

# Responsibilities of the Board and the Director

---

Many titles exist for the person in charge of the Library – Chief Librarian, CEO, Director, The Librarian, etc.

As a not for profit board, the library board employs a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as its primary employee. Many boards are reluctant to use this term but an agency needs a CEO and the Director is that person. Some areas (e.g. Ontario) have legislated the term CEO to designate the Library Director.

In British Columbia, the Library Act uses the term Chief Librarian (similar to Chief Constable) but this is less common today. Some cities (e.g. Vancouver) use the term City Librarian (similar to University Librarian and making it clear that it is more than a municipal department head).

More common is the title “Director”, implying Director of Library Services, similar to other city department heads who carry that term. The term used in this document for consistency is Director.

Regardless of the term used for the role and job description, the Board has but one employee. The Director is the interface between the Board and the staff, serving as secretary to the Board and Director of the staff. The Director ensures that the Library is operated according to the Board’s plan, its policies and its priorities. The relationship with the Director must be a positive, creative partnership if the Board is to fulfill its mandate.

When the Board, or worse, individual trustees, become involved in the management of the library, they confuse roles and responsibilities and remove clear lines of authority and accountability. More successful boards grant appropriate authority and power to their Director and provide support for the carrying out of their mandate. Their mandate is prescribed and proscribed by written strategic plans and directions, policies and approved annual work plans.

It is important to note that individual trustees have no authority except insofar as they form part of a board. Only the Chair speaks for the Board; only the Chair gives direction to the Director on behalf of the Board.

# Responsibilities of the Board and the Director

---

Effective boards recognize the creative and constructive partnership between the Board and its Director. The Board will never be successful without a successful and supported Director. The Director will never be successful if the Board chooses to interfere in his or her sphere of influence. This is not to suggest that informal communication is not important between the Director and individual trustees.

Directors have three primary audiences: the Board; the library; the community. Typically, the job is divided almost into three equal slots of time. When evaluating the Director, the Board needs to collect evidence from time to time from the library and from the community. This needs to be done during periods of formal evaluation and with integrity, fairness and objectivity.

It is reasonable to expect that most boards will have policies on succession management and procedures in place to develop senior staff to fill in for the Director from time to time and be able to assume directorial responsibilities.

---

**Board:** Trustees are guardians of a “public trust” (hence, “trustees”) to ensure that the library provides relevant, comprehensive, and efficient service to the community it serves. The Board represents the community and sets strategic directions and policies on its behalf, employs a Director to implement its plans and priorities, and monitors and evaluates that implementation. The Board works closely with its one employee, its Director, through mutual trust and respect, recognizing mutual rights and responsibilities and professional expertise.

**Director:** The Chief Librarian (the term used in the Library Act) is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the library to fulfill the library's mission and acts as an advisor to the Board. The Director is the link between policy and operations.

# Responsibilities of the Board and the Director

---

## Operational Roles and Responsibilities

<b>OPERATIONAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b>		
	<b>BOARD</b>	<b>DIRECTOR</b>
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>	Employ and evaluate a Director Approve policies	Has a delegated authority to hire, manage and evaluate staff within approved policies
	Recruit, orient, and support new Board members	
	Develop Board as an effective team	
	Evaluate Board	
	Provide learning opportunities for Board development	
<b>FINANCE</b>	Secure adequate funds to carry out the library's programs and services	Prepare regular financial reports
		Prepare an annual budget in consultation with the Board
	Approve the budget Audit finances	Monitor the budget
	Present budget to Council	
	Provide suitable funds for facilities and equipment to enable the library to serve the community	Manage the facility and the equipment
<b>SERVICES AND PROGRAMS</b>	Determine and adopt written policies to govern the operation of the library	Carry out the policies of the library as adopted by the Board
	Provide appropriate oversight for current operations	Implement day to day operations

# Responsibilities of the Board and the Director

---

<b>TRADITIONAL UNDERLYING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b>		
	<b>BOARD</b>	<b>DIRECTOR</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE</b>	Develop vision and values for the future of the library	Work with staff and Board on developing vision and values for the future
	Determine the mission of the library and set the rate of progress to fulfill the mission	Plan programs and services to fulfill the library's mission and mandate
	Review mandates, missions and values	Review mandates, missions and values
	Identify strategic challenges and set strategic direction	Advise the Board on strategic challenges
<b>ADVOCACY</b> building understanding and support through networks of influence in order to secure sustainable resources to carry out the Library's mission, programs and services	Act as the community face for the library	Act as the professional face for the library
	Support and participate in a planned public relations program	Develop and maintain an active program of marketing and public relations
	Report regularly to governing officials and the general public	Report regularly to the Library Board, government officials and the general public
	Develop relationships with key appropriate external stakeholders	Develop relationships with key appropriate external stakeholders
	Secure the community's support and appreciation for the advancement of the library's mission	Secure the community's support and appreciation for the advancement of the library's mission