SMALL PUBLIC LIBRARY

Management

JANE PEARLMUTTER & PAUL NELSON

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As a department head/assistant director (1978–1986) and library director (1986–2008), Paul Nelson has extensive experience in all aspects of public library administration: governance, advocacy, policy development, budgeting, personnel management, facilities planning, marketing, and long-range planning. Since the mid-1980s, he has provided more than one hundred workshops on these subjects to library systems in the upper Midwest. As Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Library and Information Studies, he teaches a reference and information services course and courses in public library management and library advocacy.

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WHO DO YOU WORK FOR?

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY DEFINED ——————————

Ask a random group of people to describe a public library, and you are likely to receive a wide variety of responses. One person may appreciate the variety of print and audiovisual materials that are available for loan. Another person may feel he'd be lost without the library's public access Internet computers to keep him connected with family and friends in distant locations. Parents of small children may point to the importance of storytimes and family programs. By the time a dozen people have offered their perspectives, they'll have created a varied and detailed picture of the informational, educational, recreational, and cultural needs of the community that the library meets. From these interviews, we can obtain a subjective definition of a public library—what this vital agency means to an individual.

As the federal agency responsible for collecting, organizing, and disseminating statistics at the national level, the Institute of Museum and Library Services provides us with a concise, objective, five-point definition of a "public library":

> A public library is . . . established under state enabling laws or regulations to serve a community, district, or region, and . . . provides at least the following:
>
> 1. An organized collection of printed or other library materials, or a combination thereof;
>
> 2. Paid staff;
>
> 3. An established schedule in which services of the staff are available to the public;

4. The facilities necessary to support such a collection, staff, and schedule; and . . .

5. Is supported in whole or in part with public funds. [1]

This definition of a public library conveniently highlights the subject coverage in subsequent chapters of this book: financial management and recordkeeping, personnel management, facilities, collections, and services and programs.

Highlights in U.S. Library History

1816 First state library. Pennsylvania creates a state library agency by merging the collections of the Senate, House, and Assembly. The position of State Librarian is officially designated.

1833 First free public library. Established in Peterborough, New Hampshire, the library is maintained by a public tax, controlled and managed by town vote, and open to all community members without restriction.

1849 First free libraries authorized by a state. The New Hampshire legislature authorizes the creation of public libraries *"open to the free use of every inhabitant."*

1859 First library newspaper room. The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art offers twenty-eight daily newspapers in a reading room of just over 10,000 square feet. Open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., the reading room is "free to all persons of good moral character for the use and instruction of the working classes."

1887 First library school. Melvil Dewey establishes the world's first library school at Columbia College (now Columbia University).

1889 First children's department. Minneapolis Public Library separates children's books from the rest of the collection. A separate room is set aside in 1892.

1898 First county library. Van Wert County, Ohio, establishes Brumback Library. New building opens in 1901. Funds are provided through a county tax levy.

1905 First traveling library. The Washington County Free Library in Hagerstown, Maryland, refits a former grocery wagon with bookshelves. The wagon follows a schedule of stops throughout the county three times a week.

1956 First federal aid to libraries. Congress authorizes the Library Services Act "to promote the further development of public library service in rural areas."

1968 First online library database. The Machine Readable Cataloging System (MARC) is developed by a computer programmer for the Library of Congress.

1971 First computerized library network. OCLC, the Ohio College Library Center, is established at Ohio State University by the Ohio College Association, a consortium of fifty-four academic libraries.

1996 First online library provided by a state. DelAWARE, the Digital Library of the First State, offers links to numerous databases, reference texts, archives, and periodicals. Accessible to any resident with a current library card.

Source: Adapted from Joseph Nathan Kane, *Famous First Facts,* 6th edition (New York: H. W. Wilson, 2007).

WHERE ARE PUBLIC LIBRARIES LOCATED? ⸻

In 2007, the 9,214 public libraries in the United States served 97 percent of the total population, a figure that has remained steady for more than a decade. As shown in table 1.1, the majority of these libraries (88 percent) are located in small cities and villages with a legal service population of less than 50,000. Large public libraries may serve the majority of Americans, nearly 75 percent, but it is the small public library that has the larger number of outlets. The population service area of more than half of U.S. public libraries is less than 10,000.[2]

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE ⸻

In very general terms, public libraries in the United States are legally established under local or state law in one of three ways (see table 1.2):[3]

TABLE 1.1 : Percentage and number of U.S. public libraries by population group

Population	% of Total	Total number
Less than 1,000	11.60	1,072
1,000 to 2,499	16.50	1,524
2,500 to 4,999	14.50	1,340
5,000 to 9,999	16.10	1,483
10,000 to 24,999	19.10	1,764
25,000 to 49,999	10.30	952
50,000 to 99,999	6.00	556
100,000 to 249,999	3.60	335
250,000 to 499,999	1.10	104
500,000 to 999,999	0.60	58
1,000,000 or more	0.30	26
Total	100.00	9,214

Source: Institute of Museum and Library Services, *Public Libraries Survey: Fiscal Year 2007.*

1. *Single direct service outlet.* An administrative entity that serves the public directly with one central library, books-by-mail-only, or one bookmobile. (In the 2007 Institute of Museum and Library Services *Public Libraries Survey,* 81 percent of all U.S. public libraries fall into this category, as do 96.5 percent of libraries with a service area population of less than 10,000.)

