

## SECTION I. INTRODUCTION / ORIENTATION

### PURPOSE

As a director or other top public librarian in Louisiana YOU ARE NOT ALONE! Due to our state-legislated parish library systems, the similar library funding structures found across the state, and the similarities in local governance, there are problems, needs, solutions and experiences which you share with your administrative colleagues. This handbook was compiled to serve as a practical guide for you and your peers. Its intent is to illustrate how and why administrative tasks are generally performed in order to provide something concrete to apply to your library's unique situations.

The handbook is also meant to complement and expand upon the role of a public library director as described in the Handbook for Louisiana Library Trustees. As with that fine handbook, the present text hopes to facilitate the networking approach to problem solving by referencing the relevant agencies, laws, organizations, and resources you might utilize for more specific information. Whether you are a brand new director, or steeped in years of experience, it is hoped this handbook will provide a valuable source of information in those areas of public librarianship not specifically covered in library school, in the trustees' handbook, or other resources.

### CERTIFICATION

By law, the director of any public library in Louisiana must be certified by the State Board of Library Examiners. A brief description of the laws relevant to certification follows. [Louisiana Revised Statute \(L.R.S.\) 25:215](#) empowers the public library board of control to hire the library director, and this librarian must be certified by the State Board of Library Examiners. [L.R.S. 25:222](#) creates this state board, appointed by the Louisiana State Board of Library Commissioners, to consist of "three experienced and trained librarians" who must hold examinations at least once a year to test applicants for certification.

The following are the current regulations and requirements the State Board of Library Examiners has established for certification:

The State Board of Library Examiners issues two types of certificates:

#### EXECUTIVE PROVISIONAL

Requirements to be met by candidates for Executive Certificates are:

- A baccalaureate degree.
- Professional education, culminating in a master's degree of library science, representing a minimum of five years of study beyond secondary school level.

This degree must have been granted by a library school accredited by the American Library Association.

- Three years appropriate executive experience, after receiving the master's of library science degree.
- Meeting CE requirements as established by the State Board of Library Examiners.

Candidates for Provisional Certificates must have all of the above qualifications except the years of executive experience. Such certificates are issued by the Board only as emergency measures. It is expected that individuals holding Provisional Certificates will qualify for Executive Certificates within three years.

Candidates must attain a grade of at least 75 in the examination to be granted a certificate.

The examination covers the following aspects of public library service:

- Library organization and administration
- Library budgets and financial operations
- Standards for library service
- Louisiana library law
- Current status of library development in Louisiana

The examination includes both oral and written components. The oral examination includes an interview with the candidate. In addition, the written statements from references supplied by the candidate are used in evaluating the candidate. Application blanks for permission to take the examination may be obtained from the State Board of Library Examiners, State Library of Louisiana, P.O. Box 131, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0131.

At the time of application for examination, all applicants for certificates as librarians shall pay a fee of \$5.00 to defray expenses of the Board, as required by L.R.S. 25:222.

The examination is given annually on the last Friday in September, unless circumstances necessitate a change of date. Announcement of the examination is made at least two months before the examination is given, and all applications for that examination must be on file in the State Library not later than a month before the date of the examination. In an emergency, with special permission of the Board, a candidate may be permitted to take the examination if the application is received after the announced deadline.

The Board reserves the right to cancel any announced examination if fewer than three candidates signify their desire to appear.

Any certificate may be revoked for cause.

An Executive Certificate is issued for five years, and is renewable if the holder of same is serving in a satisfactory administrative capacity in a city, parish or state library position and has fulfilled the continuing education requirement.

A Provisional Certificate may be changed to an Executive Certificate without the necessity of another examination if the holder completes the prescribed amount of appropriate executive experience.

State Library consultants can be contacted for assistance on how to apply and prepare for the yearly examination, as well as for an explanation of the continuing education requirement for renewal.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

Continuing Education (CE) is not a luxury - it is imperative to seek additional training in a variety of areas, whether you are fresh out of library school or a veteran of library work. The pace of change is so great in technology, in legislation, in management techniques, in information collection, and in the expectations of patrons and staff. As librarians, none of us can or should be expected to rely only on skills from the past or "on the job" learning. Taking advantage of far-ranging CE opportunities is widely accepted as a prime tool for coping with change: an important way of our keeping up and benefiting library users in these rapidly evolving times.

In [Standards for Louisiana Public Libraries 1995](#), the Standards Committee of the Louisiana Library Association's Public Library Section states its strong support for CE and staff development.

To insure proper support for CE the director must start with the library board. The members of the board should be educated about the benefits of continuing the education of library employees. Their approval of policies and financial support for CE is the first step toward a successful program of ongoing education. A permanent budget item to cover workshops and travel to association meetings is crucial to CE efforts.

Once the library trustees understand the importance of CE for bettering the effectiveness, morale, and service attitude of library employees, the director should take the CE message to the staff. The director must lead the way in library association membership and workshop attendance to create a positive atmosphere toward CE for professionals and all other staff. Administrators should stress the career enhancing aspects of CE and the benefits to the community once the skills from CE are put to work in the library. All workshop or conference attendees should be encouraged to report on and keep files on their CE experiences.

Maintaining a foundation of support for CE will be an ongoing task. The following are some specific habits you can foster to accomplish this:

- Encourage formal and informal discussion of CE experiences and future opportunities. Stress willingness to try and apply what is learned.
- Get involved with local, state and national professional associations--whatever your current situation affords, and work to expand your involvement in terms of funding and people. The networking contacts you and your staff make will surely help out in some crisis your library will face in the future.
- Subscribe to and read professional journals and newsletters--library and otherwise. This is a good form of CE in itself, and a logical source for learning about relevant, upcoming CE events. There are many excellent newsletters dealing directly with library issues. Also look for publications concerning areas generically related to running public organizations, i.e. fiscal management, community relations, personnel, and so on. Ask fellow directors what periodicals they read for timely, pragmatic approaches to their problems - they will tell you!

- Cull through your daily mountain of junk mail for potential workshops and conferences. There are many reputable companies constantly offering one or two day opportunities on general workplace issues, such as supervision, stress management, getting the most out of your computer, and so on. A CE experience outside the strictures of pure library topics can be invigorating and can often give you some new ways to address old problems.
- Attend workshops, conferences and meetings - take a chance! There will be that occasional workshop or meeting which, at the time, you feel is worthless. It may seem devoid of even a single positive attribute, or so different from what it was billed as that you are frustrated with the lost time. Don't despair; something may come of the experience later. If not, the occasional flop is worth the risk to get you to the invaluable functions you do benefit from.

### **Sources of CE**

There are ongoing opportunities and sources of CE from local levels on up to the national scene. Most organizations include some program to ensure CE for their members. The following are some specific sources of CE relevant to Louisiana libraries, presented with brief explanations of their CE record and projects.

Louisiana Library Association (LLA). The annual spring conference presented by LLA is a primary CE event for all Louisiana librarians. The Public Library Section of LLA is only one of many sponsoring pre-conferences and workshops of relevance to public librarians. LLA publishes the quarterly Louisiana Libraries (formerly, the LLA Bulletin). In addition to articles and reviews, each issue contains a calendar of upcoming local and national conferences, and other CE events. LLA has a CE committee charged to promote continuing education across Louisiana. The CE Committee compiles a talent bank of speakers and surveys the CE needs of the state. <http://www.leeric.lsu.edu/lla/>

American Library Association (ALA). ALA, its divisions (such as the Public Library Association) and other national organizations sponsor a plethora of conferences, workshops, CE committees, journals, book publishing, videos, and other educational items and events. Information on these CE opportunities is readily available from the headquarters of the organizations, or through their associated journals.

<http://www.ala.org>

Southeastern Library Association (SELA). Louisiana joined this regional association after the Southwestern Library Association disbanded. Begun in 1920, SELA now holds joint conferences every two years with the library associations of its various member states. Its official journal is the Southeastern Librarian. SELA objectives, as stated in the 1988 Southeastern Library Association Handbook, are to "promote library and information services in the southeastern region of the United States through cooperation, research, and the encouragement of staff development."

<http://www.seflin.org/sela/>

[State Library of Louisiana](#) (SLL). The State Library is committed to CE in nearly all of its functions. The Spring and Fall Administrative Librarians Conferences that the State Library presents each year target public library directors and assistant directors. The conferences present speakers and discussion sessions on current issues facing Louisiana librarians. The conference topics also include news on upcoming library activities such as the annual Summer Reading Program. These meetings are great networking opportunities -- a good time to talk shop with people doing the same work as you do. Recent conference topics have included tax elections; library automation; retirement systems; personnel issues; and how to handle stressful confrontations. In late 1998, the State Librarian appointed a Coordinator for Continuing Education to devise a CE plan. This plan would enable the State Library to offer programs and events in a more organized and efficient way to librarians across the state. The State Library periodically presents training workshops for library staff members on topics such as reference techniques, computer usage, and cataloging. [C'est C.E. Bon](#) is a monthly compilation of regional workshops and other CE activities, their costs, and how to register for them. It is mailed to parish libraries as part of the State Library's newsletter [Communiqué](#).

[School of Library & Information Science, LSU](#) (SLIS). LSU's library school courses are another obvious source of CE. SLIS also sponsors research forums and other CE activities. The SLIS faculty is a fine source of speakers for workshops and staff development programs.

[LSU Libraries](#). Since 1965, the LSU Libraries have presented the Schwing Lecture Series. Utilizing funds donated by the Schwing family of Plaquemine, Louisiana, the Schwing lectures are held at least once a year on the LSU campus in Baton Rouge. Nationally renowned library figures are brought in to lecture on topics of interest to Louisiana librarians, library staff, and library school students.

[Regional Library Cooperatives](#). The Bayouland Library System, Libraries Southwest, the Green Gold Library System, and the Trail Blazer Library System regularly sponsor CE activities in their locales.

Office of Government Programs, LSU. This office of the Division of Continuing Education at LSU is a good example of CE opportunities to be found outside the usual library realm. The Office of Government Programs sponsors workshops in the public sector, some of which can benefit public librarians.

<http://www.doce.lsu.edu/government/index.htm>

## ETHICS

Public library trustees, directors, and staff must answer in matters of ethics to the [State Board of Ethics](#). In fact, [L.R.S. 42:1161](#) obligates every public agency head to file confidential reports with this board on any matter that he believes may constitute a violation of the ethics code. The board, by issuing advisory opinions, helps safeguard public employees (including unpaid board members) from violating state conflict of interest and other laws. The board will render formal advisory opinions upon written request; commission staff members accept telephone calls and will provide informal oral opinions.

Examples of conflict of interest violations about which the board would concern itself include these: a library's contracting with a current or former board or staff member's business for the provision of goods, services, or supplies; a library's hiring a board member's or administrator's immediate relative (nepotism) \*; a board or staff member's accepting gifts or outside income offered because of the library connection. Library trustees and staff would probably agree upon the importance of avoiding even the appearance of impropriety in matters of ethics, of striving to conform not only to the letter of, but also to the spirit of Ethics Board guidelines, directives, opinions, and rulings.

Copies of Ethics Board opinions are available from the State Library. For the text of the Code of Governmental Ethics, see [L.R.S. 42:1101 et seq.](#)

### Sources - State Ethics

[Ethics Quarterly: Selected Opinions of the Louisiana Board of Ethics](#). Published quarterly.

[Guide to Louisiana's Code of Governmental Ethics](#). Pamphlet.

State of Louisiana. [Code of Governmental Ethics](#). Published by Secretary of State from House of Representatives Database. 1994.

These publications are available from the Louisiana Board of Ethics, 8401 United Plaza Blvd., Suite 200, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 922-1400 <http://www.ethics.state.la.us/>  
\* [L.R.S. 42:1119\(C\)\(2\)](#) makes provisions for relatives already working in the agency.

## **AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS \***

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staffs.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment. We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

I. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.

II. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.

III. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.

IV. We recognize and respect intellectual property rights.

V. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.

VI. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.

VII. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.

VIII. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

Traditionally, the Louisiana Library Association adopts the ALA Code of Ethics. For trustee code of ethics, see [Handbook for Louisiana Library Trustees](#).

The text of the ALA Code of Ethics is also available on the ALA web site at <http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/ethics.html>.

\* Adopted by the ALA Council, June 28, 1995.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

### State Law Concerning Library Patron Records

Louisiana Revised Statutes may be found on the Louisiana Legislature's [web site](#).

L.R.S. 44:13 addresses the issue of confidentiality of records of library patrons. L.R.S. 44:13(A) prohibits publicly supported libraries from disclosing patron circulation records, with the following exceptions:

- a parent or custodian of a minor seeking access to the minor's records;
- a person acting within the scope of his duties in the administration of the library;
- a person authorized in writing by the patron in question to inspect such records;
- a person authorized by court order.

L.R.S. 44:13(B) prohibits disclosure of patron registration records, with the same exceptions listed for L.R.S. 44:13(A).

L.R.S. 44:13(C) specifies that these prohibitions must not be construed as a means of hindering a library from collecting overdue materials or fines.

### State Law Concerning Library Personnel Information

L.R.S. 44:11 provides for the confidentiality of certain information in a public employee's personnel records:

- an unlisted or private home telephone number;
- a home telephone number whose confidentiality the employee has requested;
- a home address whose confidentiality the employee has requested.

### American Library Association Statement on Confidentiality of Library Records

The American Library Association strongly recommends that the responsible officers of each library, cooperative system, and consortium in the United States: Formally adopt a policy which specifically recognizes its circulation records and other records identifying the names of library users with specific materials to be confidential. Advise all librarians and library employees that such records shall not be made available to any agency of state, federal, or local government except pursuant to such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized under the authority of, and pursuant to, federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or administrative discovery procedures or legislative investigatory power.

Resist the issuance or enforcement of any such process, order, or subpoena until such time as a proper showing of good cause has been made in a court of competent jurisdiction. \*

From ALA Policy Manual in ALA Handbook of Organization, 1998-99. Chicago: ALA, 1998

The text of the above can also be found on the ALA web site at [http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/pol\\_conf.html](http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/pol_conf.html).

\*This point means that upon receipt of such process, order, or subpoena, the library's officers will consult with their legal counsel to determine if such process, order, or subpoena is in proper form and if there is a showing of good cause for its issuance; if the process, order, or subpoena is not in proper form, or if good cause has not been show, they will insist that such defects be corrected.

## GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE/LINES OF AUTHORITY -- PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Louisiana Revised Statutes may be found on the Louisiana Legislature's [web site](#).

Generally the power flows from the state to the local governing authority to the library board of control to the director.

- Louisiana Revised Statutes (L.R.S.) 25:211 and 25:212 empower the police jury or other local governing authority to establish a public library by passing an ordinance.
- L.R.S. 25:213 enumerates methods by which the governing authority may raise money to acquire sites and construct library buildings: anticipation of revenues, bond issues, special tax, use of maintenance tax.
- L.R.S. 25:214 calls for the governing authority to name a five to seven member board of control, specifies the members' terms of office and names the police jury president or other top local official an ex officio, voting board member.
- L.R.S. 25:215 enumerates the board's duties and powers, notably the "authority to establish rules and regulations for its own government and that of the library"...to hire a head librarian and to fix staff salaries and compensations.
- L.R.S. 25:217 empowers the local governing authority to hold an election to secure an operating and maintenance tax for the library's exclusive use.
- L.R.S. 25:220 provides a method for payment of library expenses each month: The board of control or its designated representative, usually the president, approves the expenses, and the governing authority pays them out of library funds.
- Finally, L.R.S. 25:221 empowers the board to accept upon the library's behalf gifts made without conditions but requires governing authority approval of gifts conditionally made. In addition 25:221 calls for the library director to expend or invest such gifts with board approval.

Thus state law provides the theory of the library's governmental structure and sketches lines of authority. In reality there are exceptions to the basic pattern, some provided for by modifications of the law and some de facto. What follows are three examples, varying in significance, of these exceptions: L.R.S. 25:214 has been expanded to permit one parish to have a nine member board of control thus making possible board representation for each of the parish's nine police jury districts. L.R.S. 25:215 has been expanded to transfer certain libraries' accounting/bookkeeping functions from local governing authorities to the libraries thus assuring the latter fiscal independence. Finally, some parishes have replaced police juries with local governments based on electorate-approved home rule charters. It is considered that

these local governments enjoy independence at the expense of their ties to state government. As a result certain library boards have lost their nearly autonomous status as library boards of control to become advisory boards existing at the pleasure of the home rule charter based governments. At this point the Louisiana attorney general's office has published conflicting opinions\* pertaining to the status of such boards, and ultimately court action could prove necessary to resolve the issue.

\* Attorney General Opinions

- 90-607A, February 7, 1991
- 90-607, December 21, 1990
- 90-353, July 20, 1990
- 90-342, July 20, 1990
- 90-220, June 4, 1990

Copies of the above are available from Library Development Division, State Library of Louisiana, P.O. Box 131, Baton Rouge, LA 70821 (225) 342-4931.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the library director, board and the local governing authority are interdependent, not discrete. The following chart sketches perhaps the basic pattern of these interdependent responsibilities as provided for by L.R.S. 25:211 - 25:223. Of course the pattern can vary from parish to parish.

### A. Policy Making

#### The Board

1. Determines the goals and objectives of the library and methods of evaluating progress toward meeting them.
2. Considers what policies are needed to carry forward the library's plan most effectively.
3. Officially adopts library policies.
4. Establishes policies dealing with material selection, print and non-print.

#### The Library Director

1. Provides assistance and direction to the board in setting goals and objectives and determining methods of evaluation.
2. Recommends policies needed. Advises board on merit of decisions it is considering.
3. Administers library in accordance with adopted policies. Interprets policies to staff and public.
4. Selects and orders all books and other library materials, print and non-print.

### B. Administration of the Library

#### The Board

1. Has indirect responsibility through the employment of a library director and the adoption of plans, policies and budget.
2. Keeps in touch with library's progress and problems through librarian's reports, personal use of the library, and feedback from the public.

#### The Library Director

1. Has direct responsibility for administration of the library within the framework of the board's plan, policies, and budget.
2. Reports at each board meeting and in other ways keeps board informed of library's progress and problems.

## **C. Personnel**

### The Board

1. Employs library director and confirms staff appointments.
2. Sees that personnel policies provide fringe benefits, such as vacation, sick leave, and compatible working conditions. (Insurance plans are recommended but not mandated. Opportunities for professional growth should be considered.)
3. Provides adequate salary scale for staff and approves salaries for staff.
4. Develops criteria for evaluating library director's effectiveness. Performs periodic performance evaluations of the director.

### The Library Director

1. Employs and supervises staff.
2. Recommends needed improvement in working conditions, fringe benefits, and salary scale.
3. Utilizes skills and initiative of staff members to the library's advantage. Recommends salaries.
4. Suggests basis for evaluation criteria and provides materials for board study. Maintains records of personnel evaluations.

## **D. Budget**

### The Board

1. Scrutinizes preliminary budget submitted by library director, makes necessary changes, officially adopts budget. Explores and considers all ways of increasing library's income through new sources and cooperating with other libraries or agencies.
2. Authorizes expenditures in accordance with the budget.

### The Library Director

1. Prepares preliminary budget recommendation based on present and anticipated revenues and needs in relation to the board's plan for library growth. Calls board's attention to ways of stretching budget through cooperation with other libraries or agencies.
2. Decides on use of money on the basis of the approved budget.

## **E. Board Meetings**

### The Board

1. Attends and participates in all regular and special meetings.
2. Maintains "open meetings" as required by law.
3. Approves minutes.

### The Library Director

1. Attends all regular and special board meetings, except those at which library director's employment, salary, or performance are to be considered.
2. Gives appropriate public notice of meetings.
3. Acts as secretary to the board, prepares agenda, provides minutes.

## **F. Public Relations**

### The Board

1. Establishes and participates in planned program of public relations.
2. Serves as "connecting link" between the library and the community, interpreting the one to the other.
3. Keeps political fences mended.

### The Library Director

1. Maintains an active program of public relations.
2. Interprets board policies to staff and public and involves library in community activities.
3. Keeps political fences mended.

## **G. Continuing Education**

### The Board

1. Reads trustee materials and library-related publications.
2. Sees that new trustees have planned orientation.
3. Attends district, state, and national trustee or trustee-related meetings.
4. Belongs to the Louisiana Library Association and the American Library Association.

### The Library Director

1. Calls significant materials to attention of library board.
2. Organizes orientation of new trustees.
3. Informs trustees of important meetings and workshops for them to attend. Urges travel money be provided in budget.
4. Urges payment of dues in budget.

## H. Planning for the Library's Growth

### The Board

1. Analyzes the community and considers library's strengths and weaknesses in relation to it.
2. Sets goals and adopts short and long-range plans for library's growth.
3. Sets priorities and decides on course of action to implement plans.
4. Considers the advantages of membership in a library system.

### The Library Director

1. Suggests and provides materials for community analysis. Helps analyze the library's strengths and weaknesses.
2. Recommends plans for library's growth and means for implementing plans.
3. Administers library in terms of plans adopted by the board.
4. Supplies materials allowing board to become knowledgeable about library systems.

Further board and library director responsibilities involve the governing authority. The following chart sets out these interrelationships. Again, the pattern varies from parish to parish.

### Library Board

1. Sends to governing authority names of persons recommended for appointment to the board.
2. Requests tax election. Requests and justifies millage. (Some libraries are supported by direct appropriation from the governing authority.) Works to insure tax passage.
3. Officially adopts budget.
4. Board president or designee approves expenditures.

### Library Director

1. Informs board when new appointment is necessary. Reminds secretary of governing authority.
2. Provides counsel and documentation. Helps to plan educational information for the tax election.
3. Prepares budget.
4. Prepares claims for approval.

### Governing Authority

1. Appoints board members. (police jury president is a voting, ex-officio member, or may designate a jury member as alternate.)
2. Sets tax election millage after consultation with board. (Some libraries are supported by direct appropriation from the governing authority.) Calls tax election. Thereafter, levies library tax millage annually.
3. Procedures vary from parish to parish. Governing authority may approve/adopt budget as presented by Board.
4. Procedure for handling of funds and payment of expenses varies from parish

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|---|---|---|
| <p>5. Approves purchase of major furniture or equipment needed. Advertises for bids and awards contracts where authorized.</p>                                      | <p>5. Advises board of needs and provides specifications. Purchases items as authorized.</p>                | <p>to parish. Police jury may charge for bookkeeping, administrative, and clerical services. (L.R.S. 33:1236 (35)(a))</p> |
| <p>6. Decides on property to be leased.</p>   | <p>6. Locates property, counsels board, and negotiates with landlord.</p>                                   | <p>5. Advertises for bids and awards contracts based on public bid law and local policy.</p>                              |
| <p>7. Decides on appropriate property and mode of financing (from budget, bond issue, new tax, etc.) (See p. 61 Section IX: Construction in Trustees' Handbook)</p> | <p>7. Helps to locate property and negotiates with seller.</p>  | <p>6. Approves and signs lease</p>  |
| <p>8. Works to insure a good political climate. Appears before governing authority to report or commend from time to time.</p>                                      | <p>8. Provides background information to board members. Offers services to governing authority members.</p> | <p>7. Approves selection, purchases property, and takes title for library.</p>  |
|   |   | <p>8. Makes agenda time available to board when it is requested.</p>  |

## **STATE LIBRARY OF LOUISIANA \***

Every library director should understand the vital, supportive role of the State Library and its capacity to contribute to the excellence of local library service. Because of the State Library, directors need not operate in a vacuum or feel isolated no matter how remote their libraries.

The support the State Library provides is in services and special programs, not in financing local library operations. It has entered state folklore that parish libraries have fiscal ties to the State Library so that if local support fails, the State Library will step in and assume the library's financial obligations. This view has no foundation in fact. Parish libraries are financially independent of the state and require local support for existence. However, the State Library does offer local libraries many varied services.

\*formerly the Louisiana State Library or LSL

### **Library Development Division**

One of the most useful services offered is help from the Library Development (LD) Division's consultants who swing into action upon the director's request. Consultants visit each local library system regularly and consult routinely by e-mail or on the telephone; but they can also advise directors on planning and executing special projects, such as tax election campaigns, new services or construction. Consultants can provide sample materials such as personnel and operations policies, requests for proposals and invitations to bid, long range plans, building programs, service contracts, grant applications, tax election public relations materials, job descriptions, salary scales and so on. Consultants can provide information about how other libraries perform certain tasks or information about which libraries are doing what. Consultants can obtain information for librarians from state or federal agencies. Consultants will attend upon request meetings of the friends group, board or local governing authority. Consultants can offer moral support. When in doubt about whether or not a consultant can help, ask. In addition, LD consultants coordinate special projects, among them these recurring ones: statewide summer reading program (annually providing libraries thematic materials, programming ideas and performers); public library statistics collection; and distribution of state and federal monies available for public libraries.

### **Users' Services Branch**

The State Library's Users' Services Branch supplements local collections by lending technical, specialized materials (both books and serials) which public libraries could not justify buying. Likewise, this branch offers local libraries backup reference services by personnel with access to the latest information tools including electronic databases and CD-ROM products.

In addition, the branch's Louisiana Section tries to buy and lend all books published about Louisiana or by Louisiana authors thus again augmenting local collections. Louisiana reference service is based on a collection of state related

materials including genealogy; current census materials; state agencies information; and state codes, laws, regulations and legal opinions. This section is a full historical depository for Louisiana documents.

Further, Users' Services supplements its lending and reference services with LAsernet, the statewide bibliographic data base for interlibrary loan.

### **Special Services Branch**

The Special Services Branch includes the Audiovisual Resource Center. The Center collects and lends

- VHS tapes, including documentaries, travel, instruction, art, opera, literature
- audio books, including popular fiction, non-fiction, and classic literature
- 16mm films, primarily children's
- audiocassettes, including foreign language instruction and spoken word;
- compact disks including classical music, jazz, folk, collections, and historically or critically acclaimed recordings of popular artists such as the Beatles, Elvis Presley, and Ella Fitzgerald
- audio and video media on Louisiana subjects such as jazz, Zydeco, Cajun music, Cajun French, humor, and musicians
- management videos and videos devoted to library topics

The other Special Services section, the Section for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, provides materials in a variety of formats -- Braille, records, audiotapes, and large print -- to people whose physical impairments or other disabilities make it impossible for them to use traditional library materials. The section's also sponsors an annual summer reading program for children who are unable to read standard print books. See [Section for the Blind and Physically Handicapped](#) in this handbook for additional information.

### **Technical Services Branch**

The Technical Services Branch offers public libraries help with cataloging, processing and collection maintenance. Technical Services personnel can provide call numbers, subject headings and other information for hard-to-catalog materials. They can also interpret and give guidance in negotiating general cataloging rules. In addition, they advise on buying processing supplies and on bookbinding.

### **Computer Services Component**

The Coordinator of Computer Services heads this component, overseeing all State Library systems and network technology and policy. Computer Services concentrates on computer network development, operation, and training. In addition to oversight of the State Library's integrated library system and the LAsernet interlibrary loan system, the office designs and conducts in-house and statewide training programs

on relevant topics. The component also provides consulting for other libraries and State Library staff on the selection and use of computers and related equipment; for the administration, it provides consulting on automation of State Library operations.

## STATE LIBRARY SERIAL PUBLICATIONS

You can access many of these titles [online](#):

Audio Catalog (annual) A compilation of State Library compact discs, audiobooks, and audiocassettes including music, spoken word, and foreign language instruction.

[Communiqué](#) (monthly) A newsletter covering library activities throughout the state. It includes [C'est C.E. Bon](#), a listing of upcoming continuing education events.

Foreign Language Catalog (irregular) A compilation by language of State Library foreign language titles.

[Insights](#) (irregular, web only) A publication offering in-depth coverage of library administration and management topics.

Large Print Books (irregular)

[Louisiana Directory of Performing Artists](#) (irregular) A list of artists, singers, dancers, story tellers, puppeteers, mimes and other performers available for library programming.

[Louisiana Hotlines](#) (quarterly) A large print newsletter of the Section for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

[Louisiana Library Directory](#) (annual) A list of public, academic, institution and special libraries and their directors, as well as public library trustees.

Louisiana Summer Reading Program Manual (annual) A compilation of ideas and activities to help individuals conducting the children's summer reading program.

[Monthly List](#) A compilation of state documents processed by the Recorder of Documents office.

Official Publications (quinquennial) An indexed compilation of Public Documents.

[Public Documents](#) (semiannual) An indexed compilation of Monthly List.

Public Libraries in Louisiana: Statistical Report (annual) A statistical report compiled from reports submitted each year by Louisiana's public libraries. It particularly helps the director ascertain how his library compares to others in the state.

[Searching for Your Louisiana Ancestors](#) (irregular) A guide to genealogical materials available from the State Library.

Video Catalog (annual) Annotated catalog of Audiovisual Resource Center video holdings.

## STATE LIBRARY OF LOUISIANA TELEPHONE NUMBERS

|  |  |
|--|--|
| ADMINISTRATION                                     | (225) 342-4923<br>(225) 219-4804 FAX                   |
| AUDIOVISUAL RESOURCE CENTER                        | (225) 342-4940<br>(225) 342-6817 FAX                   |
| BLIND AND PHYSICALLY<br>HANDICAPPED                | (225) 342-4944<br>(800) 543-4702<br>(225) 342-6817 FAX |
| CATALOGING ASSISTANCE                              | (225) 342-4938   |
| CIRCULATION  | (225) 342-4915<br>(225) 291-4725 FAX                   |
| COMPUTER SERVICES                                  | (225) 342-3389<br>(225) 342-7962 FAX                   |
| CONSULTANT (NORTHWEST, CENTRAL<br>LOUISIANA)       | (225) 342-4933   |
| CONSULTANT (NORTHEAST,<br>SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA)     | (225) 342-4951   |
| CONSULTANT (SOUTH CENTRAL,<br>SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA) | (225) 342-4932   |
| INTERLIBRARY LOAN                                  | (225) 342-4919<br>(225) 291-4725 FAX                   |
| LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT                                | (225) 342-4931<br>(225) 342-3547 FAX                   |
| LOUISIANA SECTION                                  | (225) 342-4914<br>(225) 342-2791 FAX                   |
| REFERENCE  | (225) 342-4913<br>(225) 291-4725 FAX                   |
| SERIALS/LOAN REFERRAL SECTION                      | (225) 342-4919   |

## STATE LIBRARY OF LOUISIANA E-MAIL ADDRESSES

### Departments

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Acquisitions                  | <a href="mailto:acqdept@pelican.state.lib.la.us">acqdept@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a>   |
| Administrative                | <a href="mailto:admin@pelican.state.lib.la.us">admin@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a>       |
| A-V                           | <a href="mailto:av@pelican.state.lib.la.us">av@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a>             |
| Circulation                   | <a href="mailto:circ@pelican.state.lib.la.us">circ@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a>         |
| Computer Services             | <a href="mailto:css@pelican.state.lib.la.us">css@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a>           |
| Documents                     | <a href="mailto:docs@pelican.state.lib.la.us">docs@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a>         |
| ILL                           | <a href="mailto:ill@pelican.state.lib.la.us">ill@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a>           |
| LLA                           | <a href="mailto:lla@pelican.state.lib.la.us">lla@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a>           |
| Library Development           | <a href="mailto:libdev@pelican.state.lib.la.us">libdev@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a>     |
| Louisiana                     | <a href="mailto:ladept@pelican.state.lib.la.us">ladept@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a>     |
| Louisiana Center for the Book | <a href="mailto:rmills@pelican.state.lib.la.us">rmills@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a>     |
| Reference                     | <a href="mailto:ref@pelican.state.lib.la.us">ref@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a>           |
| SBPH                          | <a href="mailto:bph@pelican.state.lib.la.us">bph@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a>           |
| Serials                       | <a href="mailto:serials@pelican.state.lib.la.us">serials@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a>   |
| Support Services              | <a href="mailto:support@pelican.state.lib.la.us">support@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a>   |
| Technical Services            | <a href="mailto:techserv@pelican.state.lib.la.us">techserv@pelican.state.lib.la.us</a> |

### Individuals

State library employees are assigned e-mail addresses as follows:

[XY@pelican.state.lib.la.us](mailto:XY@pelican.state.lib.la.us)

where X is the 1st initial of the 1st name and Y is the first (up to) seven letters of the last name.

### Examples

John Robinson's e-mail address would be [jrobinso@pelican.state.lib.la.us](mailto:jrobinso@pelican.state.lib.la.us).

John Smith's e-mail address would be [jsmith@pelican.state.lib.la.us](mailto:jsmith@pelican.state.lib.la.us).

## **Electronic Access in Louisiana Public Libraries**

Many factors have contributed to progress toward electronic access for all in the state's public libraries.

### **Interlibrary Loan/LAsernet**

In the early 1970s a Louisiana Library Association committee produced the first version of a statewide union list which would greatly facilitate interlibrary loan and establish the feasibility of creating an electronic database for it. The Louisiana Numerical Register (LNR) was a union list of books presented by Library of Congress catalog card numbers arranged in numerical sequence, each number being followed by location symbols. Thus, the LNR enabled personnel to tell at a glance which libraries owned specific titles. In 1987, LAsernet, the nation's first CD-ROM bibliographic database linked to an automated referral system, enabled the electronic transmission of batches of interlibrary loan requests and responses. In the late 1990s, the ILL process evolved into an interactive Internet-based system.

