

# Handbook for New Public Library Directors in New York State

**By Rebekkah Smith Aldrich**

Coordinator for Library Sustainability  
Mid-Hudson Library System, Poughkeepsie, NY  
rsmith@midhudson.org | 845.471.6060

**Preface by** Jerry Nichols, Director, Palmer Institute for Public Library Organization and Management

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### **Acknowledgements**

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## **Preface**

Public libraries are the foundation of a democratic society, providing a place where anyone of any age can go to learn, to listen, to participate in their community. This is where literacy - in language, technology and information - is taught to people of all ages and backgrounds. Where children learn the joy of reading, teens explore their potential and the world of opportunity, and adults continue their education and enjoy some much needed recreation. Where communities gather to discuss their future and learn from the past. Each public library is different, yet the same; and each reflects the highest ideals of the community it serves.

The management of such an institution is both a joy and a challenge. It is an incredibly fulfilling career, offering the opportunity to truly make a difference in people's lives, in the community which the library serves and in our American society. The challenges are manifold; the relentless battle for political and financial support, dated and inadequate facilities, constantly changing laws and regulations, the daily delights and surprises of dealing with personnel and the public, all contribute to this wonderful job of library director.

Though we often say "libraries change lives" it is also true that individuals change libraries. Behind nearly every innovative and successful library you will find a director who chose to make a difference, who worked hard to be a good manager, then worked even harder to become a leader. You can do that too.

This Handbook, developed by a gifted professional who works with library directors every day, is designed for those new to this remarkable career. It should be read and reread as you work through your first days, months and years on the job. It will not protect you from every mistake, just the big ones. Take what you can from it and grow with your experiences along the way. In the years ahead, take what you've learned and pass it on to another person lucky enough to become public library director.

Good luck,

Jerry Nichols, Director, Palmer Institute for Public Library Organization and Management

## **Introduction**

This handbook is intended as a jumping-off point, to aid a new public library director in New York State to get the “lay of the land” both in the library and within the New York library community, to understand the basics and to get down to the business of providing quality library service to the community.

This “jumpstart” guide is simply one of many tools in your bag to use as you make your way as a public library director in New York State. There are many other resources in place to help you in your role: the Public Library System staff, fellow library directors in your system and throughout New York State, the Division of Library Development and the New York Library Association can all provide some level of support. In addition the Mid-Hudson Library System offers administration and management resources at <http://midhudson.org>,

One of the primary sources of support for new directors is the Public Library System of which the library is a member. While many of the resources included in this handbook originated within the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS), MHLS is just one of 23 public library systems in New York State working hard every day to assist their member libraries.

New directors are encouraged to connect with their library system as soon as they can after starting their new job. This will be the fastest way to obtain vital information needed to run the library and to connect with peers throughout your System who will help answer questions that arise, be there to commiserate with and serve as models for your library so you don't have to recreate the wheel at every turn.

As a new library director you have a tremendous opportunity to positively impact your Library and your community within the first hours, days, weeks and months of your arrival.

Public libraries are one of the most important, critical service organizations in New York State. **People rely on public libraries** for education and entertainment, enjoyment and fulfillment. You have been entrusted with the leadership of this essential community institution and your community is counting on you to not only maintain the library's services but to improve them to meet their changing needs. In all things you do as director of the library **think “community first” and you will rarely go wrong.**

## **Your First Day(s)**

Quality library service begins with you. The tone you set with the staff, trustees, patrons and community-at-large from your very first days on the job will help determine your success or failure in the library.

Everyone has their own style for tackling their first day at a new job, but at the very least you are meeting your staff, getting a tour of the library facility and sorting out the essential documents you need to manage the library.

Take the time to learn how things work at the library before prioritizing change. Coming in like a whirlwind and running around “making things right” (firing volunteers, heavy weeding of the collection, disposing of a donated collection that seems useless) can destabilize an organization if done without understanding the whole nature of the organization – even if these are things that ultimately need to happen. Calmly learning about the people, collection, and facility may take some time but is well worth it in the long run.



Here's a **starter checklist** to get you going, developed with the assistance of the Roundtable for New Directors in the Mid-Hudson Library System, made up of directors who have been in their role at their libraries for less than three years.

- **Before your first day** (actually, before your interview!) obtain basic factual information about the library:
  - Library mission statement
  - Chartered service population
  - Size of the staff, collection and building
  - Location of the building in the community in relation to surrounding businesses, schools, municipal buildings and amenities
  - Which Public Library System your library is a part of  
[<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/publibs/1pls.htm>]
  - What type of library your library is (more about this in the “*Structure of Libraries*” section)
  - How the library is funded

### □ **On the first day:**

- Introduce yourself to all staff; find out who does what. In particular you will want to connect with:
  - Your assistant, if you are lucky enough to have one.
    - Ask the assistant for a list of staff by department and a roster of the Board of Trustees both of which includes names, telephone numbers, email addresses and positions held on the board.
    - Find out who has been doing the staff scheduling since the last director left. In a smaller library this is a task the director assumes, in a larger library you will want to become familiar with how things are done in this area.
  - The person who handles the money.
    - Set up a meeting time with your bookkeeper / treasurer / business manager to review the library's finances and budget.
    - Get an overview of the library's bank accounts and holdings.
    - Obtain and, within your first week or two, read copies of past audits of the library's finances.
  - The person who takes care of the building (facility manager/ custodian):
    - Get a tour of the library. On your first go around take note of general areas of the library – circ desk, reference services, periodicals, public access computers, children's area, fiction collection, non-fiction collection, meeting space, storage space, mechanical room, display areas, staff work spaces and bathrooms. Save critique and suggestions for a later time.
    - Ask for the keys to the director's office and employee entrance.
    - Locate water turn off; septic tank/leach field/sewer lines; boiler or furnace; HVAC system; and circuit breakers.

- The person who maintains the computers and networks in the building. Ask for the necessary passwords for the director's computer and staff network.
  - Establish an email address as the library director.
- Orient yourself to the director's office; flip through the files – both physical and electronic.
- Locate essential documents you may need immediately:
  - Budget documents
  - Board bylaws
  - Policies that impact patrons: patron code of conduct, internet usage, challenge of materials, meeting space, exhibit space, circulation policies.
  - Personnel policy
  - Compliance calendar (A compliance calendar should list all reporting deadlines, usually involving fiscal information, to agencies your library is linked with. For example (please note that not all of these may apply to you) your Public Library System, your municipality, county, NYS Department of Taxation, IRS and any additional funders like grantors.)
  - Insurance policies (for the facility and Directors & Officers)
  - Friends leadership information
  - Library's business continuity plan (a.k.a disaster plan)
  - List of vendors and local repairmen
- **During your first weeks:**
  - Introduce yourself to patrons; ask staff to point out regulars
  - Call and introduce yourself to:
    - Alarm company
      - Change passwords/codes to alarm system; inform only those who really need to know.



- System director
- Learn how to enter the building and disarm the alarm
- Read through past minutes of board meetings to get a feel for what is going on
- Review the library's web presence
- Observe the circulation desk
- Work all shifts to make sure you meet all staff face-to-face
- Read past annual reports to the community
- Read past newsletters
- Review statistics
  - Circulation
  - Program attendance
  - Door count
  - Annual statistical data provided through the annual report your library makes to New York State (NYS) [more about this later!]
- Conduct a policy inventory [Suggested list of essential policies available on page 27]
- Create a calendar with important dates: report due dates, board meetings, System meetings, contract / policy expiration dates, etc.
- Take steps to convey to your staff, board, patrons and the community at large that you are “open and accessible” to them.
  - Schedule a meeting with your board president to talk about the next board meeting
  - Interview staff, find out what they do, their opinions on what's working, what they think isn't working
  - Schedule a meeting with your Friends President
  - Call and introduce yourself to:

- Civil Service (if it applies to your library, more about that in the “Structure of Libraries” section)
- Insurance Company
- Internet Service Provider
- Technology Support Provider
- Maintenance Contractor
- Mayor / Town Supervisor
- Chief of Police
- Fire Chief
- Head of the Chamber of Commerce
- Local newspaper(s)

**A note to non-librarian directors:** If you do not have a Masters in Library Science, or an equivalent degree, or have changed industries and are new to the library field you will want to become familiar with:

- Library Bill of Rights from the American Library Association
  - New York State Confidentiality of Library Records Law (New York State Civil Practice Law & Rules 4508, Chapter 112, Laws of 1988)
  - Library Jargon (see appendices for acronym list; see also: Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science by Joan M. Reitz [<http://lu.com/odlis/>])
  - Library Material Purchasing/Processing Options (for example, book jobbers like Baker & Taylor, McNaughton, Midwest Library Service; audio book jobbers like Landmark Audiobooks and subscription consolidators like Ebsco)
- **During your first months:**
- Conduct a facility inventory, inside and out.
    - Note problem areas.
    - Determine age of major systems: HVAC, roof, wiring, etc.