2. *Multiple direct service outlets where administrative offices are not separate.* An administrative entity that serves the public directly with two or more service outlets, including some combination of one central library, branch(es), bookmobile(s), and/or books-by-mail-only (17.6 percent of U.S. public libraries fall into this category).

3. *Multiple direct service outlets where administrative offices are separate.* An administrative entity that serves the public directly with two or more service outlets, including some combination of one central library, branch(es), bookmobile(s), and/or books-by-mail-only. The administrative offices are separate from the direct service outlets (1.4 percent of U.S. public libraries are in this category).

Governance is also divided into categories. For its reporting purposes, the Institute of Museum and Library Services organizes public library governance structures into the following groups:[4]

1. *Municipal government.* A public library is authorized to operate within the structure of a city or village government. (In 2007, 52.8 percent of U.S. public libraries were organized in this manner.)

2. *County or parish.* A public library operates within the structure of a county or parish government (9.9 percent of U.S. public libraries in 2007).

TABLE 1.2 : Percentage of U.S. libraries by type of administrative structure and population of legal service area

Population	Single outlet (%)	Multiple outlets, administration not separate (%)	Multiple outlets, administration separate (%)
Total	81.0	17.6	1.4
Less than 1,000	99.8	0.2	0.0
1,000 to 2,499	98.5	1.5	0.0
2,500 to 4,999	97.4	2.6	0.0
5,000 to 9,999	92.0	7.8	0.1
10,000 to 24,999	81.3	18.2	0.5
25,000 to 49,999	62.4	36.1	1.5
50,000 to 99,999	30.2	66.4	3.4
100,000 to 249,999	6.9	82.4	10.7
250,000 to 499,999	1.9	81.7	16.3
500,000 to 999,999	0.0	67.2	32.8
1,000,000 or more	0.0	61.5	38.5

Source: Institute of Museum and Library Services, *Public Libraries Survey: Fiscal Year 2007.*

3. *City/county.* A public library is a multijurisdictional entity operated jointly by a city and county (1.2 percent of U.S. public libraries in 2007).

4. *Multijurisdictional.* A public library is operated jointly by two or more units of local government under an intergovernmental agreement (3.4 percent of U.S. public libraries in 2007).

5. *Nonprofit association or agency libraries.* A public library is privately controlled but meets the statutory definition of a public library in a given state. (In 2007, 14.8 percent of U.S. public libraries. A majority or plurality of public libraries in Maine, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island are organized in this manner.)

6. *School district.* A public library is under the jurisdiction of a school district (2.0 percent of U.S. public libraries in 2007).

7. *Public library district.* As an independent taxing authority, a local entity other than a county, municipality, township, or school district is authorized by state law to establish and operate a public library. (In 2007, 14.5 percent of U.S. public libraries. The majority of public libraries in Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri are organized in this manner.)

8. *Other.* This category includes Native American tribal government and combined public/school libraries, as well as the public libraries of Hawaii, which are operated under a single state agency, the Department of Education (2.0 percent of U.S. public libraries in 2007).

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Although there is no single standard of public library governance, the majority of public libraries in the United States, small libraries in particular, are organized as part of a municipal government. In almost all cases, though, the library is governed by an independent board of trustees, usually appointed but sometimes elected (as in the case of public library districts), with clearly defined, statutory responsibilities.

Although specific responsibilities may vary from state to state, a board of trustees is generally accountable for three general areas of the library's operations:

- appointing a librarian and supervising the administration of the library
- adopting an annual budget and providing financial oversight
- determining and adopting written policies to govern the operation and programs of the library

In addition, board members need to be strong and visible advocates for the library in the community, engage in long-range planning activities, and monitor and evaluate the overall effectiveness of the library's operation.

Library boards are typically made up of citizen representatives who are residents of the community or service area and who share three important traits:

- genuine interest in the library as an essential service
- familiarity with the community
- general knowledge of library policies and procedures

Citizen representation is critical for a number of reasons. First, it helps to isolate the library from political pressure. Second, it ensures that a library's collection reflects all points of view and that efforts to remove or limit access to materials are strongly resisted. Last, a citizen board means that the library is governed by the same people it serves—the public. In some instances, though, state law requires the appointment of specific representatives to the library board, such as a city council or village board liaison or the school district superintendent or a designee. State and local situations may vary, and service area population may be a factor, but generally five to nine members may serve on a library board.

