moving forward. Remember this backtracking is a normal part of the process to make sure the codes you are using reflect the whole of the data the best that they can.

STEP 5: TRENDS & KEY FINDINGS

Now is the time for fun! It is time to look at the results of your data and look for the key findings and trends.

When doing this, be sure to break down your data into your identified demographic groups so you can determine whether your results are consistent across all demographics or if you have specific demographics that require particular attention. should be results to see if consistent across all demographics or specific certain groups.

Look for trends. Trends analysis involves looking at the data results you have and looking for patterns. When you integrate your data results, are there themes that appear? What recurs or stands out? Mind mapping is a useful tool to connect themes that build into trends. The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) to analyze results and consider trends is a time saver.

Once you've identified your trends, write up an executive summary to be shared with the full board and community. This executive summary should include:

- Purpose and scope: purpose of
- Key findings and trend analysis
- Recommendations and implications

Reviewing the results of the community needs assessment in board meetings, staff meetings, and marketing provides opportunities for the board, staff, and the community to review and provide feedback. Once completed, the results can be used to identify strategic priorities for your future planning.

STEP 6: VALUES, VISION, MISSION

Libraries have changed from repositories of information to hubs of education, information, and recreation. Why does a review of values, vision, and mission come into place when determining long-range planning? Values, vision, and mission should be at the forefront when any decisions are made. Use this time to review the library's current values, vision, and mission so when determining strategic priorities, it is clear what the role of the library is in how it serves the community.

VALUES IDENTIFICATION

As you consider your organization's values, be sure to review Core Values of Librarianship, Library Bill of Rights, and Freedom to Read/View as these are the guiding principles and ethics for librarianship in America.

Consider what 3-5 core values inform how decisions are made, how business is conducted, and how success is measured.

VISION

Based on the library's values and analysis of the data completed in earlier steps, take time to describe what the library looks like in the future at the fruition of the long-range plan. Remember this isn't what you want, it is driven by what the community has identified as its need and service.

MISSION

What does our organization uniquely do (could do) better than any other? What is your reason for being? Identify concepts and words that most resonate about the library and develop a statement that describes the primary purpose of the work of the library.

STEP 7: STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

Finally, you've made it! After all the preliminary work, this section takes your data analysis, your values, vision, & mission, and puts them all together to determine the library's goals and strategic priorities.

Consider your goals as the destinations (what) and your strategic priorities as the compass or steps you will take to get there (how). Typically, you will have three (3) and no more than five (5) goals.

One way to determine your goals, strategic priorities, and objectives is to complete a SOAR Analysis of key findings and trends. Use these to look at patterns. Based upon these patterns, what would your library look like if these patterns were in place.

It is useful to look at other libraries around the country to gain ideas. Generative artificial intelligence (AI) is also a useful tool as a brainstorming partner.

Once you've obtained these goals and then considered what the priority is, consider objectives. Objectives break down strategic priorities into actionable steps or need to accomplish the priorities. Think of objectives as, "How do we know we're making progress towards our goals?"

STEP 8: ACTION PLAN, MEASUREMENTS

MEASUREMENTS

Before staff dive into the action plan, it is important that the board communicates how often they want updates towards goal completion. Is it monthly, semi-annually, or annually? What evidence will demonstrate to them that actions the library staff are taking are indeed causing a shift or change?

Measurements might include data that you are already collecting for the Public Library Annual Report, satisfaction surveys, or bumps in collections. Library Research Services (LRS) can help identify data to collect as well as building board reports to demonstrate the change. Remember to record initial starting point data to demonstrate growth.

ACTION PLAN

Now that the board has determined the vision for the library, it is time to pass the strategic plan items to the staff for action plan development. The staff also needs to report back to the board measurements to demonstrate they are on track to fulfilling the strategic plan.

As staff develop the action plan, they should consider the bite size steps,

manageable actions, it will take to meet the goal. Elements to be considered are time, staffing, community partners, lead, and funding. Some actions may take multiple years to accomplish. Consider breaking down into quarters what the actions will be to get to the whole. Update the action plan regularly to demonstrate that actions are taking place, potential changes or modifications, and the impact actions have.

STEP 9: REPORTING

Under Colorado Library Law, all libraries must present an annual report to their legislative body showing the condition of the library including "sums of money expended, purpose of the expenditures, and such other statistics and information the board of trustees deems to be of public interest." (C.R.S. 24-90-109(2)).

Keeping with the idea that 'great libraries build great communities' introduced at the start of this chapter, sharing the strategic plan as well as reporting on the progress should not be done solely between the library board of trustees and the library director. It should be shared with the staff, community, stakeholders, legislative body, and elected officials to celebrate the work of the library, and its commitment to library service.

ADDITIONAL PLANS IN THE LIBRARY: CAPITAL AND DISASTER

Other plans in the library such as a capital replacement plan and disaster plan should also be developed and reviewed by staff on a regular basis. These are more operational pieces but as stewards of the library, trustees should be aware of their existence. Additionally, trustees should be aware of their role, especially around communication and decision making, if an emergency occurs.

SUMMARY

Long-term planning puts into place a vision created by the board that directs staff action and budgeting. Identifying a clear purpose for the plan coupled with identification of who is responsible for the development of the plan and what data will be used for determining goals and priorities ensure an efficient process.

It is typical that a review of the library's mission, vision, and values occurs as part of the process to ensure the stewardship entrusted to the board of trustees demonstrates responsiveness to the community the library serves as well as an asset-focused approach to strengthening operations while supporting staff in implementing change.

Rigor in evaluation, along with communication with various community stakeholders, instills public trust, maintains transparency, addresses all community groups, and can be a vehicle to justify funding and support.

TRY THIS: STRATEGIC PLAN

Develop an inventory of your organizations long range plans and tools that communicate board vision to staff action steps.

VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

What are the vision, mission, and values of your library?

Vision

Mission Vision

Values Vision

LONG-RANGE PLANS

Do you have long-range plans for the follow areas and when were they created?

☐ Finances ☐ Staffing ☐ Facilities & Infrastructure

☐ Capital Projects ☐ Programs, Services & Collections

REVIEW

Review the goals, objectives, and priorities of the above plans.

ANALYSIS

Based on the reports from your library director, what can you communicate to your stakeholders about the library's future?

Is there information in reports from your library director that you need to communicate to your stakeholders about the library's future?

What long-range plans do you believe are needed?

- ☐ Finances
- ☐ Staffing
- ☐ Facilities & Infrastructure
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ Capital Projects
- ☐ Programs, Services & Collections

How will you bring this to your board's attention?

CHAPTER 8
THE BOARD AS AN EMPLOYER

The library director translates the board of trustee's vision into daily operations. Because the board is responsible for hiring and overseeing the director, they must manage the job description, conduct regular performance reviews, and determine compensation.

When hiring a library director, boards must follow specific government statutes. To ensure the process is legally sound, always consult with legal counsel.

Relationship is key to effective library leadership. Trust and open communication between the board and the director are critical. Boards can maintain a respectful relationship by establishing clear expectations through detailed job descriptions, formal board meetings, and the review process. Additionally, it is important to take note that library staff report to the library director who reports to the board. Maintaining these simple practices will keep the focus on the forward momentum of the library.