- Review or establish a “key inventory.” Who has keys to your library? If it seems like too many people or you learn that people outside of your supervision have keys, you may want to consider having locks re-keyed to start fresh and get “key control” of your building.
- Assess the maintenance routine.
- Are the circuit breakers and water shut off labeled?
- Conduct a signage inventory (inside and out) – could a new patron find their way around? Learn about services? Know where to go for help and how to access services? Would they even know to come through the door?
- Is there a fire drill schedule/procedure in place?
- See also: Facility Plan Outline [page 42]
- Get an introduction to the technology infrastructure in the library – staff and patron access computers – how many do you have, what software is on them, network structure, security measures in place, passwords, etc.
- Conduct a Communications Assessment
  - How does the library currently communicate internally and externally:
    - Staff communications
    - Board communications
    - Friends communications
    - Patron signage, notification and publicity
    - Community-wide publicity
  - How does the library receive communication from patrons and the community?
- Attend meetings with other libraries in your county and System. (Your System should be able to connect you with these meeting dates.)
- Start to find ways to become visible as a community leader locally, for example, join the Chamber of Commerce or a service organization, participate in community events, and attend local happenings. It’s not enough to just attend - introduce yourself and tell people what you do!

- Call and introduce yourself to:
  - School Principals / School Superintendent
  - Local shelters / missions
  - Local Arts Council
  - Neighboring libraries
  - Other heads of prominent nonprofits in the community

Hopefully you are energized by the people you meet and what you learn in your first weeks on the job.

### **Community First**



You are now on the front line of sustaining and improving a great American tradition – the public library. Public libraries are a uniquely American institution. The ability for any person - regardless of their background, economic status, or educational status – to walk through the doors of a public library in America and have access to information, technology and community space is at the heart of library service and serves as both our greatest attribute and biggest challenge.

The enormity of what a public library can mean in a community, to families and individuals, is often overlooked. Its importance can be forgotten as days are filled with enforcing circulation policies, finding someone to fix a dripping faucet or getting through your email. But never forget: within the walls of a library a person can change their life, a parent can change their child's future for the better, a community can become stronger, healthier and more vibrant.

**Striving to uphold the community's right to a quality public library is your goal.** A goal that needs your attention every day - at every staff meeting and board meeting, during public budget presentations, interactions with patrons, municipal officials and the media, during good times and in bad.

It is a big responsibility, **but you have help.** While you provide leadership and vision you have a team of people working with you: locally, you have your board, staff, and Friends; regionally, you have your Public Library System and fellow library directors; and beyond that are networks of helpful peers in the state and across the country.

However, success starts at home - the Board, staff and Friends are major stakeholders, the "home team" dedicated to working with you to create and sustain a great library

for the community. The Board and Friends believe in it so much they devote many hours of their free time and energy as volunteers.

Helping your team work together and move forward on the same path will be one of the most important aspects of your job. The key is your leadership capacity and your ability to facilitate the creation of a shared vision that all stakeholders believe in and want to work towards with you.

**Putting the community first in the decisions you make** is the key step in creating a shared vision for all stakeholders. From policies and purchasing, to the hours of operation and the library's web site – understanding community needs and working to meet them is the first step of the journey in providing quality library service.

To put the community first you need to understand who lives in your community and get to know them. Ask people what they need in a library. Community input is the foundation of quality library service and the gathering, digestion and response to the input received is just as important.

To start, understand the audiences – there are two segments of the community you need input from:

- The *in-house audience* is made up of current patrons, staff, the Board and Friends.
- The *exterior audience* is made up of future patrons, non-users, and community leaders.

You should work toward getting input from both segments.

### Input collection techniques:

- For the “*in-house*” audience:
  - Routinely check in with your front line staff to find out what patrons are talking about.
    - What do they like? What don't they like?
    - What patterns is staff noticing in borrowing trends? Reference questions?
    - Ask staff to keep a “No Log” for a week or two. Anytime they can't fulfill a patron request have them note it in the log. Determine why these requests can't be met. A change in policy, staff training, or investment in a new collection area could make a big difference.
  - Provide opportunities for patrons to give feedback:

- A suggestion box with blank cards or short customer service surveys available at service desks in the library.
  - A virtual “suggestion box” on the library’s web site
  - A message from the director in the library’s print and e-newsletter that invites patrons to share their concerns, questions and ideas with you or the board president by phone, email or in person.
  - Work with the Board to issue invitations to patrons to join in on short-term advisory committees or to give input on specific projects like an expansion project or change in hours.
- Involve patrons in the information-gathering phase of the board’s long-range planning activities. Targeted patron focus groups – parents, seniors, retirees, business owners, religious leaders and educators – can help you develop a better understanding of how the community currently uses the library and what their future needs may be.
  - Help the board’s nominating committee do an inventory of current board members’ “community connectivity.” When it comes time to find new board members there will be a better idea of where opportunities exist – parents of young children, a representative from an immigrant group that has grown in your community or a business leader. The Board of Trustees is the ultimate community representation in the governance of the library; they represent their neighbors on the board to help craft appropriate service for everyone in the community.
- For the *exterior* audience:
    - Work towards funding for a community-wide mailing of your newsletter at least quarterly.
    - Develop an e-newsletter product that goes out monthly/bi-monthly to all patrons.
    - Develop an annual report to the community that reflects the value the library provides in the community, demonstrates growth and responsiveness to community needs.
      - Mail the report to the *whole* community. This is the best way to insure you reach all taxpayers, including those who choose not to use the library.

- Send the report, along with a customized cover letter, to community leaders, for example:
  - Mayor or town supervisor
  - School superintendent, building principals and school media specialists
  - Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
  - Nonprofit Executive Directors
  - City planner
  - Local police
  - Fire chief
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Local business owners – realtors, restaurateurs, day care owners, etc.
  - Economic Development Corp. or Industrial Development Agency (IDA)
  - County supervisor and county legislators
  - State legislators
  - Federal legislators
- Go out of your way to solicit input from non-library-users:
  - Attend meetings in the community to hear what the hot topics are or ask to be put on the agenda (For example: Rotary, PTA, Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce). Talk about the community, not the library. Ask for their feedback on what challenges the community is facing from their perspective. Encourage your board to join you when they are in the information gathering phase of their long-range planning for the library.
  - Invite opinion leaders and non-users into the library for a tour, find out what services appeal to them, ask them to spread the word to others who would benefit from those services. Even if they never use the service themselves, their awareness of the availability and support of its existence will have its benefits.

- Invite non-users to participate in a targeted focus group. Ask them what they see going on in the community and what needs the people they deal with in their jobs/roles are facing.

The time, energy and funds invested in these activities will have a big return on investment. With the input received it will be possible to create a plan to benefit the community. For example, libraries frequently discover that they do offer what people want, but people just don't know it so their marketing and publicity efforts need to improve. Sometimes a critical hole in service will be revealed – maybe you don't offer evening or weekend hours but your community demographics have shifted to a degree that they are now necessary.

The library is “*by the people, for the people*” – if you are not focusing on the people's needs why would they use the library or write a check for the capital campaign or vote yes on the budget?

### **Structure of Libraries in New York State**

Libraries in New York are “*by the people, for the people*” and understanding the structure of libraries in New York State is critical knowledge for a director as it greatly impacts the governance and funding of your library.

Your library is one of more than 750 public libraries in New York State. It is an autonomous entity, overseen by your board of trustees and chartered by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York.

The Regents appoint the Commissioner of Education, who is the chief executive officer of the State Education Department. The Assistant Commissioner for Libraries, also known as the State Librarian, is responsible for the activities of the New York State Library and the Division of Library Development (DLD). DLD coordinates and administers state aid programs and the rules and regulations that govern public libraries and public library systems. DLD also helps to develop new statewide programs of library service and provides guidance on charter changes and other matters that must be referred to the Board of Regents.

