Resource Kit for New Library Board Members

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Introduction

The Resource Kit for New Library Board Members is intended to help new library board members understand their important role as a library director in Northern Ontario. Additional resources are listed at the end of each section for board members to explore.

A quick overview of the organization of public libraries in Ontario

The Municipal Role

Local libraries are the cornerstone of Ontario's public library system. Each municipal or county public library is governed by a public library board. The local municipal or county council establishes the public library board, appoints qualified and effective board members, and ensures the board receives the appropriate resources to provide quality public library service.

Library boards are legal entities established under the *Public Libraries Act (R.S.O. 1990, c.P.44.) and the Corporations Act.* A public library board is appointed by the municipal or county council at the start of each new council term to govern the affairs of the library (Public Libraries Act Sections 3.3, 5.3, and 7.7) and to make policy (Section 23.4).[1] The Public Libraries Act designates the library board as the decision- making and legal authority of the library (Section 3(3)). It is accountable for the whole but is NOT responsible for doing everything.

The Provincial Role

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport plays a central role in building the province's pride and economic prosperity. The Ministry administers the Public Libraries Act, and provides funding, support, and advice to libraries. The provincial government funds two public library support agencies: the Northern Ontario Library Service (OLS - North) and the Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS).

For information about programs and services offered, please visit the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport website.

Resource

Please read the Public Libraries section in Ontario in the *Library Board Development Kit.* http://www.sols.org/files/docs/develop/publications/boarddevkit/Kit2014-full_document-Final.pdf

What is governance?

The board's responsibility for governance is to:

- Define the library's purpose
- Develop and oversee the plans
- Develop policies
- Financial oversight
- Monitor the library's performance
- Advocate for the library
- Manage the board
- Ultimate authority for decision-making

Governance is defining the purpose, and overseeing the plans, policies and results of an organization. A library board governs the library by planning, hiring the CEO and delegating authority to staff to operate the library and deliver services, and by advocating with council, the community and reporting on library effectiveness.

The Skills Development team of Ontario Library Service – North (OLS – North) is available for information and training on the governance role of the library board. Contact this team by email skills@olsn.ca or by phone 1-800-461-6348 ext. 505.

Governance Resources

The *Public Libraries Act* helps ensure free, equitable access to public library service in Ontario. The Act, *Regulation 976* and General Questions and Answers are available on the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport website.
http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/libraries/legislation.shtml

The Ontario Library Boards Association (OLBA) provides board training opportunities. These may be offered at the OLA Super Conference, through regional training, webinars, and through LearnHQ. The OLBA's Leadership by Design program provides access to leadership development, governance resources, continuing education, and online resources. It is a resource for board chairs, board members, and CEOs to build leadership and governance skills.
https://www.accessola.org/WEB_TEST/OLAWEB/OLBA/Leadership_by_Design/Leadership_by_Design.aspx?WebsiteKey=397368c8-7910-4dfe-807f-9eeb1068be31&hkey=81a464f2-176e-405c-9947-765abe323df2

Board development resources are available through LearnHQ. Select Resources, then *Board-Conseil des bibliothèques* to access board resources including the Library Board Development Kit, a comprehensive introduction to library board development.
http://www.learnhq.ca/kr/One.aspx?objectId=4651119&contextId=3362634

Leadership by Design is now available on LearnHQ as a free online learning program specifically designed for public library board members and CEOs. Module 1 features: effective participation in board meetings, roles and responsibilities, understanding legislation and policies, assessing community needs.
http://www.learnhq.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=3068607&pageId=5110317

Ontario Library Association's (OLA's) Education Institute (EI) is a continuing education program for library workers. The program offers one-hour webinars and 3- to 6-week online courses for libraries.
http://www.thepartnership.ca/web/PARTNERSHIP/Education_Institute/Welcome/PARTNERSHIP/Education_Institute/Welcome.aspx

Strategic Planning

The board's responsibility for planning is to:

- Represent the community
- Establish a library mission statement
- Identify service priorities
- Develop strategic plan, goals and objectives
- Monitor and evaluate services to ensure the library is serving the community, responding to its needs, and achieving its goals
- Secure funding to support the plan and library operations
- Develop plans in the best interests of the community

Strategic planning defines the library's role in the community, outlines library goals for the future, and establishes objectives and actions. Thus, many boards review and revise plans in each board appointment cycle.