### **LOUIS: The Louisiana Library Network**

LOUIS: The Louisiana Library Network <http://www.lsu.edu/louis> is the system which automates and links Louisiana's academic libraries and enables a patron to determine the holdings of academic libraries across the state. It is also a statewide academic, public and school library network providing patrons with access to online resources including journal databases and LOUIS OPACs. Originally funded by \$4,000,000 in grants from the U.S Department of Education and the Louisiana Education Quality Support Fund, LOUIS aimed 1) to automate and network Louisiana's public academic libraries; 2) to increase library cooperation throughout the state; 3) to provide network access to journal databases, the Internet and other online resources; and 4) to extend this network access to public libraries in every parish. LOUIS is now supported by the State Library, academic libraries, and public libraries across Louisiana. Public library directors, systems and electronic resources personnel are encouraged to subscribe to LOUIS's electronic discussion list. Postings include database trial information, questions related to public library electronic access, upgrades and maintenance, and relevant announcements. Information on subscribing to this list can be found online at <http://sumvs.sncc.lsu.edu/ocs/louis/documentation/listserve.html>.

### **LaNet**

Louisiana's wide area multi-protocol network (LaNet) refers to the telecommunication network, as well as to personnel at the Louisiana State Office of Telecommunications (OTM) who maintain and enhance it. LOUIS, the State Library, and the state's public libraries all utilize LaNet to communicate with one another and to access the Internet.

## **Louisiana Libraries Connect**

In 1997 the Foster administration endorsed Louisiana Libraries Connect (a three-year plan to bring Internet access and electronic resources to every Louisiana public library) when it added \$2,000,000 to the executive budget for this project.

## **Gates Library Initiative**

In 1998, by means of a statewide partnership grant administered by the State Library, the [Gates Library Initiative](#) (formerly the Gates Library Foundation) provided Louisiana public libraries with some \$7.25 million worth of equipment, technical assistance and training. The grant money financed the installation of more than 1100 computers for public Internet access at the 327 public library sites (headquarters and all branches) in the state, as well as training for 1300 staff members. The Gates Center for Technology Access (formerly TRI) provides technical support for this project.

## **Universal Service Fund/E-Rate**

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 expands universal service---previously designated to ensure consumers affordable access to basic telephone service---to include an e-rate or education rate for schools and libraries. As part of the e-rate, telecommunications carriers must now offer their lowest corresponding rates to elementary and secondary schools and to public libraries. In addition, schools and libraries are allowed 20-90 percent discounts on top of the lowest corresponding rate for telecommunications services, Internet access and internal connections.\*\* The Schools and Libraries Division [web site](#).

\*See also [Library Services and Technology Act \(LSTA\)](#) and [State Aid to Public Libraries](#) in this handbook.

\*\*From e-rate hotline What Is the E-Rate? at <http://www.eratehotline.org/>

## WEBSITES OF INTEREST

American Library Association <http://www.ala.org>

Americans with Disabilities Act Document Center <http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/kinder/>

Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act (COBRA)  
<http://gatekeeper.dol.gov/dol/pwba/public/pubs/COBRA/cobra95.htm>

Gates Center for Technology Access (GCTA, formerly TRI)  
<http://www.techresource.org/gcta>

Gates Learning Foundation <http://www.glf.org/LearningFoundation/>

InfoLouisiana <http://www.state.la.us/>

LANET <http://www.state.la.us/otm/lanet>

Library Services Technology Act <http://www.ims.fed.us/mlsa.html>

Louisiana Legislative Auditor <http://www.lla.state.la.us/>

Louisiana Library Association (LLA) <http://www.leeric.lsu.edu/lla/>

Louisiana Library Network (LLN) <http://www.lsu.edu/ln>

Louisiana State Board of Ethics <http://www.ethics.state.la.us/>

LSU School of Library & Information Science <http://adam.slis.lsu.edu/>

Medicare <http://www.hcfa.gov/>

Schools & Libraries Division (SLD) <http://www.sl.universalservice.org/>

Southeastern Library Association (SELA) <http://www.seflin.org/sela/>

State Library of Louisiana <http://www.state.lib.la.us/>

State Purchasing Contracts <http://www.doa.state.la.us/osp/osp.htm>

Tax Elections Schedule for Louisiana <http://www.sec.state.la.us/elect-3.htm>

## SERVICES TO BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

Through its affiliation with the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, the State Library provides free public library service to any person who is unable to read or handle ordinary printed materials because of visual, physical, or reading disability. The same service is available to agencies and institutions which serve such individuals---schools, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, and others.

The primary service offered is through the Talking Books program. Talking Books are recordings on records and cassettes of books and magazines. Record and cassette players are available on loan. Braille and large print books are also available. All materials and equipment are mailed directly to the home or agency, and no postage is required either way.

For an individual to use this service from the State Library of Louisiana, it is only necessary to have a doctor or other competent authority complete the form Application For Free Library Service. The application form will show: (1) the applicant's full name and address; (2) the visual or physical handicap which prevents the applicant from reading or handling conventional printed matter; (3) a brief description of the degree of severity of the condition; and (4) the name, signature, and title of the doctor or other certifying authority. Note, in case of a reading disability, a medical doctor's signature *is* required.

Mail the form(s) to: State Library of Louisiana  
Section for the Blind and Physically Handicapped  
P. O. Box 131  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0131  
1-800-543-4702

### LOUISIANA CENTER FOR THE BOOK \*

The Louisiana Center for the Book at the State Library of Louisiana celebrates the achievements, past and present, of Louisiana's powerful and imaginative authors. The Center brings public focus to the value of books, reading, literacy, libraries, and culture. It seeks to excite readers and writers alike to carry forward the challenge of literary excellence. The State Library provides, through Center activities, opportunities for Louisiana citizens to embrace their literary heritage.

For more information about the Louisiana Center for the Book, contact State Library personnel at (225) 342-9714, or e-mail [rmills@pelican.state.lib.la.us](mailto:rmills@pelican.state.lib.la.us).

\* Adapted from Louisiana Center for the Book Inaugural Celebration Pamphlet, March 17-18, 1995.

## LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN LOUISIANA -- AN OVERVIEW

### State Library

The State Library of Louisiana was established as an independent state agency in 1925 and remained so until the reorganization of state government's executive branch mandated by the 1974 constitution. By legislation implementing this reorganization, the State Library became an office in the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. At this time the State Library Board of Commissioners, made up of five gubernatorial appointees, became advisory but retained the authority to appoint the state librarian who must meet the qualifications set forth in state library law.

The State Library exists to meet Louisiana citizens' education, information and recreation needs. Traditional State Library functions include:

- To work toward a coordinated statewide system of parish and regional libraries.
- To coordinate library service so as to afford schools, colleges and universities the best free library service possible through interloan arrangements.
- To give on request supervisory/advisory service to all institution, parish and public libraries.
- To require institution, parish and public libraries to file annual reports.
- To administer federal and state funds for library aid.
- To conduct courses of study and/or continuing education activities.

Currently, the State Library uses its publication Five Year Plan for Improving Louisiana Library Services, 1998-2002 as a guide to improving library service for all the state's citizens. The plan establishes goals and priorities for the state, consistent with the purposes of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), a federal program enacted in 1996.

The LSTA program is administered by the State Library. The purposes of LSTA are:

- To establish or enhance electronic linkages among or between libraries.
- To link libraries electronically with educational, social, or information services.
- To assist libraries in accessing information through electronic networks.
- To encourage libraries in different areas and to encourage different types of libraries to establish consortia and share resources.
- To pay costs for libraries to acquire or share computer systems and telecommunications technologies.
- To target library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to under-served urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line.

## Public Libraries

The State Library played a central role in the establishment of nearly all of Louisiana's parish libraries and has always maintained close ties with them. Except for five public libraries already established in larger cities, the state's parish and regional libraries owe their existence to the State Library and its demonstration method. With the initiative coming from local citizens, and after the police jury had passed an ordinance establishing the library, the State Library would set up a parish library and staff and operate it for one year. This method originated from the theory that if parish citizens had the opportunity to experience good library service, they would recognize its value and vote to support such service after a year's demonstration. In almost every case, the theory proved true.

The State Library bore most of the expense of the year long demonstrations. Before the passage of the 1956 Library Services Act, the local governing authority contributed substantially to the operations cost. After 1956, the state library reduced the local financial contribution but continued to require a small amount of local money to insure the police jury's commitment to the project.

Most Louisiana public libraries exist as parish-wide systems because of the demonstration method and the Louisiana law governing parish and municipal libraries ([L.R.S. 25:211-223](#)).

In the 64 parishes there are 65 public libraries. Sixty of these are parish-wide; one is a three-parish consolidated unit; one is a bi-city library in a parish without parish-wide service; two are independent city libraries in parishes with parish-wide service; and one is a district library serving three towns and their outlying areas (see [Map of Louisiana Public Libraries](#) in this handbook). [map not currently available]

## Systems

By 1969, the State Library had completed the establishment of public libraries and thus turned its attention to methods of improving service. Between 1966 and 1968 two library consultants made a comprehensive study, the Humphrey Survey, of the state's library service so as to recommend a future course of action. The survey's recommendation was for the organization of library systems consisting of groups of libraries within a defined geographical area cooperating to improve library services.

The basic objective of these systems would be to use interlibrary loan to make materials in member libraries--public, academic and special--more easily available to area residents.

To speed service the systems would offer twice weekly delivery among libraries. In addition, systems would provide continuing education for library trustees and staff; local history and genealogy collections; programs for special groups (children, seniors and adult nonreaders); and public relations.

The Louisiana Library Association committee appointed to study the Humphrey recommendations endorsed the organization of library systems but recommended gradual implementation. Thus the State Library would again employ its demonstration method, this time to test and evaluate a two-year pilot system. Personnel in officially designated areas were offered the chance to seek Library Services and Construction Act grants for the establishment of systems.

Eventually LSCA funded systems covered much of the state: Trail Blazer, northeast Louisiana; Green Gold, northwest Louisiana; Bayouland, south central Louisiana; Southeast Louisiana Library Network Cooperative (SEALLINC), New Orleans area; and Heartland, central Louisiana. However, when federal funding proved so unreliable as to make it hard for the systems to develop long range plans, or even to maintain established programs, they gradually reduced operations until today only one, Bayouland, maintains full-time staff and courier service. However, the Trail Blazer and Green Gold groups both still enjoy an esprit de corps strengthened by continuing education activity and regular courier service. Unfortunately, SEALLINC and Heartland are defunct.

In 1987, an additional system, Libraries Southwest, was established to promote interaction among southwestern Louisiana's public library trustees, directors and staffs and among the area's school, academic and special librarians as well. LSW focuses on cooperative staff and trustee development and continuing education but has also initiated reciprocal borrowing privileges for member parish library patrons (see [Map of Louisiana Library Systems](#) in this handbook).

From its inception, a major trend in Louisiana's public library service has been centralization/systematization/cooperation. Considering the evolution of LAsernet into an Internet-based service, the Louisiana Library Network and Louisiana Libraries Connect is likely to continue.

[NOTE: The maps are not yet available on the web site.]

## **THE NEW LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

### **Before Starting the Job**

The new director can read various materials for an overview of the library including annual reports, the budget, board meeting minutes, long range plans, organization charts, circulation statistics, salary schedules, job classifications and job descriptions.

For a broader view, the director can also review professional literature and this handbook and talk with area librarians.

Local newspapers, chamber of commerce literature and the yellow pages will provide community information.

Of course the director, gathering library and community information from such sources, must reserve judgment about what is learned until it can be personally validated.

### **Suggested First Few Days Activities**

The first few days on the job will set the tone for the library director's administration. The director's immediate task is to become acquainted with staff and the library and in doing so, to begin to work toward staff acceptance. The director should seek to reassure staff and eliminate any fears they may have about arbitrary or unfair changes; and, of course, the director should guard against making negative comments about how things have been done in the past and should avoid being drawn into staff members' disputes.

The director should tour the building with staff, set up meetings with department heads and arrange for branch visits. Upcoming events should be reviewed with the library's public relations person. In order to get to know individual staff members and their routines, the director might schedule work time in each department or section. In addition, the director should become familiar with office procedure and practice by scanning files and observing the flow of internal communications.

The first few days on the job provide the director the chance to ask questions and listen to the answers. Do not, at this point, try to reorganize the library or attempt to make important policy decisions. When talking with staff members, the director should try to remember names and duties. Perhaps the director could take a few coffee breaks with staff members, getting to know them and learning their ideas about library service. Of course the director should try to maintain cordial yet professional relations with workers from the first day of the job.

## **Suggested First Month Activities**

In the first few weeks the director should discuss with each department or branch head the rationale for current operations and routines. If there has been an acting director during the interim, then the new director should review library plans and problems with that individual. The new director should visit every library branch. In addition, the new director should review the previous director's files and accumulated mail, generally refraining from weeding these materials for about a year. Try writing up a calendar of important contract dates, insurance expiration dates, dates of local significance and deadlines. The director will need to be learning about the library's financial operations: budgets, bookkeeping, financial reports, payrolls, and purchase orders.

The new director should make sure to discuss proposed changes with all affected staff members and then to implement the necessary changes as diplomatically as possible.

The new director must get to know the board members. Reviewing the minutes of board meetings will provide historical perspective and help determine how much information the board expects.

After the director has adequate information about the local governing authority, parish and community agencies and the press, contacts should be made with appropriate personnel in these organizations.

## **Other Considerations**

The new director will need to keep an open mind about board members and staff, avoiding assumptions and prejudices and listening carefully without making immediate judgments.

The new director can build a support group by calling on other area librarians and State Library consultants, as well as by attending professional meetings. Unfortunately, there is no one right way to orient the director to the job. Basically, there is a need to establish, for the system, an effective management philosophy and style beneficial and acceptable to the public, the library board, staff members, and the director.

Adapted from "The New Library Director" Ohio Public Library Administrators' Handbook, Ohio Library Association 1987-88.

## **CHECKLIST FOR POLICY MAKING IN YOUR LIBRARY**

### **Organizational Policies**

Preface  
History of the Library and Community  
Objectives of the Library  
Organizational Structure  
Financial Support of the Library

### **Operational Policies**

Bylaws of the Board  
Approval of a Board Member; Removal of a Board Member  
Terms of Board Members  
Conflict of Interest  
Membership of Board Members in Professional Associations  
Taking and Reporting Minutes  
Meeting Procedures  
Purchasing Procedures  
Bidding on Library Contracts or Purchases  
Expenditure Authorization  
Disposition of Surplus Property  
Investments  
Insurance for Library Facility and Contents  
Liability Insurance  
Other Insurance, including Vehicles, Performance Bonds, etc.  
Reimbursement for Travel Expenses for Board Members  
Audits  
Disaster Procedure  
Retention and Disposal of Library Records  
Inventory / Fixed Assets  
Friends of the Library

### **Service Policies**

Material Selection  
Weeding  
Gifts  
Intellectual Freedom Statement  
Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statement  
Reconsideration of Controversial Library Material  
Circulation Regulations  
Fines  
Confidentiality of Circulation Records  
Interlibrary Loan

Fees for Service  
Geographical Service Area and Eligibility for Borrowing  
Genealogy  
Copy Machine and Copyright  
Distribution of Free Literature  
Interaction Between Staff and Public  
Patron Complaints  
Problem Patrons  
Cooperation with Other Libraries and Public Institutions  
Programming  
Public Relations  
Bookmobile and Outreach  
Electronic Information

### **Facility Policies**

Meeting Room  
Exhibits and Displays  
Property Management and Maintenance

### **Personnel Policies**

Appointment of Staff / Recruitment and Selection  
Development and Training of Staff  
Continuing Education  
Performance Evaluation  
Promotion, Transfer, Reassignment  
Probation / Suspension  
Disciplinary Action  
Grievance Procedure  
Criteria for Staff Reduction Due to Budget Cuts  
Termination of Service  
Personnel Records  
Staff Obligations / Staff Privileges  
    A. Attitude toward Public / Staff  
    B. Personal Appearance  
    C. Conflict of Interest  
    D. Other Employment  
    E. Gratuities and Gifts  
    F. Use of Telephone  
    G. Staff Loan Policy  
    H. Security of Personal Items  
    I. Collections / Solicitations  
    J. Parking  
    K. Other  
Political Activity

Volunteers  
Work Week  
Salary Payment  
Overtime and Off-Time Compensation  
Scheduling / Schedule Changes  
Lateness  
Extreme Weather or Transportation Condition  
Coffee Breaks and Lunch  
Holidays  
Sick Leave  
Sickness in the Family  
Vacation / Annual Leave  
Personal Leave  
Leave With Pay  
Leave Without Pay  
Jury Duty / Court Appearance  
Bereavement Leave  
Military Leave  
Maternity / Paternity Leave / Family Medical Leave  
Disability Leave and Benefits  
Worker's Compensation  
Health Insurance  
Unemployment Insurance  
Life Insurance  
Retirement and Social Security  
Professional Meetings / Workshops and Memberships  
Travel and Reimbursement

### **Sources on Policy Making**

Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives. Policies and Procedures for the Public Library, A Sample Collection 1985. Frankfort: Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives, 1985.

Kratz, Charles E. The Personnel Manual: An Outline for Libraries. 2nd edition. Chicago: American Library Association, 1993.

Ohio Library Association. Ohio Public Library Administrator's Handbook. Columbus: Ohio Library Association, 1987-1988.

Wozny, Jay. Checklists for Public Library Managers. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1989.

## PLANNING

The creation, expansion, or retrenchment of any activities within a library system are usually the result of our reaction to specific influences, events, people or disasters. We are trained to be responsive to our communities - customizing collections, services and programs to the individuals and groups we serve.

Managing busy and important institutions like the libraries of Louisiana is challenging, and occasionally burdensome. Sometimes day to day operations get complicated and unexpected situations lead to crisis management, knee jerk reactions to immediate problems. In addition to these difficulties, the competitive environment in which we exist adds to our anxieties. We manage our institutions with seemingly fewer and fewer resources, a staff that is too small, a building that may not work.

Marketing and planning are two processes that can help you understand your environment and think ahead to maintain or improve the position of your library. Marketing is the identification of key constituencies and the involvement of these constituencies in the creation and implementation of goals and objectives for an organization. This is the initial stage of the larger planning process. Setting roles and planning long range goals can help us avoid crises, can focus on the things we do best, can commit our human resources to getting the most out of the buildings, collections, and time that we have. Altogether, marketing and planning can lead to real development of our institutions.

Neither marketing nor planning is new to institutional development, or new to librarians. But some feel that these techniques have been successful and that much can be gained by understanding how the marketing of products in the commercial environment relates to the creation of and commitment to service in a non-profit institution. In 1949, Bernard Berelson published an important landmark work in library literature called The Public Library Inquiry. Berelson and others studied libraries and library users and began to promote to librarians that studies of users are needed so that the proper services are created.

The "Library Community Project" was touted in ALA in the late 1950's. This, too, was a recognition of our need to customize services and programs for the community which the library will serve. Terminology such as "outreach" became popular, and the recruitment of non-users to become library patrons was an important tactic of the Library Community Project. Services to children, young adults, and minority groups grew during this period as well.

By the 1970's the "planning process" started to replace the achievement of national standards and suggested a new way to examine the changing world of service and support. The planning process recognized the uniqueness of communities and the shortcomings of national standards. The Public Library Association division of ALA ceased to produce standards by the mid-1970's.

The first document concerning this technique for librarians was A Planning Process For Public Libraries, by Palmour, Bellassai, and DeWath; it was published in 1980 by ALA. The volume explains how to measure library services and set goals appropriate to the local conditions and needs. The principal stages of the planning process are:

- Assessing Community Library Needs
- Evaluating Current Library Services
- Determining the Library Role
- Setting Goals, Objectives, and Priorities
- Creating Strategies for Change
- Implementing and Beginning a Cycle of Planning
- Developing a System of Management Data.

The process can take a long while, typically about two years. But marketers will say this is the process of positioning your organization in the marketplace, finding out what you want to do, doing that as best you can, and committing your resources to the greatest advantage.

ALA expanded on the matter of data collection with a work called Output Measures for Public Libraries, by Zweizig and Rodger, in 1982. This "manual of standardized procedures" seeks to help librarians create localized frames of reference for monitoring and quantifying activity within a library. Circulation per capita, turnover rate, reference fill rate, and others are among the twelve output measures that are discussed.

In 1987, McClure, et al. wrote Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries. Once again, this expanded on subjects already established in the Palmour et al. volume of 1980, but with more explicit procedures and worksheets to aid the librarians and planning committees undertaking the planning process.

In 1998, ALA published Planning for Results: a Public Library Transformation Process, by Himmel and Wilson. Essentially, this two-volume document updates the ALA planning titles mentioned above, expanding the eight public library roles found in Planning and Role Setting into thirteen service responses. ALA also published in 1998 a companion volume, Wired for the Future: Developing Your Library Technology Plan, by Mayo and Wilson.

### **Why do this? How much time is involved? Can it work?**

Setting goals and objectives following an analysis of an organization is a familiar management concept. Some managers have used this process for many years. But the documents created by ALA are library specific and designed to help us through the stages suggested above. In the midst of a busy day, or week, or month, you may think that planning is a luxury. But the purpose of planning is to gain a thorough knowledge of your community and its needs in order to establish programs and services that are best

suited and most supported by that community. The aspects of the planning process that involve segments of the community have been shown to have paybacks with greater community support and understanding, successful tax elections, more precise budgeting, the creation of shared goals, and teamwork.

The investment of time is, indeed, considerable. A Mississippi system gathered all twelve output measures and created community profiles, taking two years to do so. That was only the background work for setting roles for the library. But new information emerged throughout the process, and the project developed momentum as administration, staff, and community participants worked together. This process of examination, review, collaboration, and planning is not passive; nor does an organization cease other developments during the process. The manuals treat the different data gathering elements, surveys, and other input as stages in a long process, recognizing the day to day commitments of a library.

Planning requires an open mind about our knowledge of the local community. Although librarians learn the names and habits of patrons and neighborhoods, the object of marketing and planning is to examine the total community. Persons undertaking the planning process invariably learn about new facets and activities in their community. And this is done with the community itself involved. It may be that the chief benefit of the planning process is this involvement, which can generate interest in the library by other community leaders and potential library users. By hearing the ideas from a new spectrum of thought, and by developing library activity with new people and information, the planning process may help to target services with greater success, prepare for the future, and save effort in the long run.

## REPORTING AND STATISTICS

Libraries keep various usage statistics and financial information throughout the year. This information can be used both internally and externally for comparative purposes. Internally, a library's statistics can be compared to previous years' statistics to track the library's performance over time, to measure its success in achieving established goals, and to set service and management priorities. Externally, these statistics can be used to compare the library to other libraries of similar size and environment to determine the library's place in the overall state picture, to plan for the future, and to justify actions and budgets. This section describes the two main reporting and comparative tools for Louisiana's public libraries.

### Annual Report

The State Library is empowered under L.R.S. 25:216 to require all public libraries in the state to file a yearly report on library use and library finances. The Library Development Division of the State Library distributes reporting forms and instructions to all public libraries and collects the completed forms. The report packet, Public Library Statistical Report Form, is commonly called the Annual Report and is usually distributed by January 1st of each year for reporting the previous year's data. The deadline for returning the Annual Report to the State Library is April 30th.

The Annual Report includes both statistical and financial data in the following sections: general information; services, personnel and collections data; general operating finances; capital project finances; and trust finances.

The public library annual reports are also used by the State Library to report statistics to the Council of State Governments, the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, the American Library Association, and the Public Library Association, and to prepare accountability reports for the state and federal governments.

### Public Libraries in Louisiana: Statistical Report

The State Library uses the Annual Reports to prepare the state publication Public Libraries in Louisiana: Statistical Report [date]. Public Libraries in Louisiana lists key usage and financial data about each reporting library and gives individual and statewide percentage breakdowns. This publication is distributed annually to all public libraries and trustees in the summer or fall.

## **Federal / State Cooperative System for Public Library Data (FSCS)**

The National Center for Education Statistics collects data on the nation's public, academic, and school libraries. The program for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on the nation's nearly 9,000 public libraries is called the Federal/State Cooperative System for Public Library Data, or, simply, FSCS. The FSCS program, a cooperative project with the National Commission for Libraries and Information Science, began as a pilot project in 1988; Louisiana began participating in 1989.

The State Library's public library annual reporting form incorporates the data elements required for participation in the FSCS program. The FSCS program is a major development in the collection of public library statistics in that it provides the first standardized mechanism for collecting comparable, reliable data from the nation's public libraries and for producing comparative analyses by size, state, etc. The NCES issues the FSCS data as an annual document Public Libraries in the United States: FY [year] in both print and electronic formats. The data is also accessible through the Internet at the NCES web [site http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/librarian/public/data.shtml](http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/librarian/public/data.shtml).

### **Collecting and Measuring Electronic Usage**

Electronic access to library resources continues to increase. Libraries nationwide have experienced decreases in circulation counts while reporting that their library has "never been busier". The competition for Library funds has become even more pronounced as libraries replace and increase computers, network equipment, subscribe to electronic databases, and provide software packages for public in-house use. To justify these expenditures and to show the public that library services are still vital to the community, public libraries are seeking ways to collect and measure use of their electronic databases, online catalogs, web page hits, and other electronic resources that they now provide to the public. Searches, retrievals, users, sessions, and time online are all units which can be counted, although libraries and database vendors may not currently be able to track any or every one of these measures.

Although some states and national committees are working towards standardization, standardization of electronic use statistics is still in the future. Libraries are urged to begin gathering and counting as many of these measures as possible.

## **LIBRARY BUILDING PROJECTS**

When you, as the director, foresee the need for increased library space, the future can seem overwhelming. Be advised there is plenty of help available from the literature, the State Library, your colleagues in libraries and local government, your trustees, architectural professionals, and your patrons. As with any big change, a consistent public relations campaign throughout the entire process is essential to maintain community support of the building project. Library staff and trustees must be enlisted from the start to continually inform the public of the need, the importance, and the progress of the building project. Building a library is a community effort involving public dollars, many people, multiple phases, and, yes, a few years of focused effort -- a challenge that can provide great satisfaction to all involved.

Although each library building project is unique there are many elements common to building almost any addition or new structure. These elements can be grouped in major phases which outline the journey from the ideas stage to the use of a finished building:

- Fact Finding and Solutions
- Planning
- Architectural and Interior Design
- Construction
- Occupation

The framework of these phases is borrowed from the writings of a library building consultant, Raymond M. Holt. The bibliography at the end of the chapter lists books on building libraries by Holt and other writers. The following text describes elements in each phase and the director's important role in the process.

### **FACT FINDING AND SOLUTIONS**

This phase involves the establishment of space requirements for current library services and collections; the projection of long-term space needs of the community; and, finally, the evaluation of options to answer these needs for at least the next twenty years.

Before a revolt by library users and staff incensed at the crowded conditions of the library, a director should initiate a thorough fact-finding mission. An honest, unflinching approach is required. The information gathered here is used to evaluate the long-range options to solving the lack of space, and to convince board members, local officials and the public of the need for expanding facilities. Also, the needs and options established at this time are used in the "Planning" phase to develop the building program statement. This vitally important statement will guide the architect, the interior designer, and the building contractor through the entire design and construction of the library.

## **The Need for a Library Consultant**

Library consultants are usually professional librarians with substantial experience in building projects. They can be hired at the onset of a project to assist fact-finding and funding efforts, or brought in later to help prepare the building program statement or to work with architects and contractors. Books in the accompanying bibliography consider the use of consultants. Whether or not a library needs a consultant depends on factors such as the complexity of the project, and the expertise available in the community. Sometimes, a consultant is invaluable because contentious local players in the building process might be more willing to listen to the views and arguments of an outside "unbiased" expert. Often, the various "consultant" skills are handled by experts extant in the local governing authority. Trustees and local businessmen may lend their talents to the project. Or, by calling upon friends, guts, and providence, these skills are somehow executed by the jack-of-all-trades librarian.

## **Establishing Current Space Needs**

The basic types of space in a library facility are collection space; space for user seating; staff work space; meeting room space; special use space (area needed for copiers, index tables, card catalog, public access computers, etc.) and non-assignable space (areas such as foyers, hallways, elevators, staff lounge, toilets, mail room, janitor closets, garages for vehicles, and mechanical rooms that are not assignable to library functions). In order to project a community's future library needs a director must first establish the space currently needed to more adequately house the present collections and services. Librarians involved in a long range planning process will have much of the essential information at their disposal.

An accurate inventory of the collection and the current square footage devoted to the basic types of space is an important first step. Measure the floor space used by each of the basic types. This is also a good time to note how the current lack of space or positioning of various operations affects library services. Notice how workflow or patron satisfaction is impaired or improved by the arrangement of desks, displays or other structures. Places with poor lighting, excessive noise, a lack of electrical outlets, or other problems should be noted for future improvement.

The next step is to apply library space planning formulas to the inventory data. These formulas are widely available in library literature, including many of the sources in the attached bibliography. They constitute allowances for the amount of space needed to adequately house the various aspects of the present operation, e.g., allow 30 square feet of floor space per lounge seat or 125 square feet for each staff work station. The resulting estimates of space needed for each of the basic types of library space are compared to the current library arrangement to graphically point out deficiencies in certain areas.

For example, a widely held collection space planning allowance for optimal shelving of books is 10 volumes per square foot of floor space. This is for the average mix of adult books loosely shelved on full-height (84" - 90"), double-sided shelving, including 42 inch aisles for wheelchair passage. Using this figure, the space needed to adequately house 50,000 books -- at 10 volumes per square foot -- would be 5,000 square feet of floor space. If these books are now housed on 3,800 square feet one could use these standards to point out the lack of adequate space. Realize that areas of one-sided shelving, shelves adjusted for oversize materials, etc. will impact the space planning calculations accordingly.

In books such as Information Technologies and Space Planning for Libraries and Information Centers by Boss one can find help in using similar formulas for the other collection media (periodicals, microfilm, etc.) and all the remaining space types -- user seating, staff work space, etc. A surprising rule of thumb: non-assignable space (foyers, hallways, stairs, restrooms, etc.) accounts for approximately twenty-five to thirty-five percent of most buildings.

Documenting the present space deficiencies is important. This information validates the perceived lack of space and can be used to determine short-term remedies such as aggressive weeding or usurping extra seating space for shelves. The long-term impact of this information comes in determining future needs.

### **Projecting Future Space Needs**

In order to project the size facility that will adequately serve its users for the next twenty years, the director must use all sources available to answer these questions:

- How large will the collection be two decades from now?
- What is the projected population of the community and what will its demographic makeup be (e.g., age and income distribution, education levels, occupations, etc.)?
- What space will be needed for adequate seating and meeting rooms for the projected users?
- How many staff members will be required to serve these users?
- What impact will ADA and similar legislation have on library design and space requirements?

Though outdated national standards were traded by the Public Library Association for the planning process many state libraries and state associations still have standards for things such as staffing levels, space needs of facilities, and number of books per capita. The Public Library Section of LLA revised the Standards for Louisiana Public Libraries in 1995. Standards can be applied to the population projection to estimate how large the collections, staff, seating and meeting rooms should be.

Relying solely on standards to calculate an optimal-sized library facilities is untenable for many reasons. Per capita standards can't account for the differences

between communities, though they have the same number of people. Standards are also difficult to apply to the space needs of non-print materials, library automation, and other emerging technologies. To project true community needs the floor space estimated from standards must be adjusted by information from community analysis and planning, from historical library service patterns and from patron demands.

Once the size of future collections, staff and seating needs are estimated, the library space planning formulas discussed earlier can be used to document the total square footage needed to adequately house library services for the next twenty years. Be sure to plan for all the basic space types, especially the large percentage (25-35%) taken up by non-assignable spaces.

### **Evaluating Options**

With current and future building needs in hand the director is prepared to consider one or more of the options available to answer these needs:

- Remodel the present facility
- Expand/Add to the existing structure
- Convert another building to library use
- Construct a new library building
- Rent a facility

Each of these options should be explored and objectively compared with any viable options to choose the best answer to library space needs. Criteria for comparison should include the physical condition of the current building and site; usefulness of the intended space; accessibility and visibility to the maximum number of users; effect on patrons of the construction period; possibility of future expansion; and the costs to complete and maintain.

A thorough inventory of the physical condition of the current building is required as a first step to evaluating all but the new building options. The inventory should be done by an engineer or an architect -- someone with broad knowledge of buildings in order to assess the building's structural soundness; its compliance with building codes and ADA requirements; any asbestos problem; the electrical system; mechanical system; plumbing, etc. A report on the inventory should include problem areas, including their remedies and associated costs, and an informed opinion on how the renovated facility would function through the next twenty years.