Nearer to the local library, and its first source of assistance and resources, is the Public Library System. Virtually all of the public libraries in the state belong to one of the twenty-three public library systems. There are three types of public library systems: consolidated, federated and cooperative. Each has a different legal structure and relationship with its members, or in the case of consolidated systems, its branches. [A comparison of the three different types of public library systems can be found at: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libtypes.htm>]

Each public library system develops its own 5-year Plan of Service, reflecting the needs of the libraries in the area the system serves. Local governance and control allows library systems to offer programs and services that vary greatly from one region to



another. Nevertheless, all public library systems share the same common purpose and responsibility for the development and improvement of their member libraries. Each system is required to designate a central library or co-central libraries whose purpose is to house and offer reference resources in greater numbers and depth than usually found in local libraries.

Public library system services may include the following:

- Shared online catalogs (combining the collections of all member libraries into one catalog);
- Interlibrary loan and delivery of materials;
- Administration of computer networks and integrated library automation systems, including circulation, online public catalogs (OPACS) acquisitions and other related software modules;
- Cooperative purchase and support of electronic databases, Internet access and telecommunications services;
- Continuing education seminars, workshops and training for library staff and trustees;
- Consultation on library administration, programs and services;
- Specialized support for Young Adult and Children's Services;
- Centralized purchasing, ordering and processing of library materials;
- Assistance in materials selection and collection development;
- Materials cataloging services and advice;
- Web page design and maintenance; printing and other duplication services;
- Service to correctional facilities, nursing homes, and other institutions;
- Outreach services to special populations and consultation on accessibility issues;
- Assistance in, and administration of, state and federal grant programs;
- Services to unchartered areas including contract library services, bookmobiles or other extension services.

Public Library Systems are chartered and primarily funded through New York State. As an agency reliant on state funding **it is imperative that you regularly communicate with your state legislators about the value your System provides to your local library.** The NYS Division of Library Development estimates that for every \$1 in state aid to Systems, \$13 in services to the public is produced. [Source: *New York's Libraries: How They Stack Up*, New York State Division of Library Development, 2008] Take some time to consider how much extra it would cost to run the library without the System.

New York State also supports two other types of library systems that work with the public library systems to broaden the variety of resources available to all residents of the state.

- Reference and research library resources systems (3Rs councils) were established to enhance resource sharing and to meet specialized reference needs. The 3Rs councils serve primarily as the systems for academic and special libraries but their membership also includes library systems, hospital libraries, and specialized libraries of all types. Individual public and school libraries may also join.

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- The state is also served by forty-two school library systems sponsored by the BOCES and Big Five Cities Schools. The school library systems provide support services, consultation, and assistance to both public and non-public school libraries.

Working together, the State Library, the public library systems, school library systems and the 3Rs councils offer the local public library and patrons access to a vast array of services and resources from around the state and all over the world.

In addition to the support available to you through your system and DLD you have access to the professional support of your peers through:

- NYLINE: New York's Libraries Information Network (email list) [<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/nyline.htm>]
- New York Library Association [<http://nyla.org>]
- PUBLIB Electronic Discussion List [[http://www.webjunction.org/documents/webjunction/PubLib\\_Overview.html](http://www.webjunction.org/documents/webjunction/PubLib_Overview.html)]
- American Library Association [<http://ala.org>]
  - Public Library Association [<http://pla.org>]
- WebJunction.org

The New York Library Association (NYLA) provides the framework for a coalition of professional librarians, library support staff and library supporters to come together as a strong voice in the State on policy and funding issues. Membership in NYLA is a significant advantage to directors as the annual NYLA Conference is a major source of education, networking and peer support.

### **Legal Structure of Libraries**

There are four types of public libraries chartered in New York State:

- ❑ Association Library
- ❑ Municipal Public Library
- ❑ School District Public Library
- ❑ Special District Public Library

An association library is established by a group of private individuals to serve “all the people in the community in which the library is located,” [Education Law § 253 \(2\)](#), whereas a “public” library is established by a village, town, city, county, school district, or special state legislation. [Education Law § 255 \(1\)](#). Following is a brief explanation of each of the four types.

**An association library** is a private corporation established by the members of the association. It contracts with a unit of local government to provide library service to the residents of that jurisdiction. In legal terms, this contract may be written, oral or implied; but it always exists. Though association libraries are private not-for-profit corporations and not subject to some of the laws and restrictions of true public libraries, they are

generally supported by public funds and must always keep that in mind. It is strongly recommended that association libraries operate with the same transparency required of public institutions.

**A municipal public library** is formed either by a vote of the governing body of a municipality (village, town, city, or county) or by a public referendum to serve the residents of the municipality. Although the board of trustees is an independent corporate entity, the library is a part of the municipal government and subject to all the laws applicable to public institutions in the state.

**A school district public library** is organized to serve the residents who live within the boundaries of a given school district (hence the name). The library and the library board are independent of the school district and the school board. The school district is responsible for the collection of taxes and for the issuance of municipal bonds for construction on the library's behalf. The separation of powers between local boards of education and school district library boards is detailed in [Education Law Section 260](#).

**A special district public library** is created by a special act of the State Legislature and a local public vote, to serve all or part of one or more municipalities as defined by the special legislation. Each of these libraries is somewhat unique but all are considered "public" insofar as adherence to state law.

### **Funding**

#### *Local:*

The latter two types of public libraries – school district public libraries and special district public libraries have the authority to have their budget voted on by the public annually. There is the opportunity for people to tax themselves for the level of library service they feel is appropriate for the community. This creates a direct customer-business model for the library – taxpayers vote yes for well-run, highly visible and viable libraries. For more information about district libraries check out the NYS Division of Library Development's web site at <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libspldtools/index.html>.

Traditionally libraries are funded better when the public votes on their budget and in that spirit of "by the people, for the people" the NYS Legislature passed a law in 1995, referred to as the Chapter 414 Municipal Ballot law, that enables the other two types of libraries, association and municipal public libraries to put their budget up for a public vote. If the ballot passes the municipality must fund the library at the level the community decides and may not cut the library's funding below that level unless a proposition was voted on to allow that. For more information about a 414 vote refer to [Inch by Inch, Row by Row: Implementing Chapter 414 of New York State's 1995 laws, the "local votes law" for public libraries](#), 2009 edition from the Mid-Hudson Library System.

There is also the opportunity to use the school district ballot to help fund your library. Education Law 259[1] allows all four types of libraries to put a proposition on a school district ballot to provide an opportunity for voters to tax themselves for library services.

As public libraries are open when school libraries are not it is easy to demonstrate the role a public library plays in the education of the children in the community. For more information on School Districts and Taxes for Public and Association Libraries visit the NYS Division of Library Development's web site:

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/sdtaxes.htm>

### **Three tips for winning library budget votes:**

- Library trustees are called "trustees" because they are entrusted with other people's money to spend on behalf of the community. Ensuring that the Board is compliant with all laws, regulations and procedures to help them be as transparent and accountable as possible to the community is a major priority.
- Votes are won all year long at the circulation desk, at programs and events, on the web site and when people drive by the library. Make the community proud by providing a great library with great service.
- Get your base of supporters out to vote. Make use of the "Public Library Vote Toolbox: Know-how for your library's vote" from the Mid-Hudson Library System: <http://vote.midhudson.org/> Need your "base" to be bigger? Check out the [Targeted Marketing](#) handout from the MHLS Building Your Base Project.

Association and Municipal libraries that do not have the public vote on their budget must negotiate with their municipal leaders each year for funding. Funding may be cut at any time.

Association and Municipal libraries can be rechartered as district libraries, either as special district libraries defined along municipal lines or by merging with other libraries to create a district along school district boundaries. To begin this process a library may talk with their System or the NYS Division of Library Development.

### *County:*

County funding for libraries is negotiable depending on the local situation. Check with your System and other library directors in your county.