The following sections are intended for informational purposes and not intended as legal advice. Libraries and trustees should consult their own legal counsel for legal advice.

RELATED COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARD
ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE
LIBRARY STAFF

IN THIS CHAPTER, YOU WILL EXPLORE:

Hiring a Library Director 108
Director Job Description 109
Library Director Onboarding 111
Library Director Review 111
Library Director Compensation 113
Library Staff 114
Summary 115
Try This: Director's Review 116

HIRING A LIBRARY DIRECTOR

One of the most important decisions a public library board of trustees makes is the hiring of a library director. This individual is responsible for taking the vision of the board and putting it into practice. The library director is an employee of the board in a library district. In municipal and county libraries, the library director is typically an employee of the city or county government.

LEGALITIES OF HIRING A LIBRARY DIRECTOR

As this position is a chief executive-level position, hiring is different from other library staff. Colorado Open Meeting Laws and Public Records Act come into play. Consult with legal counsel regarding questions on any part of this process.

1. A search committee shall establish job search goals, including the writing of the job description, deadlines for applications, requirements for applicants, selection procedures, and the timeframe for appointing or employing a library director. (C.R.S. §24-6-402(3.5)). Boards have put this into writing as a Resolution for the director search.

2. Fourteen days prior to appointing, employing, or offering the position to a finalist, the list of all finalists must be made public. The state or local body shall name one or more candidates as finalists for the position of chief executive officer. When there are three or fewer candidates, they are automatically defined as "finalists." No appointment or employment in the position can occur until the fourteen days have passed. C.R.S. §24-6-402(3.5)

3. The Board must select the top candidate and make an offer of employment in the open session of a public meeting, not in an executive session.

4. Specific contract negotiations about pay, benefits, etc., may occur in an executive session pursuant to C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(e), but the Board must approve the contract in a public meeting.

5. Records of finalists are generally public records, except for these documents pursuant to C.R.S. §24-72-204(3)(a)(XI)(A):
   Records of applicants who are not finalists;
   The following parts of records of finalists:
      Letters of reference
      Medical, psychological, or sociological data
      Financial records (e.g., credit checks)

Colorado Library Consortium (CLiC) has excellent resources for recruiting & hiring a rural public library director including a timeframe template, potential interview questions, and an offer letter template.

Library Jobline is an online platform for postings specifically for libraries and information services job opportunities. It is hosted through the Colorado State Library and requires employers to disclose compensation in job posts based on Colorado's Equal Pay for Work Act.

DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

The position "Library Director" is to bring the vision of the library board of trustees into operation. The role and responsibility of a Colorado public library director are addressed in Colorado Library Law (C.R.S. 24-90-109(c)(i-iii)) under the trustee's role to employ a director:

> "The duties of the director shall include, but not limited to:
>
> I. Implementing the policies adopted by the board of trustees pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of this section;
>
> II. Recommending individuals for employment by the board of trustees; and
>
> III. Performing all other acts necessary for the orderly and efficient management and control of the library."

Like the relationship of the governing authority to the advisory board, the board of trustees can pass on certain roles to the library director; however, the board of trustees is still responsible for work being done. An example, the completion of the public library annual report.

It is the board's responsibility that the Public Library Annual Report is submitted to the Colorado State Library. The library director does this. The library director must then make sure to inform the board of the data submitted in the report so that the board is aware and familiar.

Typically, a library director's job description includes these essential functions from the Colorado Public Library Standards (2024-2030):

- Liaise between the governing authority and library staff, including communicating priorities to staff and sharing significant staff concerns that may inform governing decisions as well as issues that impact the library locally and globally
- Prepare and present the budget, regular reports, budget updates, and policy recommendations to the library's board of trustees/governing authority
- Hires and supervises library staff members
- Upholds written policies and procedures for the library, including supervision, operations, fiscal matters, and services
- Writes and oversees procedures that align with policies and library professional ethics
- Maintain written emergency procedures, risk management plans, and other guidance for continuity of library operations
- Is a member of local organizations
- Develop innovative processes and services, sharing freely with others to lead all public libraries into the future
- Administer the library in accordance with federal, state, and local codes and laws
- Meets with elected officials, community leaders, and other stakeholders to share library impact stories and needs and gain information on other local organizations and community priorities
- Develop a strategic plan for the future of the library

When reviewing the job description, consider the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by the public library and community for the library director to complete the work. Consider what education or experience is needed to do the job. Does the organization need someone with a heavy library background, organizational background, or community background?

Depending on the staff size and community of the public library, answers to those questions may vary. Prioritize what can be learned against what is needed immediately when determining the requirements for the position.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR ONBOARDING

The purpose of onboarding is to communicate the library's mission, vision, culture, as well as policies and procedures. The Library Factbook is an excellent resource that provides basic & essential information for managing the transition from one director to the next.

Onboarding should include:

- tour of the library(-ies)
- meeting with the board president and trustee responsible for director review, individual members of the leadership team, and other staff
- review of budget and board packet documents to fill administrative responsibility role
- review policies and the strategic plan
- access to library board packets, organizational chart, contact information of the director, and trustees
- expectations and procedures for efficient board meetings and operation of the library
- separation of duties between trustees and the director

The responsibility of onboarding a new director is primarily the responsibility of the board of trustees; however, it may be shared with the library leadership team & staff. It is critical to complete onboarding with fidelity.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR REVIEW

It is critical that the Library Director is reviewed and provided with coaching. Each year an annual evaluation should be conducted by the board based upon the position's job description, skills, and goals. It should be presented by the board during an executive session (unless the library director chooses it to be held in an open meeting).

A designated member or committee of the board is responsible for putting together the review. If the board is an advisory board rather than a governing board, and the library director is an employee of the governing authority, the board should establish expectations with the governing authority regarding the library director review process.

Why perform an annual review, especially if the director has been the library director for many years? An annual formal review acts to clearly state and review expectations. It clears the air and strengthens the relationship of the board of trustees and director. Completing the review reaffirms the board's role in overseeing the work of the director and communicates to the director the board's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with performance. Times change. Communities change. Boards change. It is important that the library director continue to be the right fit for the position.



The board of trustees should determine who contributes towards the review process of the library director. Is it just the board? Is a survey sought by the Leadership Team, staff, or Friends/Foundation? The determination should be consistent year-to-year and not alter just because the director has been on staff for multiple cycles of review.

Goals should be identified annually based upon the review, implementation of the strategic priorities, and skills needed to lead the library as identified in the job description.

To ensure coaching occurs throughout the year, establish a timeframe in which a designated trustee or committee of the board meets with the library director 2-3 times a year to review goals and the working relationship between the board and the director. Documentation summarizing the discussion and further action should be added to the library director's HR folder.

Libraries are bastions of learning in which the review process is reflective and positive. All individuals involved with the library should be committed to growth, especially the library director.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR COMPENSATION

The Colorado State Library has tools available to compare library director compensation based upon data provided in the Public Library Annual Report. Library Research Services can help the board of trustees determine comparable libraries, identify longitudinal data on salary, and find the cost of living in the community.