Information must be compiled on the other criteria to be compared: the usefulness of the new space; how the design improves or impedes patron access, including disabled users; which location will attract the most users in the coming decades; the possibility of future expansion. One cannot overlook problems such as the migration of users, the awkwardness of a remodeling design, or the amount of scarce parking lost to an addition. Proximity to one's users is important: a poor location can't be improved by renovation or new construction. Fondness for a building or a neighborhood

should be discounted -- the purpose here is to objectively choose the option which will best serve the largest number of users in the future.

The selection of a building site for a new library is often one of the most problematic issues in a building project. The director can stem the tide of irrational and/or political reasoning by demanding relevant criteria is used in site selection. These include convenient access to large number of users; adequate space for building, parking and possible future expansion; favorable topography and soil conditions; availability; and cost. Soil must be tested due to the geological conditions in the state; an engineer does the testing.

After a thorough investigation of each viable building option the director can report the findings to the library board. With the director's counsel the trustees must choose the best building alternative before the project proceeds to the next phase.

## **PLANNING**

This phase includes the preparation of a Building Program; the determination of a building committee or team to guide the building process, including the architect; and the funding of the project. Selection of an architect is very important to the building process and should be done as early in the planning process as possible. Equally important is estimating, planning for, and securing adequate funding for the building project. Exactly when each of these steps in the planning process occurs will vary with each library's situation. The basics for the planning phase are discussed below.

### **Building Program Statement**

The building program statement utilizes the information from fact finding to communicate to the architect and others what is required of the intended facility in order to serve its community for decades to come. It must contain enough detail to thoroughly address the design and space needs of every library service. Though consultants or architects sometimes prepare the building program, the director, with staff input, most often writes it. Ample opportunity should be given for the board to review and advise the writing of the document.

Many examples and checklists are available in the literature to assist in the preparation of a building program document. The Library Development Division of the State Library can be contacted for sample building programs. A building program usually begins with a mission statement. A brief history of the library can be given, along with its present condition, and what is needed to accomplish future service goals.

Later sections should get specific: describing each space, how it is used, who uses it, and its present deficiencies (lack of space, inadequate electrical wiring, poor access for the disabled, etc.).

The future space and design needs should be detailed. Use text and graphics such as flowcharts and relationship diagrams to show how spaces relate and function. It is important to illustrate which spaces should adjoin each other for efficient workflow or monitoring.

A facility checklist should be provided. This lists all the spaces previously addressed in the building program with the twenty year space requirement for each area, its relationship to other spaces, and what operations or collections will be housed there. Also, the special requirements of each space for energy systems, plumbing, furniture and communications should be listed. A useful addition is a bibliography or appendix of materials that was used to project the area's population patterns and to determine the space needed to serve the projected community.

A summary can reassert the public service goals of the intended facility, and the importance of efficient, flexible space design for the rapidly changing needs of the future.

### **Building Planning Committee / Project Team**

The building planning committee or "project team" is made up of the parties most intimately involved in the building project. This group varies in formality from a loose knit group of board members, librarian and architect to a highly structured team. The formal team might include the director, representatives from the library board, the community and local government, a library consultant, the project architect, and the contractor awarded the building contract.

Whatever the makeup of the project team, the members must understand and accept the commitment they are undertaking. Project team membership involves plenty of homework to prepare for the numerous, intensive meetings involved in planning new library space. The members should familiarize themselves with the building program and the design of other libraries in order to make informed decisions on the many pressing details concerning their library. The members should be diligent, intelligent people willing to learn and work together to build a useful, beautiful library.

The project team evolves or is determined at different times in each building project, and is ultimately responsible for the direction and decisions concerning the emerging facility. The core members of a team often come from the formation of a library board building committee. The committee begins its work by advising the director through the fact-finding phase and the writing of the building program statement.

The building planning committee grows when an architect is selected and with the addition of a library consultant when this is deemed necessary. Closely following these responsibilities are the frequent meetings called to assist and approve the design of the building. Other experts and members of the community may join the project team for the duration of the project or when their input is essential. Some of the other responsibilities include determining the project's total cost and securing requisite funding. The team members must keep the public informed of the building's progress. Although specifics vary among parishes, the team develops specifications and prepares for the bidding process and approves or recommends the awarding of the construction contract. The team also arranges for the oversight of the construction, furnishings, and occupation of the library facility. The architect supervises the construction process. The team plans the grand opening celebration of the completed structure.

### **Architect Selection**

A key factor in a successful building project is the selection of a qualified architect. This person must possess the skills, experience and temperament to work with the project team to design and guide the construction of a functional, beautiful, affordable library.

The selection process varies across the state. In some locales the architects for public structures are chosen from a pool of certified architectural firms by the head of the local governing authority or a standing architect selection committee. In the committee scenario the user agency (library) is usually given one vote as a member of the committee. Barring this type of mandatory selection process, the project team searches for the right architect for the job in much the same way as in recruiting for a top-level position. The job is advertised, applicants are screened and interviewed, and references are carefully checked. It is important for the architect to have experience in designing public facilities that serve clients well and operate with reasonable maintenance costs. It is very desirable that the architect has knowledge of libraries and library buildings.

However the selection occurs, the architect chosen must be responsive to the guidance and demands of the project team. This can be greatly facilitated by detailing the exact responsibilities and fees of the architect in a well-conceived contract. Court-tested contracts are available from the American Institute of Architects (AIA). These provide a framework for a document that can forestall many future difficulties by clearly delineating the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved throughout all phases of the project.

There are five stages of architectural services available for a building project:

- Developing schematics, which include preliminary drawings;
- Design development;
- Preparing construction documents, which include both working drawings and specifications;
- Supervising the bidding process, including evaluation of bids; and
- Construction administration.

If the parish has an architect or other individual with the appropriate expertise, this individual may be responsible for supervising stages four and five of the building project. Generally, the architect is engaged for all five stages.

### **Building Project Funding**

How much will the expansion project or new library cost, and how will it be financed? These ever-present questions should be resolved by the time that the architect begins substantive work on the library's design. The project team, guided by the architect, must gather accurate cost estimates and secure adequate funding to build a facility that will serve its community well for decades to come.

The process of estimating construction costs often begins early in the project, and obviously grows more accurate as the building plans evolve. Reports on the condition of the building site, the materials chosen for construction, the bid price of the winning contractor, and unforeseen costs all have their impact on the total project cost.

It is essential to avoid underestimating costs. One strategy to protect against under funding is to create a contingency budget for unexpected costs.

Basic costs associated with building projects are land acquisition; construction costs; furnishings and equipment; new or expanded collections; professional fees for architects, consultants and others; landscaping; and expenses associated with moving collections and services.

Site costs often have to be negotiated and set before funding can be resolved. The current per-square-foot cost of construction is easily obtained from architects or contractors. The architect or interior designer and furniture company staff can estimate costs for interior furnishings such as cabinets, furniture, and floor and wall coverings. The director and architect should work closely with experts in the library automation and communications fields to plan for the costs of the equipment and conduits necessary for current and future technology. The director can estimate the cost of initial or start-up collections of library materials using information from the fact-finding phase and knowledge of current materials pricing. A standard fee range for the architect is from eight to ten percent of construction costs. Other professional fees from consultants, lawyers, engineers (if not included as part of the architectural services cost) and the like may add another two to three percent in costs.

Once a realistic estimate of the various project costs is compiled, the method of funding can be resolved. Most building projects are financed through bond issues or temporary dedicated tax millages approved by the voters. Other facilities are funded through sales tax revenues, gifts of land or money or savings from annual operating budgets. Refer to Capital Projects Fund in this handbook for information on various methods of funding building projects.

An important and oft neglected part of the overall funding picture concerns the increased operating costs of the completed structure. The impact of increased staffing, higher utilities, more supplies, building maintenance costs, etc. must be factored in to future operating budgets to ensure full use of the new building. A thorough operational costs checklist -- as well as checklists for building and automation projects -- can be found in Jay Wozny's Checklist for Public Library Managers.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND INTERIOR DESIGN**

This phase guides the design of the intended building inside and out. Explicit requirements in the Building Program and input from the project team are translated by the architect and other design specialists into the final drawings and specifications for use by the building contractor.

Though the team leadership shifts somewhat from the director to the architect at this time, the director remains heavily involved in the project. This phase is where the best plans and dreams for future library operations are realized through the project team's guidance of the evolving design. The director should work closely with the architect and other design specialists to ensure the special needs of future library operations are addressed. The director should become familiar with architectural symbols and terminology in order to understand the drawings and blueprints which will come out of the design phases. It is helpful if other members of the project team become familiar with the terminology and drawings to assist them in visualizing the evolving library. Check the bibliography for chapters and references on analyzing blueprints.

### **Architectural Design**

In some projects an architect may be hired before the architectural design phase to prepare conceptual drawings and even broad cost estimates for constructing additional library space. These provide the director and library board with concrete assistance as they convince the community of the need and possibilities for a new facility. In some cases, the architect also assists in the development and preparation of the building program. Excepting instances such as this, the project architect begins work with a thorough study of the Building Program.

In early discussions with the other members of the project team, the architect becomes completely familiar with the intent of the building program. At this time the architect will often propose a schedule for completion of the three stages of the architectural drawings, and a target date for letting the finalized drawings and specifications out for bid. Throughout these three stages, schematic drawings, preliminary drawings, and working drawings, the architect will incorporate specifications and system designs from building specialties such as energy distribution, mechanical systems, communications, building security, and library automation.

Schematic drawings, or preliminary drawings, are a first stage result of the architect's work with the functional relationships and space needs described in the building program. The schematic drawings produce a rough floor plan of the various library functions; they depict alternatives for how the building might be placed on the site, and how it would look from various angles. The basic skeletal framework of support columns and beams is developed in the schematic stage. In the case of an addition or expansion, the schematic drawings show how the new portion relates and attaches to the existing structure. The schematic stage should include preliminary specifications for the building materials and mechanical systems the architect is proposing for the facility,

and possibly a preliminary placement of furnishings. A key ingredient for the end of the schematic stage is the architect's projection of total costs -- a more accurate estimation of costs than was previously possible.

Careful study of these drawings by the project members must ensure the design will facilitate staff and patron use of the building. The plans must also be compared with building program space needs to see that adequate space is provided for all the operations and collections of the library. The design is easily molded in this initial stage -- strict attention to detail by the team will forestall the need for making changes that become increasingly difficult and expensive to implement in later design stages.

Upon approval of the schematic design by the project team, the library board, and possibly local government officials, the architect begins the design development stage. Working with various engineers or consultants the architect designs the structural and mechanical systems for the building. Development of these and other elements may necessitate numerous changes to the preliminary schematic designs. Doors and windows are more exactly placed in the plans, and all interior partitions are added. The requirements and specifications for building materials and systems such as air conditioning, security, and plumbing grow more exacting, along with a finer estimation of construction costs.

Once again, the director and other project team members must take pains to ferret out design problems at this stage before the plans are approved -- design changes of any magnitude are extremely difficult to make after the design development stage is completed.

The final design stage is the development of construction documents or CDs: working drawings and specifications. These are the blueprints and written details the contractor will use in the construction phase. The work is complex, with the architect coordinating intricate details and specifications from many building specialties. A fine level of detail is required because when approved, these final drawings and voluminous specifications must contain enough information to allow a building contractor to reliably bid and construct the entire structure depicted in the design documents.

The project team usually reviews the working drawings in progress, and then performs a thorough review when the documents are completed before approving the final working drawings and specifications. The architect also prepares a final construction cost estimate at the conclusion of this stage.

The final approved construction documents are combined with bidding instructions and appropriate legal forms to make up the bid documents. The architect must cooperate with state and local officials to ensure all legal requirements are met.

## Interior Design

The goals of patrons and staff are greatly facilitated by quality interior design. The architect is often responsible for interior design, though more projects are using the services of a separate interior designer. The interior design specialist, whether it is the architect or an interior designer, works as part of the project team to design, procure, and oversee the installation of the following: a functional arrangement of comfortable furniture and equipment; appropriate floor coverings, wall coverings, lighting and acoustics; well designed signage and display areas; and harmonious color schemes. The interior designer also assists in the design and purchase of the library's casework -- cabinets, built-in counters such as circulation desks, and other immovable furniture.

Starting in the schematic drawing stage, the interior designer uses information from the building program to prepare layout drawings of the interior furnishings. The first goal is to make sure the required furniture and equipment fits in the proposed floor plan. After this is confirmed, the layout and specifications for the furnishings and color schemes are perfected throughout the design stages. At project team meetings, the architect and interior designer present different design packages of layout drawings, material samples, furniture catalogs, etc. for the team to choose from. Along the way, the interior designer prepares cost estimates to inform the decision process.

The interior designer can also save the library money and, with accurate cost estimates, help the director administer the furnishings budget more effectively. An interior designer uses experience with a wide range of furnishings companies to guide cost-effective purchases. These furnishings will be carpets, furniture, wall coverings and other items that wear well, and thus save on future maintenance and replacement costs. The interior designer can also be of service writing the detailed specifications needed for the state regulated bidding process and local purchasing requirements.

The director and project team must be sure to order any materials, furniture, shelving, and other items (such as a built-in cabinet or safe) necessary in the construction process early enough to insure that these items arrive when they are needed. The architect and the interior designer oversee the receipt and installation of these items, and they deal with any companies that deliver damaged or incorrect products.

By the end of the design phase the interior design is incorporated into the construction documents. The bid documents, when necessary, will contain separate specification packages for items such as casework, shelving, and furniture.

## **CONSTRUCTION**

This phase includes the contract bidding process; the actual construction of the building; the installation of furnishings; and the acceptance of the building. The architect, or designated "clerk of the works", supervises the construction phase.

### **Bidding**

With the approval of the bid documents the design phase is completed. The construction phase can begin with the bidding of the contract. After review by local officials to ensure the documents are in order, the building job is advertised in the area legal journal. The architect may invite contractors with suitable experience to bid on the project. Contractors interested in the job receive a copy of the bid documents. They review the plans, often asking the architect for clarification on aspects of the job. Sometimes a pre-bidders conference, held with the project team, architect, and prospective bidders, is held before the bid deadline. Contractors submit sealed bids by the stated deadline to the proper authorities.

Bids received by the deadline are opened and forwarded to the project team for evaluation. Generally, as the expert in the process, the architect examines the bids. Of all valid bids, the architect must recommend the lowest be chosen unless strong evidence from investigation of the company's past work disqualifies that contractor.

The bid is awarded to the lowest qualified bidder and announced to the public. An attorney, hired by the library or local governing authority, draws up a contract. It is negotiated and signed by the contractor and the "owner representative", i.e., the legal representative of the building project. This entity varies -- it can be the director, the library board, or the head of the local governing authority.

Once the contract is signed, the contractor prepares a schedule coordinating all the subcontract building specialties required for the job -- concrete workers, plumbers, electricians, etc. Construction trailers move in, temporary phone and electricity services are set up, and the construction work begins in earnest.

### **Construction Begins**

Actual construction begins with the preparation of the building site. This can involve demolishing existing structure; grading of the site; excavation of basement area and trenches for underground utilities; and preparation of the ground for the foundation. In the case of an addition, the existing structure is readied for connection to the upcoming building.

Thus begins an exciting time for the library planners, library staff, and the public as they watch the foundation, walls, and roof take shape. During construction it should be understood the contractor is in charge of the construction site. Visits to the site should be approved through the architect. Through site visits and meetings with the

contractor and subcontractors, the architect supervises the building process, checking the quality of the work and approving the contractor's periodic requests for payment of work completed. The local governing authority often adds another layer of oversight by assigning a building inspector for the duration of the project.

While construction proceeds, the director has much to accomplish: coordinate payments to the contractor and professionals; plan for moving materials, equipment, and staff to the new space; hire and train new staff when needed; continue to keep the public informed and interested in the project; and plan for a celebration period when the new structure is put into use. When dealing with a building addition project, a major effort is needed to mitigate the temporary dislocation, hazards, and mess caused by construction for both users and staff.

Invariably, problems arise that necessitate a change in the plans. A specified material or piece of equipment might have been discontinued, or might require a different amount of space than was planned. A remedy is suggested by the contractor or architect, and, since it often costs more than the original plan, any of these "change orders" must be approved by the project team or appropriate body.

### **Installation of Furnishings**

As the building proceeds, furnishings are installed. The installation of floor and wall coverings, and, sometimes, the casework, are normally covered in the contractor's bid. The architect, with assistance from the interior designer, will contract with the furnishing companies or local labor for the installation of other furnishings, such as shelving, furniture, automation equipment, and artwork. As these orders arrive they should be carefully examined for damage and adherence to the order. Remember, these items must be ordered early to, hopefully, arrive when they are needed; furniture and shelving orders have been known to come in late.

### **Acceptance of the Building**

A point known as substantial completion is reached near the end of the project. It occurs when the architect and the contractor agree the building is ready to be handed over to the owners.

A substantial completion walk-through (inspection tour) of the building is scheduled with the entire project team and involved local officials. During the tour, all fixtures and electrical outlets should be tested. Any malfunctioning equipment or fixtures, or damaged window panes, wall coverings, floor tiles or any other problems should be noted. The architect prepares a document called a punch list. This is a list of the problem areas which must be remedied by the contractor before the building can be formally accepted. After agreeing to the repairs listed on the punch list, the contractor, architect and owner representative sign it.

During this time, the contractor should supply the project team with a complete set of instructions and warranties on the materials and equipment installed in the project. The contractor should also supply a full list of subcontractors and manufacturers involved in the project in case problems with their work or product arise. The architect should supply a set of drawings and specifications. If there have been changes during construction, ask for a set of "as built" drawings from the architect.

Once the punch list is signed the director can begin to move in. During the occupation period, the contractor works on the punch list repairs. When satisfactorily completed, the building can be formally accepted by the owner representative, and the contractor can be paid the final portion of the contract payment.

## OCCUPATION

The final phase involves moving into the finished structure. Depending on the complexity of the move, this exciting phase can be handled by available staff or contracted out to professional movers. A well-conceived plan which everyone is familiar with is essential to a smooth occupation.

Settling into the new building will take months. Be prepared to overcome many minor problems with equipment, staffing levels, and arrangement of the collection. Keep records of problems and their solutions. Work quickly to repair systems still under warranty. Successful adjustments to the climate control system often take a full year.

As soon as practical after the move is completed, a dedication ceremony and celebration period should be held. An open invitation should be publicized for the dedication ceremony. All those involved in the actual project should be specifically invited and briefly acknowledged at the ceremony. Keep speeches short; spend more energy on giving attendees a tour of the new facility. Take pictures, pass a good time -- everyone involved will deserve it!

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## **DISASTER PLANNING**

"Hell" or "High-water" may not darken your library door, but wise is the administrator who thinks in terms of "when" rather than "if" disaster strikes! In Louisiana most disasters take the form of flood, hurricane, or tornado. However, national events warn that man-made disasters such as fires, explosions, and criminal intrusion threaten civic operations at all levels through destruction of records and materials. When building a disaster plan from scratch, it's best to start small, concentrating on the most basic procedures, and then expanding to include further concerns during yearly revision sessions. And while a disaster plan designed for another plant may serve as a guide, don't assume it can be simply modified for your particular building, staff, and *modus operandi*.

Any plan should consist of three parts: prevention, response, and recovery.

### **Prevention**

Preparedness begins with a thorough survey of the library building or buildings to determine potential problems. A well maintained building will aid in preventing many conditions that lead to disaster. It is helpful to devise a checklist to be used for an annual inspection of fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, exit accessibility, and disaster supplies. Staff responsible for the inspection should send a memorandum to the director identifying problems and recommending solutions.

When the plan has been written, make all staff members aware of its existence. Conduct in-house training sessions in which ground plans are reviewed, disaster equipment is located, and response and/or recovery techniques are discussed. Administrators and staff responsible for directing disaster operations should have a copy of the plan at their desk and at home. Copies of records vital to library operations and building blueprints should also be stored off site.

### **Response**

The disaster response section of the plan should begin with an outline of basic emergency procedures for library staff to follow immediately at the onset of the disaster. For fire and water, the basic steps are similar:

- In a water emergency, stop the flow, generally by turning off the supply or plugging the leak.
- In case of fire, the person discovering it must sound the alarm, call 911, or the appropriate agency, and initiate evacuation of the building.
- With both, the next step is to contact the response team, the disaster recovery contractor, and the insurance company.

- In case of fire, the response team can gather supplies while waiting for permission to reenter the building. Upon access, they can begin packing damaged materials according to the priorities noted in the ground plan.

### **Recovery**

Once your plan-writing team has covered basic emergency procedures, move on to the long-term questions of how to deal with existing damage, prevent further problems, and restore essential services as soon as possible. Know exactly what your insurance covers and what the company expects the library to handle.

The plan should also explain what to do with damaged materials and how to make sure nothing is further damaged. In the worst cases, when damage causes closing of a building, the disaster plan should make provisions for the relocation of staff and collection so that some form of service is reinstated as soon as possible. Telephone numbers of disaster recovery resources, as well as backups of vital files and blueprints, should be stored off-site. Information on logon procedures, passwords, and phone numbers should be updated regularly and readily accessible.

No plan can cover every emergency, but surprisingly, much can be anticipated simply by sitting down with all the appropriate people and thinking through what might happen "when" a disaster strikes and how it would affect the library's functioning.

## OUTLINE FOR DISASTER PLAN

### I. Introduction

- A. Purpose of the plan
- B. Kinds of disasters to plan for
- C. Types of materials in the collection

### II. Prevention

- A. Upkeep Checklist
- B. Map of on-site emergency equipment (e.g., Utility shutoffs, fire extinguishers, alarms)
- C. Emergency telephone numbers.
- D. Basic supplies on hand with location (e.g., plastic sheets, tape, camera)
- E. Schedule of training sessions
- F. Revision schedule

### III. Response

- A. Assignment of staff responsibilities
- B. Marking priorities for salvage on plans and in library
- C. Handling and/or duplication of essential files
- D. Directory of staff
- E. Directory of resource personnel and services

### IV. Recovery

- A. Steps to be taken immediately following a disaster
  - Re-entry (Work with local officials for procedures)
  - Assessment of damages
  - Communications
- B. Preparations for salvage and treatment (e.g., where to set up work area)
- C. Treatment procedures for types of materials
- D. Public Relations

Appendixes - Floor plans, evacuation procedures, location of fire extinguishers, checklists, etc.

### List of Resources

#### Information Assistance

State Library of Louisiana (225) 342-4931  
SOLINET (800) 999-8558  
AMIGOS (800) 843-8482

#### Referrals to Conservators

American Institute for Conservation (AIC) (202) 452-9545

## Commercial Services

BMS-CAT (Blackmon-Mooring Steamatic Catastrophe) (800) 433-2940

DRS (Disaster Recovery Services) (800) 856-3333

North East Document Conservation Center (978) 470-1010

Miners Moisture Control Services (800) 422-6379

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## **SECTION II. COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING**

Public relations can be defined as a function of management in which libraries establish and maintain open two-way communication between the organization and the public. Marketing deals with the function that evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or organization and plans and executes a program to earn public understanding and acceptance. Libraries belong in the spotlight of our communities. It's our responsibility as the manager to make it happen!

#### **Library's Image**

The library director is responsible for promoting library services and programs and nurturing a good association with the public. Community use of the library relies in part on the public's image of what the library can offer. Offering good service and promoting relevant library activities is essential. Service is the core of your library. Your library must meet patrons' needs with speed and accuracy and anticipate community concerns. Fostering a good relationship between staff and the public should be a high priority. Competent, courteous staff who make library users feel welcome by creating a positive environment is invaluable. A telephone is to be considered a vital element in public relations. By using the telephone, a patron can ascertain if the library is open or discover if the materials desired are available.

Public relations begin in the library itself. Developing that image of libraries depends on principles of packaging. Care should be given to the manner of speaking, answering the telephone, and responding to the endless questions that flow in. Very basic to public relations is an attractive, neat library that offers the services people seek. Proper maintenance of collections, adequate directional signs and explanatory placards will increase good will. Library users should enjoy their visits to the library. Bright colors, simple directions, attractive people, comfortable surroundings, willingness to serve, smartness, style, simplicity, and smiles will give your library a positive image.

The library's most powerful avenue for good relations is the word-of-mouth advertising given by the satisfied patron; it is also the least expensive!

## Publicity

Making citizens aware of library resources requires constant and imaginative effort. The library's annual report can be an effective promotional tool. It should include financial, circulation, and reference statistics, photos, and short features on the past year's accomplishments and activities. Your taxpayers have a right to know. Give them a clear concept of the workings of the library! Libraries that have been surveyed can profitably capitalize on the survey as a public relations device. Surveys provide your library patrons the opportunity to express their needs and opinions of their library. This aims the director toward securing better personnel, better methods, and better financial support that will produce a better library.

Bookmarks, flyers, and newsletters done with imaginative preparation can be used to denote special happenings, services, or hours open and address of the library. Booklists in certain subject areas or lists of new books or videos with short annotations are great promoters. Bulletin boards and posters can be a very versatile means of publicity. They can stimulate interest in selected books or subjects and call attention to resources or services or programs. Displays or exhibits can reach a wide audience by informing users and potential users of what is available in the library. Remember to celebrate and capitalize on National Library Week - it's a marketing event designed just for libraries. Check with the State Library; there may be a statewide promotional package available. Campaigns for funding are another tool to create public awareness. An effort has to be made to the whole community to thoroughly inform them of financial facts and library needs (see [Tax Elections](#) in this handbook). Check with your Chamber of Commerce to identify happenings and interest points in your area, and also check such sources as [Chase's Annual Events](#) for ideas.

Public relations outside the library are absolutely essential for lively libraries. Make a contact at your local newspaper; find out about their deadlines and news-related formats; and offer to provide filler materials to the editor when needed. Radio stations will air public service announcements that are typically less than 30 seconds long. Offer to participate in interview and talk shows on pertinent topics. Local television stations should receive media releases and stories with human interest and visual appeal. Larger public libraries have TV production studios for the production of spots or short subjects. Some of the items produced are for release to TV stations or cable networks, and some for cassette utilization by the library's videocassette viewers and for home lending.

## **Programming**

Programming in the library offers the public an opportunity to see the lively, welcoming side of service that many people may not expect. Goals for programming should be to enrich the background and stimulate the interest of library users who currently use the library, to attempt to draw into the library people who are not necessarily intrigued, and to provide library users with programs that are not available anywhere else. When you decide you have a need for a particular program, search for a presenter or a resource person with a specialty and build your program around that specific topic.

The library is the perfect place to offer many types of programs. Special events or programming for children and teens could include story hours, reading clubs, book reviews, film programs, puppet shows, summer reading programs, storytelling events, Children's Book Week and the list goes on. Adult programming can include any type of informative program that would enhance their day-to-day lives. Consider adult offerings such as computer training, literacy programs, investment seminars, performing and creative arts, travel lectures, library's anniversary, guest authors and poets, lectures, National Library Week, discussion groups, and book talks.

Many programs of this nature can be done free of charge - just do it enthusiastically! Remember communities change or expand; so should the library's programming (see [Planning](#) in this handbook). The director must keep in mind the community's needs and continue to evaluate public programming.

## **Community Relations**

The library should be represented in various community activities. The library director should offer to address community meetings. Speaking engagements offer the opportunity for a "commercial" about the library, new services, or upcoming programs. Always provide a handout, such as bookmarks, brochures, booklists, or flyers on future events. Getting out of the library gives you the opportunity to meet people who do not use the library.

The library should be ready to co-sponsor or supplement non-sponsored programs with bibliographies, information services, and displays and to lend book collections to special groups such as the mental health association, Bible schools, or garden clubs. Brochures on city and parish officials and community groups would be another way to reach the public. Also, a successful way to attract and hold the support of community groups and

agencies is to ask them for specific assistance in promoting a program or project. It could be the garden club working to develop a better garden collection or planting shrubs for Arbor Day; Boy Scouts moving shelves and books; church youth groups preparing exhibits in the churches for National Library Week; or the AARP promoting the Blind and Physically Handicapped materials and services. Citizens who become involved make life-long friends of the library (see [Friends](#) in this handbook).

Another role of the library in the community is working with the local school system. The director should establish a good working relationship with the school administration. The library can offer cooperative efforts with school librarians, such as class visits, teacher loans, reserves for school assignments, summer reading programs, and library tours. Also, an effort should be made to identify other youth groups such as Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts and to have knowledge of their aims and programs. You should be aware of parent groups such as the PTA, Teen-Parent Support Groups, and others. Family literacy is of major importance in the 90's. Some programming should be geared to the entire family. Programming might include a special Family Reading Night or a program on books to read aloud or books on parenting.

### **Trustees**

Public relations are of vital interest to trustees. Board actions affect the public's concept of the library. Trustees should not be inhibited by public opinion but should take action for the public good and inform the public. Trustees and the director should work closely together in planning the trustee's role. Some specific suggestions for trustees to assist are speeches on library topics at public meetings; board studies on library equipment or building problems; and contacts in the community with leaders and organizations. Trustees should be active members of the community, so they can also be sensitive to community needs. Trustees can enhance library relations with outside channels in a very positive manner. (See the [Handbook for Louisiana Library Trustees](#)).

## **BOARD MEETINGS AND MINUTES**

Library board meetings are the official business meetings at which your library board makes the policy and financial decisions for your library system.

### **Positive Suggestions to Consider**

Boards need to be as positive as possible and to deal only with appropriate issues. Board bylaws provide the general structure for the board's work. Bylaws should cover guidelines for the meetings of the board, the officers of the board, the library director, resolutions, committees of the board, order of business, and amendments to the bylaws. (See the Handbook for Louisiana Library Trustees for further details of bylaws.)

Another suggestion is to elect a new chairperson and other officers annually or every two years. Rotating leadership responsibilities can create a stronger board.

Meet in different libraries throughout the community or system. This creates high visibility and gives trustees the chance to become acquainted with the library staff, the buildings, and the collections throughout the library system.

Plan meetings on a regular, annual schedule. Select specific dates, times, and places six to twelve months in advance.

Follow Robert's Rules of Order for conducting the business meetings.

Board committee meetings need to be held prior to the board meeting in order to save time. Committees of the board make recommendations to the whole board in order for the board to make a decision for the library. Remember the director is present at board meetings in nearly all libraries and may act as the secretary.

### **"Sunshine Law"**

The open meeting or "Sunshine" Law (L.R.S. 42:4.1-13) applies to your library board meetings and board committees. Never forget that the community "owns" the library and that the trustees govern on behalf of the citizens. The media and citizens are always welcome. Announce the regular board meetings as set by your bylaws with written public

notice in January for the whole year. For special or rescheduled meetings, written public notice must be given at least twenty-four hours before the meeting. Written public notice includes publishing the notice in the official journal or posting notice at the library or wherever the meeting is held. All decisions must be formally adopted in an open board meeting to be legally binding. The exceptions to the open meetings law are listed in L.R.S. 42:6.1.

### **Getting Organized for the Meeting**

Before the board meeting, the director should do the following: plan the meeting carefully; discuss with the president items to go on the agenda for all members; prepare the agenda in advance; mail or distribute the agenda and other information in advance, generally at least a week; and publish or post public notice of meetings.

During the meeting, the director should assist the board in focusing on issues at hand; following the agenda and establishing order of business as stated in the bylaws; and establishing action items. At the end of the meeting, the director should see that the progress on decisions is evaluated; that the next meeting is announced; and that the meeting is adjourned officially.

After the meeting the director should mail minutes to the board members, follow through on action items, and begin planning the next meeting. Minutes are an official public record and are written by the secretary. You may want to send your minutes to the governing authority.

## Sample Format for an Agenda

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Place: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Time: \_\_\_\_\_

| <u>ORDER OF BUSINESS</u>           | <u>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</u> | <u>ACTION NEEDED</u>         |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Call To Order                   | President                 |                              |
| 2. Roll Call                       | Secretary                 |                              |
| 3. Minutes                         | Secretary                 | Approve                      |
| 4. Statistical & Financial Reports | Director                  | Present/Discuss              |
| 5. Old Business                    | Board                     | Review/Decisions/<br>Actions |
| 6. New Business                    | Board                     | Review/Decisions/<br>Actions |
| 7. Reports of Committees           | Committee Chairs          | Present/Discuss              |
| 8. Other                           |                           |                              |
| 9. Adjournment                     | Board                     | Approve                      |

## Sample Format for Minutes

1. Name/Title of Board
2. Type of Meeting - Regular or Special Meeting
3. Date, Time, and Place
4. Members Present, Absent, and Guests
5. Agenda - Items discussed and general description of meeting's content
6. Decisions/Actions:
  - Who, What, When
  - Record the number of votes for and against
  - State that the motion carried or failed
7. Next Meeting - Next meeting's date, time, place, and preliminary agenda items
8. Attachments

## **OUTREACH**

The commitment of public libraries to serve the public wherever that public might be has led to the development of a wide range of outreach or extension services. Outreach in this section excludes services provided by branch libraries and/or stations. To offer outreach services, librarians must evaluate the personality of their own area by assessing the educational levels, the economy, and the needs, interests, and attitudes of their community. Librarians must be aware of changes in the community's composition. For example, such factors as a change of transit routes, the closing of a hospital, an influx of apartment dwellers, an increase in the average age, or a change in the ethnic composition should be considered. The public library has long been dedicated to the concept of "services to all". The vastness or limits of your outreach will depend on your parish needs, your board's policies, and your financial situation. The following examples are possible outreach programs that one might consider.

