

Governance and Administration

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Public libraries in Wisconsin must be governed and operated according to Chapter 43 of the Wisconsin Statutes. In addition, all public libraries operate most effectively if they follow sound practices of administration, management, planning, funding, and public relations. These important issues are covered in this chapter.

Governance

Public library trustees are public officers and as such are legally responsible for the governance of the library and the conducting of its operations in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. Libraries should meet the following standards relating to governance:

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Residents have free access to tax-supported public library services (<i>Wis. Stats.</i> ss. 43.52(2) and 43.15(4)(c)). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. The library is established, and operates, in accordance with Chapter 43 of the <i>Wisconsin Statutes</i> . |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. The library is in compliance with other Wisconsin laws that affect library operations, such as laws relating to open meetings (<i>Wis. Stats.</i> ss. 19.81 to 19.98), ethics (<i>Wis. Stats.</i> s. 19.59), and public records (<i>Wis. Stats.</i> ss.19.31 to 19.39). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. The library is in compliance with federal laws that affect library operations, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. A legally appointed and constituted library board governs the operation of the library (<i>Wis. Stats.</i> s. 43.54 or s. 43.57). All non-donated funds are held by the municipality and are disbursed upon approval by the library board. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. The library board has exclusive control of the expenditure of all monies collected, donated, or appropriated for the library fund (<i>Wis. Stats.</i> s. 43.58(1)). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. The library board hires the library director (<i>Wis. Stats.</i> s. 43.58(4)) and delegates active management of the library to the library director. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. The library board conducts annual performance evaluations of the library director. |

Resources for library trustees can be found at pld.dpi.wi.gov/pld_trustee, including Trustee Essentials, a handbook of information that should be reviewed by every Wisconsin public library trustee.

*Policy resources
for Wisconsin
public libraries
are available at
[pld.dpi.wi.gov/
pld_policies](http://pld.dpi.wi.gov/pld_policies)*

Yes	No	
C	C	9. The library board determines the library staff table of organization and the rates of compensation for library staff positions (<i>Wis. Stats. s. 43.58(4)</i>).
C	C	10. The library board has written bylaws that outline its purpose and its operational procedures and address conflict-of-interest issues. The bylaws are reviewed at least every three years.
C	C	11. The library board adopts written policies for operating the library and reviews them on a regular cycle, ensuring that all policies are reviewed at least every three years. The policies are consistent with state and federal laws, and with applicable court decisions. Policies are updated to reflect changes in applicable laws. Policies address services provided to children as well as adults, and cover the following issues (among others): circulation, code of conduct, collection and resource development, confidentiality of patron records, handling of gifts, meeting room use, personnel, programming, public notice bulletin board, public records, and use of electronic resources by staff and patrons.
C	C	12. The library board meets monthly (with the library director in attendance) at a time and in a physically accessible location convenient for the board and the community and in accordance with the state law on open meetings and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
C	C	13. The library provides support for the continuing education of its trustees, which includes payment for workshop registrations and library association dues.
C	C	14. The library board is invited to participate in the diversity and ability awareness training provided to staff.
C	C	15. The library is a member of a public library system and actively participates in its program of service, including reciprocal borrowers' privileges and interlibrary loan.
C	C	16. The library board enters into any necessary contractual agreements to participate in the public library system and in resource sharing with other types of libraries in its service area.

Administration

Library administrators and staff use sound library administration and management practices to apply the policies and statutory obligations of the governing board to the daily operations of the library. Libraries should meet the following standards relating to administration:

Yes No

- C C 17. The director is paid to perform library-board-designated duties for no fewer than 25 hours per week, which includes scheduled hours away from a public service desk, and is present in the library a minimum of 10 hours per week during library open hours.
- C C 18. The library director provides current library financial and statistical reports for review at each library board meeting.
- C C 19. The library director provides every new board member with a copy of the *Trustee Essentials* and participates in an orientation program for each new board member. (See Trustee Essential #27: Trustee Orientation and Continuing Education. (See pld.dpi.wi.gov/pld_te27 for more information.)
- C C 20. The library director informs the board of pending legislation on the local, state, and national levels that affects libraries and explains how the proposed legislation might affect local library service.
- C C 21. The library director is responsible for personnel administration, including hiring, supervising, evaluating, and dismissing library employees.
- C C 22. The library director is responsible for developing library operating procedures based on board policies.
- C C 23. The library director monitors statutory changes and court decisions related to library operations, and recommends any policy changes needed to maintain legal library operations.
- C C 24. The library director is actively involved in community planning efforts.
- C C 25. The library director keeps the library board informed of library services and library programs and all important issues facing the library.
- C C 26. The library collects the statistics and information required by the DLTCL and reports that information to the municipal governing body, the library system, and the DLTCL.