Considerations for library director compensation include:

- salaries in comparable libraries
- similar positions and compensation provided in the local community;
- expectations of the position on time and desire of the library to have the director in financial need of a second position;
- requirements of education and experience for the position; and additional components of compensation the director receives (housing, retirement, paid time off, educational opportunities) that contribute to the overall compensation.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE INSURANCE (FAMLI)

In 2020, Colorado voters approved Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI). This is a paid leave program for all workers in Colorado. Employers and employees contribute premiums to the program.

Local government boards can choose three paths of participation unlike private businesses:

- Participate in FAMLI
    - Employee & employer contribute
- Decline all participation
    - Employer does not manage employee contribution nor provide employer contribution
        - Employee may self-elect to participate and manage their contribution
    - If this path is chosen, every eight (8) years, the governing body must vote again on its path
- Decline employer participation
    - Employer manages employee contribution through payroll deduction, but employer does not provide the employer portion of the contribution

No matter what path is voted on, all local governments must register with the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program under the Department of Labor and Employment. Depending upon the vote, a different course of action must occur through the portal.

LIBRARY STAFF

The role of the trustee is to hire and supervise a highly effective director, provide clear policies to follow, develop a strategic plan for staff to implement, and ensure funds are budgeted to execute the strategic plan and pay staff appropriately including professional development.

All communication with library staff should go through the library director. Concerns should follow written problem-solving procedures in the employee handbook.

The employee handbook is a comprehensive guide outlining policies, procedures, and expectations for staff and staff relations. Typically, the board of trustees has an oversight role in developing an employee handbook, ensuring it aligns with the organization's mission, values, and legal requirements. The library director and HR department

typically handle the drafting and implementation; the board is responsible for reviewing and approving the final document.

There are many legal requirements surrounding employment in Colorado including wages, working hours, employee benefits, discrimination, and safety. The Department of Labor and Employment is a good resource for Colorado labor statutes. Keep in mind that public library staff are public employees, and there are exceptions to certain labor laws. One of the key matters keeping library directors up at night is HR issues. Many public libraries are members of organizations that provide legal training and HR resources for employers. Encouraging the library to be a member of one of these organizations provides a library director with HR support that many do not have in their backgrounds.

SUMMARY

As the library director brings to operation the library board's vision, trust, respect, open communication, and mutual support are critical. Being up front and honest about the expectations for the position throughout the job description, hiring process, and reflective cycle of review, ensure a strong working relationship between the board and the trustees.

The library director is an employee of the board in a library district. In municipal and county libraries, the library director is typically an employee of the city or county government. The process is outlined in Colorado Law *C.R.S. §24-6-402*.

The annual review for a Library Director should be based on their job description, skills, and goals. It is a critical opportunity for the board to provide coaching and clarify expectations.

- **Who conducts the review?** A designated board member or committee is responsible for putting the review together.
- **Who contributes?** The board should consistently determine who provides input, such as the leadership team, staff, or Friends/Foundation groups.
- **What about the meeting?** The review should be presented during an executive session unless the director requests that it be held in an open meeting.
- **Ongoing Process:** A designated trustee should meet with the director throughout the year (2-3 times) to check in on goals and the working relationship.

TRY THIS: DIRECTOR'S REVIEW

To fulfill their oversight role effectively, the Board of Trustees must be thoroughly familiar with the Director's review process.

TO UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS AND OVERSIGHT

- ☐ Become familiar with the process for the library director's review.
- ☐ Identify who oversees the procedures for the review (e.g., Board President, designated committee, or full Board).
- ☐ Identify a clear timeline for coaching, goal setting, and the formal evaluation.

OBTAIN AND REVIEW KEY DOCUMENTS

- ☐ Obtain a copy of the library director's job description.
- ☐ Obtain a copy of the procedures for the review.
- ☐ Obtain a copy of the tools used for evaluation (e.g., performance metrics, self-assessment forms).

PERFORM A CRITICAL ALIGNMENT CHECK

Compare the job description to the evaluation tool.

- ☐ Are there areas in the job description that are not addressed in the evaluation tool? (This indicates a gap in accountability.)
- ☐ Are the correct people being asked for feedback for the evaluation?
- ☐ Are there areas being evaluated that are not included in the job description? (This indicates a potential mismatch between expectations and formal duties.)

CHAPTER 9
IMPACT AND RELEVANCE

Demonstrating the impact and relevance of a library requires a proactive and strategic approach. Showing that the library makes a difference in your community and is an important institution needs to be clearly articulated and requires planning in advance.

Supporting your library means promoting it and explaining why it's important and worth your time. It's the job of every library trustee to be a library supporter. This goal is achieved by actively and enthusiastically seeking local, state, and federal resources for the library's staff, collections, facilities, and programs.

Trustees should share the library's story and value proposition using data with all stakeholders.

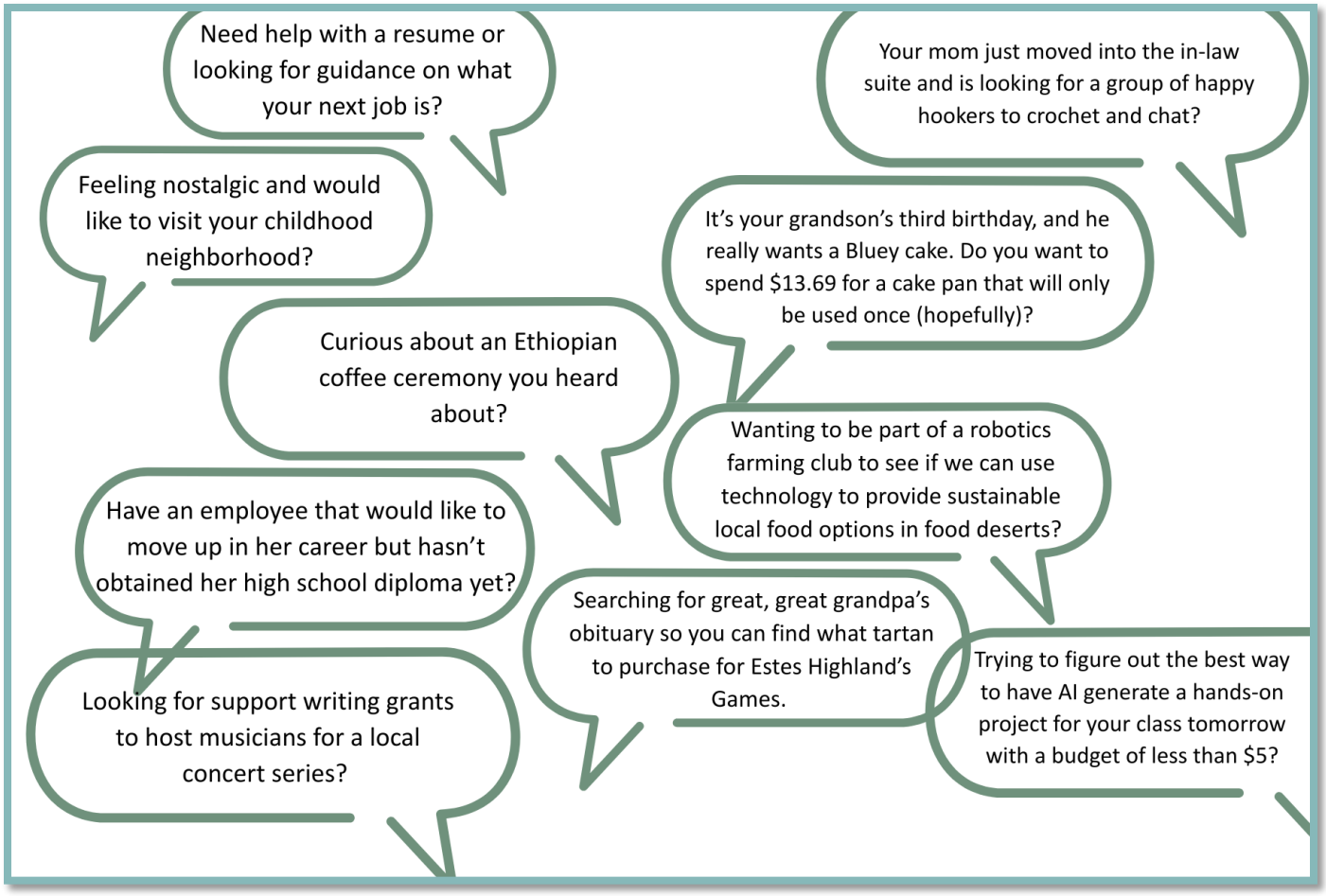
The following sections are intended for informational purposes and not intended as legal advice. Libraries and trustees should consult their own legal counsel for legal advice.