Most library board members are appointed by a mayor, city manager, county executive, or other similar official. These appointments are then forwarded to the municipality's or county's governmental body for approval. Library directors have a role to play in this process through recruitment, an effort to find people who are willing to serve and who have the best interests of the library as their top priority. This task can be accomplished in several ways, including through direct contact or by developing an application form. Mayors and county executives are usually pleased to receive the names of volunteers to serve on the many boards, committees, and commissions to which they make appointments. Without this extra step in library board development of seeking out potential members, a director may end up with an appointee uninterested in or unsuitable for the assignment.

LIBRARY BOARD BYLAWS

In order to function effectively, a library board must establish the rules that govern its activities. These rules are codified in its bylaws. At a minimum, this document should specify the election of officers, scheduling of meetings, appointments to committees, and the process by which bylaws are amended.

Most boards elect a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer, a process initiated with the president's appointment of a nominating committee. The "Officers" article of the bylaws describes how they are elected and lists the responsibilities assigned to each officer. Term limits and procedures for filling vacancies are also addressed in this section.

The article on "Meetings" sets regular and annual meeting dates, describes the posting of agendas and other notices, notes the conditions for the scheduling of special meetings, and establishes a quorum—that is, the number of members that must be present in order to conduct official business. All meetings should be held in compliance with any open meetings laws and follow the rules of parliamentary procedure.

Depending on the needs and workload of the board, the president may appoint a number of standing committees, which is typically done in the areas of personnel, budget, building, and policy. Ad hoc committees are formed to study a specific issue or problem, such as long-range planning or technology, and may include staff, public representatives, and outside experts. An ad hoc committee is generally given a deadline for completing its report, at which time the group is dissolved. Committees of the board are advisory in nature. In other words, it is the responsibility of the full board to take action on specific recommendations.

Board members must abide by a code of ethics in the commission of their duties. For this reason, bylaws should address potential conflicts of interest, such as a member acting as a private citizen in negotiations with the public library over a contract in which he or she has a direct or indirect financial interest. A board member should withdraw from any discussions, deliberations, and votes that have a whiff of special interest.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LIBRARY BOARD AND THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR

The partnership between board and director works best when their separate roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and mutually respected. While the board is primarily responsible for the big picture (determining the service program, setting policy, having financial oversight), the director administers the day-to-day operations of the library (preparing reports, managing the collection, supervising other staff). The board must give the director a certain degree of autonomy in decision making. For example, if state law gives the board the authority to "audit

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An Invitation to Serve Your Library

The library depends on citizen involvement to ensure that its services are as reflective of community needs as possible.

The _____ Public Library Board of Trustees is a [9]-member board appointed by the mayor. As a policy-making body, it guides the development of library services. Terms on the board are [three years]. The board meets on the [day or week and time, e.g., second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.].

Effective trustees bring to the library a knowledge of the community, a commitment to the rights of citizens to information, and a willingness to continually maintain and strengthen library services.

If you are interested in serving on the Library Board, please complete the form below and return it to the Library Director. This expression of interest will make your name available for consideration by the mayor at the time of a vacancy but will not, of course, guarantee appointment. For more information, please contact Library Director at [phone number] or [e-mail].

Thank you for your interest in the library.

Name _____

E-mail _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Education _____

_____

Work/volunteer experience _____

_____

Skills/expertise that you can bring to the board _____

_____

_____

Source: Middleton (Wisconsin) Public Library.

Public Library Board of Trustees Job Description

References: Municipal Ordinances, Chapter _____; State Statutes, Chapter _____

Legal Responsibilities

Members of the library board are mandated by [state] law to control

- Library funds
- Library property
- Library expenditures
- Selection and hiring of a library director

Members of the library board are required to maintain open records and hold open meetings under the requirements of Chapter _____ of the State Statutes.

Fiduciary Responsibilities

Public library trustees are public officers and therefore have a responsibility to:

- Obey federal, state, county, and local laws as they relate to libraries
- Conform practices to board bylaws
- Manage all library assets wisely
- Recognize that the library's best interests must prevail over any individual interest
- Ensure adequate recordkeeping and documentation

Examples of Duties

- Select, hire, and supervise a qualified library director.
- Determine and adopt written policies to govern the operation and program of the library.
- Develop a long-range plan to meet the changing needs of the service population.
- Adopt an annual budget adequate for meeting goals and objectives; work actively for public and official support of the budget.
- Review monthly financial statements; approve reasonable expenditures that are within the approved budget; forward approved bills for payment by county.
- Negotiate, approve, and enter into contracts for services.
- Develop and maintain capital improvement plan.
- Establish, support, and participate in a planned public relations program.

