



TYPES OF LIBRARY BOARDS

Governing Board

The **Governing Board** is either elected by the general population or is appointed by the city or town's elected council. This type of board has full authority over the governance of the library. This Board hires the library director, sets policy, and works closely with the director in establishing and presenting the library's budget to the city.

Advisory Board

The **Advisory Board** typically exists where the library is a city or county department, the library director is hired by the city or county, and the library director reports directly to the city/county manager or mayor. The Advisory Board typically has no governing authority though it may be an appointed or elected Board. By law in most states, this board still has responsibility for assisting with policy setting, but does not have responsibility for the budget or the direct oversight of the library director.

TRUSTEE COMPETENCIES

General Knowledge

Knowing the role of the Trustee and director, the library's mission in the community, current library issues, and state and national laws governing libraries.

Public Relations

Participating in community events and promoting the library to local, state, and national elected officials. Attending events to promote library issues and to gain support from these officials. Promoting the library's budget request to funders.

Strategic Planning

Working with the director to develop a long-range plan for the library with input from the staff and community, as well as involvement from community-based leaders.

Fundraising

Working with the Friends of the Library group, developing partnerships in the community, creating, supporting a Foundation for the library, and promoting these activities through available media outlets.

Communications & Networking

Continuously informing local, state, and national legislators about the needs of the local library and libraries in general. Knowing the decision makers, press members, and local leaders and telling them how they can help libraries. Sharing knowledge about the library's services and contributions to the community, state, and nation. Explaining the intricate issues involving libraries. Visiting groups in the community.

Board Operations

Familiarity with the agenda and order of business, making motions, voting, minutes approval, resolutions, ordinances, executive session requirements, and state Open Meeting Act requirements for the library board.

Decision Making

Using up-to-date information for decision analysis, being prepared for all meetings, and participating fully in board actions.

Finance

Understanding the board's role in keeping the public trust. Knowing the budget process, being informed about finances, having adequate information and time for making decisions and knowing the impact on services, and being able to defend budgetary decisions.

Policy Making

Working with the director and staff to develop policies that become the basis for guiding the practices and decision making of the library administration and staff and ensuring the rights and responsibilities of library users. Regularly reviewing policies and suggesting updates.

Professional Development

Participating in the orientation of new board members. Knowing the mission of the library and how the it functions to meet this mission. Understanding the role of governing, advising, supporting, and promoting the library. Joining regional, state, and national library associations and developing budgetary appropriations allowing Trustees to attend meetings and conferences at all levels, if possible. Reading professional library publications and attending webinars that educate Trustees in library trends.