RELATED COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS
MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

IN THIS SECTION WE WILL EXPLORE:

When in Doubt, Go to the Library 119
Local Engagement 120
Education, Advocacy, & Campaigning 121
State Legislative Network 125
Public Relations 127
Working With The Local News Media 130
Public and School Library Cooperation 131
Summary 131
Try This: The Power of your Library's Story 132

WHEN IN DOUBT, GO TO THE LIBRARY



All these questions have one answer in common –the Library.

Wouldn't it be great if no matter what the question, the person always knew they could find the answer or get what they needed from their public library? Colorado public libraries are robust and dynamic centers committed to providing information, resources, and opportunities.

Rather than just library staff sharing what the library does, wouldn't it be great if the Town Manager, local DJ, or post office worker was connecting the public to your library? Your role as a trustee is to help make that happen to ensure the long-term viability of the library.

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

When you see advocacy, don't panic. Advocacy is simply sharing the amazing and needed things your library does - creating local engagement. It can be as simple as sharing with your neighbors to testifying before Congress.

Advocacy at the local level is of paramount importance. As a trustee, you show your library's impact and relevance to decision makers by:

- Talking to friends about the library, its role in the community, and its needs
- Speaking to civic groups about the library's needs and issues
- 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

These kinds of advocacy are the responsibility of trustees. You are the voice of the community.

As trustees, you make a difference because you:

- See the library from the user's viewpoint
- Have a perspective on the full range of public services
- Represent a broad base of the community
- Understand the needs of the community
- Are volunteer participants in local government
- Are voters

Involve your local community in the advocacy process. Think of advocacy as inviting others to be part of the public library.

Trustees should be advocating for the library by pursuing contacts with friends, library users, civic groups, industry, business, real estate contacts, and elected town or city

officials. Establish a local legislative network of committed residents and friends to put library issues before the voters and officials. Identify key supporters, distribute facts, figures, and position papers, provide information on the legislative process, and mobilize and be ready for action. **There's no substitute for personal contacts.**

EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, & CAMPAIGNING

Colorado public employees are restricted from engaging in certain types of advocacy during work hours and while using public resources. As public officials, there are some limitations on what trustees can do in their role of advocate. This is true when the library is on the ballot.

Education, advocacy, and campaigning have different intentions. All library staff and trustees can educate on the impact and relevance of the library and its work. Advocacy includes educating the public and has an ask attached to it. Advocacy focuses on influencing decision-makers within institutions. Campaigning aims to build public support and pressure on decision-makers through public mobilization and awareness.

EDUCATE:

> The public library has a lunch program that has brought more than 245 participants together to enjoy a meal out as well as connect and find new walking partners, Maj Jong players, and friendship.

ADVOCATE:

> The public library has a lunch program that has brought more than 245 participants together to enjoy a meal out as well as connect and find new walking partners, Maj Jong players, and friendship. Help support this social connection by funding a transportation program offered by Colorado Seniors.

CAMPAIGN:

> The public library has a lunch program that has brought more than 245 participants together to enjoy a meal out as well as connect and find new walking partners, Maj Jong players, and friendship. Help support this social connection by voting yes for funding a transportation program offered by Colorado Seniors.

COLORADO FAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICES ACT

The Fair Campaign Practices Act (FCPA) - C.R.S. § 1-45-117 sets the parameters for election activities and political subdivisions (the library district or municipality). Specifically, the library as an entity cannot make any contributions in campaigns involving the nomination, retention, or election of any person to any public office, nor can the entity make any donation to any other person for the purpose of making a contribution, nor can such entity expend any moneys from any source, or make any contributions, to *urge* electors to vote in favor of or against state or local ballot issues, referred measures, or recall measures. This includes making contributions to its own ballot initiatives once the official ballot language has been adopted.

WHAT A TRUSTEE CAN DO:

- A trustee may expend up to $50 of district funds on letters, telephone calls, or other activities making statements or answering questions concerning the issue.
- Districts may expend public money or make contributions in-kind to disperse fair and balanced information on any issue of official concern before the electorate.
- This information must be factual; include arguments both for and against the proposal; and cannot contain a conclusion or opinion in favor of or against any issue addressed.
- The board of trustees is permitted to adopt a resolution of advocacy on any ballot issue or referred measure and report the adoption of the resolution by usual means other than paid advertising.

The FCPA does not prevent a public employee or trustee from working on a campaign or speaking out on an issue on their own time. A distinction is made between activity as a citizen on one's own time and activity as an employee or representative of the local government. If the individual is acting as a private citizen, they can take part in any of the political or campaign activities listed above, just like any other person.

A library employee "on the job" must be careful not to violate the FCPA and has restrictions a non-governmental employee would not have. The table below is a summary of permitted and prohibited activities.

ACTIVITY	PERMITTED	NOT PERMITTED
Public Presentations	During the workday, employees may respond to unsolicited questions with strictly factual answers regarding a campaign issue. Those answers should not tend to urge a particular vote. Employees may make presentations that express a position on a ballot issue or a candidate off the work site and outside of employee work hours.	It is a violation of state law to campaign or support a political cause while "on the clock." Staff need to use good judgment to avoid the perception of championing a cause as a library employee. "Work time" includes all times employees are on duty during regular or overtime hours or in attendance as a work requirement beyond regular work hours. Employees may not use their official authority or influence to interfere with an election, engage in political activity while wearing an official uniform, or engage in political activity while using a library vehicle.
Library-owned Materials and Equipment	A library may expend library resources to create an unbiased factual summary on any issue of official concern before the electorate that includes arguments both for and against a proposal. The summary may not contain a conclusion or opinion in favor of or against any particular issue. The "Blue Book," prepared by the Colorado Legislative Council, is a good source for this type of information on statewide and local ballot issues.	Library-owned materials and equipment cannot be used to prepare, post, sort, or distribute any materials or information advocating a position concerning an election. This includes the use of email, fax machines, copy machines, paper, telephones, bulk mailing permits, etc.