Qualifications for Library Trustees

- Willingness to devote time and talents
- Ability to think clearly, question objectively, and plan creatively
- Skill in communicating and cooperating
- Awareness and appreciation of the library's past, present, and future role in society
- Willingness to become more knowledgeable about library services and standards of operation
- Ability to represent the Library Board and advocate for libraries in public forums

Collectively, the Library Board of Trustees should represent:

- A diversity of interests
- A balance of age, race, sex, and socioeconomic levels
- A variety of occupational and personal backgrounds
- A diversity of geographic areas within the Public Library's service area

Source: Middleton (Wisconsin) Public Library; adapted from Dane County (Wisconsin) Library ServiceTex.

and approve all vouchers for the expenditures of the public library," this language should not be interpreted to require that the director justify each purchase individually.

Table 1.3 clarifies the duties of the library board and library director in specific areas of shared responsibility.

TABLE 1.3 : Duties of the library board and the library director

	Library Board	Library Director
Bylaws	Adopt bylaws for board procedures.	Develop and review bylaws in consultation with board.
Staff	Employ a competent and qualified director. Review the director's organizational structure, identifying lines of authority and responsibility.	Act as technical advisor to the board. Employ and supervise all other staff members. Make recommendations on organizational structure to the board.
Policy	Determine and adopt written policies to govern the operation and program of the library.	Recommend and draft policies for board action. Carry out adopted policies, delegating responsibilities to staff as needed.
Planning/ capital projects	In cooperation with director and staff, develop a long-range plan for commitment of resources to meet the changing needs of the community.	Work together with board and staff in preparation of a long-range plan by projecting needs and trends in library service.
Budget	Review the annual budget to determine its adequacy for meeting goals and objectives. Work actively for public and official support. Explore all possible revenue sources.	Prepare the annual budget draft to achieve objectives as identified with the board. Supply facts and figures to aid in interpreting the library's financial needs. Attend budget hearings as a resource person.
Finance	Review and approve monthly financial statements in context of the annual budget.	Prepare and present monthly financial statements and bills for board action.
Public relations	Establish, support, and participate in a planned public relations program. Interpret the library's role and plans to other community boards and committees.	Maintain an active program of public relations and public information. Represent the library on other community boards and committees.
Library legislation	Know local and state laws. Actively support state and national library legislation.	Know local and state laws. Keep board informed of pending legislation, library trends, developments, and standards.
Advocacy	Report regularly to governing officials and the general public.	Report regularly to the library board, local government officials, the general public, and the state library agency.

Source: Adapted from Middleton (Wisconsin) Public Library (1986).

Building Effective Working Relationships with Your Board: Dos and Don'ts

Do
- Provide information in a concise format and timely manner (agendas, reports, proposals).
- Encourage, don't force, all board members to participate in discussions at meetings.
- Confer with board president prior to each meeting to review agenda.
- Meet with new board members, provide them with appropriate background materials, and give them a tour before their first meeting.

Don't
- Arrive late or unprepared for a meeting. (The same, of course, can be said for board members.)
- Speak in library jargon.
- Spring any surprises, such as asking board members to act on a proposal or recommendation as you distribute it to them.
- Overwhelm board members with operational details, particularly if the issue is outside their primary areas of responsibility.

WORKING WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS

The best way to work with local officials is to start at the beginning. Within the first month on a new job, a library director should make individual appointments with those elected and appointed officials—council members, county board supervisors, township supervisors, city and county administrators—who represent or serve the library's service area. It's a major commitment of time but well worth the effort in the long run. Building relationships with local officials should be an element of every library director's position description. It's the most effective way to ensure that the library has "a place at the table" when budget, policy, and planning discussions occur at the municipal or county level.

Where should these one-on-one meetings take place? At the library, of course.

The first order of business is a tour of the facility, a strategy that may help to reinforce concerns about space needs, collection development, staffing, or other high-priority issues. The official should be given the opportunity to see all areas of the library: public, staff, meeting rooms, storage. This approach provides the best impact when the tour is scheduled during a peak time of library use.

When the tour has been completed, the conversation continues in the director's office. By the time the meeting concludes, the following points will have been well covered.

The director shares his or her philosophy of library service—in essence, anticipating the question, "Why is a public library an essential service in our community?"

The director describes what he or she hopes to accomplish over the long term (e.g., a building program, new or expanded services or both, technology needs).

When asked, officials share the reasons why they chose to serve the municipality or county in their current capacity. ("What made you decide to run for the [council,

county board]?" The answer to this question may allow the director to learn if a particular official has a big-picture view or a narrow-interest agenda.)

When asked, officials share their sense of the community's or county's priorities. ("What are the most important issues facing the city/county over the next few years?" A follow-up question is in order if an official does not mention libraries unprompted.)

An important outcome of this process is that the library director becomes known to officials on a first-name basis and not just by a generic job title. In addition, the director learns how the library is perceived by officials in the overall municipal or county picture. Most importantly, though, the meetings serve as an effective way to identify the library's allies and adversaries and are important building blocks in a program of library advocacy.

Once the initial series of meetings has been conducted, the director continues this process on at least an annual basis. In other words, after each spring, fall, or special election, newly elected officials are invited to the library for a tour and informal discussion. The ultimate benefit of this meeting cycle is that the library director provides officials with a clear sense of the library's mission and goals and is not just seen as someone pleading for money at budget time.