### *New York State:*

Libraries primarily receive state funding in two forms:

- Local Library Services Aid (LLSA) which passes through the System to the library in the form of a check. The funding level has remained unchanged for more than a decade at 31 cents per capita or \$1,500, whichever is more.
- Services provided to your library through the Public Library System. The System is funded by New York State. The services they provide to the library help provide quality library service in your community and therefore contribute to your bottom line. The translation of state funding into services by the System has a significant dollar value to your library.
  - The System administers other streams of state funding that can benefit your library: central reference library aid / book aid; outreach services;

Summer Reading Program funds and the State Aid for Public Library Construction grant program.

### *Federal:*

Very little federal money comes to public libraries. In New York, federal money comes to the New York State Library in the form of Library Services & Technology Act funds, or LSTA funds, from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Currently these funds support activities in the Division of Library Development and the coordinated package of databases available to all libraries in the NOVEL package: New York Online Virtual Electronic Library [<http://novelnewyork.org/>]

### *Fundraising:*



Fundraising is a fact of life for some libraries. As boards work to be fiscally responsible while responding to community needs there are often items in a long-range plan that “would be nice” but are not mission critical. The library’s operations budget should be covered by a secure and stable tax source (read: a budget that is publicly voted on).

Dollars that are fundraised are to be used for non-critical items or programs, since these monies cannot be predicted from year to year. Fundraising should be funneled through a Friends Group. Friends Groups are volunteer organizations dedicated to supporting the library’s mission. They are vocal advocates for the library in the community-at-large and the chief fundraising arm of your library.

To learn more about Friends Groups:

- [United for Libraries](#) (Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations)

### **Minimum Standards**

By [Regulation 90.2](#), the Commissioner of Education has established minimum standards for public libraries. They are as follows:

A public library is required to have:

- Written by-laws;
- A board-approved, written long range plan of service;
- An annual report to the community;
- Written policies for the operation of the library;
- A written budget proposal for presentation to funding agencies;
- Printed information describing the library’s rules, hours, services, location, and phone number.

In addition, a public library is required to:

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- Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the library's collection and services;
- Maintain hours of service according to a schedule based on population served;
- Maintain a facility which meets community needs;
- Provide equipment and [electronic] connections to meet community needs;
- Employ a paid director with qualifications based on population served.

The minimum education qualifications for library director are as follows:

- 2,500-4,999 population: two years of college study;
- 5,000-7,499 population: bachelor's degree;
- 7,500+ population: Master's degree in Library Science (MLS).

**A public library in New York State must meet these Minimum Standards in order to be registered to receive public funds.**

See also [Helpful Information for Meeting Minimum Public Library Standards](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/helpful.htm)  
[<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/helpful.htm>]

A comparison of libraries by type follows:

**Libraries by Type** [Modified from the NYS Division of Library Development's "Types of Public Libraries – a comparison found at <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libsp/pltypes.htm>]

	Association Library	Municipal Public Library	School District Public Library	Special District Public Library
<b>Establishment:</b>	By vote of association members or as trustees operating under a will or deed of trust.	By vote of county, city, town or village board; or by petition and referendum.	By vote of school district voters.	By special act of State legislature and vote of special district voters.*
<b>Tax Funds:</b>	May receive appropriation from units of government. Also tax levy by vote of municipal** or school district voters***. Library should sign contract with appropriating unit. May petition municipal and/or school district taxpayers for funds.**	Budget approved by county, city, town, or village board. Also tax levy by vote of municipal** or school district voters***. May petition municipal and/or school district taxpayers for funds.	Budget approved by school district voters. May also petition for a tax levy from municipalities.**	Budget approved by district voters. May also petition for a tax levy from municipalities**, unless enactment legislation specifies otherwise.
<b>Bond Authority:</b>	Not permitted. Requires a special act of legislation through Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY)	Municipal government may bond if it owns the library building.	School district may bond if it owns the library building.	A municipality may bond on behalf of district if legislation allows.*
<b>Trustees:</b>	Number: 5-25. Elected by association members as defined in bylaws.  Term of office: set by charter.  Responsible to association membership and to Regents. Residential requirements may be established in bylaws.	Number: 5-15. Approved by municipal governing board.  Term of office: three or five years if established after 1921.  Responsible to municipal government, public, and Regents. Must be residents of municipality (except village library).	Number: 5-15. Elected by school district voters.  Term of office: three or five years (if established after 1921).  Responsible to school district voters and Regents. Must be residents of school district.	Number: determined by enabling legislation. Elected by residents of special district.  Term of office: five years or as defined by legislation.  Responsible to special district voters and Regents. Residency requirements determined by enabling legislation.
<b>Community Involvement:</b>	Public can join association and may vote for trustees.	Public "owns" library; votes for elected officials who are sympathetic to library needs.	Public "owns" library and votes directly for trustees and budget.	Public "owns" library and votes directly for trustees and budget.
<b>Civil Service:</b>	Employees not covered by Civil Service.	Employees subject to Civil Service Law.	Employees subject to Civil Service Law.	Employees subject to Civil Service Law.
<b>Retirement Benefits:</b>	May purchase retirement benefits from private vendor. Some may be in State Retirement System if specified in statute.	State Retirement System benefits through municipality.	State Retirement System benefits through school district or independently.	State Retirement System benefits if library district opts to participate.
<b>Reporting:</b>	Must file annual statistical report with DLD through their public library system.  Must report Summer Reading Program Statistics to their System.	Must file annual statistical report with DLD through their public library system.  Must file annual financial report with the NYS Comptrollers Office.  Must report Summer Reading Program Statistics to their System.	Must file annual statistical report with DLD through their public library system.  Must file annual financial report with the NYS Comptrollers Office.  Must report Summer Reading Program Statistics to their System.	Must file annual statistical report with DLD through their public library system.  Must file annual financial report with the NYS Comptrollers Office.  Must report Summer Reading Program Statistics to their System.
May also file with NYS Office of the Attorney General's office if registered as a charity. ****May also file 990 with IRS if registered as a charitable organization.				

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*\*Special district public libraries are created by act of the NYS Legislature. Each one is different and reflects the particular needs and situation of that district.*

*\*\*Chapter 414 Vote*

*\*\*\*School District Ballot (259)*

*\*\*\*\*Filing with the IRS: Federal Tax-Exempt Status: Association libraries are eligible to obtain federal tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Municipal, School District and Special District public libraries are considered "government entities" by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and thus by definition are already tax-exempt. However, for purposes of receiving tax deductible gifts and grant writing having 501(c)(3) makes things easier so it is recommended that the library's Friends Group obtain the status and become the fundraising arm of the library. There are reporting requirements for library's and Friends Groups with 501(c)(3), the director should be aware of these requirements and ensure either agency remains in good standing with the IRS. In addition to the federal tax exemption, each library should also obtain a state sales tax exemption certificate.*

## **Library Laws & Regulations**



As corporations in the public arena, libraries are subject to a wide range of federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations. While directors cannot be expected to understand all the details of every pertinent law, they should be familiar enough with the major legal issues to be assured that the library is always in compliance. It is strongly advised to solicit the assistance of legal counsel well-versed in education and municipal law. It is important, however, for every director to understand the legal foundation of their library and the extent and limitations of the Board of Trustees' authority.

Public libraries in New York State receive a charter from the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York. The charter gives the library a corporate existence. The basic powers and duties of all library boards of trustees are defined in [Education Law Section 226](#). This law provides fundamental rules of conduct for the Board and details important powers such as the right to hold and control property and hire staff.

Other pertinent NYS Education Laws and Regulations include:

- [Ed. Law Sec. 253](#) - Definition of a public library;
- [Ed. Law Sec. 254](#) - Standards of library service;
- [Ed. Law Sec. 255](#) - Establishment of a library;
- [Ed. Law Sec. 256](#) - Library service contracts (with unchartered areas);
- [Ed. Law Sec. 259](#) - Library taxes;
- [Ed. Law Sec. 260](#) - Trustees;
- [Commissioner's Regulation 90.2](#) - Standards;
- [Commissioner's Regulation 90.3](#) - Public Library Systems;
- [Commissioner's Regulation 90.4](#) - Central Libraries;
- [Commissioner's Regulation 90.8](#) - Personnel;
- [Commissioner's Regulation 90.9](#) - Library Services Aid.

### **Other laws to be well versed with:**

Each library board is required by the [Open Meetings Law](#) to conduct its business in public with only a few very limited exceptions. All municipal, school district and special district libraries must also conform to the requirements of the [Freedom of Information](#)



[Law](#) (FOIL). Though association libraries do not fall under the provisions of this law they are wise to consider such a policy since they are generally supported by public funds.