ACTIVITY	PERMITTED	NOT PERMITTED
Interacting with Other Employees	Employees may campaign outside of work time.	Employees should not advocate for or against a candidate or ballot issue with fellow employees while on duty. Employees shall not distribute to fellow employees any materials that express a position on campaign issues during work time.
Phone Calls	Employees may give factual responses about a campaign issue on department phones in response to an unsolicited telephone inquiry. Employees may make phone calls stating their position on a candidate or ballot issue on their own time and on their own personal phone.	Employees may not work to promote or defeat a candidate or ballot issue while using department phones.
Wearing of Campaign Buttons, Posting Literature, etc.	Employees may wear campaign buttons, post literature, etc. outside of work time.	Employees should not wear, display, or distribute campaign materials at the work site.
Fliers	Employees may distribute campaign materials on their own time outside of the work site as long as the distribution is not done in connection with any official activity.	On election day, electioneering materials are specifically prohibited from public display in a department facility being used as a polling place.

ACTIVITY	PERMITTED	NOT PERMITTED
Voting Campaign Contributions	Employees may encourage citizens to register to vote and give them information on registration, absentee voting, and polling locations. Employees may make personal contributions to any candidate or organization supporting or opposing a ballot issue.	Employees may not solicit or accept cash or other campaign contributions during work time.
Public Records Act	Employees should respond to Open Records Act requests from candidates or election organizations in the same manner they would respond to such a request from the public at large.	Employees must not release employees' names, addresses, or telephone numbers unless such information is in response to a request under the Open Records Act.

STATE LEGISLATIVE NETWORK

Colorado State Library Trustee Email List (COLT)

This list has a few emails per month, sent only by the State Library, with important news and information for library trustees.

Trustees also have a broader imperative: to work for improved library services across the State of Colorado. This can be accomplished by becoming informed about the structure of legislative activities across the state, learning to network with others who are concerned with improving libraries for the benefit of every citizen of Colorado, and developing a process with their director to ensure that all relevant legislative information is disseminated in a timely way to every trustee on the board.

https://cvl-lists.org/mailman/listinfo/colt_cvl-lists.org

SPEAK UP, STAY INFORMED

Trustees should be aware of political issues that impact academic, school, and special libraries as well as public libraries.

THE COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF LIBRARIES (CAL) LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE (CAL-LEG)

CAL-LEG acts as a resource for local legislative networks; to monitor legislation, and to provide information on library issues to local, state, and federal officials. Information about legislative initiatives for library funding and the legislative process at the state level can be found on the CAL Legislative Committee web page.

To take library advocacy a step further (i.e., the national level), visit the American Library Association's advocacy page.

Do you know your local, state, and national elected officials? Have you contacted your state or national legislators about library legislation or funding? Do you discuss pending legislation at your board meetings? If not, it's never too late to get started! You can look up your legislator and send them your library's story.

- Know the key issues, needs, facts, and statistics of your library.
- Keep the library in the loop of major town/city boards.
- Get to know your municipal officials and state legislators.
- Encourage officials and legislators to use the library (e.g., town boards could hold meetings at the library, legislators could hold constituent hours at the library, etc.) and invite them to library events (programs, celebrations, award ceremonies, etc.).
- Establish an ongoing relationship with local media.
- Keep abreast of statewide initiatives and participate in advocacy efforts, such as Library Legislative Day.
- Attend trustee training workshops such as CALCON trustee track.

Speak out for your library as the institution that provides the taxpayer the "biggest bang for the buck," an essential element in the education of the lifelong learner. You can use the Calculator to find the value of your library use.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

An active publicity program is essential to communicate the dissemination of needed services, and for the growth and even survival of public libraries. Time, effort, and funding must be devoted to marketing library services. Publicity is the continuous process of informing the community and creating a positive public image.

It may be difficult for librarians, trustees, Friends, and library users to believe, but many people are unaware of the wide range of resources and services available at the public library. In today's media-oriented society, libraries must market their services creatively using all forms of publicity. As noted in various sections, the library plan, budget, policies, and activities provide ample opportunity to spread the word.

Consider using the following public relations tools:

- Public service announcements on local television, radio, and cable
- Library website
- Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.)
- Newspaper and community organizations' newsletters, articles, and photographs
- Information distributed by moving companies, Welcome Wagon, and other local organizations that support new residents
- Billboard space (donated) and community bulletin boards
- Club meetings, civic associations, PTA, and similar organizations
- Local business contacts
- Displays and exhibits
- Special events
- Bookmarks, booklists, flyers, brochures, posters

Public relations is much more than the flash, pizzazz, and hoopla often associated with PR. Publicity and advertising are not sufficient alone to cultivate good relations between the public and the library. Public relations is the person-to-person effort to put libraries into the lives of the people. Good service to the public is the foundation for good PR. It is EVERYBODY'S job! The trustees, director, staff, and even the buildings and resources affect the public image of the library.

KEY TRUSTEE ROLE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

As ambassadors of goodwill, trustees play a crucial role in public relations. Their involvement helps to sustain the organization's credibility in the public eye. There is a natural role and a major responsibility for the library trustee in public relations. Trustees serve as the public's representatives to provide library direction and guidance. The trustee needs to keep in close touch with the people, listening to their perceptions of the library, their still unmet information needs, and the role they want the library to fulfill. At the same time, the trustee needs to serve as a spokesperson for the library to help people understand its role and any problems in fulfilling that role, as well as how to use library services.

As community leaders and citizens working as public employees without compensation on the library board, trustees are in a unique and key position to carry out this two-way communication. By virtue of their unpaid public service role, trustees can speak out and respond to the public in ways that the library director and staff, as employees, cannot; or which if they did, might well be perceived differently by the public.

Some of the most effective public relations for the library is done by members of the library board who may not know that public relations is what they are doing when they talk to their friends about the library. Everything said about the library adds to the community awareness of an important service, and trustees need to take advantage of the many opportunities they have to boost the library.

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Establish a public relations policy.
- With the library director, develop a positive PR plan and schedule for the library.
- Recognize PR as a total and continuous function of the library. Assign members to participate in PR events. Support staff training and involvement in PR programs.
- Evaluate the PR program and public service.
- Allocate funds for PR activities and/or volunteer specialists to offer help.
- Educate the board and expand awareness of Public Relations.

INDIVIDUAL TRUSTEES:

- Be vocal and visible.
- Listen to the community. Be well informed, use the library, and spread the word.
- Attend meetings of community organizations to speak and gain information.
- Convey the progress, plans, and policies of the library to individuals and groups.
- Ask the opinion makers in your community to be library supporters.
- Support Friends of the Library group and recruit members.
- Spot gaps in the library's information program and make suggestions.
- Work closely with municipal and other officials.
- Tell people what trustees do, who they are, when they meet and how they can be reached.
- Talk about the philosophy and merits of quality library service.
- Provide facts and figures to persuade people.
- Learn about other libraries and services statewide and nationally.