### **Services to Children**

Outreach to children may include special children's programming throughout the year, a library-sponsored storytelling event in a recreational area, a puppet show by the bookmobile staff at a central stop, or service to day care centers. These are all common types of outreach. With social changes occurring in our communities many libraries have latchkey programs in the afternoons and evenings, drug awareness programs, and even special programs for the abused child.

### **Service to Older Adults**

Older adults are a growing sector of our population. Many residential areas have been designed for them such as retirement homes. This group may be less mobile or homebound and often need special delivery service, or may need special interest materials, or may desire special programming on topics such as social security or Medicare.

## **Services to New Readers**

Many Louisiana libraries are involved in literacy programs. Providing new reader materials is the first step in assisting adults who are improving their basic skills and understanding in reading, writing, speaking, and computing as they gain new knowledge. Often the library is the agency that provides training sessions for tutors, provides space for a tutor and student to work, provides the teaching materials for the student and tutor, and even locates a tutor for the patron who needs help in learning to read. In some areas, there are well-established programs conducted by literacy action groups, or Council on Aging, or United Way, but in many areas the public library is the only agency totally involved.

## **Services to the Institutionalized**

Service to the institutionalized includes correctional facilities for adults and children, nursing homes, hospitals, schools and residences for the mentally and physically disabled, and other special facilities. Library services, such as deposit collections and special programming, can be very meaningful to citizens who make a traumatic change in their lives to an institutional environment where there may be a loss of privacy or dignity.

## **Bookmobile Services**

A bookmobile or a van delivery system is one means of serving special groups. Bookmobile service is an active component of Louisiana library service. A statewide interest group offers periodic bookmobile workshops featuring expert speakers and a sharing of ideas by participants. Bookmobiles reach out to people as a mobile force in an age of mobility. They provide temporary service until library facilities can be erected. They help determine the best locations for future permanent sites. They advertise the library dramatically and can enhance your public relations program. Bookmobiles do not replace and are not a substitute for a well-planned adequate branch, but bookmobiles do allow your library to serve people who might otherwise not have access to library services. Bringing books and people together by means of a vehicle is a unique service. Bookmobiles are used to serve older adults in residential areas and those who are homebound or handicapped. Bookmobiles are used to serve the institutions that were mentioned earlier if these institutions are not served by special collection deposits managed by staff or volunteers. Some schools are served by bookmobile. Often, bookmobiles serve schools that have no school library or school librarian, schools where there are no branch libraries,

and/or schools that have few books to supplement the curriculum needs of the students and faculty. With the rapid opening of many daycare centers, bookmobiles now go to these centers to provide books and programs for these very young children. Bookmobiles are also used to service many migrant children in our farming areas.

As the director, you must determine the realm of your outreach program in your own community. The question we must ask ourselves as librarians is: *Can we ignore communities where human beings wish to read, do read, and need to read?*

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## FRIENDS

Friends of public libraries are organized for a variety of reasons. While there are differences in activities, the basic purposes for organization are to support and promote institutions that are vital to the well being of society but which are largely taken for granted.

Friends bring together citizens who are acutely aware of libraries as a public good and, as such, have a committed interest in their development and use. Because they are not responsible for the library, as are trustees, the director and library staff, these citizens can provide an unbiased assessment of the library and serve objectively to enhance the library and promote its use.

In addition to promoting the resources and services of libraries for the benefit of the public and serving as a forum for the expression of the community's library needs, Friends organizations provide two main functions. They provide advocacy for libraries at the local, state and federal levels in regard to legislation and funding, and they seek to improve and extend resources and services of libraries by augmenting public funds.

Friends groups seek to increase and enrich library resources and services through gifts, endowments, and bequests and through other fundraising activities. They are not organized to assume city, parish, state, or federal obligations to finance libraries, but rather seek to supply the extras that turn adequate libraries into superior ones.

The organization of a Friends group follows a general pattern. The elected officers -- president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer -- along with a board of directors representing the library regionally, govern the business of the organization. Friends adopt a constitution with bylaws and usually acquire nonprofit corporation status.

While sharing concerns and goals, Friends and trustees have very different areas of responsibility. Trustees are legally and officially responsible for the operation of the library. Friends have no policy-making role. Trustees govern the library and keep Friends informed by providing liaison between the two entities. Friends support board decisions and coordinate their activities to library policy guidelines. Operating in an atmosphere of cooperation and respect, Friends and trustees can make their library the vital, responsive agency it should be.

The state group, Friends of Libraries of Louisiana (FOLOLA), incorporated in July 1993 as a non-profit organization patterned after the national organization, Friends of Libraries

U.S.A. (FOLUSA). FOLOLA's purposes are to encourage the formation of local groups, support state initiatives for the improvement of library services, and promote federal and state funding for libraries at appropriate and reasonable levels. FOLOLA's activities include annual educational programs for friends, trustees, and library staff; informational assistance in starting friends groups; and notice of Friends activities in [Communiqué](#).

### **Sources - Friends**

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## VOLUNTEERS IN LIBRARIES

Volunteer programs in libraries should be given consideration for two important reasons. If they are planned and administered well, they can enrich the library by freeing or enabling regular staff to reach beyond what they are normally able to do. Such programs also perform the invaluable public relations function of increasing the network of library supporters in the community.

Volunteer programs in libraries can be either a boon or a bane depending on how they are planned and administered. Whether they develop as a reaction to a crisis such as lack of funding to support adequate staffing levels or as a desire to enhance the library's ability to serve the community, there is a need to plan wisely for volunteer use.

The level of planning for volunteer programs will depend on the size of the library and the tasks to be undertaken. The first step in planning for any size library is to make sure your staff understands how volunteers can assist them, and that board and staff are in complete agreement for volunteer help. Without this agreement on the use and role of volunteers in the library, a volunteer program is doomed to failure.

Other steps important to the success of any size volunteer program are the appointment of library employees to act as the volunteers' supervisors or first line of contact, and the appointment of an individual to coordinate the volunteer program. For small programs, the director can serve as volunteer coordinator. For larger programs, the director should consider appointing an existing staff member, hiring someone, or recruiting a volunteer with administrative experience to serve in this position.

Steps in planning volunteer programs include the following:

1. Enlisting full board and staff cooperation,
2. Reviewing with board and staff all library activities to see if a volunteer work program would be of help to the library in meeting goals and objectives,
3. Assessing activities and specific tasks to see where volunteer assistance could most properly be utilized,
4. Appointing a volunteer coordinator,
5. Preparing job descriptions for tasks appropriate for volunteers,
6. Establishing first line supervisors for each volunteer,
7. Establishing evaluation measures for continual feedback on volunteer job performance,

8. Preparing policy and procedure guidelines for volunteers,
9. Developing orientation and training programs, and
10. Planning formal recognition programs.

While recruiting volunteers can be difficult, retaining them is often a greater problem. Recruitment and retention of serious, capable and dependable volunteers are facilitated by a planned business approach to volunteer work. It indicates to the volunteer the library takes its responsibilities seriously and has respect for the volunteer's time, talents and motivation.

Most volunteers enter the library with no idea of library operations. Volunteers appreciate knowing exactly what is expected of them and what they are to accomplish. They appreciate training before embarking on their assignments and supervision all along the way. They need an introduction to the library including the physical facility (parking, where to hang their hats, restrooms, break rooms, telephone use, etc.) and library policies and procedures (confidentiality of records, patron interaction, staff relations, promptness, absences, dependability, hours, holidays, time sheets, liability, benefits, expense reimbursements, tax deductible expenses, etc.)

Volunteers can be recruited from library users, acquaintances, or community agencies. An application form to take information from interested individuals and an interview with the director or volunteer coordinator will indicate a business approach, ascertain skills and interest of the individual, and help in placement. Entering a contractual agreement with the volunteer utilizing a form, which spells out volunteer responsibilities and library responsibilities, will also formalize the process and indicate to volunteers the importance of their work.

To avoid burnout, volunteers should be scheduled for no more than three hours one day a week. Minimum commitment should be for six weeks.

Keep volunteers to a minimum to avoid staff conflict and the idea that libraries can be run on a part time basis rather than with regular paid professional and skilled workers. When a volunteer has finished an assignment, end the volunteer cycle with the provision that the volunteer may be recalled for another assignment. Recall only the best.

Thank volunteers both personally and through formal recognition programs. Volunteers need to feel satisfied with and appreciated for their contributions. A volunteer who experiences a positive working relationship with the library and feels appreciated will

speak highly of the library in the community.

Activities appropriate for volunteers include the following:

1. Care of the collection including sorting, mending, shelving and straightening books,
2. Working with children's programming including storytelling,
3. Assisting in branches,
4. Helping with outreach programs,
5. Preparing displays and exhibits,
6. Assisting with the automation process inputting files into the computer and bar coding,
7. Compiling reading lists,
8. Working with genealogists,
9. Helping with inventory,
10. Providing hospitality and decorations for special occasions such as open houses, end of summer reading program parties, etc.,
11. Working as a literacy tutor,
12. Providing help in maintaining the vertical, picture and pamphlet files, and
13. Assisting with surveys.

### **Sources - Volunteers**

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- Warner, Alice Sizer. "Volunteers in Libraries II." in Library Journal Special Report #24. New York: Library Journal, 1988.
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## TAX ELECTIONS

The State Constitution, Article VI, Section 32, authorizes a special tax for the support of a public library. It reads:

"For the purpose of acquiring, constructing, improving, maintaining, or operating any work of public improvement, a political subdivision may levy special taxes when authorized by a majority of the electors in the political subdivision who vote thereon in an election held for that purpose."

The Election Code (L.R.S. 18:402 et seq.) adopted by the legislature pursuant to the state constitution establishes a uniform procedure for the conduct of bond and tax elections.

There are many steps that must be followed in order to begin working toward a tax election.

The following things must be done - the responsibility for which may vary from parish to parish. One is advised to check with the parish governing authority to ascertain which steps are the library's responsibility. The first step, of course, is for the library board, with the help of the administration and staff, to make the decision that it is time to call a tax election. Consideration should be given to the amount of money necessary for the library's operation and the number of years that the tax should run. Traditionally, duration of library taxes is between five and ten years. The library must share the cost of the election with others on the ballot. The board should work with a bonding attorney to write: 1) the resolution ordering and calling for the tax or bond election, and 2) the proposition as it will appear on the ballot.

The actual wording of the proposition as it is submitted to the voters is very important and should be carefully studied. It is very important that the heading indicate that the proposition is for the library so that voters will not confuse it with the other propositions on the ballot, if any. For example, the heading should read "LIBRARY TAX PROPOSITION" rather than merely stating "PARISHWIDE TAX PROPOSITION". Also, be sure that the purpose of the tax is spelled out by noting that the tax is for the "support, maintenance, operation, and upkeep" and/or for the "construction and improvements" of the parish library system.

Remember, how the proposition is worded will legally limit the use of the tax money. Attorney General Opinion 98-361 states that the proceeds of an ad valorem tax levied for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, and improving a public library and its branches could not be used for the purchase of equipment and books for use by the library.

## Sample Tax Proposition

### **PARISHWIDE LIBRARY TAX PROPOSITION**

**SUMMARY: 10 YEAR 5.98 MILLS PROPERTY TAX CONTINUATION FOR THE SUPPORT, MAINTENANCE, OPERATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE XYZ PARISH LIBRARY AND ITS BRANCHES.**

Shall the Parish of XYZ, State of Louisiana (the "Parish"), be authorized to continue to levy a special tax of five and ninety-eight hundredths (5.98) mills on all property subject to taxation within the Parish, for a period of ten (10) years beginning with the year 1999 and ending with the year 2008, for the purpose of the support, maintenance, operation and improvement of the XYZ Parish Library and its branches?

After the resolution and proposition are written, the Board officially approves the written resolution and sees that it is placed on the parish Police Jury or governing authority's agenda for discussion and approval. Next, the governing authority officially approves the resolution, and the governing authority generates a resolution approving of the election.

A written notice of the election (certified copy of the resolution of approval) is next sent to the Secretary of State, State Bond Commission, Commissioner of Elections, and each Clerk of Court and Registrar of Voters in the area affected by the election at least forty-five days prior to the election. A copy of the proposition as it is to appear on the ballot must also accompany the election notice. The purpose of this notification is in order that each office may prepare for the election and perform those functions required of them by law. Along with the certified resolution, application is formally made to the State Bond commission for consent and authority to hold the election and, should the proposition pass, to levy and collect the special tax or finance the bond as provided in the proposition. Notice to the State Bond Commission should be submitted several weeks in advance of the forty-five day deadline for the Secretary of State's office. A schedule of these deadlines, State Bond Commission meetings, and regular election dates is available at <http://www.treasury.state.la.us/sbc/dedln-98.htm> or by contacting the State Bond Commission at (225) 342-0040.

Public notice of the election shall be given and shall embrace substantially all matters

required to be set forth in the resolution ordering the election. It also shall list all designated polling places and that the governing authority of the political subdivision ordering the election will in open session, at hour and place named, proceed to canvass the returns and declare the results of the election. The notice shall be published once a week for four consecutive weeks in the official journal of the political subdivision. Not less than forty-five days nor more than ninety days may intervene between the date of the first publication and the election.

Bond and tax elections may be held only on certain specific days during the year. Based on the election code (L.R.S. 18:402 et seq.), the State Bond Commission has determined the dates for elections through 2001 to be as follows:

| <b>Elections</b>                 | <b>1999</b>                           | <b>2000</b>  | <b>2001</b>   |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------|
| <b>Propositions Only</b>         | <b>Jan 16</b>                         | <b>Jan 15</b>                                      | <b>Jan 20</b> |
| <b>Primary</b>                   | <b>Mar 27</b>                         | <b>Mar 14</b> (presidential preference primary)    | <b>Apr 7</b>  |
| <b>General</b>                   | <b>May 1</b>                          | <b>Apr 15</b>                                      | <b>May 5</b>  |
| <b>Propositions Only</b>         | <b>Jul 17</b>                         | <b>Jul 15</b>                                      | <b>Jul 21</b> |
| <b>Primary</b>                   | <b>Oct 23</b> (gubernatorial primary) | <b>Oct 7</b>                                       | <b>Oct 20</b> |
| <b>General</b>                   | <b>Nov 20</b> (gubernatorial general) | <b>Nov 7</b> (congressional/presidential election) | <b>Nov 17</b> |
| <b>Congressional Run-off/Tie</b> | <b>none</b>                           | <b>Dec 9</b>                                       | <b>none</b>   |

Information on future dates can be obtained by contacting the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's Office in Baton Rouge at (225) 342-4970 or online at <http://www.sec.state.la.us.elect-3.htm>.

After the election, the official results are canvassed and the Proces-Verbal giving the results is published once in the official journal.

After your tax has passed, check to make certain that adjustment in revenue sharing funds are made if needed. The mechanics of insuring eligibility for revenue sharing funds are simple - contact your legislator (either representative or senator) and request that new

millages be included in the next revenue sharing bill. For further information on this matter contact your State Library consultant and review the articles on [State Revenue Sharing](#) in this handbook.

### **What if your tax doesn't succeed?**

First, you cry. Then take several deep breaths! You will have support from your colleagues, library supporters in your community, and the news media. The best advice, information, support, and sympathy come from colleagues who have had failed tax elections and from Library Development personnel at the State Library.

Library taxes have failed for a variety of reasons, including general voter anti-tax sentiment, low voter turnout with the anti-tax faction voting heavily, and being on the ballot with unpopular propositions. In 1995, voters approved an amendment to the Louisiana Constitution (Article 6, Section 30 B) providing that the submission of a local tax proposition to the electorate may occur no more often than once within a six-month period except in the case of an emergency.

You **will** go back to the voters again – older, wiser, and with a more successful result!

## Tax or Bond Campaign - Checklist for Placing Item on Ballot

This checklist is a general guideline for placing a tax or bond proposition on the ballot. Check with the appropriate local, parish, and state officials for answers to specific questions and to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the Library Director, Library Board, Parish Police Jury or Parish Council, and attorney in your parish.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Library Board determines it is time to call an election for a tax or bond issue.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Library Board determines amount to seek and duration of tax.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Library Board chooses a date for the election.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Library Board works with an attorney to produce the following:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Resolution ordering and calling for the tax or bond, which must
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Include purpose for which election is being called
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Include tax rate or bond amount
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Include number of years the tax or bond will run
    - \_\_\_\_\_ For a tax, includes the method of taxation (sales, ad valorem)
    - \_\_\_\_\_ For a bond, includes the interest rate and source of revenues pledged to retire the bond
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Include the text of the proposition
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Proposition to appear on the ballot, which must
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Not exceed 400 words in length
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Include a concise summary of purpose in capital letters, placed at the statement's beginning
    - \_\_\_\_\_ State the purpose of the tax or bond
    - \_\_\_\_\_ State the tax rate or bond amount
    - \_\_\_\_\_ State the number of years the tax or bond will run
    - \_\_\_\_\_ State the year the tax or bond will begin and the year it will end
    - \_\_\_\_\_ For a tax, state the method of taxation (sales, ad valorem)
    - \_\_\_\_\_ For a bond, state the interest rate and source of revenues pledged to retire the bond
- \_\_\_\_\_ Library Board approves the written resolution and proposition.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Resolution and Proposition are placed on Parish Police Jury or Parish Council agenda for discussion and approval.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Police Jury or Parish Council approves
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Resolution
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Proposition
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare written notice of the election, which contains the following
  - \_\_\_\_\_ All information required to be set forth in the resolution ordering the election

- \_\_\_\_\_ List of all precincts where the proposition will be voted
- \_\_\_\_\_ Statement that the proposition is to voted parish-wide by all registered voters,
- OR
- \_\_\_\_\_ An indication for each precinct as to whether all registered voters in that precinct will be eligible to vote on the proposition
- \_\_\_\_\_ Statement that the governing authority calling the election will, in open session, at the hour and place named, proceed to canvass the returns and declare the result of the election.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare and publish public notice of the election
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Published once a week for four consecutive weeks in the official journal of the political subdivision or, if there is none, then in a newspaper of general circulation in the parish or in and adjoining parish
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Not less than 45 days nor more than 90 days shall intervene between the date of the first publication and the date of the election
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare and submit written notice of the election to the following governmental units in order that each office may prepare for the election and perform those functions connected with same as required of them by law
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Certified copies of the resolution and the proposition must be submitted to
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary of State
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Commissioner of Elections
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Clerk of Court - for each area affected by the election
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Registrar of Voters - for each area affected by the election
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Transmittal of notice must be on or before the 45<sup>th</sup> day prior to the election
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make formal application to the State Bond Commission, which includes
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Certified copies of the resolution and the proposition
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Request for consent and authority to hold the election and,
    - \_\_\_\_\_ For a tax, request to secure the authority to levy and collect the tax as provided in the proposition, should the proposition pass
    - \_\_\_\_\_ For a bond, request to secure the authority to finance the bond as provided in the proposition, should the proposition pass

Note: in some parishes, an attorney may be hired to perform the steps on this checklist once the tax issue is decided by the Library Board and Parish Police Jury or Parish Council. It is critical that the Library Director work with this attorney to ensure that the wording of the proposition and resolution is correct and that all steps are completed in a timely fashion. This will help avoid errors or misunderstandings that could lead to a defeat of the tax or bond proposition on Election Day.



## Tax Elections - Planning a Campaign

The State Constitution, Article XI, Section 4 reads:

"No public funds shall be used to urge any elector to vote for or against any candidate or proposition, or be appropriated to a candidate or political organization. This provision shall not prohibit the use of public funds for dissemination of factual information relative to a proposition appearing on an election ballot."

This means that library funds may not be used to promote an affirmative vote on a library tax proposition. Library funds may be used to explain and provide information relative to the proposition, to state what would happen if the tax passes or if it fails, but not to print literature of any type saying, "Vote Yes" or "Vote for the library tax". This prohibition also extends to the use of library time by the librarian and staff to promote a favorable vote and the use of library equipment to produce promotional materials.

Suggestions for planning a campaign:

1. Contact the Library Development staff of the State Library. They can help you in planning your campaign, supply you with sample publicity pieces and update you on recent changes in the election law.
2. Meet with library staff members and explain the goals and plans for the campaign.
3. Get the Friends of the Library group involved to help promote tax election and assist in conducting a campaign. If no group exists, consider starting one.
4. Prepare a fact sheet for general distribution.
5. Prepare informational bookmarks, etc. on the tax election for distribution to patrons.
6. Prepare posters for display in stores, banks, etc.
7. Prepare lists of organizations and churches throughout the parish with meeting time and name, address, and telephone number of contact person for each.
8. Organize a speakers' bureau made up of board members and library friends. Prepare a library fact sheet to assist speakers.
9. Write letters to organizations offering speakers on the library and its services; ask for resolutions endorsing the library tax.
10. Write similar letters to parish and city agencies, such as the school board and city councils

11. Write letters to churches asking their support for the election by mentioning it in their services and publicizing it in their church bulletins on the Sunday before the election.
12. Visit the newspapers and radio and TV stations to ask their help in promoting the tax election by using:
  - a. Weekly stories on library service
  - b. Specific stories on the various goals of the campaign
  - c. Editorials
  - d. Letters to the editor from a variety of interested citizens
  - e. Resolutions
  - f. Radio, TV, and press interviews with board members, library staff, and interested citizens
  - g. Spot announcements on library services and tax campaign
  - h. Advertisements paid for by business, industry, or individuals (not the library)
13. Organize a parish-wide telephone committee to get the vote out on Election Day. Calls should be made both in advance of and on Election Day.
14. Organize a transportation committee to offer rides to the polls.
15. Schedule special events like a balloon launch or poster contest to attract attention to the library and its services.

## **SECTION III. BUDGET AND FINANCE**

### **BUDGET AND FINANCE**

The primary goal of a public library is to provide quality library service to its public. A major part of meeting this goal is the ability to adequately fund activities. Budget and finance represent a significant part of a library administrator's time. Although planning the budget may be a seasonal activity, its effects are felt throughout the year.

Library administration textbooks usually devote a chapter to budget and finance. Library school management courses may cover funding sources and the theory of budgeting. Reality often hits when a director is faced with planning his first budget. Experience, once again, proves to be the best teacher.

This section of the handbook will offer definitions, requirements, and ideas for the library administrator to adapt to his own situation in an attempt to make understanding library finances and the budget process easier.

## 10 STEPS TO ORIENTING YOURSELF TO THE LIBRARY'S FINANCES

A new director can soon be overwhelmed by the complexity of the library's finances and budget. As a library director, you are responsible for managing public funds. Once you address the steps below, read through this handbook, and experience planning a budget, you will be an "expert" at library finances.

1. Find out your revenue sources. Know when these revenues are received each year. Look at the amount of fines, photocopy monies, and other self-generated revenues received by the library. Determine which revenues are recurring and which are non-recurring. Know how these are deposited and how they are accounted for. Determine the limitations, if any, on the use of library revenues.
2. Review the prior year and current year budgets. Review past annual reports to the State Library. Review the current and past audits. This will provide a good foundation when you are ready to prepare your first budget.
3. Meet with your parish secretary-treasurer or finance director to discuss library finances and the budget. You should seek this person out, rather than wait for this person to come to you. This meeting will give you insight into the relationship between the library board, the parish, and the previous library director concerning finances and budget.
4. Review current expenditures. For several weeks or months, do some of the invoice coding yourself, or have your bookkeeper review the invoices with you prior to payment. Learn your fixed costs and your variable costs.
5. Review your purchasing procedures. Determine if any contracts for goods or services exist and review them with staff.
6. Review and analyze the library's financial reports. Discuss options with the secretary-treasurer or finance director concerning the timely receipt of reports.
7. If you receive tax monies, determine your property tax millage or sales tax percentage and learn when these taxes expire. Your parish assessor can provide you with this information. Learn about any statutory charges which are assessed against the library as a result of tax revenues.

8. Determine if the library receives any grant monies. Identify who monitors grant activity and familiarize yourself with any financial obligations or reporting resulting from the grants.
9. Review payroll practices, including how payroll is submitted for payment, who cuts the checks, and how leave records are kept. Auditors always ask questions about salaries, leave benefits, and any payments made to an employee.
10. **Ask** questions of your staff, your parish, your board, your auditor. When you cannot get answers, call your consultant in Library Development at the State Library or call a colleague.

## REVENUES

Louisiana's public libraries receive about 85% of their revenues from local sources, including ad valorem taxes, sales taxes, and appropriations from the local governing authority. State revenue sharing, a partial reimbursement for ad valorem taxes which are not collectible due to the State's homestead exemption, accounts for about 6% of library income. State aid to public libraries for technology and resources represents about 2%. Federal funds comprise approximately 0.7% of public library revenues in Louisiana. Self generated revenues, such as fines, photocopy revenues, fees for services, and donations, constitute about 6.8% of library revenues.

Revenue information for individual public libraries in the state can be found in *Public Libraries in Louisiana: Statistical Report*, an annual publication of the State Library of Louisiana. The sections that follow describe and discuss various sources of revenue for Louisiana public libraries. These revenue sources are discussed in roughly the same order as they are listed on the Annual Report.

## AD VALOREM TAXES

Most parish library systems in Louisiana have an ad valorem tax (or property tax) as the major revenue source for operations and maintenance. The section on [Tax Elections](#) in this handbook provides information on calling elections, duration of taxes, and restrictions on using public funds when planning tax campaigns.

### Assessment

All property, except public service properties as provided in Article 7 '18 D of the Louisiana State Constitution, is assessed by the parish assessor. The Louisiana Constitution, Article 7 '18B provides that all property subject to ad valorem taxation be listed on the assessment rolls at a percentage of its fair market value. The assessed value in each parish varies depending upon what properties are on a parish's tax rolls. The gross assessment includes all properties. The net assessed value excludes those properties covered by homestead exemption, which is defined in Article 7 '20 A, and other exemptions, as defined in Article 7 '21 of the Louisiana Constitution. Homes are assessed at 10% of their fair market value; a \$75,000 home would be assessed at \$7,500. Currently, homeowners

receive an exemption from paying parish-wide ad valorem taxes on the first \$7,500 of the assessment of their property.

### **Reassessment**

The Louisiana Constitution mandates that property be reassessed at least every four years. Sometimes, especially when the economy dramatically changes downward, a special reassessment may be called. Reassessment can affect the library's millage. If the library tax is for ten years, there will be at least two reassessments during the span of the tax. Depending on the economy and the political climate, this can hurt or help the library financially.

After a reassessment, the assessed value of properties in each parish could go up or go down. In Louisiana, property values went up in the late 1970's and early 1980's. However, due to the economy of the state, many property values went down in 1986. The economy continued to decline and, in 1988 a special reassessment was ordered. Louisiana Constitution, Article 7, '23 provides mandates for local governing authorities regarding millages after reassessments.

### **Property Assessment Decreases After Reassessment**

If the property assessment **decreases** in a parish, the maximum authorized millage is "rolled forward" so that the library's millage brings in the same amount of taxes under the new, lower assessment as it did under the previous assessment. The millage may be increased only to the extent that it will generate the same amount of taxes generated the previous year, nothing more. The governing authority, however, is not obligated to keep the library's millage at the new maximum. During the annual setting of millages, the governing authority can set the millage anywhere from "zero mills" up to the new maximum. If the governing authority keeps the millage at the same level as before the reassessment, the library will lose tax revenues.

**Example:** In 1995, a Library's maximum millage is 3.01, which brings in \$500,000. After the 1996 reassessment, when property values decreased, that same 3.01 mills might only bring in \$400,000. The new millage necessary to generate \$500,000 might be 3.6 mills. The new maximum becomes 3.6 mills. The governing authority can set the Library's millage anywhere between 0 mills and 3.6 mills.

## Property Assessment Increases After Reassessment

If the property assessment **increases** in a parish, the maximum authorized millage will be adjusted downward (i.e., "rolled back") to a level which would bring in no more tax revenues than the library received under the previous property valuation. The governing authority is mandated by the state Constitution to make this "roll back" or adjustment to the millage.

**Example:** In 1995, a Library's millage is 3.01 and brings in \$500,000. After the 1996 reassessment, when property values increased, that same 3.01 mills might bring in \$600,000. To generate only \$500,000, the library's millage might need to be rolled back to 2.8 mills. The governing authority must set the Library's millage anywhere between 0 mills and 2.8 mills, although they can take additional action to readjust it upward as explained below.

During this reassessment year only, after performing this mandatory roll back of the millage, the governing authority could, following public hearings and with a two-thirds vote of the governing authority, roll the millage forward - up to a rate not to exceed the prior year's maximum millage.

If the governing authority chooses not to roll the millage forward during the reassessment year, then the new maximum millage is the rate established by reassessment. If the governing authority chooses to roll the millage forward after the mandatory "roll back", then the new maximum millage is the rate they rolled forward. Although this is not a popular move for a governing body, since it raises taxes without a vote of the people, this is a way for a library to receive additional revenues.\*

**Example 1:** After performing the mandatory roll back of the Library's millage from 3.01 down to 2.8 mills, the governing authority holds a public hearing to discuss increasing the millage from 2.8 mills back up to the prior year's millage of 3.01. The Library Board is able to make a strong case for receiving the extra funds that a millage increase would generate. The governing authority votes with a two-thirds majority to roll forward the millage to 3.01, thus allowing the Library to receive an extra \$100,000 in tax revenues. This will increase taxes of some constituents in the parish. Thus, a tax increase has been passed without a direct vote by the public. The new maximum millage for the Library is 3.01 mills.

**Example 2:** After performing the mandatory roll back of the Library's millage from 3.01 down to 2.8 mills, the governing authority holds a public hearing to discuss

increasing the millage from 2.8 mills back up to the prior year's millage of 3.01. The Library Board is able to make a strong case for receiving the extra funds that a millage increase would generate. The governing authority agrees that some, but not all, of the extra funds are needed; it votes with a two-thirds majority to roll forward the millage to 2.95 mills, thus allowing the Library to receive some extra tax revenues. This will increase taxes of some constituents in the parish. Thus, a tax increase has been passed without a direct vote by the public. The new maximum millage for the Library is 2.95 mills.

**Example 3:** After performing the mandatory roll back of the Library's millage from 3.01 down to 2.8 mills, the governing authority holds a public hearing to discuss increasing the millage from 2.8 mills back up to the prior year's millage of 3.01. The Library Board makes a strong case for receiving the extra funds that a millage increase would generate, but the governing authority does not agree and, by taking no action, keeps the library's millage at 2.8 mills. The Library will not receive an increase in revenues due to an increase in its millage. This is not considered a tax increase for the public. The new maximum millage for the Library is 2.8 mills.

Be careful about tax elections scheduled during reassessment years. If the election is called (and thus the millage is set) before the reassessment figures are in and property values drop, there could be a problem. A millage which appears on the ballot, whether it is a "renewal" or an "increase", and approved by voters, will be the maximum millage available for the library until the next reassessment. "Roll forward / roll back" provisions which will occur after the current reassessment apply only to existing millages. The millage on the ballot is really a new tax, even though it may be a millage amount identical to the current library millage. If the net assessed value in the parish drops after the current reassessment, an existing millage will be rolled forward to generate the same amount of revenue as was generated under the old reassessment. However, a "new" or "renewal" millage which takes effect after reassessment is not subject to "roll forward / roll back" provisions for that reassessment. Assuming a library wants to generate at least the same amount of revenues with the "renewal" millage as the "existing" millage, a library, in a reassessment year where the assessment is expected to drop, should wait until the reassessment figures are completed and existing millage amounts adjusted before scheduling a tax election. The library would then have the information necessary to determine the millage needed to generate the revenues required.

Contact your Parish Tax Assessor or the Legislative Auditor's Office for further clarification about reassessment.

### **Millage**

A mill is 1/1000 (.001) of a dollar. A property tax is approved by voters for a set number of mills for a set number of years. This is the maximum millage, against the current assessment, that can be levied by the governing authority for the library to collect. This maximum millage will only be increased, without a vote of the people, if, at reassessment, the property valuation decreases as explained under Reassessment previously. To determine the gross tax revenues the library will receive, multiply the net assessed value of property in the parish by the library's millage.

The governing authority can levy up to this maximum millage for the library. The governing authority can "roll back" or reduce the library millage if it feels the library is collecting tax monies needlessly or building up too much in savings. Governing authorities have been known to roll back the library's millage, roll forward another parish agency's millage the same amount, and claim "no tax increase" for the people. The library director and members of the board of control must be in attendance at the meeting where the governing authority sets millages for the year.

A library whose millage is levied at the maximum at the beginning of its 10 year tax, and needing the entire amount for ongoing operations, is likely to be in dire straits near the end of its 10 year tax unless the property reassessment changes upwards and the governing authority avails itself of the roll-forward provisions of the Louisiana Constitution mentioned under Reassessment previously.

Contact the parish assessor for answers to questions about assessments, millage rates, and anticipated tax revenues. The parish treasurer or finance director should also be able to help the library director with millage rates and anticipated tax revenues.