The *Public Libraries Act* states that boards are to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service that reflects the community's unique needs (Section 20(a)). The board is responsible for planning library services that meet community needs by consulting with the community. Planning helps the board to know, for example, what services are needed and in which language, which opening hours work best for the majority of the community, whether branch services are needed, and training needs of staff. Through planning, a board develops a vision for library services in the community. Planning relates to the fiduciary duty of the board – to act honestly and in good faith and in the best interests of the community.

Library boards must be able to govern and oversee the library operations from a strategic perspective. Planning provides that perspective and a stable framework for operations. Through planning, a board defines the library's mission in the community. The mission drives the plan and the plan drives the library's strategic priorities and goals over the board's term. The strategic plan influences the library's budget and operational plans.

It is important for boards to know what information is needed to demonstrate accountability and that the library has met its goals and objectives. The board reports to municipal council, the community, and the Ministry on how well it achieves objectives.

<u>Planning Resources</u>

The OLS – North Skills Development team assists library boards with strategic planning, survey design and analysis, facilitation, and compilation of the plan.

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport maintains and publishes statistics on public libraries in Ontario using data from the Annual Survey of Public Libraries. These statistics cover holdings, programs, services and partnerships, library uses and many other subjects.
https://www.ontario.ca/data/ontario-public-library-statistics

Please read the Planning section in the *Library Board Development Kit*.
http://www.sols.org/files/docs/develop/publications/boarddevkit/Kit2014-full_document-Final.pdf

Policy Development

The board's responsibility for policy development is to:

- Discuss policy issues in relation to a library's philosophy and priorities
- Adopt and approve policy
- Review and revise policy on a regular basis

A major governance responsibility of the board is to set policy. Policies define the organization's philosophy, principles, and rules and are integrated with the library's mission. Policy provides the framework for all library activities that will accomplish the library's goals. Regular policy review demonstrates accountability.

Policy Resources

The OLS – North Skills Development team assists library boards by providing sample policies and is available to review policy. The team assists boards interested in pursuing accreditation by conducting a pre-audit policy review using the *Ontario Public Library Guidelines.*

The *Ontario Public Library Guidelines* were developed by the Ontario public library community to help improve the quality of public library service across the province. Using the guidelines helps develop a comprehensive process and plan for improvement. Public libraries who meet the guidelines requirements may request a formal audit. Libraries which pass the audit successfully are recommended to the Guidelines Council for accreditation.
http://www.ontariopubliclibraryguidelines.ca/

Please read the Policy section in the *Library Board Development Kit.*
http://www.sols.org/files/docs/develop/publications/boarddevkit/Kit2014-full_document-Final.pdf

Financial Oversight

The board's financial responsibilities are clearly laid out in the Public Libraries Act (Section 23).

The board's responsibility for finances is to:

- Oversee the finances and the library audit
- Determine how much money the library needs to operate and meet community needs
- Appoint the auditor
- Advocate with municipal council for needed funding
- Establish and review financial policies
- Understand the implications of a budget and financial reporting
- Monitor library finances
- Demonstrate accountability to council, the province, and the community
- Act with due diligence, honestly and in good faith and in the best interests of the corporation[2]

Municipal governments provide the majority of operating funds for most public libraries in Ontario. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport issues an annual public library operating grant to legally-constituted public library boards. In addition, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport provides special funding to public libraries from time to time through strategic funding programs and other special purpose funding.

The board is accountable to the municipal council, the province, and the community to guarantee allotted funds are spent to meet community needs and in accordance with the budget. Ask your CEO about reporting requirements to the municipality and the province. The board monitors the budget and is the ultimate decision maker with fiduciary responsibility.