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

- Schedule visits to media representatives in the community.
- Ask the media representative what they can use, in what form they wish to receive it, and how often they can give coverage.
- Ask representatives for any ideas they have for giving publicity to the library.
- Let them think of interviews, public service announcements, or even regular shows for local radio and TV stations.
- Compile a helpful information kit to give each media representative. For example: a summary of the library's goals, objectives, and priorities; current services; flyers or brochures; a listing of special upcoming events; and even a review or two of some new books that might be of personal interest.
- Absorb, but do not promise. Ideas, comments, or even complaints should be taken back to the board and the library director for discussion, and as tools in planning future public relations programs.

WORKING WITH THE LOCAL NEWS MEDIA

The local media (newspapers, TV, cable, and radio) are a vital factor in all public relations efforts. The local media can, and should be, one of the library's best friends. Therefore, the library board should be familiar with all media resources in the community and should learn how best to utilize these resources.

While each board should have a designated spokesperson (usually the board chair), library trustees should make it a point to personally know the editors, publishers, TV and radio station managers, editorial writers, plus media staff who may be involved in reporting on libraries or municipal matters. As determined by the library board planning, there should be regular "keeping in touch" efforts. Media contacts should be invited and encouraged to attend library board meetings and kept informed of meeting date schedules, agenda items, special meetings, and any other special events. Key media contacts should be on mailing lists for such items as reports and announcements. Library board members should also keep in mind the value of using the letters to the editor column. This is a means of directly reaching a large audience.

Generally, the library director is the information source concerning library activities. The trustees, director, and staff should clearly understand and observe their respective roles in communicating with the media.

PUBLIC AND SCHOOL LIBRARY COOPERATION

The need for strong, ongoing cooperation between public libraries, trustees, school boards, and key educational administrators has long existed. Productive partnerships enhance public relations, advocacy efforts, and—most importantly—library services for all.

A vision of ideal cooperation between public and school libraries reflects the following:

- Every student has access to a well-resourced school library that is fully integrated into the instructional program and staffed by qualified, professional school library personnel.
- The public and school communities understand that public and school libraries have distinct missions but share common goals and work together to mutually support those goals.
- Every community provides its residents with access to a free public library.
- Every resident has access to the full range of library and information resources in the community.
- Citizens and municipal officials value and demand excellence in library services, ensuring adequate and sustained financial support to achieve it.

SUMMARY

Trustees are responsible for promoting public awareness of and support for the library's mission, services, programs, and spaces. Trustees are the key to building local elected officials and other stakeholders into library prophets so when a representative of the local library is not in the room, others are there to promote. Building these relationships ensures the public is knowledgeable and in support of public libraries.

It is critical to ensure the public recognizes the public value of public libraries. Not only are trustees advocating for the local public library on whose board they serve but also engage in state, national, and international level discussions to strengthen all libraries.

TRY THIS: THE POWER OF YOUR LIBRARY'S STORY

Everybody has a library story. Keep it short & simple. When you are speaking to people, ask to hear their library story. Then share a library story.

THE LIBRARY STORY

Identify a project/services/focus

Identify a hero (patron) who has participated in this project/service/focus. Describe this individual.

What problem was the patron trying to solve?

What was the impact to the patron by engaging in the library project/service/focus**?**

The hero is not the only one. Find data to show how many others have been impacted by the library.

- LRS.org
- Director
- Board report
- Census
- Community Reports
- Strategic Plan

That is all you need to demonstrate the impact and relevance of your library.

THE ASK

Now, if you have a related ask, add at the end. Ideally, you will have already built relationships by showing the impact and relevance of the story before you request something from those you are speaking.

If an ask, what are you asking for keeping in mind the connection of your hero to the person you are speaking.

Who are you going to tell this story? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Commissioner
- ☐ Local Chamber of Commerce
- ☐ Representative (state, federal)
- ☐ Non-Profit Leader
- ☐ Local Tourism Board
- ☐ Town Manager/Council
- ☐ Neighbor
- ☐ Bartender/Budtender/Soultender
- ☐ Other_____

CHAPTER 10
LIBRARY SUPPORT – FUNDRAISING, FOUNDATIONS, & FRIENDS

Most public libraries in Colorado rely primarily on a mill levy (a property tax) or municipal appropriations (funds from the city, county, or town). These core funds are the library's financial backbone, covering essential costs like staff salaries, books, resources, and utilities.

It's the library board's responsibility to ensure the library receives adequate funding from these main sources. Think of trustees as the library's primary financial champions!

Beyond tax funds, libraries build support through a great system of partners: the Board of Trustees, the Director and staff, dedicated "Friends of the Library" groups, and, in some cases, Library Foundations. Libraries also benefit from partnering with other local organizations like historical societies, schools, or senior councils—it's all about spotting mutually beneficial relationships.

United for Libraries, a division of ALA, is a support agency that provides support for governance, promotion, advocacy, and fundraising. They are excellent resources for resources, training, and support.

The following sections are intended for informational purposes and not intended as legal advice. Libraries and trustees should consult their own legal counsel for legal advice.

RELATED COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARD
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

IN THIS SECTION, WE WILL EXPLORE:

Roles and Responsibilities: Trustees, Director, Friends, & Foundation 136
Partnering Effectively: The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) 137
Understanding Library Foundations 139
Fund Management & Accountability 140
The Future: Blending Organizations and Advocacy 140
Summary 141
Selected Terms Glossary 141
Try This 142

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: TRUSTEES, DIRECTOR, FRIENDS, & FOUNDATION

"Friends" groups and Foundations both build support and raise funds to bridge the gap between the library's budget and its critical needs. However, each entity has a distinct legal and operational role:

Entity	Primary Role	Key Focus
Trustees	Legal Governance & Core Funding	Securing public funds, policy setting, legal oversight, and public awareness.
Director	Administration & Management	Day-to-day operations and implementing board policy and vision.
Friends	Grassroots Support & Advocacy	Raising smaller amounts of money for programs and enhancements (e.g., Summer Reading, equipment) and generating public support.
Foundation	Major Fundraising & Long-Term Assets	Securing large gifts, managing endowments, and funding capital campaigns.

KEY DIFFERENCES AND BEST PRACTICES

Historically, Friends and Foundations differ in:

- **Who's Involved:** Friends are grassroots community groups; Foundations are often established by the library board and focus on corporate or major individual donors.
- **Fundraising Style:** Friends focus on broad community support (like book sales); Foundations focus on major gifts, bequests, and endowments.
- **Purpose:** Foundations are frequently created for a specific, large-scale purpose, such as funding a new building wing (a Capital Campaign).
- **Crucial Trustee Principle**: Supplemental funds must never be used to permanently replace the core public funding obligation from the government. Foundations should not fund cuts to the core operating budget. This is a crucial best practice designed to prevent the governing authority from intentionally reducing public funding knowing a private group will consistently backfill the loss.

That said, foundations can and should provide temporary funding to ensure service continuity during economic downtimes or periods where the library's ability to build essential operational reserves has been stifled by legal limitations (such as tax growth limits imposed by TABOR). The goal of this temporary foundation support is to stabilize services until core public funding recovers, not to permanently assume public financial responsibility.

PARTNERING EFFECTIVELY: THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a highly valuable tool for defining the working relationship between the library board, the director, and support entities (Friends or Foundation). It acts as a framework for collaboration and manages expectations—it is a signed understanding, not a formal legal contract.

