

tip sheet #9

Tools for Trustees

TRUSTEE COMPETENCIES

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **Advocacy** – Participating in community events and promoting the library to local, state, and national elected officials. Attending political events to promote library issues and and to gain support from these officials.
4. **Decision making** – Using up-to-date information for decision analysis, being prepared for all meetings, and participating fully in board actions.
5. **Strategic planning** – Working with the director to develop a long range plan for the library with input from staff and citizens, as well involvement from community-based leaders.
6. **Finance** – Knowing and understanding the board's role in keeping the public trust. Understanding 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 to the citizenry through verbal and written communications.
7. **Fundraising** – Working with the Friends of the Library group, developing partnerships in the community, creating and supporting a Foundation for the library, and promoting these activities through available media outlets.
8. **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.
9. **Lobbying** – Continuously informing local, state, and national legislators about the needs of your local library and libraries in general. Knowing the decision makers, press members, local leaders/gatekeepers and telling them how they can help libraries.

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Keeping contact information current. Sharing knowledge about the library's services and contributions to the community, the state and the nation as a whole. Explaining the Intricate issues involving libraries. Visiting groups in the community to stress your point of view.

10. **Professional development** – Participating in the orientation of new board members. Knowing the mission of the library and how the library 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 at all possible, and if it will not impact staff development activities. Reading library journals and professional publications, and attending webinars to further educate Trustees in current and future trends of the library world.

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United for Libraries

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