GETTING OUT THE LIBRARY MESSAGE:
A Checklist for the Director, Board Members, and Designated Staff

Municipality
- Mayor
- City administrator
- Council members
- Members of personnel and finance committees
- Department heads

County
- Executive (or Chief of Staff)
- Board supervisors
- Members of personnel and finance committees

Township
- Chair
- Supervisors

School District
- Superintendent
- School board president
- School librarians
- Reading specialists

Chamber of Commerce
- Executive director
- Chair, board of directors

LIBRARY POLICY DEVELOPMENT ——————————

Policies provide the framework for a library's operations. They guide the decision-making process of the board, director, and staff and give a clear sense of organization to the library's ongoing activities. Policies in the areas of circulation, public access computers, and meeting rooms, for example, promote the effective use of library resources. Policies also provide the guarantee that all library users will be treated fairly and equally.

Library policies fall into two categories. External policies (circulation, reference, programming) determine how the library serves the public. Internal policies (personnel, volunteers, responsibilities of staff when the director is absent) govern library board operations and library management.

Procedures, on the other hand, are defined as the steps required to complete a specific task, such as registering a person for a library card. A circulation policy, for example, will set forth who is eligible to apply for a card and what type of identification is required but should not include a detailed description of everything a patron and staff member must do to complete the process. Many libraries develop a separate procedures manual for use in staff training (see table 1.4).

Policy development and review should be a "bottom-up" process: public input, staff, director, and board. From a practical standpoint, frontline staff members at the circulation desk, for example, are going to have the best sense as to how a policy addressing loan periods, overdues, and renewals are perceived by library users. Once a staff review has taken place, the director submits a draft policy to the library board for discussion, revision, and approval.

As the review team, the library board is responsible for ensuring that policies contain legal, clear, and reasonable language. State law, for example, might preclude public libraries

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TABLE 1.4 : Is it policy or is it procedure?

Policy	Procedure
Has library-wide application.	Has narrow application, usually specific to work flow within a department or area of the library.
Describes in broad terms the operational framework in which the library operates.	Describes in detail the specific tasks required to complete a task (e.g., processing library materials).
Addresses the issues of "what" and "why."	Addresses the issue of "how."
Is flexible enough in some cases to allow supervisors to use their discretion.	Is less flexible due to the need to follow a prescribed series of steps to complete a task successfully.
Changes infrequently and must be approved by library board.	Changes frequently and is informally agreed to by the staff involved.

from charging for services, including Internet access and interlibrary loan. Any fees applied to these services would not conform to current law and would, therefore, be illegal. If people are banned from the library for engaging in "inappropriate behavior," clear definitions of this behavior must be specified. Restricting certain types of activities (no talking, no crying babies) is likely to be unenforceable—that is, unreasonable—at certain times of the day. The board must also support the staff's efforts to enforce all policies fairly and without discrimination. No favoritism, in other words.

Before a new or revised policy is implemented, library staff members need to build awareness of any impending changes. For example, long waits for public access Internet computers may result in the need to enforce stricter time limits. Signs announcing this policy change should be posted in appropriate locations.

As the person responsible for administering board-approved policies, the director incorporates development and review as ongoing activities. To stay current, all policies should be reviewed on a three-year cycle. In addition, the director encourages staff and public input on an ongoing basis, promotes and publicizes policies with local officials and other community leaders, and ensures that policies are implemented in a consistent manner among all staff members.

POLICY CHECKLIST

The scope of a library's policy development is dependent upon the breadth of its service program and the amenities its facility provides. What follows is a checklist of standard policies. Specific issues of policy development are discussed in subsequent chapters.

Appropriate behavior. Although by design this type of policy contains some restrictions, its overall purpose is intended to be positive. It sets forth the library's commitment to providing an atmosphere where people of all ages and circumstances feel welcome and safe.

Bulletin board (public notices). Most libraries provide space for the display of public notices of events and services of a cultural, educational, or community nature.

Circulation. This policy ensures equal access for all to the library's materials and services. At the same time, it ensures that some borrowers don't abuse their privileges to the detriment of others. In an era of increased resource sharing, agreements with other libraries and consortia should be referenced and their benefits briefly explained.

Collection development. This critical policy is used by library staff to select, maintain, preserve, and weed materials. It can also serve as a tool to acquaint the public with the principles of collection development and intellectual freedom.

Emergency/disaster. Policy development in these areas requires close coordination with municipal and county governments and staff training to ensure a proper response during an emergency.

Exhibits. Many libraries provide space for the display of educational and cultural exhibits provided by local, state, and national organizations.

Gifts. At a minimum, a gift policy must clearly state that a library will accept books, audiovisual materials, and any other items with the understanding that the board has the authority to use or dispose of them however it sees fit.