To clarify roles, an MOU should detail:

- **Purpose:** Intent of the MOU
- **Objectives of Collaboration:** Why the entities work together
- **Ex-Officio Roles:** Which individuals from one board (e.g., a Trustee) sit as a non-voting member on the other board.
- **Communication:** Expected frequency and method of updates.
- **Engagement:** How the groups will coordinate joint events.
- **Financial Arrangements:** Procedures for requesting, receiving, and allocating support funds.
- **Staff Support:** The amount of staff time, space, and supplies the library provides to the support entity.
- **Decision-Making:** The Friends/Foundation understand they do not have a decision-making role for the library itself. They decide how to spend their funds after consulting with the library director and board and adhering to the library's strategic plan.
- **Performance Metrics**: Relevant if part of the library rather than a separate entity

Structure collaboration helps prevent duplication in fundraising and community engagement efforts. The ex-officio roles ensure transparency, all parties being informed, and awareness of the library's goals, focus, and ongoing projects.

WORKING WITH FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Friends groups are typically set up as separate 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. This separation is essential: as a separate entity, the funds raised are under the control of the 'Friends' and not the library.

The ideal scenario occurs when a Friends group raises funds and gives them to the library annually as an unrestricted donation, allowing the library director and board full discretion to apply the funds where they are most needed.

The strained, but common, scenario arises when a Friends group wants more control and decision-making over how their funds are spent, leading to restricted or designated donations (e.g., funding only the children's program, purchasing only a specific piece of equipment). While the results may "wash out" if the Friends and library are aligned on priorities, this dynamic underscores the need for clear communication.

Effective collaboration between the Board and Friends is therefore vital. It begins by using the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to explicitly document roles and expectations, ensuring:

- Appointing a board liaison (often the library director or a staff member) to the Friends.
- Providing the Friends with a "wish list" of items not covered by the regular budget to guide their fundraising efforts toward the library's strategic priorities.
- The board actively values, encourages, and expresses appreciation for the Friends' hard work and advocacy.

No trustee should serve on the Friends Board at the same time they are serving as a library trustee, as this is considered a conflict of interest. Trustees should be members of the Friends.

UNDERSTANDING LIBRARY FOUNDATIONS

Library Foundations are also separate 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations with their own board of directors, focused on financial backing.

WHY ESTABLISH A FOUNDATION?

Foundations serve distinct, high-level purposes:

- provide the library with an independent financial resource;
- encourage and manage planned giving, endowments, and major gifts;
- provide an entity eligible for competitive private and corporate grants restricted to 501(c)(3) organizations;
- fund enhancements, capital projects, and provide a buffer against possible service reductions during tough times;

Foundation funds, being privately raised, can often be invested with different restrictions than public (tax) funds. Library funds generated from tax dollars cannot be transferred for Foundation investment. Legal clarification for specific investment practices is always recommended.

Structure

Foundation structure varies based on its degree of integration with the library.

Model A: Foundation is a completely separate non-profit.

Model B: Foundation is a separate non-profit, but its staff are paid library employees.

Model C: Foundation is fully integrated as a unit or department of the library.

If a library board is acting as a foundation board with a 501(c)(3), they need to hold their board meetings separately as the Foundation has different laws of governance - non-profit not local government.

FUND MANAGEMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

All funds—from grants, trusts, Friends, Foundations, endowments, and individual donations—are meant to supplement, not replace, the core public funding obligation.

Trustee Responsibility: Maintaining strong financial accountability is crucial for all support organizations. All parties must be cognizant of designated or restricted donations and what those mean for financial reporting.

DONOR STEWARDSHIP

Fundraising success relies on relationship building, not just the ask. Trustees and support group leaders should:

Thank donors promptly and personally.
Consistently communicate the impact of their gifts, showing donors exactly how their contribution enhanced library services

THE FUTURE: BLENDING ORGANIZATIONS AND ADVOCACY

Colorado has seen a significant increase in nonprofits, which has occasionally led to a reduction in volunteers willing to take on leadership roles for both Friends and Foundations. In response, some libraries are exploring blending these two organizations under one leadership structure. If the organizations are independent 501(c)(3)'s, it would be their decision and determination, not the libraries. This blending can increase efficiency, strengthen messaging, and reduce donor confusion by creating a single, cohesive fundraising identity.

Moving to a combined entity may have challenges including conflicting goals, priorities, and governance as well as a loss of identity. Organizations that choose to do this need to be thoughtful in their approach.

SUMMARY

Public libraries are not alone in advocating and funding. Nonprofit organizations such as “Friends” and foundations provide this support. Trustees must know the roles of the different organizations and establish clear roles and expectations through an MOU and relationship building. Trustees should also engage with these organizations as a member of the public including attending events, donating in campaigns, and being a member of “Friends.”

SELECTED TERMS GLOSSARY

Annual Appeal: Raising funds on a yearly basis, primarily through direct mail and email.

Bequest: A gift made through a will of personal and/or real property (cash, land, securities).

Capital Campaign: A fundraising program to support large capital projects such as renovations, new buildings, or major technology overhauls.

Designated Donation: A gift given for a specific purpose chosen by the donor.

Endowment Fund: A permanent fund invested to produce income (typically only the interest is spent) to supplement a library’s budget.

Planned Giving: An organized effort to encourage long-term commitments through deferred gifts such as trusts, bequests, and life insurance.

Restricted/Unrestricted Funds: Restricted funds must be used exactly as stipulated by the donor; Unrestricted funds may be used at the recipient’s discretion.

Spending Policy: The percentage of endowment assets that will be spent in each annual period (e.g., "four percent of the average value over the past four years").

Trust: A set of instructions left to a trustee with management authority over property (principal or capital) for the benefit of a named beneficiary.

TRY THIS

Being aware of your relationships with other organizations as well as responsibilities demonstrates you are an informed trustee.

INVENTORY

Identify all the MOUs that exist between your public library and other organizations.

Are they readily available to trustees for access and review?

When were they last reviewed as a board?

REVIEW

What is going right?

What requires review to either put into practice or reconsider inclusion in the MOU?

NEXT STEPS

When is the next board review to occur?

FROM VOLUNTEER TO VISIONARY

You've made it through the core responsibilities of library governance! It's been a big journey, taking you from the big-picture ideas of "What is a Public Library?" to the deep details of the Annual Audit and Amending the Budget. Congratulations!

So, what does it all mean? One thing to keep in mind is that your effectiveness isn't measured by how many books the library owns or circulates, but by the strength of the policies you enact, the clarity of the vision you set, and the financial stability you secure. You are building the library for now and in the future.

Your role is to serve the community as its most vital democratic institution. Your service is a commitment to continual learning and advocacy. This manual is a starting point, not a final exam.

Governance is absolutely a team sport. You don't have to be a finance expert or a lawyer; you just need to be prepared and mindful. This preparation shows your commitment to ongoing development and learning, and to the strategic plan you develop. The board's most lasting legacy is the vision it establishes through policy and long-range strategic planning, which guides the library through changing times. These are your compasses. Use it to hold the library, your director, and yourselves accountable for achieving real impact and relevance.