For more information on Open Meetings Law and the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) visit the [New York State Department of State, Committee on Open Government](http://www.dos.state.ny.us/coog/index.html) [http://www.dos.state.ny.us/coog/index.html]

All public libraries are subject to various parts of the Education Law, [Not for Profit Corporation Law](#) and [Public Officers Law](#). Depending on the type of library, it may also be affected by General Municipal Law, Civil Service Law and the laws of myriad other jurisdictions at all governmental levels that are concerned with activities in which libraries may be engaged.

Municipal, School District and Special District Public Libraries are subject to **“public works” laws** such as Wicks Law (which requires the library to issue multiple construction contracts for most public works projects) and prevailing wage.

[An excellent compilation of the laws and regulations affecting public libraries in our State](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/fundlaw2.htm) by Robert Allan Carter can be found on the NYS Division of Library Development's web site at <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/fundlaw2.htm>

### **Library Policies**

Think of the library's policies as the most local of laws governing the library. These are the rules established by the governing body – the Board of Trustees – that have been developed through the board/director working relationship.

Policies provide stability for staff, consistency for patrons and protection for the library.

Policy development may start with you, the director, or a policy committee of the Board. As the library professional and leader of the library the director should take an active role in policy development. While the board has the ultimate approval, they are relying on you to help develop policies that compliment the library's mission and long-range plan.

Policy Basics:

- ❑ Policies should be in writing.
- ❑ Policies should be written in such a way that they can be applied objectively.
- ❑ Policies must be enforced consistently. To insure that they are, review all policies with the Board on a regular basis and be sure to review relevant policies with staff and volunteers. If a policy no longer seems reasonable, change it.

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- ❑ Policies should provide an appeal mechanism for patrons or staff even if that mechanism is informal, such as a conversation with the director.
- ❑ Once policies are adopted by the Board of Trustees, follow them exactly—do not ignore the policies.

Policy vs. Procedure:

There is a difference between policies and procedures. The following definitions should provide clarification:

Policy: A written statement that describes how things will be handled, setting the conditions and terms of a situation.

Procedure: A written, step-by-step description of how the staff will carry out a policy.

Don't rewrite laws and professional standards within your policies — just adopt them or quote them. For example, it is recommended that the Board adopt the following standard American Library Association (ALA) policies:

- ❑ Library Bill of Rights
- ❑ Confidentiality of Library Records
- ❑ Free Access to Libraries for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights
- ❑ Freedom to Read Statement
- ❑ Freedom to View Statement

During the first months as library director it is suggested that you conduct **a policy audit** to determine which of the essential policies are already in place at the library and which need to be developed. Here's a list of suggested essential policies broken down by:

- Internal: Policies that impact library operations
- External: Policies that impact patrons directly

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<b>Essential Policies:</b>	
<p>Internal:</p> <p>Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bylaws</li> <li>• Meeting procedures</li> <li>• Conflict of Interest</li> <li>• Code of Ethics</li> <li>• Continuing Education</li> <li>• Removal of a Trustee</li> </ul> <p>Personnel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job Descriptions</li> <li>• Conditions of employment</li> <li>• Benefits</li> <li>• Continuing Education</li> <li>• Code of conduct</li> <li>• Evaluation procedure</li> <li>• Grievance procedure including whistleblower/non-retaliation protection</li> <li>• Discipline</li> <li>• Dismissal</li> <li>• Nepotism</li> <li>• Workplace Safety</li> <li>• Patron Confidentiality</li> <li>• Staff Use of Social Software</li> <li>• Volunteers</li> </ul> <p>Financial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expenditure Authorization</li> <li>• Purchasing procedures</li> <li>• Bid solicitation</li> <li>• Investments</li> <li>• Inventory / Fixed Assets</li> <li>• Audit</li> <li>• Disposition of Surplus Property</li> <li>• Gifts / Fundraising</li> <li>• Relationship with the Friends</li> </ul> <p>Administrative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Records Management</li> <li>• Business Continuity / Disaster Plan</li> <li>• Public Relations</li> </ul>	<p>External:</p> <p>Circulation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lending rules and procedures</li> <li>• Fines</li> <li>• Lost materials</li> <li>• Confidentiality of Patron Records (NYS Law)</li> <li>• Non-resident use</li> </ul> <p>Collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection Development</li> <li>• Freedom to Read Statement (ALA)</li> <li>• Freedom to View Statement (ALA)</li> <li>• Weeding</li> <li>• Challenge of Library Materials</li> <li>• Copier &amp; Copyright</li> </ul> <p>Public Space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patron Code of Conduct*</li> <li>• Unattended Child*</li> <li>• Patron Complaints</li> <li>• Meeting Room Reservation</li> <li>• Meeting Room Equipment</li> <li>• Programming</li> <li>• Posting</li> <li>• Exhibits</li> <li>• Incident Report Form</li> </ul> <p>Internet &amp; Technology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet Use</li> <li>• Computer Use</li> <li>• Wireless Network Use</li> </ul>

*\*The library's Patron Code of Conduct should be posted in a brief format to alert patrons to behavior expectations. An Unattended Child policy should be incorporated into that posted Code of Conduct.*

All policies should be able to stand on their own and be dated for the original adoption and the last review and/or revision. They should be recorded, compiled, and organized for ready access in a policy manual. Every trustee should have a copy of the policy manual and must be familiar with its contents. A thorough understanding of the library's

policies is the foundation from which to adopt new policies, revise old ones, and interpret or defend the library's rules.

Personnel policies are critical to any successful operation and must be consistent and in conformance with applicable state and federal law. Each library staff member should receive a copy of the personnel policies at the time of employment. A written acknowledgement of receipt is important.

**A word about Civil Service:** Public libraries (municipal, school district public libraries and special district public libraries) fall under Civil Service. The idea behind Civil Service in New York State is to “ensure hiring and promotion based on fitness, merit and equality of opportunity.” There are over 100 Civil Service jurisdictions in New York State. It would be helpful to talk with other directors in the county or city to get started and to find out who they work with in the local Civil Service office. Check out the “*Guide to Civil Service for Public Librarians*” from the [Library Administration & Management Section](#) (LAMS) of the New York Library Association.

**Staff should be trained on the external policies of the library.** As the front line of service, staff will be the people administering policy under the director's supervision. Their awareness of the policies and how to implement them will aid in providing good service to the community by insuring consistency and fair treatment of all patrons.

### **Organizational Components**

Customer service is influenced by a variety of factors in the library – not just the personality of an individual staff person.

All aspects of the organization – staff, training, library policies, facility, collection, the technology, programming, budget, PR and the Board's attitude towards patrons – impact customer service. As the director you have significant influence over all of these factors.

The library is a complex organization with interrelated parts. To help understand this, think of the library organization as having three components:

#### **Development** - “Identifying and Building Community Support for the Library”:

- *Gathering* community input through focus groups, community surveys, and patron feedback on library services and community needs
- *Creating* a long-range plan (with the board) that defines the paths for providing the services the community needs
- *Implementing* the plan
- *Communicating* to the community that the plan was implemented to the satisfaction of library users
- *Continuing* this cycle annually

**Operations** - “What the Library Does”:

- Lend books, movies and music
- Provide computers and a connection to the Internet
- Facilitate youth and adult programming
- Provide community meeting space
- Offer reference services

**Support** - “The Behind the Scenes Work Required to Keep the Library Running”:

- Policies and procedures
- Long-range plan
- Business office staff activities: human resources, bookkeeping, purchasing
- Facility maintenance
- Technology support
- Data entry and processing

The success of the library can be defined in terms of patron satisfaction, the value your library brings to the community and the budget provided by the community for the operations of the library. All three components depend on the coordination and oversight by the library director.

The library may have strengths and weaknesses in each of these areas. One of your first tasks will be to evaluate the library in these areas to discover which are running smoothly and which are lacking or stagnant.



### **Quality Library Service**

The three components listed above – development, operations and support - should all be working towards the provision of quality library service. A good initial conversation to have with the Board as a team building exercise, is to review the library's mission statement and review the sentiment behind it. What is the ideal “vibe” or “sense of place” in the library? How does the Board view the library's reputation in the community? Answers to these questions can help direct and influence your efforts in a variety of arenas.