## Net Tax Collections

The millage rate and the parish assessment provide the library director with the gross amount of tax revenues the library should collect. The sheriff is the ex-officio tax collector in each parish (except Orleans), as provided in the Louisiana Constitution, Article 5 '27. Tax monies are remitted to the governing authority's finance department or, where a library administers its own funds under L.R.S. 25:215, directly to the parish library. The sheriff will withhold a percentage of gross tax revenues for remittance to various statewide public pension funds as provided in L.R.S. 11:82.

An amount of gross tax revenues may also be withheld and remitted to the parish assessor for operations of that office. The amount withheld is specified in L.R.S. 47:1907 et seq. Since the 1985 tax rolls, assessors in parishes listed under L.R.S. 47:1925 have been able to fund their operations with a property tax the assessor can levy for that purpose. Those assessors receive these tax revenues in lieu of the deduction from tax revenues of other agencies.

Some people will not pay their tax bills. A tax sale is eventually held by the sheriff to collect taxes owed. Sometimes tax bills are appealed and reduced. There is an amount, therefore, that will be anticipated, but not collected, each year. This "uncollectible" amount will vary by parish. The net tax revenues received by a library will reflect pension fund deductions, assessor's deductions (if any), and uncollectible taxes.

Tax bills are to be paid on or before December 31st of each year. Tax bills due 12/31/00 are the "2000 Taxes". The library should begin receiving these tax revenues in November 2000, December 2000, or January 2001. The library also receives interest from taxpayers who pay their tax bills late. At various times throughout the year, the library receives "back tax" settlements from those who appealed their tax bills and from tax sales.

Most libraries use current year tax revenues for the next year's operations (i.e., 2000 taxes are used for 2001 operations). Some libraries use current year taxes for current year operations. Examine the library's ad valorem tax collections, deductions, interest, and back tax settlements budgeted and collected for the last few years to better understand this important source of library revenue.

Contact the tax collection division of the sheriff's department for answers to questions about tax revenue distribution.

## Increasing Ad Valorem Tax Revenues

A library may need additional tax revenues for operational purposes or special projects. Generally, when the need for additional revenues is evident, the library must ask the voters for the funds. The library either asks for an additional (supplemental) millage or asks for an increase, rather than a renewal, of the existing millage. There are only two ways a public library can receive additional ad valorem tax revenues from an existing millage without a vote of the people, although the extra amount of revenues is generally not significant. These are:

1. Additional properties are placed on the parish's tax rolls. The existing millage is not "rolled back" in this instance. Additional properties are added to the tax rolls each year, so, in times of economic growth, a library could benefit from this. (Note that the reverse is also true. If a major business folds and is no longer on the tax rolls, the library millage is not rolled forward; and the net result is a tax decrease for the library.)
2. Increases occur in the fair market or use value of the property, as determined during reassessment. The existing millage maximum remains the same for that reassessment year, although the millage is "rolled back" (as explained above under "Reassessment") in order to generate the same amount of revenues that the library received during the previous year. The governing authority can, after public notice and public hearings and with a two-thirds vote, roll forward the millage back up to the prior year's maximum millage for that reassessment year only. If the millage is not rolled forward to the prior year's maximum for that reassessment year, then the adjusted maximum millage becomes the maximum until reassessment occurs again. As mentioned above, the governing authority is usually reluctant to roll forward. However, if the parish economy has grown to the extent that property values under reassessment have significantly risen, the library probably has had an increased demand for services and can possibly justify to the governing authority the need for the additional funds.

A library needing a significant increase in tax revenues should seek the funds in the form of an additional or increased tax from the voters.

The method of levying and collecting ad valorem taxes is defined by the Louisiana

Constitution and by the Revised Statutes. The library director has virtually no part in how these taxes are levied and collected. However, because the ad valorem tax is the chief revenue source for most public libraries in Louisiana, it is imperative that the library director monitor the receipt of these funds and ensure that the governing authority sets an adequate millage for the library each year.

### **Sources - Ad Valorem Taxes**

A Citizen's Guide to Property Tax in New Orleans, prepared by The League of Women Voters of New Orleans. New Orleans: The League of Women Voters Education Fund, 1992.

Louisiana Tax Handbook. Baton Rouge: Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, Inc., published annually.

## SALES TAXES

As defined in the Police Jury Manual, a sales tax is one collected on the "sale at retail, the use, the lease or rental, the consumption, and the storage for use or consumption, of tangible personal property and on sales of services as defined by law." While the majority of public libraries in Louisiana have other types of funding, the Allen Parish, DeSoto Parish, Assumption Parish, Terrebonne Parish, and Opelousas-Eunice municipal libraries receive revenues from dedicated sales taxes.

A sales tax may be a more preferable way of financing library operations in a community where the property tax rate is high or when there are several major property owners or businesses that have traditionally opposed property taxes. A sales tax will also react quickly to changes in the economy. This can be an advantage over a property tax during good economic times; conversely, this can be a disadvantage during a recession.

A library may wish to seek a perpetual tax which does not have to be renewed. A proposition can be worded so that the tax has no renewal date. The advantages to this are that a library will not have to endure the time and cost of repeated tax elections and that funding is secure during periods of voter anti-tax sentiment. However, the tax rate of a sales tax cannot be raised without a vote of the people. Collections must be enough to allow for continued operation during depressed economic times and must also allow for growth and expansion. Although careful attention must be given to the future economy and library needs when seeking any tax, this is especially true for perpetual sales taxes.

Once approved by the voters, the library will begin receiving revenues. Sales tax revenues are collected by a uniform tax collector in each parish. This is mandated by the Louisiana Constitution, Article VII '3, as amended by voters on 10/19/91. The sales tax collector in many parishes is the School Board. Tax proceeds are remitted to the library by the tax collector on a monthly basis. Payment is made by check approximately 30 days after it is collected by retailers. A library can expect to pay a predetermined, negotiated fee for tax collections each month and will also share in certain administrative expenses of the tax collector.

Sales tax revenues fluctuate from month to month in reaction to general economic patterns and conditions. It is advisable for a library to enact a budgetary policy which establishes cash reserves that can be drawn upon when tax collections are down. The funds of a dedicated sales tax belong to the library. Funds received, but not expended, during a fiscal

year can be accumulated as contingency funds, saved for capital projects, or used to assist subsequent year operations.

### **Sources - Sales Taxes**

Louisiana Police Jury Manual. Baton Rouge: Police Jury Association of Louisiana, 1996. 6<sup>th</sup> ed.

Louisiana Tax Handbook. Baton Rouge: Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, Inc., published annually.

## **APPROPRIATIONS**

In addition to or in lieu of a dedicated tax for library operations, libraries may receive an appropriation from the governing authority. The Morgan City Public Library receives appropriations from both the city of Morgan City and St. Mary Parish Government. The Assumption Parish Library, in addition to its 3% dedicated sales tax, receives an appropriation from a 1% parish sales tax. This sales tax is shared with other parish agencies and is administered by the Police Jury.

Non-dedicated revenues appropriated by a governing authority force the library to compete with other agencies for the limited funding available. Priorities for allocating such funds often change due to turnover of elected officials. Pressure from special interest groups can also exert influence on the distribution of such funds. Unfortunately, during government budget cutbacks, libraries receiving direct appropriations often receive more than their share of reductions. This generally results in layoffs, branch closings, and curtailing book purchases. A library in this type of funding situation would probably not be allowed to accumulate a fund balance. Unused funds from a given year would, in all likelihood, revert back to the governing authority. Finally, decisions regarding projects and improvements for the library, are, in effect, passed from the library board to the governing authority controlling the allocation. The efforts of a "Friends Group" and every other possible source of support may be needed to gain leverage in obtaining requested appropriations.

Several parish library systems which previously received appropriations have successfully passed dedicated tax millages to ensure sufficient library funding.

## **CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND**

Most library revenue is used for ongoing operations and maintenance. Periodically, a library needs to finance a building program or other capital program over several years. The options available to a library are to finance the project from existing or new taxes or to issue debt, which the taxpayers must repay. A library director must work with the board and governing authority to determine the best method for that library to finance the capital project. The following paragraphs discuss the possibilities for financing capital projects. Remember, each of these methods require approval or authorization by the State Bond Commission, the parish governing authority, and the voters.

### **Ad Valorem Taxes**

A library may finance a capital project from its existing property tax if the wording of the tax proposition included provisions for "capital improvements." If the operating tax levy is limited to "support and maintenance" items, the library must seek legislative approval before using the tax monies for capital purposes (L.R.S. 25:213 (B),(C)). Many public libraries in Louisiana finance their capital improvements in this manner. It requires a commitment by the board and the parish governing authority in allowing savings to occur, and dedicating the savings to the capital project. Unfortunately, the economy, priorities, and attitudes change. The idea of saving to build two new branches may have been approved by a board several years ago; unless the project is underway, funds could be diverted for other library needs as seen by a new board or a new governing authority.

The advantage to using an existing property tax is that it does not require additional voter approval. However, there are some disadvantages. The library millage may already be rolled to its maximum and nearly the entire amount may be needed for ongoing operations. Most libraries would need to save funds for several years in order to fully fund such projects. The governing authority may frown upon building savings and may jeopardize the plan by rolling back the library millage.

Consider this example: The building program is projected to cost \$2 million. It is a 10 year project. The current millage is at its maximum. The millage yields an average of \$250,000 a year over current needs for operations and maintenance. These savings also earn interest, which can be added to funds earmarked for the project. After two years, there are sufficient funds to begin the project.

Alternatively, a library may choose to finance a capital project with a special ad valorem tax. This method requires approval of the voters and the governing body. In either of the foregoing "pay-as-you-go" plans, projection of revenue inflows and construction costs is crucial. The timing of the project, and its costs, must be matched against available revenues.

### **Sales Taxes**

A short-term sales tax is another method used to fund capital improvement projects if the tax base of the parish or city is large enough and the economy is stable. There are several advantages to financing the capital project this way. The library doesn't have to pay interest as it would with a loan or a bond sale. The sales tax monies earn interest while invested and the library is free to use this interest for project purposes. Because of the lead time needed while in the design phase, the sales tax funds would have extra time to accumulate interest earnings before major cash outflows are required.

However, monies may be required for site acquisition, architect fees, and other expenses during the planning stage. If these costs cannot be funded out of existing revenues, the project will be delayed until enough sales tax monies have accumulated.

There are other problems associated with using a sales tax for capital projects. The tax base in the parish or city may be too small, thereby generating insufficient resources for the project. Also, the legal limit on sales tax may already be reached in the parish; or, the governing authority may be reluctant to let the library "have" the last 24 or 34 available.

### **Excess Revenue Certificates of Indebtedness**

This method of financing capital projects is, in reality, a loan that the governing authority takes out. This method allows the library to pledge its excess revenues from existing millage towards the repayment of certificates of indebtedness. The tax must be able to be used for capital purposes. In lieu of "saving up" funds from the 10 year millage each year for the project, the library borrows against the savings expected to be generated over the 10 year life of the tax.

Consider this example: using the previous scenario, the library anticipates a \$2.5 million savings (or excess revenues) over 10 years. The library would then borrow against this

money for the project.

This method provides the bulk of the monies needed up front and allows the library to begin the project sooner than if it had built up savings; and, the project is "protected" from having the funding diverted to other needs. Consult L.R.S. 33:2922 and the governing authority for further details.

### **Bond Issues**

Bond monies are used to finance capital projects with long-term debt, not for ongoing operation and maintenance of the library. Bond monies may be used for site acquisition and building or renovating library facilities, including any necessary furnishings, equipment, and initial book collections. A library may also finance its automation project with a bond issue. Bond issues provide the library with a lump sum of money up front. A bond issue allows the library to immediately address capital project needs, without years of waiting and saving. Also, the funds are specifically earmarked for the project and cannot be cut or eliminated during a budget crisis.

Wording of the proposition is critical; it determines the exact use of the bond proceeds. If the proposition says the library will renovate and expand the existing branches and it is later decided to build a new branch in lieu of expanding an existing one, the library must obtain voter approval to make this change. Bond attorneys handle all the particulars of bond issue wording and the issue and sale of bonds. It is important that the librarian work closely with the bond attorney from the beginning. It is imperative that the bond attorney and the librarian have a clear understanding of the proposed uses of the monies to ensure the proposition is properly worded. The librarian and library board should review the proposition carefully prior to placing it on the ballot. Because of the complexities of issuing long-term debt, a bond attorney is essential. The fee schedule for bond attorneys is set by the Attorney General.

Bond issues require passage by a simple majority of the voters. The proposition can be part of any ballot where money matters can appear. Some consideration as to the other items which will appear before the voters might be made before deciding when to call the bond issue election. Conventional wisdom is to avoid elections with many controversial issues or multiple tax matters.

It is necessary to work with architects, consultants, and bond attorneys to determine how

much money is needed for the project. Project funding must include consultants', architects', and bond attorneys' fees. There are also costs for getting the bonds rated and for advertising the bond sale. Election costs are an added expense. The proposition should be worded as to provide for all costs associated with the project.

In addition to voter approval, the parish governing authority must approve the bonds. The police jury or parish council must be aware of the situation. The issue must have their support. It is advisable to discuss the matter with each juror long before it becomes a matter in a public meeting. Voters and elected officials are more apt to support a bond issue that is clearly and comprehensively explained: "exactly what is to be done, how much will it cost, and how will it improve services to the public." A needs assessment based on what services, resources, and programs are to be provided by the library during the next 10 - 20 years can form the basis of the justification. Without governing authority approval, a bond issue will not get on the ballot. A bond issue that doesn't have the general support of all parish officials may be just as doomed.

A bond issue, before appearing on the ballot, must be approved by the State Bond Commission. This is discussed in the [Tax Elections](#) section of this handbook.

Once the bond election carries, the bond attorney, through the bid process, markets the bonds to stockbrokers who, in turn, sell the bonds to anyone who wants to invest. The bonds are issued at a fixed interest rate (not to exceed that allowed under L.R.S. 39:1424) for a fixed period of time (not to exceed 40 years). Every governing body has a credit rating through Moody's or Standard and Poor's, which rates their ability to repay the debt. This rating will affect the interest rate and the marketability of the bonds.

With the bond sale, the library receives the net proceeds of the sale. Funds are invested until needed. The parish administrative offices generally handle the investment of bond issue revenues. Interest earned by these monies are subject to specific IRS rules concerning arbitrage. Interest earned over and above interest paid to bond holders generally must be remitted to the federal government. This is a complex issue and there are firms whose sole business is to handle arbitrage money. A library or governing authority without knowledge of arbitrage might have the added expense of contracting with one of these firms to handle the paperwork.

The library must have some means of paying interest and principal to the bond holders. Interest payments are made annually or semi-annually. In addition to these interest

payments, the bond holders receive a payment of principal each year. Some libraries are able to finance bonded debt repayment from their dedicated library millage. Most often, however, the debt is secured by a special ad valorem tax. A bond issue can also be secured with a sales tax. A tax-secured bond issue proposition that a library places on the ballot consists of two parts. The first proposition authorizes the sale of the bonds. The second proposition affords the means of debt repayment. If bonded debt is financed by a special property tax, enough millage must be levied and taxes collected each year to pay annual or semi-annual interest on the bonds and principal falling due on the bonds (Louisiana Constitution Article 6 '33(B)). This is the "debt service" account. Unlike operating millages, this millage can decrease or increase, depending upon the parish assessment and funds required to repay the bonds.

Finally, a library seeking a bond issue or other funds for capital expansion or automation should also consider recurring operating and maintenance costs associated with the project. Besides supplies, staffing, and book collections needed to maintain the new or renovated facility, thought must be given to the increases likely in utilities, insurance, and building maintenance each year. Often these increased operating and maintenance costs are significant enough to warrant seeking an increase in tax revenues from the voters. This should be part of the planning process. Don't wait until the building is ready to move into before trying to find extra money to run it.

## LOUISIANA PUBLIC LIBRARY RESOURCES ACT

In 1992, the Louisiana legislature enacted the Louisiana Public Library Resources Act, establishing the Louisiana Public Library Resources Program.

The act provides that monies appropriated or otherwise made available through the act are to be used for the improvement of the State Library's materials collections and for public library resources. The act includes the following specific purposes:

- 1.to strengthen the State Library's central collections;
- 2.to strengthen the collections of individual public libraries;
- 3.to encourage and enable resource sharing among libraries;
- 4.to develop library collections for specific groups of under-served citizens or citizens without service, such as the disabled, the elderly or those with limited language skills;
- 5.to provide staff training to maximize collection use;
- 6.to provide training programs for public use of library resources;
- 7.to acquire equipment and technology for data location and access;
- 8.to encourage adequate financing of libraries from local sources; therefore, monies distributed to local public libraries must supplement, not supplant local funds.

In 1996 the State Library succeeded in securing \$1,000,000 in state aid to public libraries for technology enhancement and library resources development. Since then the legislature has appropriated significant sums for the above purposes, as well as monies for improving public library internet connectivity with more powerful data lines. As envisioned by the State Library, the ultimate aim is to ensure the smooth functioning of Louisiana Libraries Connect, an electronic network for public libraries.

## STATE REVENUE SHARING

Louisiana public libraries which receive revenues from ad valorem taxes can receive a partial reimbursement for taxes which are not collectible by the library due to Louisiana's homestead exemption. State revenue sharing funds **should not** be confused with state supplemental funding for public libraries. Many local governmental agencies and districts receiving ad valorem taxes share a portion of the State Revenue Sharing Fund. Parish libraries, school boards, road and bridge districts, and drainage districts are among those local agencies eligible for these funds.

An overview of state revenue sharing in Louisiana along with information about applying for these funds has been supplied below by the House Legislative Services of the Louisiana House of Representatives.

### A History of State Revenue Sharing

The largest single program dispensing discretionary funds to local governments is the annual allocation and distribution of the State Revenue Sharing Fund. The constitution mandates a minimum of \$90,000,000 each year, but the legislature has exercised its authority to appropriate additional sums to the fund (a maximum of \$11,275,650 when funds were available). No additional funds above the minimum allocated \$90,000,000 have been appropriated since 1983. Probably the most important aspect of the program for the individual legislator during the present attempts to balance the budget is the constitutional protection afforded the fund; \$90,000,000 is the guaranteed minimum allocated annually without even the necessity of legislative appropriation. Therefore parishes can expect approximately the same amount as the previous fiscal year barring any dramatic changes in a parish's population or number of homesteads.

With the fund stabilized at the minimum allocation, legislators can also assure local taxing bodies that they will receive approximately the same amounts as the previous year. The manner of distributing the total parish allocation within each parish is explained below and has become fairly well settled. Individual legislators have received fewer requests for amendments to the revenue sharing bill as local taxing bodies have realized that authorizing additional millages to participate in the distribution can only be accomplished at the expense of those presently eligible, i.e., the total parish allocation remains approximately the same and all taxing bodies receive a pro rata reduction to

accommodate the new millage.

Each parish receives an allocation based on the population (80% of the fund) and number of homesteads (20% of the fund) in that parish in proportion to the population and number of homesteads throughout the state. The sheriff receives the parish allocation in three payments from the state treasurer and, after deducting his commission and amounts due state retirement systems, distributes a designated amount to the tax recipient bodies defined by the bill as eligible for such funds; any remaining monies are distributed as excess funds according to the individual parish formula.

The original intent of the fund was to aid those taxing bodies which had been receiving funds from the Property Tax Relief Fund (PTRF - as explained later) as reimbursement for taxes which could not be collected on property covered by the state's homestead exemption. But the normal growth of property assessments combined with increased taxes served to gradually reduce the relatively fixed amount available for distribution within the parish, necessitating an amendment to the bill limiting eligible ad valorem tax millages to those authorized and collected prior to 1978. Any millages authorized and levied after 1978 must be specifically listed within the bill as eligible in order to share with the other eligible taxing bodies and millages within the parish, which subsequently receive a smaller amount as a result of the additional millage sharing in the pro rata distribution.

It should be noted here that even under the PTRF, which totally reimbursed taxing bodies for homestead exemption losses as listed on the tax rolls from three dedicated taxes, the legislature found it necessary to prohibit reimbursement to special taxing districts created after 1956. Local governments were creating special taxing districts which were not parish-wide and consisted mainly of suburban areas outside municipalities, e.g. fire protection districts, water districts, sewage districts, lighting districts, etc. As a consequence, the PTRF was essentially funding those districts and services since most of the property was totally exempt from ad valorem taxation under the state's homestead exemption.

In order to present the state revenue sharing legislation and its administration in proper perspective, a brief overview of the history of Louisiana's ad valorem taxation system and the PTRF is also necessary.

In response to depressed economic conditions the state constitution during the administration of Governor Huey P. Long was amended to provide an exemption from

state, parish, and local taxes for the bonafide homestead of each head of household up to an assessed value of \$2,000. Subsequent amendments increased this amount to \$5,000 for certain veterans. The present exemption of \$7,500 for every head of household applied to the required assessment value of 10% of the fair market value now fully excludes \$75,000 of the value of a house from all nonmunicipal ad valorem taxes.

The legislature, recognizing the effect of the exemption on local governments, created the Property Tax Relief Fund (PTRF) pursuant to constitutional authorization, which fund was to be derived from other state taxes which were imposed at the same time, namely, the alcoholic beverage, public utility, and income taxes. This fund was distributed among the various parishes of the state on the basis of the losses incurred by local governmental units as a result of the homestead exemption.

The distribution of the PTRF was challenged on the grounds that it was unconstitutional in that it denied equal protection of the laws to certain parishes. The distribution formula was declared unconstitutional in 1972 by a federal district court (346 F. Supp. 897) and the decision was affirmed by the U. S. Supreme Court. Because of the lack of any uniform system of assessment of property subject to ad valorem taxation and because the disbursement of the fund depended on actual losses claimed by the parishes, the court concluded that the distribution of the fund resulted in arbitrary inequality and discrimination.

The court noted that Louisiana's system denied homestead owners in Orleans Parish and those who pay alcoholic beverage and income taxes (from which a portion of the PTRF was derived) the same treatment accorded similarly situated taxpayers in other parishes thereby adversely affecting the benefits provided by the local government. The court held that the combination of unequal assessments, limited taxing power, and payments from the fund on the basis of local millage rates resulted in an overall system which breached the constitutional rights of the plaintiffs.

In response to that decision and to effect compliance therewith, a special session of the legislature was convened to propose constitutional amendments, subsequently adopted by the electorate, to eliminate the PTRF and establish the Revenue Sharing Fund.

In order to reflect changing conditions and needs, the revenue sharing bill is reintroduced each regular session for amendment by the legislature. As a matter of practice, the representatives and senators who represent a particular parish will determine, based on local requests, the inclusion of new millages and distribution of any anticipated excess

funds in their parish. The digest accordingly reflects the various local changes made throughout the bill. This approach was considered preferable to the annual introduction of numerous local bills amending a general statute.

### **Applying for State Revenue Sharing Funds**

The mechanics of insuring eligibility for revenue sharing funds are simple - contact your legislator (either representative or senator) and request that new millages be included in the next revenue sharing bill. This request may be made at any time in the interim between annual legislative sessions, ideally for inclusion in the bill at introduction (within fifteen days of convening in March or April), although the bill can be amended at any time prior to its final passage.

Remember, new millages are those which have been added after January 1, 1978 and which have not previously been eligible for revenue sharing participation; the eligibility of participating (old) millages is automatically maintained under the provisions of the bill when they are renewed - no action is required by the taxing body. However, a continuing misunderstanding exists with respect to property reappraisal and concomitant millage adjustments required periodically by the constitution, as illustrated by the following.

A ten mill tax over the course of ten years may be adjusted to eight mills - this is the new authorized maximum and yields the same revenue as ten mills before the reappraisals. But when the taxing body again places a ten mill proposition on the ballot, it is in fact asking the electorate for an additional two mills and will realize a twenty-five percent increase in revenue if approved. Revenue sharing continues the eligibility of the eight mills, but the two mill increase is new millage and must be specifically included in the bill by request.

## SELF-GENERATED REVENUES

Libraries may collect fines for delinquent or lost books, charge fees for photocopying, online services, and rental fees for meeting rooms. Policies relating to these fees should be approved by the appropriate governing board (library board or parish council). While tax monies and interest are usually handled for the library by the parish, self-generated funds are actually collected by the library's staff. The library staff is also responsible for depositing these revenues. L.R.S. 39:1212 states that all funds shall be deposited daily, whenever possible, with the parish's (or library's) fiscal agent. The rationale is that the sooner the cash is deposited, the sooner it can be used - either earning interest or for paying bills.

Some librarians have been asked to return fine monies to the Parish's general fund. Several Attorney General Opinions, including 78-553 and 74-476, refer to the provisions of L.R.S. 25: 221 when stating that fine money, lost book money, and memorials fall under the independent control of the library board. Copies of these opinions are available from the State Library's Library Development Division.

AG opinion 78-553 was discussed with the Legislative Auditor's office by the State Library in November 1978. The Legislative Auditor advises that such funds, as well as any interest earned by these funds, are still considered public funds. They should be shown as income within the annual budget and budgeted in the same manner as tax funds. These funds, therefore, are also subject to audit. Remember, these opinions were rendered before the Louisiana Local Government Budget Act of 1980, which explicitly lists the steps to be followed in budgeting and expending any revenues (see [Local Government Budget Act](#) in this handbook). Make sure these self-generated funds are handled appropriately.

## INVESTMENTS AND INTEREST INCOME

Each parish deposits funds with a fiscal agent, as provided for under L.R.S. 39:1211-1242.

The fiscal agent must be a bank organized under the laws of the state of Louisiana, another state, or the United States. The fiscal agent is selected under methods described in L.R.S. 39:1214.

L.R.S. 39:1217.1, as amended in 1989, generally exempts parishes and municipalities with populations of less than 100,000 from the provisions of L.R.S. 39:1211 - 1242. However, the parish or municipality must still satisfy the security requirements of those Sections and of any other applicable state or federal laws or regulations, including those limiting the types of investments.

Funds not immediately needed for operations can be invested to maximize return. There are limits on the types of investments made by a public body in Louisiana. These limits are discussed in L.R.S. 33:2955 and L.R.S. 39:1271-1272.

The Fiscal Manual states "generally, unless specified by statute to the contrary, funds earned by investments and property should be returned to the funds providing the property or investment." Thus, interest earned by investing library maintenance funds should be returned to the library's account. Some grants, such as federal literacy grants, require that any interest earned on grant monies go back to the grantor.

## OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

As the tax base declines, the economy weakens, and the public becomes more disenchanted with paying taxes, libraries are looking to other sources of income. Usually, this income supplements the library's budget; rarely does outside income replace the need for a "stable" form of tax revenue. Some libraries make specialized library services, such as online database research, self-supporting through user fees. In Louisiana, more often the library looks to gifts, memorials, endowments, foundations, grants, and Friends of the Library organizations for additional income. Fundraising ideas and grant information are discussed in the following two sections.

### FUNDRAISING

Fundraising for special projects or for supplementing the budget in specific areas can be done by the library, the Friends, or via legally established entities such as foundations or endowments. The scope of fundraising done by or for a library will largely depend on the need for supplemental funds, the economy of the area, and the time and effort put into the fundraising activities. Many libraries are passively involved in fundraising when they receive memorial contributions. Some libraries, with board and staff support, are able to promote on-going fundraising activities. Other libraries rely on volunteers to coordinate fundraising efforts. A few libraries use professional fundraisers to secure funds for the library. This section will discuss several ways a library can secure outside funding.

#### Book Sales

A common fundraising approach is through book sales. Gift books which are not needed in the library's collection and weeded library materials can be sold in this manner. The books are either stored in the library or warehouse space is rented. Some libraries run their own book sales. In many parishes, the Friends of the Library hold the book sale and the revenues from these book sales are used to fund library projects throughout the year. If the Friends run the sale, any discarded library material can be sold by the Friends as long as the library receives the proceeds from the sale of the discarded materials. An informal opinion of the Legislative Auditor's office indicates that a book sale is similar to a public auction (an approved method of disposing of surplus public assets) in that anyone has a chance to purchase the books. See Fixed Assets in this handbook for further information.

Friends-sponsored book sales usually indicate that the Friends have the responsibility for

supplying volunteers to sort, move, and arrange books, advertising and promoting the sale, running the sale, and cleaning up afterwards. A clear distinction needs to be made regarding who is holding the sale, who is generating the money, and how the money will be returned to the library. A cooperative endeavor agreement, signed by the library board (or governing authority) and Friends helps because it spells out in advance the responsibilities and benefits to each party. For a sample cooperative endeavor agreement, check out <http://www.state.la.us/ocr/endeavor.htm> .

Books can be priced individually, sold by the inch, or a combination of the two. Occasional, large sales are the norm, although some libraries have special textbook or paperback sales throughout the year. Silent auctions of "special" books can be utilized to enhance interest and raise significant additional funds. The book sale can be held in the library or space can be rented at a mall or other facility. The book sale coordinator should contact the sales tax collector at the local and state level to apply for sales tax exemption for the book sale.

### **Gift Shops**

Also effective, space permitting, is an ongoing gift shop or bookstore set up in a corner of the library or other rent free, utility free space. Shops can be stocked with a variety of necessary or eye-catching items which are bought at wholesale and sold at retail. Patrons always ask for pencils, pens, and paper. Some enterprising libraries sell these, as well as liquid paper. Items of local or regional interest, such as the parish Junior League cookbook, are popular. If school groups visit the library for tours, inexpensive novelty items, such as football erasers and ballerina-topped pencils, which appeal to children are good to stock. Book-related items, such as fancy bookmarks and book plates, are always popular. Some gift shops stock copies of the more heavily demanded civil service test titles, calendars, Christmas ornaments, and donated hand made items. Many libraries also stock summer reading club T-shirts, pencils, and other tie-ins in the gift shop.

If the shop is in an enclosed area, the area must be staffed by the enterprise running the shop (i.e., Friends or library staff). If the shop is in the lobby, it may be possible for the circulation desk staff to handle shop transactions. Regardless, all shop purchases must be recorded separately from other monies and receipts must be given to customers. Sales tax must also be collected and remitted on items sold. A cooperative endeavor agreement is recommended to sort out obligations and benefits for the parties cooperating to operate a library gift shop.

The biggest drawback to having a library gift shop is that someone must take on the responsibility for the shop: staffing, stocking, and related paperwork. The Library Administrative and Management Association (LAMA) of the American Library Association can provide additional information on library gift shops.

### **Library Foundations and Endowments**

Entities which accept monetary and other gifts on behalf of the library, must be federally established as non-profit ventures in order for donors to receive tax write-offs. Establishing a library foundation is useful when acquiring and spending large donations and bequests. Consult with an attorney to decide on acquiring 501(C)(3) tax-exempt status and formalizing the constitution and by-laws for a foundation.

An endowment can be established through the foundation or established as a separate entity. Donations to the endowment are considered "principal" and are invested soundly by the endowment board. Interest earned by the principal is generally given annually or semi-annually to the library for spending in keeping with the purpose of the endowment. For example, a book endowment could provide the library with supplemental funds for the annual book budget. The XYZ Branch Endowment could provide funds for the annual operations of the XYZ Branch Library.

### **Memorials**

Most libraries receive, without solicitation, contributions each year for buying books as memorials or in honor of individuals. The library can work with local attorneys, funeral directors, and insurance agents for these professionals to promote the library as a recipient for memorials, for inclusion in wills, or as the beneficiary of insurance policies.

### **Other Fundraising Opportunities**

Many clubs and organizations have specific areas of interest in the community and are involved in charitable causes. These groups can be approached for recurring sponsorship of particular materials or programs. For example, the Lions Club could be approached for a donation for purchasing large print books and books on cassette. The Optimists could

be asked for an annual donation to purchase children's materials or sponsor children's programming. Associations such as the medical auxiliary, dental auxiliary, and bar association could be asked to annually underwrite the cost of reference materials related to their professions. Many school systems have established "Adopt-A-School" programs which create a partnership between a local business and a particular school. The library could establish a similar program, "Adopt-A-Book", with businesses as well as community organizations.

Whatever the scope of the fundraising activity, the library should establish procedures for acknowledging the donations. Except for the occasional anonymous benefactor, most donors like recognition for their gifts. Publicize all gifts. Use all media available to recognize donors; place gift plaques in the library; send gift acknowledgements; and take advantage of every photo opportunity.

Talk to everyone in the community: tout the library's special programs; brag on the library's increase in usage; then mention fundraising activities.

Make the giving process easy for donors. If the effort is organized, the payoff will be greater and the jobs of those involved in the fundraising effort (from soliciting to accepting and spending the funds) will be easier.

Be wary of the gift with strings attached, but try never to refuse a gift. If the library cannot use a piece of equipment being donated, see if the donor is willing to have the equipment sold, with the proceeds going to the library. Sometimes it is worth naming that branch library after a generous benefactor. Note, however, that L.R.S. 14:316 prohibits naming a public building for a living individual. The library board must establish gift acceptance procedures and must follow them.

The library director must be aware of all fundraising efforts on the library's behalf. There will inevitably be conflicts between the different fundraising groups. These groups are all competing for public dollars, and they must remember that the dollars are being solicited for the same purpose: to help the library.

