

OLBA Joyce Cunningham Award Public Library Board of the Year

This award is given to a Public Library Board, or two Public Library Boards that participated in a collaborative effort, that has demonstrated a high level of collaboration and innovation to produce outstanding results. This award was first created in 2015.

Definition

A high-performance Public Library Board can be defined as a group of people with specific roles and complementary talents and skills, aligned with and committed to a common purpose, and who consistently show high levels of collaboration and innovation to produce superior results.

A high performance Public Library Board is regarded as tight knit, focused on their goal, and have supportive processes that will enable any board member to surmount any barriers in achieving the board's goals. Within the team, individual board members are highly skilled and are able to interchange their roles. Also, leadership within the team is not vested in a single individual; instead the leadership role is taken up by various team members, according to the need at that moment in time.

Characteristics

Some common characteristics leading to success are:

- **Participative leadership:** using a democratic leadership style that involves and engages board members to form an effective team
- **Effective decision-making:** using a blend of rational and intuitive decision making methods, depending on that nature of the decision task
- **Open and clear communication:** ensuring that the team mutually constructs shared meaning, using effective communication methods and channels
- **Valued diversity:** valuing a diversity of experience and background in team, contributing to a diversity of viewpoints, leading to better decision making and solutions
- **Mutual trust:** trusting in the board as an entity, and developing mutual trust between library staff and the board
- **Managing conflict:** dealing with conflict openly, transparently and in a timely manner so as to uphold team morale
- **Clear goals:** developing goals using *SMART** criteria; each goal must have personal meaning and resonance for each team member, building commitment and engagement
- **Defined roles and responsibilities:** each board member understands what they must do (and what they must not do) to demonstrate their commitment to the team and to support team success

- **Coordinative relationship:**ensuring the bonds between the board members allow them to seamlessly coordinate their work to achieve both efficiency and effectiveness
- **Positive atmosphere:**developing an overall team culture that is open, transparent, positive, future-focused and able to deliver success

***SMART Criteria**

- *Specific* – target a specific area for improvement.
- *Measurable* – quantify or at least suggest an indicator of progress.
- *Assignable* – specify who will do it.
- *Realistic* – state what results can realistically be achieved, given available resources.
- *Time-related* – specify when the result(s) can be achieved.

Past Recipients

2025 McKellar Public Library Board
2024 Paul Ainslie, Toronto Public Library Board
2020 Guelph Public Library Board
2019 Vaughan Public Library Board
2018 Not awarded
2017 The Board of the West Grey Public Library
2016 Inaugural Winner: Windsor Public Library Board