Your goal should be to combine the “community first” mentality with the “sense of place” or ambiance goal of the board and then to thread these two strands through all that you do. It should influence:

- Policies and procedures
- Staff training
- Collection development
- Facility layout and upkeep
- Publicity, including your library's web site

For example, if the desired effect is that the library feels like the “community's living room” then the policies, staff attitudes, furniture, décor, and collection should reflect this. Conversely, if the library is positioned to be more formal than the living room model then it may be focused on a more structured learning environment with policies, etc. to support that model.



To build a reputation as a great library you have to first define what a “great library” is for your community before you can get there. Once it has been defined, it is possible to determine where you want to go, and decisions become clearer. It becomes obvious what type of training the staff needs, what kind of tone to have in your director's column for the library newsletter, and what type of programming to offer the community. If you can thread the desired “vibe” through all aspects of your organization while remaining professional and community focused your customer service should be top notch.

### **Staff Education**

Personnel costs are the largest component of any library's budget and the staff generates value in the community everyday through their interactions with the public. Ensure that the staff receives all the necessary training they need to do their job at the library and invest accordingly in their education to help them serve the community at a high level. All staff, regardless of position, should receive regular customer service

training. Budget accordingly – it is recommended that at least 1% of your budget go towards staff education.

Educational opportunities can be found in many places:

- In-house (for example: orientation to the facility and policies; hands-on training for the automated circulation system; how to use the Online Catalog and databases available to patrons);
- Through the System;
- Through the Central Reference Library;
- Through regional library networks (for example, county library associations and Reference and Research Library Resources Councils);
- In the community: community colleges, local universities, United Way, Community Foundations;
- New York Library Association: offers regional workshops and annual conference;
- Public Library Association National Conference;
- American Library Association National Conference; and
- WebJunction.org.

### **Roles & Responsibilities**

As you read through this handbook the question of who is ultimately responsible – you or the board – may have popped into your mind.



The library director is the equivalent of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the library. The director works in partnership with the library's board of trustees. The board is your collaborator in creating quality library service for the community.

**The board's role is to govern the library** - to approve policy, secure adequate funding and hire a competent, qualified library director.

**The director's role is to manage the library** - to implement the board's policies on a day-to-day basis, manage the staff and help lead the library forward in the best way possible to meet the needs of the community.

This partnership means working together in a variety of ways – from developing policies to generating a long-range plan for the library – these overlaps are an opportunity to strengthen the board-director relationship.

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The chart below, adapted from the Louisiana Library Association Public Library Section's *Handbook for Library Directors* shows the division and overlap of responsibilities:

<b>Planning</b>	
<p>Board of Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determines the goals and objectives of the library and methods of evaluating progress toward meeting them.</li> </ul>	<p>Library Director:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides assistance and direction to the board in setting goals and objectives and determining methods of evaluation.</li> </ul>
<b>Policy Making</b>	
<p>Board of Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considers what policies are needed to carry forward the library's plan most effectively.</li> <li>Officially adopts library policy.</li> <li>Establishes policies dealing with material selection, print and non-print.</li> </ul>	<p>Library Director:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommends policies as needed. Advises board on merit of decisions it is considering.</li> <li>Administers library in accordance with adopted policies. Interprets policies to staff and public.</li> <li>Selects and orders all books and other library materials, print and non-print.</li> </ul>
<b>Administration of the Library</b>	
<p>Board of Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has indirect responsibility through the employment of a library director and the adoption of plans, policy and budget.</li> <li>Keeps in touch with library's progress and problems through director's reports, personal use of the library, and feedback from the public.</li> </ul>	<p>Library Director:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has direct responsibility for administration of the library within the framework of the board's plan, policies and budget.</li> <li>Reports at each board meeting and in other ways keeps the board informed of library's progress and problems.</li> </ul>
<b>Personnel</b>	
<p>Board of Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employs library director and confirms staff appointments.</li> <li>Sees that personnel policies provide fringe benefits, such as vacation, sick leave, and compatible working conditions. (Insurance plans are recommended but not</li> </ul>	<p>Library Director:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employs and supervises staff.</li> <li>Recommends needed improvement in working conditions, fringe benefits, and salary scale.</li> </ul>



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<p>mandated. Opportunities for professional growth should be considered.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides adequate salary scale for staff and approves salaries for staff.</li> <li>• Develops criteria for evaluating library director's effectiveness. Performs periodic performance evaluations of the director.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilizes skills and initiative of staff members to the library's advantage. Recommends salaries.</li> <li>• Suggests basis for evaluation criteria and provides materials for the board to review. Maintains records of personnel evaluations.</li> </ul>
<b>Budget</b>	
<p>Board of Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for securing adequate funding the library.</li> <li>• Scrutinizes preliminary budget submitted by library director, makes necessary changes, officially adopts budget. Explores and considers all ways of increasing library's income.</li> <li>• Authorizes expenditures in accordance with the budget.</li> </ul>	<p>Library Director:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for understanding funding options and educating the board as necessary.</li> <li>• Prepares preliminary budget recommendation based on present and anticipated revenues and needs in relation to the board's plan for library growth. Calls board's attention to ways of stretching budget through cooperation with other libraries and agencies.</li> <li>• Decides on use of money on the basis of the approved budget.</li> </ul>
<b>Board Meetings</b>	
<p>Board of Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attends and participates in all regular and special meetings.</li> <li>• Follows NYS Open Meetings Law.</li> <li>• Approves minutes.</li> </ul>	<p>Library Director:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attends all regular and special board meetings.</li> <li>• Gives appropriate public notice of meetings.</li> <li>• Facilitates the preparation of the agenda with the board president. Supervises a staff person who takes and prepares the minutes.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Relations</b>	
<p>Board of Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes and participates in planned program of public relations.</li> </ul>	<p>Library Director:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains an active program of public relations.</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serves as “connecting link” between the library and the community, interpreting the one to the other.</li> <li>• Keeps political fences mended.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interprets board policies to staff and public and involves library in community activities.</li> <li>• Keeps political fences mended.</li> </ul>
<b>Advocacy</b>	
<p>Board of Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participates in regular outreach to local, county, state and federal legislators.</li> <li>• Seeks information on state/national funding and legislative issues related to libraries.</li> <li>• Participates in New York Library Association Library Lobby Day in Albany.</li> </ul>	<p>Library Director:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes regular outreach to local, county, state and federal legislators.</li> <li>• Keeps the board informed about state/national funding and legislative issues related to libraries</li> <li>• Participates in New York Library Association Library Lobby Day in Albany.</li> </ul>
<b>Continuing Education</b>	
<p>Board of Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reads board materials and library-related publications.</li> <li>• Reads the Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State.</li> <li>• Sees that new trustees have planned orientation.</li> <li>• Attends county, System, state and national trustee-related meetings.</li> <li>• Belongs to the New York Library Association, New York State Association for Library Boards and American Library Association.</li> <li>• Budgets accordingly for continuing education for staff and trustees; and payment of appropriate professional affiliation dues.</li> </ul>	<p>Library Director:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reads the Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State.</li> <li>• Calls significant materials to attention of library board.</li> <li>• Attends continuing education offered by their System, the New York Library Association and the American Library Association.</li> <li>• Organizes orientation of new trustees.</li> <li>• Informs trustees of important meetings and workshops for them to attend. Urges travel funds be provided in the budget for trustee and staff education.</li> <li>• Belongs to the New York Library Association, New York State Association for Library Boards and American Library Association. Urges payment of dues in budget.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning for the Library’s Growth</b>	

<p>Board of Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyzes the community and considers library's strengths and weaknesses in relation to it.</li><li>• Sets goals and adopts short and long-range plans for library's growth.</li><li>• Sets priorities and decides on course of action to implement plans.</li><li>• Seeks corresponding budget increases to manage library growth.</li></ul>	<p>Library Director:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suggests and provides materials for community analysis. Helps analyze the library's strengths and weaknesses.</li><li>• Recommends plans for library's growth and means for implementing plans.</li><li>• Administers library in terms of plans adopted by the board.</li></ul>
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A key component of the director-board relationship is clear lines of communication.

The board president will have the most direct line of communication with the director. In between monthly board meetings the director and board president may meet or have phone conversations, or communicate electronically to prepare for the next board meeting and to discuss issues important to the Board. Individual trustees can channel communication to the director through the board president in between meetings.