Look through library books on fundraising for ideas. One good source is Fundraising for the Small Public Library: a How-to-do-it Manual by James Swan (Neal-Schuman, 1990). The State Library also has many books on establishing foundations and fundraising efforts.

Success in fundraising is often cumulative. Rarely will a library "wake up" one morning to find it has been left a \$1 million bequest. Fundraising efforts are never easy; the hardest part is getting started. The winning efforts make the process worthwhile.

## GRANTS

Billions of dollars in grants are available from private foundations, government agencies, and corporations. The competition for that funding is very keen. Some grantors report a rejection rate of 75 to 80%. Grantsmanship can be defined as the skill of knowing where the money is and how to get it. These skills can be acquired by librarians through study, seminars, and experience. The lack of information, rather than the lack of skills, is usually the reason for rejection of grant proposals. Matching the library's needs with the funding priorities of the granting organization is vital to the successful application. This can be done through the research of available materials.

In 1991, the LLA Public Library Section's Grants Committee did a survey of Louisiana public libraries to assess grant-funding needs and obstacles. From the survey completed by 44 parish library directors, the priority needs of Louisiana's libraries were established:

1. automation
2. new buildings
3. equipment
4. staff
5. programs for adults, children, and young adults.

The greatest obstacles to obtaining funds in priority order are:

- 1.lack of time to look for available sources
- 2.lack of skill in grant proposal writing
- 3.lack of available funding sources
- 4.lack of time to contact sources/lack of skill in making contacts with available sources.

The kind of grant pursued by a library will require the director and "grants staff" to develop different contacts and strategies. A brief summary of the most commonly known grant types follows:

**Capital** - Usually made to established organizations to meet future service demands. Includes funding for land acquisition, building construction, and equipment purchase.

**Challenge/matching** - The pledge of a specified sum, to be paid only if the

nonprofit raises an equal or otherwise designated amount.

**Conditional** - Similar to a challenge grant, but the grantee must satisfy some condition other than matching funds.

**Earmarked** - Grant made to a third-party for use by a nonprofit just getting organized and that has applied for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

**Endowment** - Funds donated for investment to provide a nonprofit with regular income.

**Funding crisis** - Grants to assist nonprofits experiencing unexpected or temporary financial problems.

**General support/unrestricted** - Funds which may be used for a broad range of organization needs, including general operating.

**Research** - Grants for medical, educational, and other types of research and associated research activities.

**Seed** - Start-up funding for a new program or organization.

**Technical assistance** - Grant awarded to a nonprofit or to a third party to provide needed services.

After deciding what kind of grant is needed, look for a funding source. There are a number of possibilities including foundations, corporations, and government, civic, service, and religious organizations. Each source has basic characteristics:

**Foundations** - A nonprofit organization created for the purpose of establishing or maintaining charitable, educational, social, and religious activities for the common good. Because of their special tax privileges, foundations are required to donate 5% of the market value of their assets to charitable causes. The various types of foundations include: independent/ family, corporate, community and operating. The operating foundation is one established by a nonprofit to fund its own programs.

**Corporations** - The grant making process differs from company to company. Usually there is a contributions committee comprised of the CEO and other senior management. Learn who does the staff work and ask for criteria and deadlines.

**Community organizations** - These are good prospects for small grants for ongoing programs or special projects for a well-known shared community need. Contact is usually made through the local president or other leader.

**Government** - Government is still big business! Public funding is available for those interested enough to track it down.

**Bank Trust Departments** - Banks and financial institutions manage trust funds of

all sizes. In some cases, investment income can be disseminated to charitable causes. The decision-making process includes the donor, family members, and perhaps a trust officer. Trust officers know about the availability of funds and grant eligibility requirements.

After identifying potential funding sources, learn as much as possible about the grantmakers. The chamber of commerce, local business and organization directories, yellow pages, and government development offices can be helpful. Request an annual report and funding guidelines from the prospective funders. Make informal inquiries by letter or phone to top prospects. Briefly describe your library, its needs, and offer to send a formal funding proposal. Schedule a preliminary meeting to discuss proposal basics.

Consider sharing a grant with another nonprofit.

Good research, followed by a good proposal, will gain you consideration. A great proposal may get you the grant. There are numerous books explaining how to write a grant proposal and where to locate funding sources. Plan on investing a significant amount of time to thoroughly research possibilities and to study the components of grant proposals. Research materials are available through the Foundation Center.

The Foundation Center's regional collections are found in four Louisiana libraries: Shreve Memorial, Beauregard Parish, Centroplex Branch of East Baton Rouge Parish, and New Orleans Public. The collections provide in-depth information on foundations nationwide. Educational programs are frequently presented by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and the Louisiana Division of the Arts. Numerous how-to books have been published to educate the newcomer to grantsmanship. A selective bibliography follows this article.

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## THE BUDGET

The library budget cycle, including planning, spending, and reporting, takes a significant amount of a library director's time. Most parish library administrators don't have an accounting or finance degree. Some libraries have a business manager or finance officer on the library staff with this expertise. Often, especially in smaller library systems, the library director has sole budget preparation responsibilities and learns this process by experience.

Libraries must plan more than a "lump sum" budget; that is, the budget is more detailed than "receive \$100,000, spend \$100,000". There are various budgeting tools and practices. The line-item budget adopted by most Louisiana public library systems conforms to account codes established by the Legislative Auditor. Descriptions of other types of budgeting practiced by libraries can be found in library management books. The following sections of this handbook discuss the budget planning process and budget management techniques and information.

## PLANNING THE BUDGET

### Codes

The Louisiana Legislative Auditor has established a standard chart of accounts (or codes) for local governments to facilitate uniformity among local governments for budgeting, accounting, and reporting. These codes can be found in the Fiscal Manual - Louisiana Local Government, published by the Legislative Auditor in 1983. (Note the legislative auditor's website is at <http://www.la.state.la.us>.) The Library Development Division of the State Library of Louisiana has, with the approval of the Legislative Auditor's office, tailored these codes for parish libraries. The financial reporting pages of the State Library's report packet, Public Library Statistical Report Form (the Annual Report), uses these codes. Not every code will be used by every library, and some libraries may use additional codes for items not included on the Annual Report. The definitions section of the Annual Report gives a description of each code, consistent with that found in the Fiscal Manual.

Each library should have a copy of the Fiscal Manual. The manual has not been updated since 1983, although the majority of information contained in this manual is still valid. (Available from the Office of the Legislative Auditor, P.O. Box 94397, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9397 Telephone 225 339-3800.)

These codes should be the basis for budgeting, accounting, and reporting for the library. Some parishes have further customized these codes to their own needs. Some parishes may use different codes due to the technology of their computerized accounting systems. The librarian needs to convert local codes and line-items in order to submit the Annual Report to the State Library.

### **How to Plan the Budget**

There is no magical solution to budget planning. Previous and current year information, as well as future needs of the library, are a good place for the new director to start. If the library has a 3-year or 5-year plan, the budget should reflect these goals. Generally, a library director's goal is to keep costs low while expanding services, or, during lean years, while not reducing services to the public. Anyone who has planned a budget knows that this is not usually an easy task.

Some libraries have an operating budget and a capital budget. Some libraries combine these. A good explanation can be found in Section 110, Page 2 of the Fiscal Manual. A separate capital outlay budget for major projects, such as a branch construction project, may also be a part of the library's overall budget. Confusing to most librarians is the designation of "books" as a capital expense. The Legislative Auditor considers public library books as tangible assets with a life generally over a year - not unlike equipment and furniture. This is discussed in more detail under Fixed Assets in this handbook.

Librarians often wonder if there is a target amount of revenues for the library or a set percentage which should be spent on books, personnel, or other costs. The Standards for Louisiana Public Libraries (1995) set the minimum standard for local revenues as the national per capita average. (For the national per capita average, see the latest edition of U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. Public Libraries in the U.S.: E.D. Tabs. For more information on NCES checkout its website at <http://www.nces.ed.gov/>.) In the section on library materials, a library would meet the state standards if it spends 20% of its operating budget on materials.

Consult the most recent Public Libraries in Louisiana: Statistical Report to see where your library stands. For example, the 1997 report shows that, on the average, public libraries in the state spent around 58% on personnel costs. Personnel costs vary depending on size

of the library, if a civil service or unionized personnel system is in place, and the percentage of employee benefits which are borne by the library. Referencing the same report, Louisiana public libraries averaged spending 13.46% of the operating budget on books and other library materials in 1997.

Wheeler and Goldhor discuss a long-held recommendation that 70% of the operating budget should go towards personnel costs and that 20% should be used to purchase library materials. The authors state that this recommendation was probably derived from a national average, and caution that each local situation, rather than a national average, should dictate budget estimates.

### **Budget Planning Major Categories**

Estimate current year revenues and expenditures, revised based on year-to-date activity. Revenues, especially, may differ from what was originally budgeted.

**1. Salaries and Benefits:** Compute current costs, including all library-paid benefits. Spreadsheet or database software greatly facilitates budget calculations. Prepare several options, such as a 2.5% increase, a 5% increase, cost-of-living increases, increases for salaried but not hourly employees, merit step increases, etc. Some boards decide on raises based on the amount of money available after other expenditures, including current payroll, are established in the new budget. The amount of raise (to give or not) may be controlled by parish or civil service regulations.

**2. Operating costs:** The best estimate of operating costs is to look at current prices, how much they changed over the past year or two, and estimate costs for the next budget year. Sometimes it is helpful to call vendors to see if prices will increase during the next year. Sometimes, however, this just gives a vendor the opportunity to raise his price.

**3. Book budget:** Determine the average price the library pays for book and audio-visual items. Build in an inflation factor for the next year. Determine how many items will be added to the collection. Evaluate the reference collection, especially where new editions of encyclopedias and other titles will be needed. These items usually cost well above the average price of the book collection. Grant monies and other funds for book purchases should also be included in the budget. Periodicals jobbers often can provide renewal price information for subscriptions. Be sure to add in costs for any new titles when planning for

the budget. Also, budget monies for any extra supplies necessary to process and circulate items if the book budget has been significantly increased.

**4. Equipment:** Equipment is often the first to be cut at budget time. Justify the library's equipment needs in detail. Whenever possible, indicate how many people will be using the equipment (such as a reader-printer or computer) and how much time this equipment will save. For example, a \$1,500 time clock that automatically calculates time cards may pay for itself within a year in labor savings alone. Use catalogs for current prices. Add shipping to these estimates, and build in a 5% or 10% inflation factor. In cases where equipment will be bid, get a ballpark quote from one or two vendors for budgetary reasons. In some cases, it might be cheaper to rent a piece of equipment than to purchase it, or renting might allow the library to acquire a larger quantity more quickly. For example, a library might only be able to purchase one copier, but could rent two copiers.

**5. Building projects:** Get quotes from vendors on carpeting, landscaping, painting, or other anticipated projects. Since many building needs are often unanticipated at budget time, budget some monies for contingencies. If the library has a building plan or equipment replacement schedule, use these items during budget preparation.

**6. Travel:** Travel is another area often targeted for cuts at budget time. Remember that the travel category includes the costs of continuing education activities, meetings, workshops, and conferences, as well as travel expenses related to daily library activities. As stated in the "Continuing Education" article in this [Handbook](#), continuing education is **not** a luxury, but a vital area of funding for the library director, professional and support personnel, and board members. Consider basic travel expenses that the library incurs for the "day to day" operations, as well as travel expenses and fees for those attending upcoming local, regional, and national functions. An established travel and reimbursement policy should prevent any confusion concerning reasonable fees, travel expenses, meals, accommodations, etc.

## Words of wisdom

Here are some additional thoughts and ideas from colleagues regarding budget preparation.

Recurring costs should not be funded from "one-time only" revenues such as grants or fund balance, without consideration as to where future ongoing funding will come from.

Personnel costs will eat up a significant portion of the budget, as will operating costs such as utilities, telephone, and branch rentals. Many costs are fixed by others and the library has very little control over the cost or whether the service can be eliminated.

Re-evaluate supply purchases and usage. Keep an inventory of supplies used and on hand. Can the library get forms printed by the vo-tech school or a government print shop at cheaper cost than producing in-house or via commercial printing? Solicit donations from groups for programming costs. Can the library save on postage by participating in a co-op van delivery service or by using the library van to run to neighboring libraries? Will faxing or e mailing correspondence save postage and envelope costs?

Solicit input from the staff and the library board. Depending on the size of the library, each department might submit a formal budget request, including personnel, books, services, and equipment. Priorities should be set by the staff, the director, and/or the board in the event not all requests can be funded.

Where do cuts come from? Personnel costs and the book budget represent the largest budget items. How will the public be impacted by these cuts? Will staffing cuts impact the public's perception of service? Will there be public outcry if the book budget is cut? Can the library reduce operating hours or close facilities? There are no easy solutions to these problems.

Cooperative purchasing may be an option worth investigating. Check with the school board, city, and parish purchasing departments. Purchasing items, such as fluorescent bulbs, from state contracts, should save a library money. Buying those library supplies which are also office supplies from a local office supply company can save both shipping costs and delivery time. Many local office supply companies give discounts to governmental bodies.

Re-evaluate service contracts. Look at carry-in options compared to the cost of on-site service. Examine service contracts on equipment to see if every typewriter, computer, or printer needs a service contract. Keep records of equipment service calls (if possible, computerize), and use this to judge maintenance needs. For example, if the library has service contracts on 10 typewriters @ \$90, but averaged only 4 service calls @ \$50 for the past 2 years, the library would save by going on a per call basis for typewriter maintenance.

Usually, it pays to keep service contracts on copiers or other equipment used by the public.

Consider contracting out services such as lawn upkeep, building maintenance, and security guard services. Weigh the costs of in-house personnel to perform these tasks against the cost and quality of services available through privatization.

Investigate options for local and long distance telephone service. Telecommunications options are always changing; often, the library can improve telephone service at reduced costs. Contact the State Library for additional information.

Use jobbers for most book purchases and make sure the library is getting the appropriate discount. Consider ILL for items over a certain dollar amount or for specialized items. Solicit funds for specific titles. Remember to include supplies and personnel needed for acquiring books purchased from donated funds or grants. Sometimes, these costs cannot be funded through the grant and must be absorbed by library.

Use state contract prices for computer equipment and some office equipment. Often the library won't get a better buy, can order from a local vendor, and doesn't have to pay shipping.

Plan for the long term, as well as the short term. Today's quick and easy solution may be to balance the budget with the library's fund balance (surplus funds). Remember, surplus funds can quickly be eroded and the basic funding problems will still be present.

## **BUDGET PRESENTATION**

Budget presentation is often as important as budget preparation. In Louisiana, the library's annual budget is usually formally presented to the library board of control and the Governing Authority. In addition to these formal presentations, the budget might be reviewed with a special board committee or with governmental officials such as the parish treasurer, finance director, or other financial personnel with oversight responsibilities. The size and organization of the library often prescribe the formality and type of budget presentation required, and it is incumbent on the librarian to seek out governmental officials with financial authority to determine their budgetary requirements both in format and in presentation.

The type of budget presentation is usually prescribed by the library's funding source. If the library has its own millage, board approval is often tantamount to council or police jury approval. If the library is in the general fund budget, approval by the governing authority becomes crucial to the library's budgetary success.

### **Budget Presentation to the Board**

Budget presentation to the board should not be viewed as a once-a-year occurrence; it should be a year-round activity. Parish librarians should reserve a portion of each board meeting to present budget information, which should include reports on revenues received or anticipated, expenditures, encumbrances, and projections. Some boards have formed committees to review library finances on a regular basis, to sign checks, and to assist with the annual budget preparation. Other boards delegate this responsibility to the librarian and the staff and request either monthly or quarterly reports. The librarian should seek to provide the board with the type of presentation and the specificity of information that will help them to understand the budget and to best interpret it to the community.

One board meeting is usually reserved for the presentation of the annual budget. The timing of this meeting depends on the library's budget year and on any time constraints imposed by the governing authority. The format of the budget, as presented to the board, should be one which the board can easily follow and understand. However, the format of the budget, as submitted to the governing authority, is often dictated by the governing authority for conformity among other departments. The librarian should keep this in mind when preparing the budget and should consolidate formats if possible.

Some hints for an effective budget presentation to the board are as follows:

1. Distribute copies of the proposed budget to the board members. Some librarians mail the proposed budget to members a week before the budget meeting. This gives board members a chance to study the budget and come prepared with questions and suggestions. Have extra copies of the budget available at the budget meeting. This will prevent delays when you discover that some board members left their copies at home or didn't receive copies in the mail.

Other librarians choose to distribute the proposed budget during the budget meeting. This gives the librarian the chance to make sure everyone receives a copy and lets the librarian review budget highlights before board members start reviewing each line-item or asking questions. However, if board members don't see the proposed budget until the budget meeting, the meeting will likely be a lengthy one. Also, the board may not feel comfortable adopting a budget they are seeing for the first time.

A third option is to distribute the budget at a special board meeting called for that purpose. The librarian makes a brief presentation focusing on budget highlights, funding available, special projects, and potential problems that the board should keep in mind when reviewing the budget. The budget meeting, where discussion and adoption takes place, is held several days or a week after the special meeting.

2. Some librarians make effective use of visual aids in their presentation to allow board members to follow the items being discussed. If a presentation is made using transparencies or computerized slide-show software, consider distributing printed copies to the board right before the presentation. Although board members sometimes "jump ahead" of the presentation by reading through the copies instead of following the presentation, the advantage of having the board simply make notes on their copies, rather than trying to copy down what is being projected, usually outweighs the disadvantages.
3. **Number** all pages for easy reference. Consider color-coding different components by using pastel paper, and start each component's numbering

with "Page 1". For example, put "revenues" on letter size white paper; "fund balance status" on mint green letter size, "expenditures" on legal size white paper, the justification for three new librarians on lavender paper. This will make the meeting go smoother when someone asks a question.

4. Discuss the scope of the budget and indicate if percentages have been used in making projections in the various categories. Briefly review current year revenues and expenditures and project current year-end figures. Always discuss anticipated revenues and fund balance status. A quick review of finances and needs until the next tax election might also be in order.
5. Present the major budgetary components separately such as personnel, supplies, contractual services, library materials, and capital expenditures. Give board members the opportunity to ask questions and make comments and/or suggestions.
6. Identify **all** proposed new expenditures and explain how these budget items relate to board priorities and library programs and collections. It is often helpful to project the cost of these new expenditures or programs for several years. This will allow board members to view not only the impact on the requested budget, but the impact on future budgets.
7. Incorporate specific board actions and recommendations into the final budget.
8. Receive official board adoption of the budget prior to sending it to the next echelon for approval.

### **Budget Presentation to the Governing Authority**

The necessity for, as well as the types of, library budget presentations to the local governing authority varies greatly among parishes. Libraries that adopt their own budget may not be required to make a budget presentation to the parish governing authority. Some libraries submit the board approved budget to the governing authority for incorporation in the parish's budget process without making a presentation to the governing authority. Other libraries are required to discuss the board approved budget

with the parish governmental offices and also make a presentation to the governing authority. It is incumbent on the librarian to know the type and length of presentation expected, if any, and to be prepared to respond to questions regarding **every** aspect of the proposed budget.

The following will help the librarian when presenting the budget to the governing authority:

1. Encourage either the board president or the board financial officer to make or assist with the presentation. If the library has a business manager, this individual should attend the budget review session and be prepared to answer questions.
2. Provide an overview of the library's mission and funding source. This overview should include any percentage increases or decreases on projected revenues and should include specifics about all new personnel and programs requested. Handouts demonstrating library use can be helpful in substantiating a request for additional staff or new programs. If a presentation is made using transparencies, consider distributing a copy to each member of the governing authority right before the presentation. Have a packet of information about the budget available for the press.
3. Understand thoroughly the library's budget proposal and appear forthright and candid in reviewing the budget.
4. Provide an opportunity for questions. Be sensitive and responsive to comments and questions and remember that the emphasis and structure of the budget presentation to the governing authority will often be dictated by time constraints and questions posed by the review committee.
5. Adhere to the time frame allotted for the presentation. The library will probably be scheduled along with other parish agencies, and it is important to stay within the time allowed. An additional meeting may be needed to discuss particular issues or to provide additional information as requested.

Budget presentations to the library board of control and the governing authority are significant parts of the entire budget process. An effective budget presentation can make a considerable difference regarding the level of funding received. Consequently, extreme

care should be taken to plan presentations that present citizen needs for materials and programs in the most persuasive and positive manner.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET ACT

Each political subdivision of the state of Louisiana is required by law to prepare an annual budget in accordance with the **Louisiana Local Government Budget Act** (L.R.S. 39:1301 et seq.). This act provides minimum guidelines to libraries. Additional budgetary policies and procedures may be mandated at the local level. L.R.S. 39:1303(C) specifies that the Local Government Budget Act includes home rule charter governmental bodies.

The budget document must be presented to the governing authority of the political subdivision and must be made available for public inspection no later than fifteen days before the beginning of the fiscal year. This document must include a budget message summarizing the proposed financial plan, policies, and objectives of the political subdivision. A consolidated statement for each fund, including beginning and ending fund balance estimates, itemized estimates of revenues and receipts, and recommended itemized expenditures must be included. Proposed expenditures must not exceed the total estimated funds available for the ensuing fiscal year. Finally, the proposed budget must include a proposed budget adoption instrument, such as a resolution or an ordinance. For specifics, refer to L.R.S. 39:1304(D).

Political subdivisions with proposed expenditures of \$250,000 or more must follow the provisions in L.R.S. 39:1306 regarding public input into the budget process before formal budget adoption. This procedure includes public budget hearings with prior notification in the official journal of the governing authority. Adoption of a budget where approved expenditures exceed the total of estimated revenues available is prohibited by L.R.S.39:1308(B).

If the budget for the ensuing fiscal year is not adopted by the end of a fiscal year, L.R.S. 39:1311 dictates that the political subdivision shall operate with amounts appropriated at 50% of the preceding year's appropriated level.

L.R.S. 39:1310 directs revenues and expenditures to be monitored within the framework of the approved budget. Written notification by the chief executive or administrative officer to the governing authority is required under certain conditions, including when revenues fail to meet the estimated budget figure by 5% or more or when expenditures, within a fund, exceed estimated budget figures by 5% or more.

As the adopted budget is a plan and guideline to follow during the year, state law

recognizes that this budget may need to be amended. This is discussed in L.R.S. 39:1309. Procedures for amending the budget will vary by parish. Amending by transferring funds from one line-item to another without changing fund balance may be up to the library board of control, the library director, or the parish administration. Amendments which change fund balance or the bottom line for revenues or for expenditures usually require amending the budget under L.R.S. 39:1309.

Who actually approves and adopts the budget will vary with the library system. Many parish libraries are required to submit their library board approved budget to the parish council, police jury, or parish administration for inclusion in the overall parish budget process. The advantage to this system is that the library's budget hearing is included with the overall parish public budget hearing. There can, however, be conflict when the parish administration and/or governing authority does not agree with the budget approved by the library board.

Other parish libraries prepare their budgets, hold public budget hearings, and adopt the budget by action of the library board of control. This can save the library staff time and paperwork in duplicating efforts for library board approval and parish approval. However, the burden of advertising and fulfilling legal requirements falls on the library director. The advantages to holding a separate library budget hearing are that only one body approves the budget and that the library doesn't end up in the middle of a political controversy between the library board and the parish.

Finally, once a budget is adopted, the document forms a financial plan for the year. It should be used to manage and monitor library finances, as well as to provide periodic reports to the board.

## MANAGING THE BUDGET

After the budget is approved, it is the director's responsibility to see that expenditures are in line with the approved budget. Just as there are laws and procedures governing the budget process, there are laws and procedures governing the corresponding expenditures.

### Purchasing

Each library should establish purchasing policies and procedures. The Public Bid Law (L.R.S. 38:2211 et seq.) spells out the requirements for contracting for public work and goods and services above certain dollar amounts. Public libraries are bound by this law. The local governing authority may have a local purchasing ordinance or procedure which the library staff must follow, in addition to the public bid law. The library director must be aware of these laws and regulations.

Some parishes have a central purchasing process, and the library may be required to participate. Central purchasing has both advantages and disadvantages. Centralized purchasing generally uses a requisition and purchase order (P.O.) system, ensuring a paper trail for all purchases. Bulk purchasing at the parish level may result in better prices for the library. However, many library supplies, and some equipment, are unique to the library (book jackets, library cards, shelving, CD-ROM workstations). The library staff will need patience and perseverance when explaining to centralized purchasing personnel what the items are used for and why, for example, the library cannot use book trucks where the shelves are screwed onto the frame rather than welded. This procedure may be more cumbersome than the library would like. In addition, the library must allow additional lead time for routing requisitions to the parish purchasing department for processing. Acquisition of library materials (including the use of book jobbers and subscription agencies) may require a bid or contract through centralized purchasing, although the actual selection, ordering, and receipt of these materials is still kept within the library.

Depending on the volume of purchasing, the library may need to institute a purchase order (P.O.) system. Many vendors will bill to public bodies only if a P.O. authorizing the purchase is issued. A P.O. system enables the library to keep track of authorized purchases in an efficient manner. Whatever system is used internally for authorizing and tracking purchases, the director is responsible for seeing that only authorized (and legal) purchases are made in line with the adopted budget.

A staff member should not be allowed to "pick up" pencils at the store because he needed them, present the bill, and expect to be paid from library funds. This scenario prevents the library from taking advantage of bulk pricing, takes the director out of the decision-making process, can wreak havoc with the budget, and weakens controls. Make sure both the staff and the board know that all purchases follow the internal procedures which have been established by the board and the director. There will be circumstances when it is in the best interest of the library to have a staff member use petty cash to purchase something but only after the purchase has been authorized.

Be aware of state and local conflict of interest and nepotism laws regarding purchasing goods or services from or contracting with relatives of board or staff members (see [Ethics](#) in this handbook). Also, be aware of questionable business practices, such as contracting with a good family friend, which might not violate state ethics laws but could cause a negative opinion of the director and of the library.

### **Telecommunications and Data Processing Procurement**

L.R.S. 38:2234 et seq. allows a political subdivision to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) instead of an Invitation to Bid for the purchase, rental, lease, or lease-purchase of telecommunications and data processing systems. This includes computer equipment, software, and related services, such as maintenance. Equipment and services covered under this procurement process are defined in L.R.S. 38:2236. Several libraries have used this method for procuring automated library systems and system upgrades.

The RFP process is described in L.R.S. 38:2237. It is similar to the bid process. Specifications must be developed, sent to prospective vendors, and advertised for an appropriate period of time in the official journal. In the bid process, the vendor submitting the lowest responsible bid that meets the specifications must be awarded the bid. In the RFP process, the specifications must include a list of criteria with assigned point values which are used in evaluating the responses from the vendors. Such criteria might include price, functionality, vendor reputation, vendor stability, and system expandability. The specifications must also detail the evaluation process. Thus the RFP process allows the library some flexibility in selecting the system which best meets the library's needs, rather than the system which is the cheapest.

During the RFP evaluation process, the library may narrow the list to the two or three

highest scoring systems and invite those vendors in for site demonstrations and further negotiations. There is some flexibility in modifying the choice of equipment or software, but a library should not deviate significantly from what was in the RFP. It is a good idea to have the library or parish attorney review legalities of the process and sit in on the evaluation and negotiations process.

System equipment upgrades or migrations which are over \$15,000 are subject to the bid process or, at the library's option, the RFP process. Since compatibility of data (and possibly existing software and equipment) is usually an issue, the bid or RFP may require compatibility with the existing system or data. A vendor can be required to demonstrate this compatibility before being awarded a contract.

Finally, a significant expenditure on telecommunications or data processing items often requires a contract between the selected vendor and the library. Rather than using the vendor's boiler plate contract, the library should make sure the contract is written to the library's best advantage, especially in areas of vendor performance, library satisfaction, and payment schedules. In fact, L.R.S. 38:2237 requires certain language to be placed in the contract. A library should consider hiring a library automation consultant to assist with the complex tasks of developing specifications, evaluating responses, and negotiating the contract.

### **State Contracts**

The Division of Administration - State Purchasing maintains a list of items and brand names currently on state contract. The contract prices are generally good for a year from date of contract. Office supplies, purchase and rental of equipment, as well as maintenance agreements for equipment, are under state contract. Because of bulk purchasing, the prices available through state contract are usually very competitive. Items purchased on state contract are not subject to the provisions of the public bid law. A public library may purchase any of these items for library use. It still pays to shop around, however, since contract prices could be as much as a year old. Computers are among the items that frequently decrease in price during a twelve-month period. To contact State Purchasing , telephone 225 342-8062. To ascertain items on state contract access the following websites: <gopher://vm.cc.latech.edu/11/lascmain>  
<http://www.state.la.us/osp/Search-Intro.htm>

## **General Services Administration Procurement**

Act 1255 of the 1995 regular session of the Louisiana State Legislature allows public entities to procure materials, supplies, and equipment from federal General Services Administration (GSA) supply schedules. Such items must not be available at a lower price on Louisiana state contract. Additionally, there must be a Louisiana licensed dealer or distributor for the item(s) through the GSA contract. Details can be found in L.R.S. 38:2212(P) and (Q). (Federal vendors may prove reluctant to allow libraries to use the GSA contracts.)

## **Sales Tax**

Act 1029 of the 1991 regular session of the Louisiana State Legislature exempted all political subdivisions of the state, effective September 1, 1991, from all state sales and use tax and from sales and use tax levied by any political subdivision. This includes all public libraries in Louisiana. L.R.S. 47:301 contains the full text of this act, as well as any relevant Attorney General opinions.

## **Bookkeeping and Accounting**

Most public libraries in Louisiana order and receive their own goods and library materials. Invoices for payment are usually prepared for payment by the library staff. This involves verifying the invoice, "coding" the invoice with the appropriate budget code, and authorizing it for payment. Usually the bills are paid and books are maintained by the local governing authority. Some parishes which provide administrative services, such as bookkeeping, charge the library annually for such services. These charges are authorized under L.R.S. 33:1236(35)(a) and cannot exceed 4% of library's revenues **or** the actual costs incurred in providing direct and indirect services - whichever is less. Additionally, the law provides that such administrative charges be established by agreement between the governing authority and the library.

Several libraries, under L.R.S. 25:215, have received legislative authority to administer and handle the accounting functions for all of their library funds. Refer to the article "Fiscal Emancipation" in this Section for information about the process for obtaining this authority. Contact one or more of the directors of those parish libraries for information on how they

handle their own bookkeeping. Some library systems purchase materials on their own, manage their funds, and basically control their budget, even though formal fiscal independence has not been granted. The governing authority may permit this method to save themselves the work.

Accounting records are to be kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The modified accrual form of accounting is the basis of accounting for local governments in Louisiana. See an explanation of this and other forms of accounting in the Fiscal Manual.

Regardless of who handles the accounting of library funds, the librarian should receive the following monthly financial reports: revenues, expenditures, itemized list of checks paid, and investments. The librarian, or designated staff member, should review these reports to catch any errors and to monitor spending in line with the approved budget. Try to anticipate possible problems with the budget. The director must keep informed and must keep the board informed about needed changes. Remember, the budget is a guide for spending. Circumstances which occur during the year could require a change in the approved budget. Some libraries can "move money" between funds, with board approval. Some libraries might have to get governing authority approval for this. Any amendment to the budget which will change the fund balance is likely to fall under provisions of the **Local Government Budget Act**. Refer to that section in this handbook for further information. Check with the board and parish administration to determine the procedures which need to be followed for amending the library budget.

In an emergency situation, the library director must be able to resolve the situation even if funds are not currently in the budget for the emergency. State and local purchasing laws discuss what qualifies as an emergency. Have the board approve emergency purchasing procedures. Funds to cover this emergency situation will still need to be found elsewhere in the budget or from the fund balance. The director also needs to report to the board, and possibly the governing authority, on emergency spending.

### **Approval of Expenditures**

L.R.S. 25:220 states that the governing authority is responsible for paying, with library maintenance funds, the monthly salaries, expenses, and maintenance costs of the library once these costs are approved by the board of control or designated board member. L.R.S. 25:215 transfers this function to the library in certain parishes, as specified in the

law. Some libraries have the board president sign, or the board approve, a claim sheet itemizing bills each month before these bills are submitted to the Parish for payment. Because the library board approves the library's budget and reviews financial reports on a regular basis, some boards authorize the director to pay bills as a part of the administrative function. This is usually stated in the by-laws of the board or done by resolution of the board.

Some parishes pay bills and employees twice a month. The library is bound by the parish's internal procedures and is often required to send bills on a daily basis rather than batch them. The parish finance department can answer questions about such internal procedures and help the director coordinate library procedures with the related parish procedures.

### **Duplicate Set of Books**

**It is imperative that the library keep a set of books or other mechanism to double-check the bill paying and accounting of the Parish.** There are several important reasons for doing this, even though some librarians feel that this duplicates work. The director is accountable to the board and the public for expenditure of library funds and must be aware of what is going on with these funds. A variety of mistakes can occur when paying bills: coding, vendors, or amounts can be keyed incorrectly; the library could be inadvertently charged for another agency's utility bills; the library staff could receive a call from a vendor questioning payment of a bill that should have been already paid by the parish; the parish could begin charging the library for items not in the budget; financial reports may not come on a timely basis from the parish. The library will not be aware of this if it is not checking what is being charged against the library fund. The problems associated with this, including both the director's and the board's need to know, are lessened if the library has kept track of library expenditures.