Group visits and tours. Libraries encourage group visits and tours on a scheduled basis to promote their materials, programs, and services. Such visits and tours, however, should not interfere with the library's operations.

Internet use. The Internet is now an integral part of a library's service program in helping people find the information they need. Policy development in this area should not be overlooked.

Meeting rooms/study rooms. In most cases, meeting rooms are used primarily for the library's own programs. When otherwise available, they may be booked by local and area groups for programs and meetings, subject to the guidelines set forth by the library board.

Personnel. The hiring, training, supervision, motivation, and evaluation of staff are key factors in developing high-quality library service. A personnel policy provides the framework for creating a positive workplace environment.

Programs (library-sponsored). An increasingly popular feature, programs for all ages promote library materials, facilities, and services as well as offering the community an informational, entertaining, or cultural experience.

Reference. This policy addresses the three main aspects of providing reference services: personal assistance by staff, formal and informal instruction in the use of library resources, and access to a wide range of information through print and online resources and the use of interlibrary loan and document delivery networks.

Responsibility for library operations. This type of policy is particularly important in libraries without an assistant director position.

Volunteers. Volunteers enhance, rather than replace, library staffing. They allow the library to make the best use of its fiscal resources and help connect it to other community groups and organizations.

The Four Outcomes of Successful Policy Development

Builds knowledge. Increases staff members' understanding of the library's mission.

Eliminates confusion. Allows staff to answer the question, "What do I do in this situation?" without consulting a supervisor.

Reduces frustration. Keeps staff in the loop. "Nobody told me about this" is no longer an operative excuse.

Lowers stress. Allows staff to approach their work with confidence.

LONG-RANGE PLANNING

Planning for library services is one of the most important shared responsibilities of a library board and library director. A clear, concise, and credible planning document provides the community with a road map to the library's development. It distills the vision of what the board and staff hope to accomplish during a specific time period, usually three to five years. Most importantly, it describes the goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes within each selected service area and provides a step-by-step account of how the library will achieve this vision.

Long-range planning is a formal, ongoing visioning process that involves the library board, library staff, city officials, municipal or county employees (or both), and representatives from community groups and organizations (especially those with whom the library has partnerships) as well as library users and nonusers. In essence, it asks participants to answer the following basic questions about the library and its place in the community.

- Where are we?
- Where do we want to go?
- How do we get there?

Depending upon the scope of the process, a library board may hire a consultant to guide the participants through their deliberations. In most cases, though, the library director serves as the project coordinator, although the concept of using a volunteer facilitator for certain planning activities has gained traction in recent years.

LIBRARY SERVICE ROLES AND RESPONSES

Since 1980, the American Library Association has published a series of guidebooks for long-range planning. The earliest compilation, *A Planning Process for Public Libraries,* provides a comprehensive overview of procedures and activities. A follow-up volume published in 1987, *Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries: A Manual of Options and Procedures,* attempts to streamline the process and presents a menu of eight public library service roles from which libraries are encouraged to choose to focus their planning efforts. A 1998 revision, *Planning for Results: A Public Library Transformation Process,* presents a visioning element that encourages participants to look beyond the library itself and design a plan in which the community benefits from a strong, well-supported program of library services for all ages and circumstances. *Strategic Planning for Results* (2008) and its companion volume, *Implementing for Results: Your Strategic Plan in Action* (2009), titles in the PLA Results Series, provide a menu of eighteen service responses, areas in which public libraries may choose to develop specific elements of their service program (see table 1.5).

THE PLANNING TIME LINE

The latest version of the planning model takes the commitment factor into consideration by reducing the amount of time required to complete the entire process—from nine to four months[5]—as summarized in table 1.6.

THE PLANNING DOCUMENT

At a minimum, the written long-range plan will cover the following five areas:

1. *Title page.* At a glance, the document must show a clear connection to the library whose goals and objectives it presents. Include the plan's date of approval and the time period it covers.

2. *Introduction or executive summary.* The board president or library director summarizes the purpose of the document and the process that led to the publication of the committee's results. This section may also contain a brief statement regarding the library's essential role in the community and highlight the major goals and anticipated outcomes.

3. *Mission statement.* "Why do we have a library?" A mission statement answers this question by providing a succinct description of the library's purpose and lists the ways in which this mission will be accomplished.

Public Library Service Roles

Although these service roles were introduced more than twenty years ago, many small public libraries still use them as a way to set priorities in the development of a long-range planning document. They are a more manageable alternative to the comprehensive list of eighteen public library service responses. The most commonly selected service roles are Preschoolers' Door to Learning, Popular Materials Center, and Reference Library.

Community Activities Center. The library is a central focus point for community activities, meetings, and services.

Community Information Center. The library is a clearinghouse for current information on community organizations, issues, and services.

Formal Education Support Center. The library assists students of all ages in meeting educational objectives established during their formal courses of study.

Independent Learning Center. The library supports individuals of all ages pursuing a sustained program of learning independent of any educational provider.