The board is a **collective authority**. Under New York State law, a library board has broad authority to manage the affairs of the library, but it is a collective authority. Individual trustees, regardless of their position on the board, may not speak or act on behalf of the library unless they have been specifically granted that authority by a vote of the board.

At board meetings the director is an integral part of the agenda. A written report from the director should be included in the board's information packet that goes out to all board members 1-2 weeks prior to their board meeting. The director should verbally present the report as well as answer questions related to the report.

Annually it would be a good idea to meet with the current board president and ask them if there are any suggested changes they would like for your **director's report**. Trustees routinely report that they do not want "surprises" so the director's report in the board packet can become a great tool to keep the Board informed of what is going on and to prepare them for questions they may receive from the community.

Tips for writing your director's report:

- Include items the community may ask or confront them about (for example, significant changes in day-to-day operations, the facility, web site or budget)

- Financial matters that may come up later for a board vote; flag large expenditures
- Update on internal projects (examples: weeding, technology upgrades, web site redesign)
- Relevant statistics *in context*, for example:
  - Year-to-date circulation statistics as compared to last year/5 years ago and factors contributing to growth/contraction
  - Program attendance translated into a dollar value for the community
  - Library cards issued and what percentage of your service population this represents
  - Number of patrons using the library's public access computers and what it would cost them to use computers or connect to the Internet from a business like FedEx-Kinkos
  - Reference Questions: amount, trends staff are noticing
  - Volunteer hours and the dollar value they represent
- Summary of regional library director meetings
- County and State advocacy efforts on behalf of library funding
- A "take-away": something occurring in the library they can take out into the community and talk about – an upcoming program, a new service or an unexpected service that people may not know much about

### **Director Evaluation**

The Board should evaluate the director's progress in writing annually. If there is no library director evaluation policy, encourage your Board to create one. Has the director moved the library forward as set forth in the long-range plan approved by the board? This is the key evaluation point. The Mid-Hudson Library System has developed a director evaluation tool that helps the board structure the evaluation around five areas:

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

Learn more about the MHLS model and to download a customizable evaluation form at <http://midhudson.org/topics/trustees/atb-evaluating-the-library-1/>

There should be no real surprises during the evaluation if there are established lines of communication with the board president and library trustees.

### **Library Growth**

Most libraries experience growth. Growth and change in the library can take on many forms. Inside the library there is growth in technology (mobile devices, wireless technology and social networking), material formats (titles are available in book form,

large print, ebook and downloadable audio book); and movies (DVD - full screen or widescreen, original or director's cut and blu-ray)... this impacts space, cataloging and training of staff. Exterior growth factors will impact the library as well. An increase in the number of residents in the service area, change in demographics or the demise of the local newspaper will impact service in your building.

As director you should always be looking forward and around – what's going on in the community, in the publishing industry, in technology, and what factors could influence your funding – at the local, county and state level? Can you prepare to respond to all of these factors in advance for a more comfortable growth pattern?



By predicting growth “flashpoints” in your organization you can help assist your board in planning for the future and address issues before they become problems or result in bad PR. The Mid-Hudson Library System's “*Library Growth Cycle*” (shown below) can help you assess which stage of development your library is currently in and help you see what's coming next.

By looking forward you can start predicting how that next step will push on the organizational structure. [Areas covered include: Board, Management, Finances, Services, Internal Controls, External Communications, Facility, Evaluation, Technology and Friends Group]

The MHLS “*Library Growth Cycle*” is based loosely on a “Mom & Pop” restaurant growth path: As a Mom & Pop restaurant becomes more popular, demand pushes for growth and growth has impact on the infrastructure – in the restaurant setting it means Pop can no longer handle the kitchen by himself, Mom needs help in the dining room which means more staff. More staff requires personnel policies, training and an increased need for levels of management. As the owners get further from the day-to-day work the controls they put in place become more critical. The same pattern emerges for libraries as they grow. The Growth Cycle can help you identify those pressure points that signify the need for planning to avoid or lessen growing pains.

For example – if you need to increase the staff level to keep up with demand this will have an impact on the budget, policies and management categories. Are these categories robust enough to handle an increase or is it necessary to make adjustments to the personnel policy, shift management or budget categories?

# Handbook for New Public Library Directors in New York State

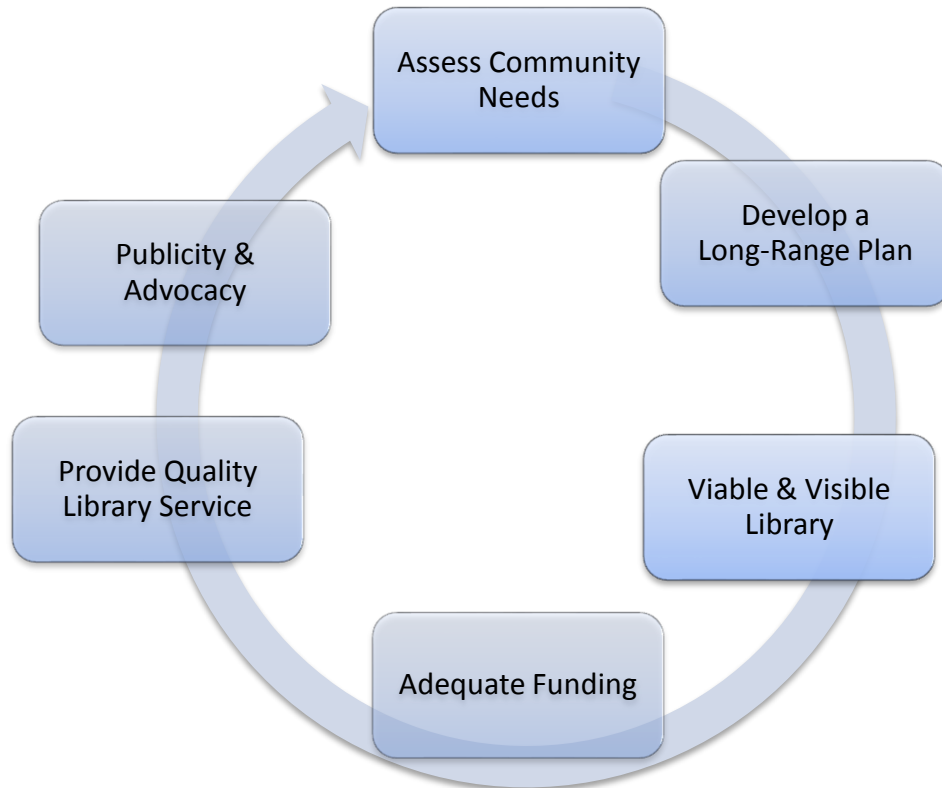
Library Growth Cycle						
STAGES						
	Mom & Pop	Extended Family	2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation	Expanding	Complex	
CHARACTERISTICS	<b>Board</b>	Involved with day-to-day operations and handles some administrative functions.	Board plans on a month-to-month basis; Director takes on more administrative duties (except financial)	Board committee structure becomes more developed. More focus on oversight. Works from a simple strategic plan.	Board moves away from administrative role into partnership role with Director. Community involvement in planning.	Board functions as a policy, planning oversight group with strong committee structure within the context of their plan.
	<b>Management</b>	Director handles most tasks. Few personnel issues. Director works less than 35 hours a week; volunteers work the desk; Director supervises all.	Director and staff work together on day-to-day basis. Overlapping tasks, informal policies. Director works at least 35 hours/week; some part-time staff and volunteers; Director supervises all.	More delegation, develop written procedures for time off, benefits. Simple job descriptions. Some departments. Full-time director and another professional; Several clerks; Director supervises all.	Written personnel manual with forms and tracking methods. More specialized job descriptions. Departments responsible for their areas. Supervisory department heads are established; Director supervises department heads.	Complete personnel manual. Formal job titles and descriptions. Extensive specialization even within departments. Director has administrative team made up of department heads.
	<b>Finances</b>	Basic budget; Board handles finances; has large role in fundraising. Sporadic third-party audit by CPA.	Simple budget with few controls. Board treasurer administers budget and purchasing process. Still fundraising for operations budget; Occasional third-party audit by CPA.	Budget is tied to plan; Bookkeeper and director deal with finances along with board treasurer; standardized budget reports; Fundraising more for special projects; Audit firm hired.	Full time bookkeeper; finance/budget committee of the board exists; Fundraising only for special projects; Control system in place; Annual audit/review by CPA.	Fiscal officer; Extensive planning; fundraising turned over to the Friends and/or development staff person; Annual full audit.
	<b>Services</b>	Some story hours; one-on-one help with technology; collection made up of popular fiction and children's	More children's programs; basic reference; wider range of fiction, more format diversity (incl. AV and large-print)	Some adult programs as well as children's; technology training; Beyond the basic reference tools; non-fiction and teen collections expanded.	Regular adult and teen programming; Separate staff reference desk; systematic collection development.	Ongoing events for all ages; Reference Department; Complete range of materials and regular collection analysis.
	<b>Internal Controls</b>	Few written policies and procedures; informal, face-to-face communication system	Internal policies and procedures begin to be documented; Written reports to board; formal communication on major issues.	Written policy manual; begin a formal communication system; board packets and regular messages to staff.	Complete policy and procedure manual; written communication to staff on most issues.	Extensive procedure manual; complex communication system based on organizational levels; possible internal blog