As a minimum, keep a duplicate copy of all invoices sent to the parish for payment, along with the date submitted for payment and coding information, and record in a ledger or in a computer database package, at least the code, vendor and invoice amount submitted. Check these against the monthly financial reports received from the parish. It is much easier to do this checking on a regular basis than it is to try to find a problem at year-end. Experience will teach what information the library is likely to need access to from the internal set of books. This will enable the director to determine how to keep these records and to decide if the library can quit keeping some of the duplicate information.

## **CONSOLIDATED CASH ACCOUNT VS. LIBRARY MAINTENANCE FUND**

Dedicated library funds must be accounted for separately from other funds. Often, a library has a dedicated library maintenance fund account at a bank, with checks, statements, and investments managed separately from other parish monies.

The trend among parish governments is to consolidate accounts for all parish agencies which are administered by the parish into one large bank account. Records for individual agencies are accounted for separately in the books of the parish. However, the funds are intermingled in the bank account and investments. The Fiscal Manual (section 720, page 1) recommends that a governmental unit pool its cash into one account to improve cash management and to provide for a greater return on investments. One disadvantage to this method is that checks cut for a library no longer show the library as payer. One check for telephone service or utilities may be cut to the vendor as payment of invoices for all parish agencies.

Librarians and boards have expressed concern about this practice, fearing that the library will somehow lose its funds to another parish agency. The library director must keep track of library money by monitoring and reviewing the library's investments and financial statements. An audit should catch any improprieties. The Attorney General's office and the Legislative Auditor's office can be asked for specific opinions as to questionable fund usage practices by a parish government.

## INSURANCE FOR LIBRARIES

Insurance is protection. Insurance is purchased to guard against loss, liability, negligence, and oversight. There is scarcely an area of human activity, endeavor, or interaction that cannot be covered by insurance. A library requires contractors and architects to hold insurance when working on library construction projects and often requires other service providers to obtain liability, performance, and worker's compensation coverage.

The range of insurance available today has expanded to meet the needs of a litigious society. As the danger of liability has risen, the industry has expanded to meet the need, fill the void, or, depending upon your viewpoint, create the demand. There are various types of insurance needed by a library. As the chief administrator, the library director must advise the board on the need for, and cost of, coverage.

Libraries have traditionally been considered good customers and have been treated as a preferred class by the insurance industry. The true bottom line on many insurance coverages is, of course, how much can be afforded by the library's budget.

Some library systems are included in the insurance plan of the governing authority. Other libraries have separate insurance coverage. The director will need to determine the maximum coverage that can be procured and work with the parties involved to acquire this coverage. Listed below are some ideas and pieces of information for the director looking into the library's insurance.

1. The first step for a director investigating insurance is to ascertain how the library is covered: what policies exist, what is the coverage, and what is the cost. The "risk management" or other insurance specialist at the parish level is generally a good person to contact when investigating insurance coverage.
2. Before insurance can be purchased or upgraded, the value of the items being insured must be determined. The general fixed assets list, building construction cost, vehicle value, and book collection value are all items needed when insuring property and liability. The inventory of physical assets must be brought up-to-date before considering insurance.
3. A library is a public building. The risk of the library's liability due to personal injury or

loss of property must be assessed. Policies enacted by the library board and decisions made by administrative staff could potentially cause liability problems for a library.

It is at this point that risk management can help. Determine which of the library's risks can be eliminated, reduced, or transferred, which losses should be insured against, and which losses can be assumed or self-insured. For example, a library's budget might be able to withstand a potential \$5,000 property loss risk (deductible) each year, assuming this risk might reduce premiums over the long-term.

### **Types of Coverage**

Insurance is complex, and the vocabulary can be as esoteric as the vocabulary of any specialized field. Some areas of possible coverage are briefly discussed below. The best advice is to know the library's needs and discuss coverage with the library's insurance agents.

Blanket policies cover more than one piece of property and/or property contents, in a single amount or limit. For example, a blanket policy might cover the physical plant and contents of all library branches.

Special endorsements to policies are available that modify the standard policy coverage. These endorsements might include large deductibles, replacement cost coverage, contingent liability (if the building does not meet code requirements), and special pricing (which covers special, irreplaceable collections).

### **Buildings and Contents**

Blanket property coverage on a parish-owned library building will be an expense of the library. Because the title to library buildings resides with the governing authority, the governing authority may carry insurance on the building. Usually, the cost is charged back to the library budget by the governing authority. The library may want supplemental coverage if the insurance carried by the parish is not deemed sufficient.

Plate glass requires specific coverage by endorsement if it is to be insured against breakage by accident or vandalism. Steam boiler explosion must be specifically covered.

Blanket contents coverage refers to furniture, books, equipment, and other items owned by the library. The general fixed assets list and valuation of the book collection are used for determining coverage required.

A special type of contents coverage for valuable papers and books is classified as inland marine coverage. A library may want to investigate securing this type of coverage for rare books and manuscripts, special collections, fine arts, and bookmobile contents.

Burglary and theft are not covered in blanket policy packages unless by specific endorsement. Unless a library has an extreme problem with break-ins, this kind of endorsement is usually not cost effective.

Money and securities must be insured separate from other property. However, if the library can control how much money is left in the building and is making daily deposits of fine and photocopy monies, this type of coverage may not be needed.

### **Miscellaneous Property**

Bailer liability is often secured for personal property of others, such as items on exhibit. This coverage may be a separate policy or covered under a blanket policy by endorsement. A transportation floater covers property at outside locations, as well as property in transit.

## **Liability Insurance**

General liability, or comprehensive public liability, protects the library from injuries to the public on library property. Umbrella, or excessive, liability coverage is sometimes secured to protect the library in case of a major liability claim. Umbrella coverage is generally a separate policy and is written in multiples of \$1,000,000.

## **Vehicles**

Vehicle coverage, including comprehensive, collision, and liability policies, are available for bookmobiles, vans, and library automobiles driven by staff. Many libraries are self-insured for the loss of a van or automobile.

## **Performance Bonds**

Performance bonds, also called surety or fidelity bonds, are guarantees of "faithful performance" in financial matters by the bonded individual. Often, a surety bond is taken out on the library director. Sometimes, a blanket bond which covers all employees is secured.

## **Other Liability**

The liability insurance of Directors-Officers-Trustees is sometimes secured to protect the individual decision-makers of non-profit organizations. This type of coverage is also called Public Officials' Liability, Errors and Omissions, or Malpractice insurance. The American Library Association offers such a policy to libraries.

## **Unemployment Compensation**

Unemployment compensation is mandatory insurance coverage. This insurance fund compensates former employees who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. There are several methods of handling unemployment insurance in Louisiana.

1. Louisiana unemployment insurance fund: the library pays a quarterly premium based on the library's taxable payroll. The rate is determined by the

- state and is based on the library's unemployment experience.
2. Self-insurance: the library sets aside a separate percentage of its payroll in a fund to meet future claims. The fund is used to reimburse the State of Louisiana for claims against the library.
  3. Reimbursement: the library does not have separate unemployment insurance nor a separate self-insurance fund for unemployment claims. Rather, the library reimburses the State of Louisiana for claims against the library.

### **Workers' Compensation**

Workers' compensation is a mandatory policy to aid employees who have been injured on the job. Rates are set by class of employee (e.g., clerical, administrative) and applied against the library's anticipated payroll. Workers' compensation is audited at the end of each year. The library may receive a credit for overpayment or a supplemental invoice, depending on how the actual payroll matched with the anticipated payroll upon which premiums were based.

### **Group Insurance**

A library may offer group insurance coverage to its employees for health, life, and dental coverages. Plans for the employee, as well as for family members, may be offered. Stipulations concerning eligibility (such as, employees must be non-temporary and work over 28 hours a week) can be made by the library, as long as these are uniformly applied and do not discriminate.

Determine insurance costs and coverages for employee health insurance plans (group insurance). Determine what percentage of the coverage is paid by employee and what percentage is paid by the library. State Attorney General opinion 90-106 says that a parish government may pay 100% of the insurance premium cost for employee health and accident insurance.

It is, however, illegal for a library to give bonus payments to employees who do not participate in the group insurance plan. It is also illegal for employers to give employees direct cash payments to defray the cost of health insurance. This is discussed in Attorney

General opinion 90-558.

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 or COBRA (<http://gatekeeper.dol.gov/dol/pwba/public/pubs/COBRA/cobra95.htm>) gives eligible former employees the right to continue their group insurance coverage for a certain period of time, as specified by the act. The library's group insurance policy should address COBRA participation.

Attorney General opinions 95-152, 94-448, 92-547, and 91-490 affirm that it is legal for a public agency to use public funds for paying insurance premiums of its retired employees. At the least, a library should have a policy regarding the participation of retired employees in the group insurance.

### **Medicare**

Medicare ( <http://www.hcfa.gov/> ) coverage is required for all employees hired by the library after March 31, 1986. This is a matching payroll deduction. Libraries belonging to Parochial Employees Retirement System (5420 Corporate Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70808, 225 928-1361) in lieu of participating in Social Security do have to include their employees hired after March 31, 1986, in the Medicare system. As of July 1, 1991, these same libraries which have full and part-time employees not eligible for participation in Parochial Employees Retirement System must participate in the Social Security system for those employees. This includes both the FICA and the Medicare contributions as paid by both employee and employer.

Insurance is highly individualized and should be tailored to each library's needs. The practical constraints of the budget will determine how much of the necessary insurance can be obtained. The library director and the board must carefully consider the needs of the library against the potential risks when determining insurance coverage.

### **Sources - Insurance**

Myers, Gerald E. Insurance Manual for Libraries. Chicago: ALA, 1977.

## THE AUDIT

The fiscal cycle of a library starts with budget planning and continues with budget monitoring and spending. The cycle concludes with an annual financial report on operations and the audit. The Legislative Auditor's Office is the state agency to which these items are submitted.

The annual financial report is required of all parish agencies under L.R.S. 24:514. A library may submit its report directly to the Legislative Auditor or may be included as part of the parish governing authority report. If the library reports with the parish, the library director should advise the Legislative Auditor in writing. The report can be submitted in any format which complies with generally accepted accounting principles. The Legislative Auditor provides a packet of forms which can be used to submit the report. Additional details can be found in the Fiscal Manual or by contacting the Legislative Auditor. The report is due within ninety days after the close of the fiscal year. However, if the library has engaged an independent public accountant to audit the financial statements, the report is not required.

The audit is a periodic review or check of a public agency with respect to the services provided with taxpayer dollars. The audit must be performed by an independent certified public accountant, licensed to practice in Louisiana. The Legislative Auditor's office focuses on oversight of local governmental audits performed by private CPAs and investigative audits, rather than actually performing audits for local governments. Under state law, all parish agencies must be audited at least biennially, with the audit covering both years. Some parishes have annual audits by choice. A library may be a part of the governing authority's audit or may contract for its own audit. Usually if the administration of library funds is handled by the library (as provided under L.R.S. 25:215), the library will contract its own audit. Refer to Audit Requirements for Louisiana Local Governments (available from Office of Legislative Auditor, P.O. Box 94397, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9397 225 339-3800 [www.lla.state.la.us](http://www.lla.state.la.us)) and L.R.S. 24:511 et seq. for additional details about the audit and the Legislative Auditor's office.

### Handling an Audit

Whether the auditor is engaged by the parish or the library, the auditor will visit the library. The librarian must assist during the audit and comply with the requests of the auditor for information, invoices, etc. in a timely fashion. There are penalties, under state law, for noncompliance with an auditor's request. A librarian who has followed the steps outlined in

this handbook for preparing the budget and managing public funds should be well prepared for the audit.

The auditor will review budget compliance, including receiving and expending funds within budgeted amounts. The auditor will check compliance with federal, state, and local laws, such as compliance with the public bid law. The auditor checks to see that appropriate library board action occurred concerning raises, paid leave policies, and other items which affect the finances of the library. Finally, the auditor will review the library's internal controls for managing public funds.

The auditor will usually schedule an appointment with the library director. The visit could take several hours, days, or weeks, depending on the scope of the audit, and whether the official financial and personnel records are kept at the parish or at the library. The librarian should plan to provide the auditor workspace and plan to be available to the auditor to provide information and answer questions. Below are items which an auditor is likely to address while at the library; some items are also required as part of the annual financial report.

1. An auditor will examine minutes of the board meetings, checking for policies which affect finances (leave policies, fines policies), raises which were approved, approval of library-paid travel, and budget approval. Make sure the minutes book is up to date. (Make sure the minutes reflect all board action on setting salaries and raises.)
2. The auditor may ask to see the library's policy manual. (At a minimum, have gathered any policies which directly or indirectly concern monies.)
3. The auditor will ask to see employee work records (time cards, time sheets) and leave records. Depending on the size of the staff, the auditor will examine all records (small staffs) or will examine a random sample (larger staffs). Be sure that all leave paid to terminated employees is documented and is in accord with board or parish policy. The auditor will question any non-salary check paid to an employee and any paycheck which differs from the employee's approved salary.
4. Have copies of all contracts entered into by the library and all grants received by the library available for the auditor. Grant funds will also be a part of the

audit.

5. The auditor will question revenues which seem out of line with both the current year budget and the previous year's receipts, or vice-versa. For example, an auditor might question why fines collected in 1991 increased 20% over the previous year. This might be explained due to a board-approved policy in mid-1991 raising fines from 24 a day to 54 a day or due to a two month "no-fines" period while changing to an automated circulation system. The auditor is questioning, not accusing. This is part of the auditor's job. Remember, although the auditor is looking for anything out of the ordinary, most circumstances can be easily explained by the librarian. Likewise, the auditor will question expenditures which are not in line with the current year budget and the previous year's expenditures. For example, a library may have increased 50% spending in utilities due to opening two regional branches in 1991 and only spent 40% of the bookmobile gasoline budget because of a problem which kept the bookmobile off the road for six months. The auditor cannot tell this from looking at the financial report; the librarian (or library business manager) must be able to answer these questions. Some librarians prepare, for both the board and the auditor, a year-end line item explanation of revenues and expenditures in relation to the budgeted amounts.

A library which is responsible for its own fund administration (under L.R.S. 25:215) will likely be questioned in detail about its handling of revenues and expenditures: timely deposits, investments, fiscal agent, type of fund accounting, and disbursement procedures.

Other items which are part of the audit include changes in fixed assets for the year, pending litigation involving the library, and any other claims against the library.

## **FIXED ASSETS**

Fixed assets are assets of a long-term character which the library intends to continue to hold and use, such as land, buildings, improvements other than buildings, machinery, and equipment. General fixed assets (GFA) are "fixed assets used in operations accounted for in governmental funds."

### **State Law and Recordkeeping**

L.R.S. 24:515(B) mandates each library to keep a record of all GFAs for which the library is accountable. Information such as date of acquisition, initial cost, and disposition (if any, along with the purpose of the disposition and the recipient of the disposed goods) must be kept in the records. Fixed asset records are generally examined by the auditor during the library's audit.

Libraries have been maintaining GFA records since 1980. New items are added annually, while other items are removed. A "running total" of the value of the library's fixed assets is thus maintained.

Items placed in a library's GFA inventory generally have a minimum value in the \$250-\$750 range and have a long-term life. Equipment items are labeled with a non-removable property tag which contains the library's name and an inventory or tag number. Libraries may use property tags which bear the name of the parish rather than the library. The tag number is recorded in the GFA records for ease of identifying a specific piece of equipment.

Small items under \$250, such as calculators, are generally considered "office supplies" rather than as part of the fixed assets of a library. A library can account for such items by either tagging these items and assessing a \$0 value to the items in the GFA records, or by simply recording these items as supplies with no GFA recordings. Some libraries use non-numbered tags to simply "property stamp" such items.

## Books and Other Library Materials

Library books and possibly other library materials are part of the GFAs of Louisiana's public libraries. Public library books are considered tangible assets with a life, generally, greater than one year. Even though the cost of an individual book may be under \$250, books, as a group, represent a significant value to the library. Other material collections, such as periodicals in paper format, bound periodicals, microfiche, microfilm, paperbacks, videocassettes, recordings and audiocassettes, art prints, filmstrips, or software, could be considered as a part of the library's fixed assets. A library should consider the following when deciding if a specific collection is part of the library's fixed assets:

- 1.the collection is held for the long term and individual items generally have a long life span;
- 2.the collection represents a significant value in reference to the library's total holdings; or
- 3.the collection is of a "reference" nature.

In practice, collections established as fixed assets will vary by library. For example, a library with a small video collection might exclude these items from the fixed assets policy; a library with over 1,000 videocassettes would likely include this collection in the fixed assets policy. A library might exclude unbound issues of periodicals or periodicals kept less than 5 years from the fixed assets policy, but would include bound issues and periodicals on microfiche, since the latter are used for reference, held indefinitely, and represent a significant investment of library funds.

Several methods exist for assessing the value of the book collection for fixed assets purposes. Some libraries use a moving average for each collection for additions and deletions. Other libraries have recorded the actual cost of each item added to the book collection, using this value should the item be discarded. Some libraries establish separate valuations for their reference book collection and paperback collection. The State Library can assist a library director with determining the value of the book collection for fixed asset accounting.

## **Inventory**

A library should periodically inventory its fixed assets. Some libraries do a partial inventory each year, rotating what is done, so that a complete inventory is accomplished over two to three years. Other libraries do a complete inventory of fixed assets annually or biennially.

An annual or biennial inventory of library books is generally impractical in most libraries. Books differ from other fixed assets due to their quantity and their mobility. The shelf-list is generally considered the fixed assets record of the book collection. A library should periodically sample the shelf-list or card catalog to test its accuracy. Libraries which have automated the circulation function may find that the inventory process is greatly facilitated.

## **Disposal of Assets**

Generally, there are few ways a library can legally dispose of obsolete property. First, items must be declared surplus by formal resolution of either the library board or the governing authority. Items can then be offered for sale to the public via public auction or by advertising for bids on the items. Items are sold to the highest bidder. Items cannot be given to an individual, staff member, or board member.

Items can be transferred to another department within the parish or municipality, or donated to another governmental entity (such as a library in another parish) as a transaction between governmental entities.

Library books which are outdated, damaged, or simply no longer needed in the collection should be officially declared surplus and then recycled or discarded. The following are valid methods of disposing of surplus library books. (Methods one through four may require the concerned parties to enter into a cooperative endeavor agreement.)

1. Hold a book sale. The book sale is akin to a public auction. The books could be given to a Friends of the Library group for sale provided the Friends give back the proceeds of the sale either directly or indirectly (in the form of equipment or new books). This is definitely considered a cooperative endeavor and should be formalized with a contract, or a cooperative endeavor agreement. This agreement should be between the board, director, and/or governing authority and the Friends group.

2. Give the books to another library.
3. Give the books to the jail, recreation center, or other parish or municipal agency.
4. Give the books to a non-profit agency, such as a battered woman's shelter.  
Giving the discarded books to a quasi-public or non-profit agency which receives some public funding or grants should be legal.
5. Throw away the books.

### **General Fixed Assets Policy**

Each library should have a general fixed assets policy established by the library board. A library may choose to follow the GFA policy of the parish; if so, the board should reflect this in their minutes. The GFA policy should address the following:

1. define general fixed assets and establish a minimum dollar value for GFA;
2. define GFA in relation to the library's book collection, listing which collections are included and which collections are not included, along with a justification for excluding the collections;
3. description of the record-keeping process for each of the GFA groupings (land, buildings, equipment, book collections);
4. description of property tags and what items will be tagged;
5. inventory procedures and frequency of inventory; and
6. procedures for disposition of assets.

A library should periodically review its GFA policy, making revisions when necessary. For example, a library may have established \$250 as the minimum value of a GFA in 1990. The library may choose to update this in 1999 to an amount in the recommended range of

\$500-\$1000 and remove from the GFA all items under the new minimum value.

## RECORD RETENTION

Libraries generate numerous reports, documents, and other records each year. These records provide a director, the board, and the public with historical information about the library's finances or usage by the public. Each public library should establish a record retention schedule and have it approved by the library board. The Secretary of State, Division of Archives, Records Management, and History (P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9125, 225 922-1200) can assist in setting up a record retention schedule. The Division will provide an "agency worksheet", which should be filled out by the library and sent back to the Division. Division personnel will then use this information to set up a record retention schedule for the library.

These guidelines are useful when establishing record retention policies:

1. State law requires keeping records a minimum of three years if a formal retention schedule has not been developed and approved for the agency by the State Archives.
2. Records relating to IRS matters (such as W-2 forms, payroll, tax-exempt information) must be kept a minimum of four years. However, records of this nature which fall under the purview of the Louisiana Department of Revenue and Taxation must be retained a minimum of six years, as per L.R.S. 44:36(B).
3. Annual budgets, year-end financial reports, audit reports, statistical reports, and records relating to building construction are among those a library may wish to keep indefinitely.
4. Records are often kept in a variety of formats (e.g., electronic, printed, microfiche). A library may elect to keep only a printed copy or a microfiche copy. The format chosen for permanent retention must be in accordance with L.R.S. 44:39.
5. Some library records are also kept by the governing authority (e.g., audit report, budget). If the governing authority keeps such records indefinitely and storage space in the library is at a premium, the library might choose to retain only the past three years' records in-house.

## FISCAL EMANCIPATION

A library may seek fiscal emancipation, that is the assumption of all responsibility for its accounting, payroll, investments, and audit, for a number of good reasons. Many small library systems have done their own bookkeeping and check writing since their creation with the effort being duplicated at the police jury office or parish council. Other libraries have experienced examples of shoddy record keeping or unclear accounting or even difficulties in obtaining their fair share of state revenue sharing funds. In times of tight money, the local government may discontinue offering accounting services free of charge, and, considering the library a separate entity, can legally impose a fee (L.R.S. 32:1236(35)(a)). All of the above may result in a significant financial loss of dedicated library funds.

However, fiscal emancipation should not be entered into casually. If the bookkeeping and auditing are contracted out, a middle-sized library may face fees of \$15,000 a year. With good software and a personal computer system, many libraries could handle their own payrolls and bill paying with minimal expense, but the library bookkeeper must also be aware of quarterly payment to the IRS, the retirement system, and Worker's Compensation, as well as the laws governing employees, wages, and insurance. As of 1995, 12 libraries under L.R.S. 25:215 have received legislative authority to administer and handle the accounting functions for all their library funds. Some library systems purchase materials on their own, manage their funds, and basically control their budget even though fiscal independence has not been granted; other libraries were established as fiscally independent. Obviously, libraries are capable of doing the task and see an advantage to it.

The road to fiscal emancipation may be easy or labyrinthine depending upon the library's relationship with local politicians and the governing body. The first step is, of course, to reach a consensus of the library director and board to seek financial separation from the parish. This must be put in the form of a motion and entered into the minutes of the Library Board.

Step two of the process is to secure a formal resolution from the governing body allowing the library to seek the necessary legislative authorization. It is strongly recommended that Board members should contact their respective representatives in parish government and let them know that the Board is going to request their help in fiscal emancipation. Also, each member of the governing body should be asked to vote in support of the resolution and to pass a motion reflecting their support. Phone calls or letters from Friends of the

Library may also help in this regard.

The next step is to contact a state legislator to amend L.R.S. 25:215. Again, trustees and library advocates should contact state legislators and request their support, sponsorship or co-sponsorship to amend the law as in the following example:

"The administration of and accounting function for the funds of the \_\_\_\_\_ Parish Library are hereby transferred from the \_\_\_\_\_ Parish Police Jury (Parish Council) to the \_\_\_\_\_ Parish Library Board of Control, effective \_\_\_\_\_ (date)."

In warning, if the parish government rejects the library's emancipation, it is unlikely that a state legislator will sponsor your bill or see it through the legislative process though this may be attempted again with letters and phone calls to the politicians.

Assuming that a sponsor for the amendment is obtained, an advertisement of intent to introduce the bill in the legislature must be published. The sponsor will then see the amendment through the legislature. It will become law 30 days after the close of the session. The transition will be easier if the transfer occurs at the end of the fiscal year.

Once the legislation is passed, it will be necessary to decide who will be doing the actual accounting -- a hired CPA, a library bookkeeper, the Director. If a CPA is hired, another accounting firm will have to be hired to do the annual audit to avoid conflict of interest. The library will also have to obtain a Federal Identification number from the Internal Revenue Service and make sure that all appropriate personnel, including the board and director, are bonded since they will be handling public money.

It may be necessary to advertise for a Fiscal Agent, that is, a bank which will offer the best rates for services and investments, or it may be possible to use the one already approved by the parish government. State Library advisors can assist with the wording of legal notices when advertising is required. A parish with a population under 100,000 is generally exempt from using the bid process to choose a fiscal agent.

The library will now be responsible for publishing its own minutes, budget, and notice of public budget hearings. An auditor may be hired for an annual audit. The Parochial Employees Retirement System, IRS, Louisiana Department of Revenue and Taxation, Louisiana Department of Labor, and the Social Security System as well as the

Unemployment Compensation and Worker's Compensation official system must be notified of the shift of fiscal responsibility. Each entity will supply the library with the necessary paperwork and quarterly report forms. An account at a local bank must be established to hold tax withholding funds. Most importantly, the local sheriff or tax collector must be informed that tax revenues must be sent directly to the library for deposit.

The library will also find itself responsible for its own bonds and investments. It will have to seek insurance policies for both buildings and possible health insurance as well.

Expect the first year of fiscal emancipation to be difficult and confusing. Expect the rewards to the library to be many, such as obtaining better and lower insurance rates, more funds to run the library, and a much better knowledge of the library's financial health.

This explanation is based on a new interpretation of L.R.S. 47:1705(B) by the State Office of the Legislative Auditor, 1994.

The former mechanism for securing state money for public library materials is known as "state aid".  
available from Office of Legislative Auditor, P.O. Box 94397, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9397 (504)339-3800.

available from Office of Legislative Auditor, State of Louisiana, P.O. Box 94397, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9397 (504)339-3800.

Governmental accounting, auditing, and financial reporting. Municipal Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada, c1  
Appendix B.

Secretary of State, Division of Archives, Records Management, and History, P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9125. (504)922-1200

## SECTION IV: PERSONNEL

One of the most difficult tasks of the library director is personnel management. The style of personnel management that a director chooses to adopt is a very individual and personal decision. Just as people are different, it is unlikely that any two directors will adopt the same management style. In this chapter various ways of handling difficult situations are presented so that as you use this manual, you will find "bits and pieces" to use in the operation of your library.

The library staff you employ is either your best asset or worst liability. Your library may have plaster falling from the ceiling, holes in the wall, and few new books. However, if the first thing a patron sees when coming through your front door is a smiling, friendly face behind the desk, eager to search for the necessary information that person seeks, that patron perceives the library as "a great place".

There are a number of things a library can do to ensure that its staff is the best it can be. Having the library board of control adopt personnel policies is one of these. In fact, if a complete policy manual has not been maintained, creating one should be among your first major projects.

Draft and have the board approve policies on affirmative action, equal employment opportunity, selection, recruitment methods, job classification and pay scales, retirement, leave and employee dismissal. These policies will be the rules by which you run the library. They provide both guidelines and protection. A detailed list of policies that a library should adopt, including personnel policies, can be found in the [Introduction/Orientation](#) section of this handbook.

Other than developing personnel policies, a director can ensure the staff is as good as it can be by utilizing a management style that is fair, impartial and consistent for all employees; by keeping lines of communication open at all levels; and by remembering to treat subordinates as you would want to be treated.

Occasionally, the director must place others in management positions. Consider the individuals carefully who will supervise on your behalf. Will these persons manage your staff in a manner which is ethical, fair and reasonable? Or will they become devious in administrative positions and rule by ridicule and intimidation? Will they make others do all the work while they relax? Remember that you will be the one to answer for their actions, so select wisely.

## **CLASSIFICATION AND JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

A library should establish and maintain a position classification schedule and job descriptions for all individual positions. A job description defines an individual position (such as reference librarian, catalog librarian, acquisitions librarian). A classification schedule groups similar positions into classes (such as Librarian I, Librarian II, and Librarian III). This schedule measures responsibilities, experience, qualifications, and educational requirements for each class. A pay scale may be developed in conjunction with the classification schedule, assigning appropriate salaries and increments to the various classes within the schedule.

The needs and responsibilities of positions change over time and the class to which they are assigned should reflect those changes. For example, if the position responsibilities as listed in the job description have increased, a position reclassification may be necessary. Changes in the classification schedule and pay scale normally need to be approved by the board.

In developing and maintaining a classification schedule, you may want to use flexibility in your requirements for experience and education. For example, you might allow two to three years of library work experience to substitute for one year of college. On the other hand, you might allow two to three years of college to substitute for one year of experience. This flexibility allows you to select an excellent applicant or current employee who may lack one or the other of those requirements but who would excel in the position.

Determine how you will evaluate education acquired at trade school, vo-tech and business college. Transcripts, specializations acquired, and courses taken are factors you may wish to consider.

In 1993, the Public Library Section of the Louisiana Library Association adopted the document "Statewide Salary and Compensation Plan for Public Libraries". It offers instructions on formulating a position allocation system, where skill, effort, responsibility, and job conditions are considered. The document also offers a generic pay scale for public libraries to use or adapt to their needs. The document is available from the Louisiana Library Association office at P.O. Box 3058, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, or by calling (225) 342-4928.

Samples of position classification schedules and sample library job descriptions are available from the State Library.

## CIVIL SERVICE

In certain parishes, including Orleans (New Orleans Public Library), East Baton Rouge, Lafayette, and Jefferson, library employees are included in a civil service system. In these parishes, you will need to learn and comply with the civil service procedures and regulations governing recruitment, advertising, hiring, discipline, terminations, classification, and employee pay.

## FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) contains provisions which apply to public libraries (and state and local governments in general). The act establishes a general minimum wage and "overtime" provisions, generally at one and one-half times an employee's regular hourly rate for employees working over 40 hours in a work week. The minimum wage is currently \$5.15 per hour. Minimum wage information is available on the Internet at the U.S. Department of Labor website (<http://www.dol.gov/dol/esa/public/minwage/main.htm>).

The act also requires libraries to establish a fixed "work week" for employees, consisting of seven consecutive twenty-four hour periods, which may begin on any day at any hour. A library may establish different "work weeks" for different classes of employees. However, the work week is "fixed" and cannot routinely be adjusted to circumvent the "overtime" provisions of this act; a library may change the work week of an employee or of classes of employees if the change is intended to be "permanent". The library must also establish which classes of employees are "exempt" and which are "non-exempt" from the "overtime" provisions of this act. "Exempt" employees are generally executive, administrative, or professional employees. A good source for determining "what makes an employee exempt" is Library Personnel News, Vol. 6, #1 (January-February 1992).

Libraries that are open on weekends and use regular full-time "non-exempt" staff to cover these hours often have to pay particular attention to scheduling in order to avoid recurring overtime payments or compensatory time earnings at time and a half. For example, a library clerk working 40 hours Monday - Friday and one Saturday a month must either take off a day during the work week which includes the Saturday, or be paid overtime for working the Saturday. As a second example, a "non-exempt" staff member may not work an hour extra a day for two weeks in order to save up the time to take off later. If this is allowed, the employee is actually credited with time and a half for each hour over 40 that he worked in each work week. Note that this does not apply to any compensatory time earnings for "exempt" employees.

The Library Board should adopt an official library "work week" (or "work weeks" for different classes of employees) and should establish which classes of employees are "exempt" and "non-exempt" from the overtime provisions of this act. The FLSA Advisor website can be found online at <http://www.dol.gov:8002/flsa/screen51.asp>.

## AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) states that an employer may not discriminate against a person with disabilities in hiring or promoting if that person is otherwise qualified for the job in private-sector employment or in services provided by state or local government. The following are some of the considerations library administrators should examine regarding employment and the ADA.

Is the entire library accessible to people with disabilities when they come for employment interviews? Is the interview site accessible? A library task force can help ensure this. The library administration should use an in-house survey or one by a knowledgeable organization to make compliance with the ADA definite.

Are the requirements of each position defined? A clear job description, established before an interview, allows the interviewer and the interviewee to determine whether the applicant with disabilities is qualified. Defined job requirements also will assist in determining what, if any, reasonable accommodations can be made. When potential employees need accommodations to do the job, they also may be able to suggest the type of accommodations needed. The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a good resource. It is operated by the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

Must an applicant complete any paperwork during the interview? If so, the interviewer must be prepared to assist the disabled individual who has difficulty reading, writing, or otherwise handling documents. This preparation should be made before the interviewee arrives.

ADA information online can be found at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>.

### Sources

Americans with Disabilities Act Handbook. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Department of Justice, 1991.

Americans with Disabilities Act Information File. Chief Officers State Library Agencies, 1994.

Americans with Disabilities Act Technical Assistance Manual. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Department of Justice, 1992.

How Libraries Must Comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), compiled and edited by Donald D. Foos and Nancy C. Pack. Oryx, 1992.

