

AE 2: The Director's Job Description

Your library should have an official job description for the library director. This is an important document because it spells out the library board's expectations of you in this capacity. The job description also will often be the basis for the library board's evaluation of your job performance. If the job description doesn't match what you actually do, you should update it and seek approval of the revision from the library board.

Job Title: Public Library Director

General Function: Serve as chief executive officer of the library, implement library policies and projects, and provide leadership for improving public library service to the community.

Qualifications:

- Commitment to the mission and philosophy of public library service.
- Excellent leadership skills.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to work effectively with library trustees, elected officials, and community groups.
- Ability to supervise and motivate library staff and volunteers.

Principal Activities:

1. Work with the library board

As the library's director, you report to the library's board of trustees which has the legal responsibility for governing the library and hiring the library's director (See AE 5: Who Runs the Library). You will provide administrative support to the library board. You will normally assist the library board president in preparing the agenda for board meetings by preparing an initial draft of the agenda (See AE 7: Effective Library Board Meetings). You will compile and distribute background materials for items on the agenda. You will have a responsibility for keeping the library board informed of issues and problems relating to the library, for assisting in and promoting the continuing education of board members, and for orienting new board members (See AE 4: Working with the Library Board). You will assist the library board in the development of the library's annual budget and in justifying the budget to municipal or county officials. You will assist the library board in the development of library policies. You will bring issues facing the library to the attention of the board and present options and recommendations for dealing with those issues.

2. Public Services

You will help develop and oversee a variety of services designed to meet the needs of a diverse public. You are expected to

operate the library under a philosophy of service which puts the needs of library users first and responds to those needs in a positive, helpful, and friendly manner. In addition to the lending of a wide variety of materials to users of all ages, the library provides reference and information services, public programming, and access to electronic information. Library services are designed to be accessible to everyone in the community including individuals with various types of disabilities. (See AE 8: Public Services and AE 9: Accessible Library Services)

3. Collection Development and Technical Services

You will be expected to select or direct the selection of a collection of library materials that meets the needs of a diverse public. Selection of library materials should be based on a collection development policy which has been approved by the library's board of trustees. It is important that you and the library board review the collection development policy regularly and make sure that it is consistent with current practice and otherwise up to date. After decisions have been made about which materials to add to the library's collection, you will be expected to oversee and participate in the acquisition, processing, and cataloging of these library materials. The nature of these processes will vary from library to library. You will also oversee and participate in the circulation of library materials. The nature of this activity will depend to a large extent on whether the library participates in a shared automated library system or has its own automated library system. Your library, as a member of a public library system, will be expected to share materials with other libraries in the system and in the state through interlibrary loan. The nature of this activity will also depend on whether your library participates in a shared automated library system and will require knowledge of a variety of tools. (See AE 10: Technical Services)

4. Supervise staff and volunteers and implement personnel policies

You will be responsible for the hiring and supervision of library employees and the enforcement of personnel policies established by the library board. This includes the evaluation and disciplining of employees if necessary. You will be expected to carry out tasks related to personnel in conformity with state and federal laws. You will also be responsible for training other staff members and for facilitating their continuing library education. In some libraries you may also need to be aware of the provisions of a union contract covering the library's employees and to operate within that contract. (See AE 11 & 12: Personnel Issues)

5. Develop the library budget and manage the library's money

Each year the library must develop a budget for the next fiscal year (January 1- December 31) and present that budget to the library's governing body. It will be your responsibility to prepare

the initial budget for consideration by the library board (See AE 13: Developing the Library Budget). You will also be expected to assist in the presentation of the library's budget to the library's governing body. Once the library has an approved budget, it will be your responsibility to manage the library's finances so that expenditures stay within the approved budget (See AE 14: Managing the Library's Money). Bills to the library must be submitted each month for approval by the library board. You will be required to maintain accurate and up-to-date financial records and to report on the library's financial position in the library's annual report to the state Division for Libraries and Technology.

6. Develop policies and procedures for the library

Day-to-day library services and operations are carried under policies approved by the library board and under procedures which have been developed by the staff to implement those policies. Effective policies and procedures ensure that library services are consistent, fair, in compliance with local, state, and federal laws, and in the public's interest. You will be responsible for the initial development of policies for consideration by the library board and for creating procedures to administer these policies effectively and efficiently. You will be responsible for making sure that both policies and procedures are kept up to date. (See AE 15: Policies and Procedures)

7. Plan for the library's future

Your library and its services will be constantly changing and evolving. To ensure that these changes are occurring in a way that services to the public are improving, it is essential that the library plan for the future. Every public library should have a long range and/or strategic plan. You and the library board are responsible for developing that plan in conjunction with the library community. There are various models for developing the plan which you and the library board can follow. An important planning tool, and one you will need to be familiar with, is the publication Wisconsin Public Library Standards issued by the Division for Libraries and Technology. Because of its special nature, there also needs to be a technology plan for the library. (See AE 16: Planning for the Library's Future)

8. Advocate and promote the library

The effectiveness of the library and the way the library is viewed by the community are significantly influenced by the way you and others advocate and promote the library in the community. To effectively advocate and promote the library you need to stay informed of what is happening in your community and you need to be active in your community. Effective library advocacy and public relations require a coordinated effort by the library director, the library staff, the library board, the library's Friends of the Library organization, and library users. There are a wide

variety of proven advocacy and public relations techniques that you and others can utilize to promote the library. Support for your efforts can be provided by the public library system, the Division for Libraries and Technology, and the Wisconsin Library Association, and the American Library Association. (See AE 18: Library Advocacy, Public Relations and Marketing)

9. Manage the library facility

You will be expected to oversee the care and maintenance of the library facility in which the library is located and the grounds on which it is located. The exact nature of your duties in this regard will depend on whether the library shares a facility with other governmental entities or is a stand alone facility. Your duties will also be impacted by the role the municipal or county government plays in maintaining the facility and its grounds. You may or may not be required to supervise custodial staff. In any case, it will be your responsibility to determine problems and needs relating to the library facility and its grounds and to bring these to the attention of the library board and the municipality or county. If there is a deficiency in the amount of space that is available to the library, you will need to initiate a formal space needs assessment in conjunction with the library board. The space needs assessment may result in the need to pursue a remodeled, expanded, or even a new library facility. You will need to be aware of requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as they relate to the library's facility and make any deficiencies known to your library board. (See AE 22: Library Building Accessibility and AE 23: Facilities Management)

Sources of additional information

Trustee Essentials: A Handbook for Wisconsin Public Library Trustees
<https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/trustee-essentials-handbook>

Your library system staff: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/directories/systems>

The staff of the Division for Libraries and Technology: <https://dpi.wi.gov/dlt/staff>

Chapter 43, Wisconsin Statutes: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/statutes/Stat0043.pdf>

Gordon, Rachel Singer, *The Accidental Library Manager*. Medford, N.J., Information Today, Inc., 2005.

Written for librarians in management positions without management training. Includes a broad spectrum of management practices and theory, approaches to working with staff and the public, money management, as well as ethical and philosophical issues.

Reed, Sally Gardner. *Small Libraries: A Handbook for Successful Management*, Second Edition. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2002. Provides an overview of concepts and general practices of library administration, but not nuts and bolts information. Divided into five major

chapters: Creating a Political Base, Personnel, Collection, Building, and Service. Appendixes include worksheets for policies. A good guide for directors and trustees in a community establishing or considering its first library.

Weingand, Darlene E., *Administration of the Small Public Library, Fourth Edition*. Chicago, ALA, 2001.

Good, broad overview of public library governance and administration, including planning, marketing, policies, finance, and resource sharing.

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