Financial Resources

Please read the section on Financial Oversight in the *Library Board Development Kit*.
http://www.sols.org/files/docs/develop/publications/boarddevkit/Kit2014-full_document-Final.pdf

Responsibility for Staff

The board's responsibility for staff is to

- Set the policies, plans and budgets within which the chief executive officer (CEO) operates the library and manages staff
- Hire the best CEO for the library
- Set the CEO's terms of employment
- Delegate authority for library operations to the CEO
- Evaluate the CEO based on performance goals, often related to the library's strategic plan

The library board employs library staff as defined in the *Public Libraries Act*, Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1990, chapter P.44, which states:

A board may appoint and remove such officers and servants as it considers necessary, determine the terms of their employment, fix their remuneration and prescribe their duties. Section 15 (1)

Boards ensure the library is properly run through planning and policy and by hiring a paid library expert. A major responsibility of the board is to hire a chief executive officer:

A board shall appoint a chief executive officer who shall have general supervision over and direction of the operation of the public library and its staff, shall attend all board meetings and shall have the other powers and duties that the board assigns to him or her from time to time. Section 15 (2)

While the board is accountable for the library's services, it is not responsible for managing the programs or the people who carry out those programs. The board is responsible for selecting the best CEO it can find. The chief executive officer is the one who carries out the board's plans and implements the board's policies. The board creates a comprehensive job description for the CEO and decides on the qualifications and skills required for the position. The board sets the CEO's terms of employment such as hours of work, salary, and benefits. A board may set a probationary period for a newly hired CEO.

The board delegates authority for library operations to the CEO. Hiring, evaluating, and directing the CEO's work is an important board function. The board establishes library policies, budgets, and plans within which the CEO operates the library.

The library board is responsible for evaluating the performance of the CEO in carrying out his/her responsibilities as an advisor to the board and as administrator of the library's day-to-day activities. The board and CEO agree to establishing performance goals, often based on the library's strategic plan and achieving its outcomes.

The board is not responsible for managing staff or for staff performance. The CEO ensures library staff works within the board's policies. The board creates a positive workplace by defining clear goals for library services, approving a written personnel policy, establishing salaries and benefits, and providing a budget for on-going training. Boards need to be aware of how employee-related legislation and, in some cases a union agreement, affect personnel policies and procedures.

Responsibility for Training

The board's responsibility for training is to

- Identify core services
- Approve a training policy
- Approve a training budget

The board ensures there is a budget to offer training to the CEO, staff and board members. Through the planning process, the board identifies core services and the CEO identifies core competencies required of staff. These core competencies drive the training plan for library staff. The board approves a training policy and budget to ensure all staff receive ongoing training to acquire basic library skills and the technical skills needed to meet changing library needs. The CEO implements the board-approved staff training plan within the approved budget.

Training Resources

Assistance is available from OLS - North for the selection of new CEOs. For information, please contact Ontario Library Service North's CEO.

OLS - North staff are available to advise and train new CEOs about their role and responsibilities. The Skills Development team orients new librarians to their responsibilities and assists with cataloguing, collection development and weeding, working with the board, and provincial reporting requirements. The Technology team supports the Joint Automation Server Initiative (JASI) and website development. The Skills Development team provides training for library boards in a number of areas such as orientation for new library boards, planning, and policy development.
OLS - North: Our Services

The OLS - North mentorship program pairs an experienced librarian (the mentor) with a new librarian (the mentee) with the aim of increasing the knowledge and skills of new CEOs in the north and building strong northern public libraries. The mentorship program launches at the annual conference and runs through to the following year. For more information contact the Skills Development team.
OLS - North: Mentorship Program

OLS - North offers training to client libraries at annual area networking meetings. Additional training may be offered to library board members and to library staff. The OLS - North annual conference offers a selection of training opportunities for library staff and board members. A vendor exhibit offers access to books, electronic resources, and other material. A presentation archive from past conferences is available on our website.
OLS - North: Networking Meetings

From time to time, OLS - North may host summits to provide intensive training to library CEOs. Past summits have included Leadership Summits which provide professional development opportunities to strengthen the library CEO's leadership skills and strengthen community relationships. Technology Summits have focused on library technology trends. A Policy Summit provided CEOs an opportunity to develop skills in evaluating library policy issues and draft policy for presentation to the board.