## RECRUITMENT

Where do you look for a replacement or to fill a new position? This is another area in which libraries differ as recruiting practices vary from library to library. Regardless of the method you use, remember to be consistent.

You may wish to consider current staff for a promotion or transfer. To this end, post vacancy announcements so staff are aware of possible opportunities.

Before you advertise, check current applications on file. Although applications may be kept on file for an indefinite period of time and utilized to fill positions, there is no state law requiring an employer to keep applications on file for any specific period of time. You may want to have the length of time applications are considered current written into board policy.

Opinions vary concerning the advertisement of every vacant position in the local paper. Some libraries selectively advertise. This is another area in which each director, in conjunction with the board, must decide what is best for the library.

General advertising (e.g., classified) often casts a broad "net", resulting in many callers but perhaps few "serious" candidates with library backgrounds. Rule of thumb: if you want "general" applicants, advertise *generally*; if you want "specialized" candidates, advertise *specifically* (i.e., universities, other libraries, trade journals).

In larger cities it may be helpful to use an employment agency, particularly for positions like "automation specialist" or other jobs, such as maintenance, which don't require specific library experience or training. Sometimes an agency search may even locate applicants with library backgrounds who hadn't already applied at the library. A possible downside to using agencies is deciding which agency to use if there are several in your area. Even though it is time consuming and repetitious to contact all of them, you may be thought "partial" if you deal mostly with one. Adopt what seems like a fair policy; be consistent, and be certain the agencies know it. Be sure to establish that the library will not pay the fee which most agencies charge; the successful client should pay that.

Don't forget the local or state employment service (i.e., Office of Employment Security), particularly for the less specialized positions. These governmental service agencies offer the additional advantages of screening applicants through interviews and often through testing.

Professional positions that cannot be filled from current staff or available applications should be advertised for a predetermined period of time. The advertisement will either list the deadline by which applications must be received or include a statement to the effect that the position will be advertised until filled.

Advertisements can be placed in to your local paper, major papers around the state, and library schools. Job notices can be submitted online to the State Library's [Communiqué](#) and to the School of Library and Information Science at LSU (e-mail their listserv at SLIS-L@LISTSERV.LSU.EDU). If national publication is desired, contact [American Libraries](#) (<http://www.ala.org/education/adcosts.html>) and [Library Journal](#) (<http://www.ljdigital.com>) The ALA "Placement Center" at both the annual and the mid-winter conferences is a good source for recruiting and interviewing professionals.

If you are unsure how to word an advertisement for a position, check the current job description for that position, and read several similar ads in the professional journals. There may also be advertisements on file in your library or at the State Library that you could examine.

Before you call a professional to come in for an interview, have the board provide guidelines for which travel expenses---if any--- will be paid. The library board may pay the moving expenses of a newly hired professional. The basic requirement is that this provision be included in the contract between the new employee and the library board; or, if there is no formal contract, the board must specify the provision for payment of moving expenses in the formal letter offering the job. In other words, the decision to pay moving expenses must be made in advance; the legislative auditor would take a dim view of the board's paying such expenses as an afterthought.

## **NEPOTISM**

Interview only those candidates who are qualified for the position. Do not agree to interview someone who is not qualified because of their relationship to another staff member, board member, or councilman. The board may already have a policy on nepotism, including hiring relatives of current employees. See [Ethics](#) in this handbook for additional information.

## INTERVIEWING

Study carefully the candidate's application. Most of the time it will be evident whether or not they meet the qualifications. Call one or more of the references if you're uncertain whether to interview an individual. Don't interview too many or too few. For most paraprofessional or civil service vacancies, three or four interviews are appropriate, even though you may have examined a dozen or more applications. Try to obtain a reasonable balance for your area's population in the race and sex of the candidates you select for interviews even though it won't always be possible to have a balanced "pool" for every vacancy.

There are several types of interviews, with different goals, purpose, procedure, or "atmosphere".

**1. Initial (or Preliminary) interview.** This type of interview would include "walk-ins", referrals from other agencies or individuals, or queries ("Are you hiring?"). Some organizations post a policy, such as "Interviews on Wednesday mornings only -- 9 a.m. to noon." Such a policy allows the library's interviewer (possibly you) to compress this activity to a specific period; otherwise, unscheduled interviews could significantly disrupt your work week. Setting aside time to hold preliminary interviews helps prevent applicants from getting discouraged or from thinking they were turned away for other reasons like discrimination.

**2. Phone interview.** This is particularly useful for candidates out of the area or otherwise not immediately available. Usually this is prompted by an applicant's letter or resume and the interviewer calls the applicant as convenient, or at a prearranged time. Sometimes, you will get "cold calls" from librarians looking for other opportunities or moving to your region. They may not be available to receive a return call from you during your normal "interviewing" time, so you should have handy a list of questions to ask, as well as any vacancy announcements for which they would be qualified. With the prevalence of the Internet and e-mail, you may find yourself conducting "electronic" interviews. If so, be especially careful to have the individual follow up with *paper* resume and application letter; this could be an important distinction at some future point.

**3. Follow-up (Finalist) interview.** After interviewing many preliminary applicants, you may have a "short-list" of good candidates. A second look is usually a good idea anyway, but particularly if it gives you a chance to expose the applicants to the supervisor or co-workers in that department or branch. In the follow-up, you may want to explore more specific aspects of the candidate's library experience, interests, specialties, goals, etc., or

learn more about his or her work ethic and communication skills.

**4. Group interview.** These consume a lot of time on the part of several people, so use them selectively. Some libraries use these only for finalists for upper level vacancies, such as department head or branch supervisor. In such cases, it is useful to see how this candidate interacts with others on your management team (or those who would be colleagues). Another factor is that group interviews are, undoubtedly, the **most** stressful for the candidate. For example, a superb finalist who had sailed through a preliminary interview (with one supervisor) and a follow-up (with two interviewers), literally froze at the beginning of the group interview (with four "new" faces, plus the two others). She continued to stumble, and the interview deteriorated. Obviously, the other evaluators thought she was a "dud", even though the first two interviewers knew she was fantastic (and stated so). As a result, the library lost a wonderful candidate. If the finalist copes well in this group interview, you've probably found someone who can handle hectic and varied library situations and functions, and who can become a great member of the service team.

The following are general guidelines for interviewing.

1. Supply the applicant with a job description.
2. Set aside a period of time for the interview either in your office or at a neutral site. Make sure you will not be disturbed.
3. Put the applicant at ease. Remember how nervous you were when you last interviewed.
4. Ask questions that cannot be answered "yes" or "no". The applicant should do most of the talking. If you want more comment after an applicant has apparently finished answering a question, remain silent. The applicant will usually take this cue to mean "he wants more information", and of course you do.
5. Have a general "game plan" for the interview. According to James F. McDermott, in The Employer's Guide to Successful Interviewing, you should concentrate on the qualities of the applicant and his suitability for the position first. Then, provide details of the position, the conditions of employment and information about the library itself. If you do the opposite, the applicant can slant his answers to fit your needs. Others contend that the applicant should be given a brief overview of the library and the position, and then asked what he could bring to this position.
6. Discuss any mandatory drug testing or pre-employment physicals which might be required. Inform the applicant that employment is contingent upon

passing these tests. In most cases, you must give the applicant a "conditional offer of hire" before requiring substance-abuse testing or physicals (that is, you should not test all applicants). Remember, all results (even "negative" drug-test results) are confidential.

7. What is the applicant's perception of library work? If it's not realistic, can this person handle what library workers really must do? Does the candidate want to work and learn, or is he merely looking for a paycheck? Will this person be positive, productive and part of the team, or negative, unproductive, and difficult to work with? Is the candidate willing to work the schedule at this location? If the first group of candidates doesn't produce anyone you are satisfied with, don't be afraid to start over.

### **Sample Interview Questions**

#### **Do ask:**

1. Why do you want this job?
2. What qualities do you have that you feel would help you in this position?
3. What skills or talents do you possess that you feel qualify you for this position?
4. If I asked your former employers (or teachers) about you, what would they say? Why?
5. What part of your last job did you enjoy the most? (Or, for those with limited work experience, what was your favorite class or teacher?) Why?
6. What part of your last job did you enjoy the least? (Or, for those with limited work experience, what was your least favorite class or teacher?) Why?
7. What are your positive characteristics (strengths)?
8. What are your negative characteristics (weaknesses)?
9. What would you do if a patron came into the library angry? How would you handle it?

10. Are there any reasons why you would not be able to perform the duties required by this position, or work the hours posted for this position?

**Never ask questions which have nothing to do with the job, such as:**

1. Are you married? (Or variations, such as what does your husband do?)
2. Do you have any children? (Or variations, such as who will stay with your children while you work?)
3. Will you be driving to work?
4. What church or social groups do you belong to? (Or variations designed to ascertain memberships in controversial or questionable organizations, political preferences, etc.)
5. Are you taking any medications? (Or variations designed to ascertain the physical and mental health of the individual.)
6. Do you need the family plan insurance? Do you live alone? (Or variations designed to ascertain the individual's lifestyle or sexual preference.)

**How to Conduct an Interview with a Disabled Person**

Special attention should be given to the interview with the disabled person. Subjects to be completely explored are a precise description and discussion of the functions to be performed, the expected production to be accomplished, and the physical working environment. Only with this complete knowledge and discussion can the need for any reasonable accommodations for a disabled person be determined.

All interview questions must be job related. For example, there is no need for the interviewer to ask whether the individual with disabilities has a driver's license unless driving is an essential function of the position. Nor should the interviewer inquire how the interviewee will get to work if employed.

The interviewer should not ask the cause of a noticeable disability, nor should the interviewer suggest reasonable accommodations. The only appropriate questions are those needed to determine whether the individual can perform the functions of the job and thus whether the individual is qualified. A specific discussion emphasizing how the job is performed should elicit from the applicant information as to what, if any, accommodations

might be needed.

Individuals with disabilities can be required to have a pre-employment medical examination after a conditional offer of employment, but only if this is required of all individuals applying for the same type of position. It should be noted that the ADA specifically prohibits classifying or segregating any job applicant or employee with disabilities in a way that adversely affects his or her opportunities.

### **PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTS**

Many libraries pretest all applicants. Some libraries give pre-employment tests to those who pass the interview stage. A director may use any kind of test to screen applicants as long as it is directly related to the job. It is recommended that the employer not set unreasonably high standards for a job. For example, an employer would be asking for trouble if he required an unreasonably high test score or a college degree for individuals applying for a filing clerk's position. The three criteria determined to have the strongest impact on an individual's work performance are previous job experience, test scores, and formal education. If the employer peremptorily excludes applicants because they do not meet one of these criteria without even considering whether they meet the other two, he could become the target of a discrimination suit.

If testing is used in any way during the selection process, it must be used consistently. For example, your library's circulation workers must be able to type 25 wpm for ordinary typing and keyboard work. There are 15 applicants for a circulation clerk vacancy; you examine the paperwork and select six who appear to meet the qualifications for initial interviews. Three of those impress you as probable finalists. Test all three. Testing may **not** be used selectively, solely to exclude any candidate who otherwise meets the established criteria. As another example, your shelvers must be able to arrange correctly 25 "typical" books by call number and/or author's name. You may **not** favor one candidate by using 25 rather easily-arranged books while the other applicants have to sort 25 difficult ones. It is **not** acceptable to vary the difficulty of the test content or samples.

## EVALUATING YOUR CHOICES

After you have analyzed the paperwork of the qualified applicants and held an initial interview with several of the most promising candidates, you should find yourself with a "short list" of contenders. From a large applicant pool, that may be four to six finalists; from a small pool it may be two or three. In the earlier stages, you consider applicants who meet the minimum qualifications and you interview those with the **best** credentials. Within the posted qualifications, however, try to allow for the "trainability" factor; i.e., if the individual doesn't already possess the knowledge or skills, can he or she be trained?

At this point, you shift to a combination of: (1) objective analysis of the education and experience and (2) subjective analysis of such attributes as communication skills, grooming, personality, friendliness, and positive attitude. Of the applicants who are both qualified and experienced, the best person for the job is usually the one who is willing to work and learn and who gets along well with others.

Whenever possible, schedule a second interview for the finalists. Some applicants who give a really polished initial interview may do poorly in follow-ups. If so, study the differences between the two performances. If the initial interviews suggest a clear "winner" instead of a small group of finalists, you should still conduct a second interview or have the candidate meet one of your colleagues. If the new employee will work in a particular department or branch, involve that area's supervisor in some of these selection stages but at **least** in the second interview.

Generally, it's better not to announce a decision during or at the closing of the interview, even if you think you've made up your mind. Reflect on all the finalists without the distraction of one of them in front of you. Also, you should first discuss the finalist(s) with your colleague or the area supervisor to be certain of his or her analysis. It's possible to misinterpret the expressions or body language of your co-worker and assume he or she is thinking as you are. Go over the best and worst points of each finalist. Ask yourself (or each other) whether your evaluation is clouded by:

1. pity--"they really need a job";
2. guilt--it's your responsibility to keep the wolf from their door;
3. any other reasons which would violate ethical or legal considerations.

**Always** call references before you offer the job. Once the selection is made, notify the "winner" and wait for an answer before you notify the unsuccessful candidates. Get a

written acceptance of the job by the successful applicant; keep a copy of that and the vacancy announcement in the individual's personnel folder. Complete and check all appropriate paperwork, including W-4's, retirement, insurance, proof of citizenship or Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9.

## ORIENTATION

Complete an orientation check list with each employee. Review the job description with the employee, show him his work station and introduce him to the rest of the staff. Introduce the employee to the personnel policy manual. You may choose to give him his own copy. Have him "sign off" saying he has received a job description, and understands policies which explain benefits, termination, and probationary procedures. You may wish to survey employees after a predetermined period of time to see what parts of the orientation were helpful and which could be improved upon.

Explain to the employee how he fits into the work flow. Take the time to train, or have him trained by someone who knows the job thoroughly. It is a good idea to **document** the training. After the employee feels comfortable in his new position, and for your protection, you may wish to have that employee sign and date a statement saying he was trained.

A sample orientation check list and a sign-off sheet appear on the following pages. These forms can be customized to the needs of the individual library.

### Probationary Period for New Employees

All new employees undergo a probationary period. This preliminary trial period is to be used by both employer and employee to determine if the newly hired person is the right one for the position. When writing library policy on the probationary period, be sure to cover such factors as:

1. length of probation period (can vary from a month to a year);
2. possibility of extension of probationary period for three to six months if employee proves borderline and you're working to improve his job performance
3. how the employee's success or failure will be defined and documented;
4. who determines whether the employee has succeeded or failed, and must the decision be concurred with at a higher level;
5. will probationary period automatically be deemed successful unless the employee is otherwise informed.

### Sample Orientation Check List for New Employees

## LIBRARY STAFF ORIENTATION CHECK LIST

- Paperwork:** Complete/explain/define the following:
  - Application
  - Employee file folder
  - W-4
  - Insurance form or waiver
  - Credit union papers if desired
  - Retirement forms
  - Key form, if applicable
  - Federal government citizenship papers (I-9 form)
  - Equipment sign-off (Branch managers only)
  - Time sheet, schedule, payday, vacation, holidays
  - Library hours
  - Lunch hour and breaks
  - Access to personnel folder
  - Job description
    - Point out specifics
    - Job includes whatever required
    - Schedule and purpose of evaluations
    - Circulation desk requirements
- Staff Introductions**
- Library Tour**
- Building and Grounds**
  - Parking
  - Personal belongings
  - Work space
    - Key to desk, if applicable
    - Operation of equipment
      - Typewriter
      - PC (personnel computer)
      - Automated system terminal or computer
      - Copier operation
      - Other, as needed
  - Restrooms
  - Staff lounge
    - Break time
  - Kitchen rules
    - Location of equipment and how to use
    - Location of dishes and utensils
    - Location of fire extinguishers
    - Clean-up
  - Smoking policy
- Policy Manual:** Read
  - Specify critical policies
    - Tardiness and absenteeism

- Use of telephone (i.e., personal calls)
  - Dress and personal grooming
  - Patron abuse/mistreatment/neglect
  - Grievance procedure
  - Making change from cash drawer
  - "Bad weather" closing notification procedures
  - Accident reports, including worker's comp
  - Family and Medical leave
  - ADA requirements
  - Policy against harassment
  - Code of Governmental Ethics
- Complete "acknowledgement of receipt"**

**Sample Acknowledgement of Receipt of Orientation**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the \_\_\_\_\_ Library Staff Policy Handbook, and agree to adhere to all policies therein. I understand that failure to follow these policies will result in the termination of my employment.

I have received a job description and will perform all duties as outlined. I understand that my duties include anything legal and ethical, and within the recognizable scope of my job, which is asked of me by my supervisor.

My signature also acknowledges that I have received a copy of this sign-off sheet.

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE \_\_\_\_\_

SUPERVISOR \_\_\_\_\_

(File one copy of Orientation Check List and Acknowledgement of Receipt in employee's folder . Give one copy of each to the employee.)

## PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

Provide timely performance appraisals. The new employee should be evaluated after his probationary period, and, thereafter, at least once a year. Documentation is a necessary part of evaluating an employee, and is essential in defending yourself against charges that you have treated someone unfairly.

Generally, employees should not be "surprised" during an evaluation; a supervisor's grievances should not be "stored up" until the evaluation. In other words, the supervisor should have already covered problem areas as they occurred or were noticed. Periodic evaluation is a formal opportunity to narrow the distance between the supervisor's expectations and the employee's understanding of the job. However, the supervisor should have already informally clarified such misunderstandings (or at least attempted to) as the supervisor became aware of any discrepancy or confusion. Be sure to document the good behavior, as well as the bad for all employees. Employees should be given a copy of each evaluation. The original is filed in the employee's personnel folder.

All of your employee records can be subpoenaed and examined for signs of discrimination. Be sure you do not write anything in an employee's folder or on any record which could be misconstrued as discriminatory.

## POSITIVE PERSONNEL EXPERIENCES

During a director's tenure at any given library there are many rewarding personnel experiences which should be mentioned before getting into the detail and "gloom" of the necessities of discipline inherent in the position. Things that come to mind include employees who:

1. get compliments from the public;
2. seek advice for educational plans or career goals;
3. attain a library science degree;
4. finally "crack" a complex problem in service or technology; or
5. discover a better way to do something which saves time and money.

There are many other instances in which staff help to make your work more enjoyable and infinitely more rewarding.

## **DISCIPLINE/DISMISSAL**

Considering the time and expense involved in training employees, you should make every attempt to work with an employee who is not fulfilling his potential. If an employee is not doing a part of his job correctly, that employee might improve by "refresher" training. Be sure to document the repeated training sessions. For your protection, you may wish to have the employee sign and date this and all documentation. If repeated training does not help, you may need to terminate the employee at, or before, the end of the probationary period. Remember that the library itself cannot improve an employee; the employee must be willing to improve himself.

### **Oral Warning**

If it is the behavior of the employee that is the problem (e.g., tardiness, excessive personal phone calls, etc.), an oral warning may be in order. Talk to the employee about the problem; express your concern. Listen to the employee for his version and take notes. There are times when your information on the case may be incorrect or incomplete. After hearing all sides, indicate your determination and whether further discipline is needed (e.g., written warning, probation, suspension).

### **Written Reprimand**

If it becomes apparent that the behavior is a chronic problem and repeated "talking" does not improve the situation, give a written reprimand. This is a documented warning in which you tell the employee what to expect, up to and including termination if the behavior continues.

### **Formal Discipline**

Once things progress to the stage where formal discipline is necessary, it is very likely that an adversarial relationship exists between the employee and the supervisor. At this stage documentation is mandatory. The documentation should include the employee's name, social security number, date of employment, rate of pay, and the current date. Indicate the nature of the problem or the policy which the employee has violated and the dates of occurrence. Or, use a standard Employee Disciplinary Report Form designed for this specific purpose. A sample form follows this article.

It is preferable to discipline the employee as soon as possible after the offense, ideally

within a day or two of the infraction. Wait until shortly before the end of his shift and call him into your office. (Keep in mind that your handling of such a confrontation could differ from the specific conduct suggested here. Your actions will depend on such variables as the physical layout of the site, the availability of privacy, and the proximity of potential witnesses or other workers.) You need to anticipate the employee's probable reaction and act accordingly. For example, if you feel that the behavior will improve or you do not want to embarrass the employee, it may be best to close the door. Conversely, you may need an open door -- and a witness -- if you believe the employee will not improve, will not sign documentation, or may become violent or abusive. A witness can be especially important to ward off accusations of harassment.

When you address the employee concerning the problem, try to be positive and talk mainly about specifics. Tell the employee what you perceive as the problem. If this behavior is a new development, remind the employee of the "good" things he has done previously. Explain where this trend of "poor" work performance and/or "bad" behavior could take him -- probation, suspension, or termination. Remind him of the policy and ask whether he understands it properly. If he doesn't, ascertain why he signed the acknowledgement that he read and understood all personnel policies when he began employment.

Tell him you expect this problem to cease and that if it doesn't, he could be terminated for it. Instruct him to sign and date the formal discipline document. His signature should also attest that he has received a copy of this paperwork. If he refuses to sign, ask him to write down why he refused. This may help later as your evidence that the employee was warned. If he refuses to comment, you should have a witness sign and date a statement saying the employee was warned and refused to sign the warning. Give the employee a copy of this also.

If the employee becomes violent or abusive at any time during the session, it is suggested that you immediately contact security personnel (or police, if you don't have guards) to escort the employee from the premises. Such a response should be documented and attested to by any witnesses. Disciplinary probation, suspension, or termination should be seriously considered if the employee's violent behavior persists, threatening co-workers and/or staff. In fact, criminal charges may be warranted in some instances.

**Sample Employee Disciplinary Report Form**

Copy To:  
Employee \_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Personnel Representative \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Employee Disciplinary Report

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Division: \_\_\_\_\_

Emp. No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Dept.: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Action to be taken:  Warning       Suspension       Dismissal

This report is to be made part of the official record of the above-mentioned employee.

### Nature of Incident:

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. ( ) Unexcused Absence              | 11. ( ) Housekeeping                                      |
| 2. ( ) Tardiness                      | 12. ( ) Improper Conduct                                  |
| 3. ( ) Drinking on Duty               | 13. ( ) Reporting under the influence of alcohol or drugs |
| 4. ( ) Insubordination                | 14. ( ) Violation of Safety Rules                         |
| 5. ( ) Dishonesty                     | 15. ( ) Carelessness                                      |
| 6. ( ) Garnishments                   | 16. ( ) Destruction of Company property                   |
| 7. ( ) Failure to follow Instructions | 17. ( ) Defective and improper work                       |
| 8. ( ) Fighting on Company premises   | 18. ( ) Theft (Stealing)                                  |
| 9. ( ) Leaving without permission     | 19. ( ) Violation of Company Rules of Conduct             |
| 10. ( ) Substandard Work              | 20. ( ) Other _____                                       |

Supervisor's Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee's Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEE

I have read this report.

Signature of Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Employee \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

THE ABOVE OFFENSE OR OFFENSES HAVE BEEN NOTED AND ARE MADE A PART OF THE ABOVE EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE AS OF THIS DATE.

OFFENSE NUMBER 1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Personnel Department \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

LAST OFFENSE \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

## Disciplinary Probation and Suspension

Just as it's not usually "cut and dried" about when to invoke formal discipline, there are also many variables to consider about disciplinary probation and suspension. Some employees will respond after the supervisor first expresses concern; others may not respond to subsequent reprimands or discipline. There's no magic in probation and suspension either -- these actions may or may not work with an employee exhibiting serious problems.

Disciplinary probation is a period of time (six weeks, ninety days, six months) during which the supervisor monitors the employee very closely. It should be long enough to give the employee a fair opportunity to improve, but not so long that it creates an oppressive atmosphere. Probation is designed to determine whether the employee (1) has ceased the problem behavior or performance, (2) is showing measurable and sustained improvement, and (3) demonstrates a cooperative attitude and willingness to change. Most supervisors consider probation to be a disciplinary step less serious than suspension, although both indicate the existence of a significant problem which has not improved even after actions such as counseling, warnings, and reprimands.

If, after a suitable period during probation, the employee is not responding, consider the next disciplinary step (dismissal). A supervisor is not obligated to wait until the end of the probationary period if the result is clear at the half-way point.

Among the disadvantages of probation are:

1. the employee remains in the same environment where the behavior occurred;
2. the supervisor must spend significant time monitoring the improvement (or lack of it);
3. the employee may feel like he or she is in a fish bowl; and
4. other staff in the area are **probably** aware that the employee is on probation,

and

relations may be uneasy.

While suspension is usually considered more serious than probation, it may nevertheless be invoked before, or instead of, probation. Often probation and suspension are used as the last two steps before dismissal in cases where the employee does not improve. Sometimes a supervisor must decide which of the two has a better chance of correcting the problem and then invoke that step. There are also times when both are used together,

for example when the employee is suspended without pay and placed on probation upon his return.

Suspension is a disciplinary measure in which the problem employee is penalized an amount of time (three days, two weeks, one month) without pay. This is a dramatic step which gets the employee's "attention" and forces him to examine the performance or behavior in question. This has the advantage of removing the employee from the environment in which the behavior or performance occurs. It also allows the employee the time to seek work elsewhere.

Before invoking either of these disciplinary steps, be certain the employee has been directly told what the problems are and what is expected, and has been given suitable prior warnings and time to correct after those reprimands. No employee, except one who is being disciplined for criminal activity or dangerous (violent) behavior, should receive suspension or probation without knowing the violation(s) and possible consequences and without having a chance to explain and to file a written response.

### **Final Written Reprimand**

Continue to work with the employee if at all possible. If the employee continues to violate the policy, write him up again. The director may choose to give up to two written reprimands before giving the final written reprimand, but must be consistent with all employees. The final written reprimand follows the same procedure described for the first written reprimand. Let the employee know that this is his last warning and that next time, he will be terminated. **Follow the same procedure for signing, dating (with a witness again if necessary).**

### **Pre-Termination Hearings**

Library administrators, when convinced it is necessary to terminate an employee, should do so in accordance with a board adopted termination policy that has been consistently and impartially applied.

There is no state law requiring a library to grant an employee a pre-termination hearing. However, for libraries which operate under a civil service system, the necessity to "Loudermill" an employee (that is, to provide a pre-termination hearing) has been ruled by

the U.S. Supreme Court to be "due process" for any tenured civil service employee leaving your employment "for cause", unless the employee has committed a crime on the job.

Once a supervisor has determined that the employee should be fired, he communicates this to the employee in writing, explaining the charges against him. The employee then has an opportunity to respond, even though his response may not affect the termination decision.

## Termination

Firing an employee should be the last resort. Before you terminate an employee, use the following checklist to make sure the discharge is warranted.

- Do I know all the facts, and are they accurate?
- Can I prove the employee's guilt with objective evidence, or is my evidence circumstantial?
- Is the employee personally guilty, or is it guilt by association?
- Am I being fair, impartial, and level headed, or merely reacting to a challenge to my authority?
- Does the employee have a reasonable excuse for the misconduct?
- Is the rule the employee broke a reasonable one?
- Has the rule been applied reasonably in this instance?
- Did the employee know the rule? Should he have?
- Has the employee been warned in writing about or disciplined for this offense before?
- Has the employing unit strictly enforced its rules? Has it recently notified employees of a "crack-down" on this type of violation?
- What is the employee's past disciplinary record?
- Is the employee receiving the same treatment given others for the same offense? Does the punishment fit the crime?

If the indications are for termination, fire the employee in a timely manner; do not wait until Monday because you need the employee to work his Saturday shift. The termination papers should include statements, dates, and signatures pertaining to all infractions. The termination meeting with the employee should follow the same general guidelines given above for formal discipline.

There are some instances in which warnings are not needed - when the employee is caught stealing, damaging library property, fighting with a patron or another employee, etc. You obviously would not give him the opportunity to repeat this behavior. These and similar examples should be written out in board policy.

## Resignations

Employees may resign their positions for a variety of reasons (moving out of the area, another offer of employment, returning to school, demands of home life, or general dissatisfaction with their job circumstances). Some employers offer about-to-be-terminated employees the opportunity to resign in lieu of being fired. Under certain conditions, employees who resign (in lieu of being terminated) can continue medical insurance under COBRA. An employee who "resigns" may find that preferable to being "terminated" when seeking other employment.

An employee who resigns must submit a signed and dated resignation statement to the director. A Sample Resignation Statement follows this article.

Some libraries schedule an "exit interview" with the employee who has resigned to resolve details such as forwarding addresses, leave balances, and return of keys and other library property, and to allow the employee to make general or specific comments, observations, and suggestions about the library and the job he is leaving. A Sample Exit Interview Form follows this article.

Employees who resign or are terminated, regardless of the reason, often file a claim for unemployment compensation. Terminated employees, college students who resigned to take post-graduate jobs, employees who resigned to return to school, and employees who moved out of state with their spouses have all successfully claimed and collected unemployment against libraries. Collecting unemployment depends on individual circumstances. It is imperative that the library submit a Separation Notice Alleging Disqualification (Form 77) to the State Office of Employment Security within 72 hours after separation. Failure to submit this notice within the specified time limits may cause you to forfeit your right to appeal or dispute an employee's claim for unemployment. These forms are available from your parish government office or from the Louisiana Office of Employment Security (P.O. Box 94094, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9094, (225) 342-3111, <http://www.ldol.state.la.us/miscpage.htm>) or from your area Louisiana Department of Labor job service office which can generate 25 to 50 copies to send you.\*

\*To obtain contact information about your area job service office, call the Library Development Division at (225) 342-4933 or the LDOL Office of Workforce Development at (225) 342-7632.

### Sample Resignation Statement

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Library / Branch \_\_\_\_\_

Dept. \_\_\_\_\_

TO: **Personnel Department**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am voluntarily resigning my employment at \_\_\_\_\_ for the following reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

I have discussed my resignation with my supervisor and agree that my resignation is completely on my part.

I \_\_\_\_\_ am \_\_\_\_\_ am not leaving my present position to accept other work with another company. (Please indicate name \_\_\_\_\_).

Employee signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: **Supervisor and/or Employment Manager**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample Exit Interview Form**  
**\_\_\_\_\_ Parish Library**

**Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_**

**Employee's name \_\_\_\_\_**

**Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_**

**Last day of employment \_\_\_\_\_**

**Insurance information given \_\_\_\_\_**

**Retirement information given \_\_\_\_\_**

**Key returned (identify key) \_\_\_\_\_**

**Time sheet / vacation leave discussed \_\_\_\_\_**

**Library card status changed \_\_\_\_\_**

**Others present \_\_\_\_\_**

**Comments of interviewer:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of interviewer \_\_\_\_\_**

**Comments of employee:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of employee \_\_\_\_\_**

## REFERENCE CHECKS AND GIVING OUT REFERENCES \*

An organization should clearly communicate to its employees which individuals are authorized to give out employee reference information. It may be that only the library director and other top administrative personnel are so authorized. Anyone authorized to give out reference information on past or current employees must be trained by the director or personnel manager as to what information it is permissible to release.

Employee reference checking is a double-edged sword. There are potential negative consequences for not checking references on those you've hired (such as negligent hiring lawsuits); there are also potential negative consequences if you do check references (such as defamation lawsuits).

Before providing references for employees or former employees, be sure that all personnel know the library's policy on giving out references. If possible, obtain an employee's written permission before providing a reference. Document the positive and negative performance evaluations of an employee, and refer to these documents when giving a reference. It is important to provide only accurate and truthful information, because truth is an "absolute defense" to a defamation charge. It is also a good practice never to "volunteer" information. Be sure that any information you do provide is job related.

Make sure you find out to whom you are providing the information. If called for a reference, an employer may want to write down the requester's name, title, address, and telephone number, and then return the call. Returning the call allows the employer to verify the identity of the person seeking the information.

L.R.S. 23:291 became law in 1995 and relates to the disclosure of employment information. The statute provides for rights when certain employment related information is disclosed, provides for immunity from civil liability in certain instances, and provides for a limitation of liability. The impact this legislation will have on the procedures and practices of reference checks remains to be seen.

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\* Some information provided by the Society for Human Resource Management.

## FEDERAL LABOR LAWS

There are many federal laws which apply to labor practices of state and local governments.

Some of the topics addressed in these laws include discrimination, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), civil rights, family medical leave, fair labor standards, privacy, social security, and safe workplaces.

Websites pertaining to these laws include the following:

ADA <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>

Civil rights and discrimination <http://www.eeoc.gov/index.html>

Fair Labor Standards Act <http://www.dol.gov:8002/fsla/screen51.asp>

Family Medical Leave Act <http://www.dol.gov/>

Safe workplace <http://www.osha.gov>

Social Security [http://199.173.244.3/SSA\\_Home.htm](http://199.173.244.3/SSA_Home.htm)

Employers must display in the workplace posters giving information about certain relevant laws. To obtain these posters, contact your area Louisiana Department of Labor job service office.\*

\* To obtain contact information about your area job service office, call the Library Development Division at (225) 342-4933 or the LDOL Office of Workforce Development at (225) 342-7632.