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<b>External Communications</b>	Basic contact information is made available in print.	Sporadic program flyers, press releases and possibly newsletter.	Regular program announcements and calendar of events; regular newsletter; Professionally designed logo.	Identity package; regular press releases; annual report to the community	Professional marketing and PR plan; PR staff or consultant.
<b>Facility</b>	No offices; maintained by the director	Several rooms; staff maintained	Director has office; PT building maintenance person	Staff offices; regular building maintenance person	Many rooms or even floors; full time building maintenance staff
<b>Evaluation</b>	Director provides circulation, card holders, program statistics periodically	Director provides more complete assessment / analysis	Development of measures tied to plan	Refinement including collection and user analysis	Ongoing analysis of all library programs and activities
<b>Technology</b>	Small and simple public access network, stand alone staff computers. No regular tech support.	Build more stable public access network. More staff file sharing. Minimal tech support.	Expanded public network with better security. Staff machines networked with file sharing. Regular computer tech support.	Public network with tight security and print controls. Internal staff network. Part time tech person.	Complicated public network and internal network. Regular full time tech employees.
<b>Friends</b>	Work as volunteers in library , assist in library events.	Build their own identity, still under library's auspices.	Develop Friends board and some own activities. Written agreement with board.	Separate organization with own identity. Larger scale events.	Fully developed organization with board and bylaws. Adjunct to library.

## **Tying it All Together:**

As you move forward in the role as director, work towards a *continuous cycle of improvement*. The success of the library day-to-day, at the polls, in fundraising and in board development will be greatly impacted by your attention to and awareness of this cycle:



Look at this cycle to determine where the library currently exists, then move forward. Once you accomplish one step, move to the next and keep it going. The basic formula is this:

1. Understand your community's needs
2. Provide services that meet those needs
3. Tell the community what you are doing
4. Get others to tell the community what you are doing
5. Repeat

When you provide quality library service based on the needs of the community and let people know what is going on, you will find that the community will be more likely to support you – whether that be to volunteer in your organization, participate in your fundraising efforts or to vote yes on the budget.



## Appendices

### Acronyms & Abbreviations

<b>3 R's</b>	New York's 9 Reference and Research Resources Systems
<b>414</b>	State library law that allow for voter fund initiatives for association and municipal libraries
<b>917</b>	State law under which Library Systems are funded
<b>ADA</b>	American with Disabilities Act
<b>ALA</b>	American Library Association
<b>ALTAFF</b>	Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations (national)
<b>BOT</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>BYB</b>	Building Your Base, MHLS project
<b>CBA</b>	Central (Library) Book Aid
<b>CIPA</b>	Children's Internet Protection Act
<b>DLD</b>	Division of Library Development (New York State Library)
<b>DHP</b>	Documentary Heritage Program of the New York State Archives
<b>E-Rate</b>	Federal reimbursement program for library telecommunications costs
<b>EDL</b>	Electronic Doorway Library
<b>ILL</b>	Interlibrary Loan
<b>ILS</b>	Integrated Library System (automated circulation software)
<b>IMLS</b>	Institute of Museum and Library Services (Federal)
<b>ISBN</b>	International Standard Book Number
<b>ISP</b>	Internet Service Provider
<b>ISSN</b>	International Standard Serial Number
<b>LAMS</b>	Library Administration and Management Section (a section of the New York Library Association)
<b>LC (LOC)</b>	Library of Congress
<b>LLSA</b>	(NYS) Local Library Services Aid (\$.31 per capita or \$1500, whichever is more for local libraries)
<b>LSTA</b>	(Federal) Library Services and Technology Act
<b>LSSA</b>	Local Services Support Aid
<b>MARC</b>	Machine Readable Cataloging - Standard for Libraries
<b>MHLS</b>	Mid-Hudson Library System
<b>NLW</b>	National Library Week
<b>NOVEL</b>	New York Online Virtual Electronic Network (state program that funds electronic databases)
<b>NYLA</b>	New York Library Association
<b>NYLINE</b>	New York Library-Line (Electronic mail service)
<b>NYSALB</b>	New York State Association of Library Boards
<b>NYSL</b>	New York State Library
<b>NYTRO</b>	New York 3R's Organization
<b>OCLC</b>	Bibliographic utility for ILL & MARC records (Dublin, OH)
<b>OGS</b>	Office of General Services (NYS)
<b>OPAC</b>	Online Public Access Computer Terminals
<b>PLA</b>	Public Library Association (division of ALA)
<b>PLDA</b>	Public Library Directors Association (New York State)
<b>PLS</b>	Public Library Section (a section of the New York Library Association)
<b>PULISDO</b>	Public Library Systems Directors Organization (New York State)
<b>RBDB</b>	Regional Bibliographic Data Base, a State-funding Line
<b>SED</b>	New York State Education Department

**Facility Plan Outline:**

- ❑ Age of major systems [roof, HVAC, plumbing, wiring, septic, etc.]; maintenance and replacement schedules

System/Equipment	Age	Preventative Maintenance Schedule	Responsibility	Replacement Schedule

- ❑ Housekeeping Standards [rest rooms, floors, mechanical room, general building]
- ❑ Accessibility Assessment
- ❑ Major Repairs Needed?
- ❑ Code Compliance [local, fire code, ADA]
- ❑ Energy Consumption Assessment
- ❑ Prioritized List of Renovation Projects
- ❑ Prioritized List of Energy Efficiency Project
- ❑ Plan for Expansion (if needed)

**Resources:**

The Library Bill of Rights, American Library Association,  
<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

Code of Ethics of the American Library Association,  
<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/proethics/codeofethics/codeethics>

List of Systems, <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/index.html>

Types of Systems: A Comparison, NYS Division of Library Development,  
<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/libtypes.htm>

Library Laws and Regulations in New York State,  
<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/fundlaw2.htm>

## Handbook for New Public Library Directors in New York State

A Librarian's Guide to Civil Service in New York State (LAMS),

<http://www.nyla.org/max/userfiles/uploads/Guide%20to%20Civil%20Service.pdf>

New York State Department of State, Committee on Open Government,

<http://www.dos.ny.gov/coog/index.html>

Library Growth Cycle, Mid-Hudson Library System,

[http://midhudson.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/growth\\_cycle.pdf](http://midhudson.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/growth_cycle.pdf)

MHLS Model of Director Evaluation, Mid-Hudson Library System,

<http://midhudson.org/topics/trustees/atb-evaluating-the-library-1/>

Public Library Glossary from the NYS Trustee Handbook,

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/handbook/glossary.htm>

Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science by Joan M. Reitz,

[http://www.abc-clio.com/ODLIS/odlis\\_about.aspx](http://www.abc-clio.com/ODLIS/odlis_about.aspx)

### **Support Organizations:**

New York State Division of Library Development <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov>

New York Library Association <http://www.nyla.org>

Mid-Hudson Library System <http://midhudson.org>

American Library Association <http://www.ala.org>

Public Library Association <http://www.pla.org>

WebJunction.org <http://www.webjunction.org/>

TechSoup for Libraries <http://www.techsoupforlibraries.org>

Your Public Library System <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/publibs/1pls.htm>