The OLS – North has produced toolkits in various areas to assist library boards and staff.
OLS - North: Resources

The OLS - North webinar series offers sessions of interest to public library board members, public library staff, and First Nations librarians. Webinars are usually one hour long. There is no cost to participate and registration is required.
http://www.olsn.ca/webinars/

The Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS) has compiled the Competencies Index for Public Library Staff. Competencies are the skills, abilities, and knowledge needed for successful job performance and achievement of organizational outcomes. It can be used to develop job descriptions, job ads, and performance appraisal systems, as well as planning for staff development and succession.
https://www.sols.org/index.php/develop-your-library-staff/competencies2/competencies-index

Advocacy

The board's responsibility for advocacy is to:

- Understand the board's role in advocacy
- Know how the library supports community priorities, supports informal and formal education of community members, provides access to new technologies, and supports community development
- Build relationships with members of council, and other elected officials and the community
- Understand community priorities
- Be able to tell stories on how the library supports community priorities

Advocacy is about connecting agendas. Advocacy is an important role for the board and the CEO. The board advocates for the library's services with the municipal council and in the community. It reports to council and to the community on the library's effectiveness in meeting community needs, and advocates for the necessary resources to deliver services. The board advocates while the CEO maintains an active public relations program, including promoting library services in the community.

Advocacy is an ongoing process that builds council and community support and understanding of library issues. Advocacy identifies how the library helps build community capacity and advances municipal goals. Advocacy can help the board improve the library's profile in the community. It is important for the board to discuss and agree upon advocacy messages that are communicated by board and staff.

The CEO speaks with other paid employees while the board speaks to other boards and elected officials. Advocacy targets for board members may include your municipal chief administrative officer, clerk, mayor or reeve, councillors, municipal staff, Chamber of Commerce, other community boards, the Ministry, and other levels of government.

Advocacy Resources

The Ontario Library Service – North has produced toolkits on community development to assist library boards in evaluating how the library supports and contributes to the community's development.

Please read the sections on Key Relationships and The Library Board and the Community in the Library Board Development Kit.
http://www.sols.org/files/docs/develop/publications/boarddevkit/Kit2014-full_document-Final.pdf

The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) is a non-profit organization with a mandate to benefit Ontario public libraries through advocacy, research, and marketing. For example, to assist library boards in preparing for the Ontario Election 2014, FOPL posted information on how boards can engage candidates and stakeholders on the value of Ontario's libraries. http://fopl.ca/news/ontario-election-2014-ontarios-librariesontario-election-2014-ontarios-libraries/

The iSchool has developed a free MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) entitled "Library Advocacy Unshushed: Values, Evidence, Action", for libraries to learn how to be powerful advocates for values and the future of libraries and librarianship. This course takes a strategic, evidence-based approach to advocacy for the future of strong communities. https://www.edx.org/course/library-advocacy-unshushed-university-torontox-la101x#.VKxgH3sa23O

Environment in which Public Libraries Operate

In today's environment, public libraries in Northern Ontario are faced with several changes and challenges. Communities are facing increased demands for limited community resources. It is important for library boards to know their roles and responsibilities, practise effective governance, understand community goals and challenges, and communicate the value of the library to the community.

Research compiled for the Ontario Library Service – North highlighted demographic, political and social trends for Northern Ontario that could affect the provision of library services in our communities. It is important for library boards to be aware of larger trends and consider how these trends influence local libraries.

A Northern Ontario profile

Northern Ontario covers over 90% of the province's land area with only about 4% of Ontario's population (775,178[3] with a population density of 1 person per 1 km²).[4]