Popular Materials Center. The library features current, high-demand, high-interest materials in a variety of formats for persons of all ages.

Preschoolers' Door to Learning. The library encourages young children to develop an interest in reading and learning through services for children and for parents and children together.

Reference Library. The library actively provides timely, accurate, and useful information to community residents.

Research Center. The library assists scholars and researchers to conduct in-depth studies, investigate specific areas of knowledge, and create new knowledge.

Source: Charles R. McClure, Amy Owen, Douglas L. Zweizig, Mary Jo Lynch, and Nancy A. Van House, *Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries: A Manual of Options and Procedures,* prepared for the Public Library Development Project (Chicago: American Library Association, 1987).

TABLE 1.5 : Public library service responses

Service response	What is addressed	What the library provides
Be an informed citizen	Local, national, and world affairs	Information to support and promote democracy, to fulfill civic responsibilities at all levels, and to participate in community decision making
Build successful enterprises	Business and nonprofit support	Tools to develop and maintain strong, viable organizations
Celebrate diversity	Cultural awareness	Programs and services that promote understanding and appreciation of cultural heritages
Connect to the online world	Public Internet access	High-speed access to the digital world with no unnecessary restrictions or fees
Create young readers	Early literacy	Preschool programs and services designed to ensure children will be ready to learn to read, write, and listen when they enter school
Discover your roots	Genealogy and local history	Resources to connect the past with the present through family histories and to understand the history and traditions of the community
Express creativity	Create and share content	Services and support to create original print, video, audio, or visual content in a real-world or online environment
Get facts fast	Ready reference	Someone to answer questions on a wide array of topics of personal interest
Know your community	Community resources and services	Central source for information about the programs, services, and activities provided by community agencies and organizations
Learn to read and write	Adult, teen, and family literacy	Support to improve literacy skills in order to meet personal goals and fulfill responsibilities as parents, citizens, and workers
Make career choices	Job and career development	Resources to identify and select career options related to individual strengths and interests
Make informed decisions	Health, wealth, and other life choices	Resources to identify and analyze risks, benefits, and alternatives before making decisions
Satisfy curiosity	Lifelong learning	Resources to explore topics of personal interest
Stimulate imagination	Reading, viewing, and listening for pleasure	Accessible materials in sufficient numbers selected to enhance leisure time
Succeed in school	Homework help	Resources for students to succeed in school
Understand how to find, evaluate, and use information	Information fluency	Information to resolve an issue or answer a question and the skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information
Visit a comfortable place	Physical and virtual spaces	A safe and welcoming physical place to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read, and open and accessible virtual spaces that support social networking
Welcome to the United States	Services for immigrants	Information on citizenship, English language learning, employment, public schooling, social services, and other topics to participate successfully in American life

TABLE 1.6 : Planning time line

Time line	Task	Steps to completion
Month 1	Design the planning process.	• Identify reasons for planning. • Define planning responsibilities. • Prepare planning budget and schedule. • Develop communication plan. • Design and present staff orientation.
Month 1	Start the planning process.	• Obtain board approval. • Select community planning committee members. • Invite committee members. • Prepare and distribute community and library information packets.
Month 1	Identify community needs.	• Present an orientation to planning committee. • Develop community vision statements. • Define current conditions in community. • Decide what needs to be done to reach community vision.
Month 2	Select service responses.	• Present overview of library to community members. • Select preliminary service responses. • Describe effect of preliminary service responses on current library services. • Select final service responses.
Month 2	Prepare for change.	• Assess the library's readiness for change. • Plan to create positive environment for change. • Review and revise communications plan. • Train supervisors and managers.
Month 2	Consider library values and mission.	• Define values. • Consider the library mission.
Month 3	Write goals and objectives.	• Write service response goals. • Write service response objectives. • Determine priority of goals and measures of progress for each unit.
Month 3	Identify organizational competencies.	• Understand organizational competencies and initiatives. • Identify organizational issues. • Write organization competencies and initiatives.
Month 4	Write the strategic plan, obtain approval.	• Write and review the strategic plan. • Submit the strategic plan for approval.
Month 4	Communicate the results of the planning process.	• Define the target audiences. • Develop a communications plan. • Develop communications to target audiences.

Source: Sandra S. Nelson, *Strategic Planning for Libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2008).

4. *Goals and objectives.* Each goal and objective agreed upon by the planning committee and approved by the library board should be included. They can be arranged in priority order or categorized by the service responses the library has chosen to emphasize. Selected examples of activities should be included to demonstrate how the goals and objectives will be achieved.

5. *Evaluation.* The document concludes with a brief statement about the ongoing nature of the planning process and how progress toward reaching goals and objectives will be measured.

COLLECTING DATA

In creating a long-range plan and administering the day-to-day business of the library, a director needs access to accurate, valid data to guide the decision-making process and to present officials with examples of the effectiveness of the library's service program. In very general terms, one subset of this data provides a current statistical overview of the library's internal operations as well as the service area's demographics. An equally important subset is the data developed by and for governments, schools, and businesses that attempts to predict future growth patterns and development. The director collects and analyzes this data to serve a number of purposes: planning, budget development, promotion, and advocacy.