Governance requires respect for legal statutes, adherence to bylaws, maintaining clear boundaries with the director, and following open, ethical processes. Fiscal responsibility is proactive. It involves not just adopting a budget but understanding the difference between core and supplemental funding and engaging in long-term capital planning.

The board must be an outward-facing advocate, constantly evaluating the library's impact and relevance against the strategic plan. The plan must be a living document that guides policy and resource allocation.

The future of free and equal access to information depends on the dedication and diligence of leaders like you.

(*and remember… the included chapters are intended for informational purposes and not intended as legal advice. Libraries and trustees should consult their own legal counsel for legal advice.)

AI Usage Disclosure: This document was created with assistance from several different AI tools, mainly Notebook LM, Grammarly, Co-Pilot, and Gemini. We played with AI to learn about AI tools as we worked on this project. We used the tools to correct grammar, organize ideas and refine text. The content began with the human authors and has been reviewed, edited, and verified by the human authors, who take full responsibility for its accuracy and academic integrity.

CHAPTER RESOURCES

Chapter One

ESSENTIAL LINKS

- **Related Public Library Standards**
  - Administration and Governance: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-governance

- **Library Law** (full index: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/librarylaw-index)
  - C.R.S. §24-90-102: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/librarylaw-part1#24-90-102
  - C.R.S. §24-90-105: https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/librarylaw/part1#24-90-105

- **Colorado Public Library Standards**
  - https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-index

- **Colorado Libraries Collaborate (CLC) program**
  - https://www.coloradovirtuallibrary.org/resource-sharing/clc/

CORE VALUES OF LIBRARIANSHIP

"ALA Task Force on United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals," ALA, accessed November 28, 2023, https://www.ala.org/aboutala/ala-task-force-united-nations-2030-sustainable-development-goals. Adopted Jan 2024 by the ALA Council.

LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

The inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996. Although the Articles of the Library Bill of Rights are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning the application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights.

(http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations)
https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill

FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT

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

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

A Joint Statement by: American Library Association (https://ALA.org) and the Association of American Publishers (https://publishers.org/)

FREEDOM TO VIEW STATEMENT

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council

Chapter Two

ESSENTIAL LINKS

- **Related Public Library Standards**
  - Administration and Governance: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-governance

- **Library Law** (full index: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/librarylaw-index)

Colorado State Library, Library Development Services. (2024). *Colorado Public Library Standards 2024-2029*. https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-index

> A tool in defining and measuring a Colorado public library's success in fulfilling its mission and role in the community.

Colorado State Library, Library Development Services. (2024). *Colorado Public Board & Trustees Pocket Handbook*.

> A quick guide to being a public library trustee including topics of board types, duties, meetings, Intellectual Freedom, resources for trustees, Golden Rules, and Library Law synopsis. Available upon request.
>
> Email librarydevelopment@cde.state.co.us.

Reed, S. G., & Kalonick, J. (2010). *The Complete Library Trustee Handbook*. Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc.

> Philosophical and legal foundations for your role include ways to get funding for library needs, working effectively with the library director, understanding and designing policy, and how to conduct board business in effective meetings.

Chapter Three

ESSENTIAL LINKS

- **Related Public Library Standards**
  - Administration and Governance: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-governance

- **Library Law** (full index: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/librarylaw-index)

Clicweb. (n.d.). https://www.clicweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/FAQ-to-Open-Meetings-Law.pdf

A short FAQ guide for running a meeting with suggestions and reminders.

Chapter Four

ESSENTIAL LINKS

- **Related Public Library Standards**
  - Administration and Governance: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-governance

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Stavros, Jacqueline & Cooperrider, David & Kelley, L.. (2007). *SOAR: A new approach to strategic planning.*

Chapter Five

ESSENTIAL LINKS

- **Related Public Library Standards**
  - Budget and Finance: https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/budgetandfininacestandard

Chapter Six

ESSENTIAL LINKS

- **Related Public Library Standards**
  - Administration and Governance: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-governance
  - Budget and Finance: https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/budgetandfininacestandard
  - Collections: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-collections
  - Community Engagement: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-community-engagement
  - Facilities and Infrastructure: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-facilities
  - Library Services and Programs: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-services-programming
  - Library Staff: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-human-resources
  - Marketing and Public Relations: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-marketing-communications-advocacy
  - Resource Sharing: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-resource-sharing

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Colorado State Library, Library Development Services. (2024). *Colorado Public Library Standards 2024-2029*. https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-index

> A tool in defining and measuring a Colorado public library's success in fulfilling its mission and role in the community.

United for Libraries Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations a division of the American Library Association. (n.d.). *Materials challenges: Key library policies to review and ...* Tools for Trustees. https://www.ala.org/sites/default/files/united/content/IF/materials_challenges_key_library_policies_to_review_and_revise_united_for_libraries.pdf

> This tip sheet reviews the key components of well-constructed and legal policies and describes the policies that a library should review and/or implement to prepare for the possibility of a materials challenge.

Chapter Seven

ESSENTIAL LINKS

- **Related Public Library Standards**
  - Evaluation and Planning: https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards/planning

- **Library User Surveys: A How-To Guide**
  - https://www.lrs.org/library-user-surveys-on-the-web/

- **Mapping the Methods: Content Analysis Part 1**
  - https://www.lrs.org/2022/05/04/mapping-the-methods-content-analysis-part-1/

Chapter Eight

ESSENTIAL LINKS

- **Related Public Library Standards**
  - Administration and Governance: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-governance
  - Library Staff: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-human-resources

- **Library Jobline:** libraryjobline.com

The Library Factbook: https://cde.state.co.us/cdelib/public-library-factbook

Chapter Nine

ESSENTIAL LINKS

- **Related Public Library Standards**
  - Marketing and Public Relations: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-marketing-communications-advocacy
  - Community Engagement: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards-community-engagement

- **Fair Campaign Practices Act C.R.S. § 1-45-117**
  https://content.leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/campaign-finance-restrictions-on-use-of-public-resources-by-legislators-in-a-ballot-measure-campaign-accessible.pdf
- **Colorado Library Trustees Listserv**
  https://cvl-lists.org/mailman/listinfo/colt_cvl-lists.org
- **American Library Association – Advocacy**
  https://www.ala.org/advocacy
- **Colorado Association of Libraries Legislative Committee**
  https://Cal-webs.org/advocate
- **Find My Legislator**
  https://leg.colorado.gov/FindMyLegislator
- **Return on Library Investment Calculator**
  https://www.lrs.org/interactive/roicalculator.php

Colorado Association of Libraries - Legislative Committee. (n.d.).
https://cal-webs.org/Legislative_Committee

> CAL Leg meets monthly October - June to monitor legislation that impacts Colorado libraries as well as promote legislation that supports our library community.

***Public policy and advocacy*. ALA. (n.d.).**
https://www.ala.org/advocacy/advocacy-public-policy

> The American Library Association's Public Policy & Advocacy Office provides support and advocacy on issues that matter to libraries, library workers, and everyone they serve. Resources include getting started with advocacy, finding elected officials, and advocacy assistance.

Chapter Ten

ESSENTIAL LINKS

- **Related Public Library Standards**
  - Community Engagement:
    https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards/community-engagement



This manual, authored by the Colorado State Library, is made possible in part by grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)