- Almost two-thirds of Northern Ontario's population lives in the Northeast.
- People in Northeastern Ontario are older than those in Northwestern Ontario, with almost 75% of the North's seniors living in the Northeast.
- Over 30% of the population of Northeastern Ontario will be seniors by 2036.
- About 16% of the population is Francophone with the majority (95%) living in Northeastern Ontario.
- The Northwest experienced the highest rate of population decline (5%).
- The Northwest has a higher percentage of children (17%) than in the Northeast (14%).
- About 40% of Ontario's Aboriginal population lives in the North.
- Aboriginal people represent almost 13% of Northern Ontario's population. In some provincial districts this percentage rises as high as 40%.
- The Aboriginal population is growing and is increasingly younger with almost 30% under the age of 15.
- A large share of workforce entrants over the next few years will have an Aboriginal identity in the districts of Manitoulin, Kenora, Rainy River, and Sudbury.
- Since the last census, employment rates have decreased in Northeastern Ontario (-7.3%), and increased in Northwestern Ontario (2.6%).
- The economy in Northeastern Ontario has been in a decline with a loss of 6,400 jobs reported in 2012. The lumber sector is beginning a slow recovery. The precious metals sector continues to grow in Timmins, Cochrane and Kirkland Lake. A graphite mine is expected to re-open in the Kearney area.

- Full-time employment in Northwestern Ontario grew due to capital investments in the primary sector, forestry and mining, and high commodity prices for metallic minerals. Exploration projects in areas around Sioux Narrows, Rainy River, Marathon, and the James Bay lowlands have potential to become producing mines within the decade. Bio-mass products have created opportunities in Atikokan and Terrace Bay.
- Although resource-based industries still form the economic backbone of the North, it has diversified with growth in sectors such as health care, social services , and education as key industries.
- Tourism, eco-tourism, fishing and hunting, camping, and outdoor adventuring contribute to the Northern economy.[5] New opportunities are being created based on Northern Ontario's unique history, heritage, and diverse natural environment. These are complemented by First Nation and Francophone cultural initiatives.
- A lower municipal revenue stream caused by an aging population and outmigration is creating a competition for municipal funds.
- AODA will pose challenges for municipalities and libraries needing to update and replace existing buildings.

Library boards need to be aware of all the changes that affect public library services in the community and be able to assess and identify local implications for staffing, collections, facilities, and technology. The OLS – North client survey results showed that libraries are concerned about funding, changing demographics (age and population), technology trends, and staff training.

Library Trends

The library board needs to be aware of library trends and consider the implications for the local library.

- Changing and increasing demands on library resources (e.g. staffing, funding, infrastructure, time) impact a library's ability to offer needed services.
- Electronic formats (e-books, e-audio books, etc.), web-based services, and technology-based services are increasingly relevant in libraries.
- Community members increasingly turn to library staff for help with digital devices and for access to online resources.
- Library buildings are increasing more collaborative, multi-function community spaces.
- Libraries continue to cope with inadequate facilities that neither meets community needs or legislative requirements (e.g. AODA).

Province-wide Library Initiatives

Current province-wide initiatives that will benefit public libraries include:

- LearnHQ is provides a single access point for discovering library-related training opportunities.
- OLA and FOPL received a multi-year Cultural Development Fund Grant to create tools and a learning cycle to increase the effectiveness and capacity of public library boards. This training is available through LearnHQ.
- The Ontario Library Service agencies organized a follow-up initiative to Libraries 2020. Libraries 2025 was a symposium which looked toward 2025 to identify important trends for public libraries.
- After a few years of research and strategic thinking, FOPL has launched some of the components of the province-wide marketing plan as recommended in the Libraries 2020 and Libraries 2025 Summits. This tagline is designed to complement a library's own taglines and efforts. Branding and usage guidelines will be released in French and English. "A **Visit** Will Get You **Thinking.**" - http://www.thinkaboutlibraries.ca/

For more detailed information about environmental changes across the North, please refer to the *Ontario Library Service – North Strategic Plan 2015-2018*.

[1] For more information about board composition, please refer to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport's Public Libraries Act Questions and Answers for Public Libraries.
http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/libraries/act_q_a.shtml

[2] Duties and Liabilities of Directors in Canada. MacMillan LLP.
http://www.mcmillan.ca/files/Overview_duties_and_liabilities_of_directors_in_Canada_a1.pdf

[3] 2011 Census Results for Population In: Northern Ontario Declines.
http://northerneconomist.blogspot.ca/2012/02/2011-census-results-for-population-in.html

[4] Dremin, Hal. Welcome to Northern Ontario. PowerPoint prepared by TISS Unit, Northern Development Division, Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. 2011.

[5] Ontario Profile. http://www.focusnorth.ca/english/province/ontario.php