Computerized library systems generate a wealth of useful statistics for library planning and evaluation. These numbers give the staff a sense of how the collection is being used—both in general terms (circulation of adult, teen, and children's materials) and within specific Dewey decimal classifications. In the latter case, for example, collection development staff can identify those subject areas where there is increased activity and adjust their purchasing patterns accordingly. Statistics may also be generated to determine library use by day of the week or

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Middleton Public Library is to make a positive difference in the quality of life in our community.

We will accomplish our mission by . . .

- Advocating for the importance of free access to knowledge, information, and the diversity of ideas.
- Defending Wisconsin's 130-year tradition of free and open access to public libraries.
- Meeting the educational, information, and recreational needs of the community through access to traditional and nontraditional library resources.
- Providing highly competent staff who work together with the library board and city officials to develop and implement clearly focused and shared goals.
- Offering a safe and welcoming environment in an aesthetically pleasing and conveniently organized facility.

Source: Middleton (Wisconsin) Public Library (2004).

hour of the day. In addition, creating spreadsheets that gather circulation statistics over a five- or ten-year period allows staff to identify trends.

As for demographic and other community information, this data ought to be right at a director's fingertips. Here are some examples.

U.S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov). People and households: estimates, projections, housing, income.

All fifty states provide a wealth of statistical information classified by counties and municipalities (population, education, health, business, and more) via their official websites.

County government is another useful source for data collection, particularly in the areas of regional trends, labor market conditions, and analyses of federal census data.

Most municipalities generate considerable statistical information and planning documents of their own. Examples of these include community profiles, comprehensive development plans, environmental assessments, traffic management plans, and planning agreements with neighboring municipalities. (If these or similar documents are not available online, the director should request a copy for the library's reference collection.)

School districts collect data on current demographics (population, race/ethnicity, poverty, disabilities) and long-range planning (residential development; enrollment history, trends, and projections). Useful information regarding the curriculum may also be obtained: academic and technology standards, library selection policies, approved novel lists by grade. For information not available online, contact the school district's administrative services center.

Local chambers of commerce are excellent sources of information about major categories of employment in the community, business trends, and economic and workforce development. A chamber's executive director should be one of the library director's key contacts.

NOTES
1. E. Henderson, K. Miller, T. Craig, et al., *Public Libraries Survey: Fiscal Year 2007,* IMLS-2009–PLS-02 (Washington, DC: Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2009), 2.
2. Henderson et al., *Public Libraries Survey.*
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Sandra S. Nelson, *Strategic Planning for Libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2008).

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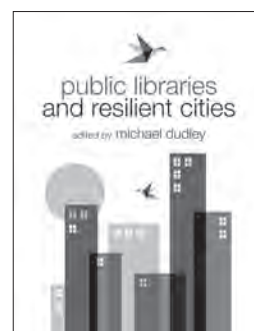**PRINT: 978-0-8389-1148-8**
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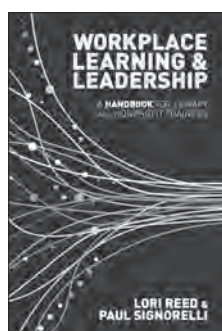WASHINGTON-HOAGLAND FOR LLAMA

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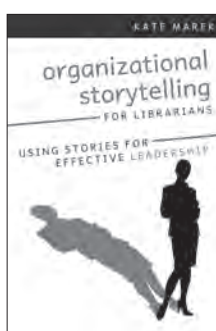
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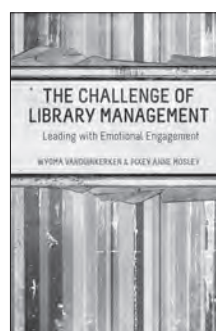
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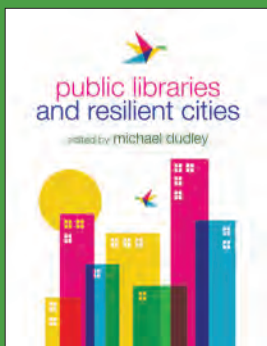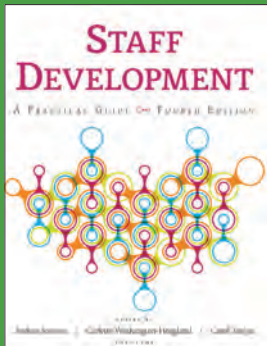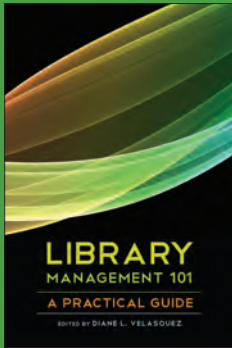**LIBRARIANS**

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