The Wisconsin Library Association provides legislative information on library issues. <http://www.wla.lib.wi.us/legis>

Planning

Library trustees and staff have a continuing obligation to assess the changing service needs of the community. Conscientious planning will help the library in its efforts to anticipate and respond to the community's library needs. Libraries should meet the following standards relating to planning:

Yes No

- 27. With input from the community, the library board and staff develop and write a long-range plan that covers the next three to five years.
- 28. The long-range plan contains a mission statement that describes the purpose and priorities of the library in the community.
- 29. The long-range plan includes goals and specific, measurable objectives, with a timetable for implementation.
- 30. The long-range plan is reviewed and updated annually by the library board. An evaluation of the library's progress toward meeting the plan's goals, objectives, and timetable should be included in this review.
- 31. As part of the library's long-range planning efforts, a systematic community study is conducted over a multi-year planning cycle.
- 32. The library director regularly attends public library system meetings and consults with system staff on issues of local concern.
- 33. The library participates in system-level planning and county-level planning for library services.

Funding

One key responsibility of the library board is to seek and secure sufficient funding (from public and private sources, as appropriate) to support the local service goals of the library. Libraries should meet the following standards relating to funding:

Yes No

- 34. The public library is adequately supported by municipal (or county) funds on an on-going basis; grants and donations supplement, but do not supplant, the basic funding structure of the library.
- 35. The library receives sufficient financial support from the community to provide a level of library service consistent with its long-range plan of service, statutory maintenance of effort requirements for library system membership, and the standards in this document. See Appendix C for further information regarding this standard, including minimum total operating budgets.

Yes No

- C C 36. The library follows fiscal procedures consistent with state law, library policy, audit requirements, and local government requirements in preparing, presenting, and administering its budget.
- C C 37. The library director prepares and the library board reviews and adopts an annual budget proposal that accurately reflects the needs of the library and the community it serves.
- C C 38. The library director and staff maintain awareness of available grant and other outside funding sources.
- C C 39. The library board and the library director present the proposed budget to their municipality. Additional presentations are made to other governing bodies as appropriate.
- C C 40. The library board reviews and approves bills presented for payment at each library board meeting, in accordance with *Wis. Stats. s. 43.58(2)* and the Prompt Payment Law (*Wis. Stats. s. 66.285*). All payments from public funds are made by the appropriate municipal or county official.

See “*Managing the Library’s Money*” in [Administrative Essentials 14](#) or [Trustee Essentials 9](#)

Public Relations

Library public relations is a coordinated effort to communicate a positive image of the library and promote the availability of the library’s materials, services, and programs. Libraries should meet the following standards relating to public relations:

Yes No

- C C 41. All library staff members exhibit a positive and helpful attitude.
- C C 42. The library’s annual plan includes activities designed specifically to enhance the library’s public relations.
- C C 43. The library’s annual budget allocates funds for public relations activities.
- C C 44. The library ensures the highest quality of all informational, directional, and promotional material, using in-house, system, or commercial printing capabilities.
- C C 45. Library policies are developed, reviewed, and revised with consideration given to their effect on the library’s public relations.
- C C 46. Annually, the library implements a number of generally accepted publicity techniques; the choice of which techniques to employ will be based on the characteristics of the community, including the needs of persons with disabilities, adult new readers, and those with limited English-speaking ability.

Yes	No	
C	C	47. The library uses nonprint media (such as the Internet, cable TV, and radio) and accessible formats (such as large print, audio recordings, and translations into other languages) to promote its programs to persons with disabilities, adult new readers, and people using English as a second language.
C	C	48. The library cooperates in systemwide and statewide efforts to promote library services.
C	C	49. The library designates a staff member to coordinate public relations activities within the library and between the library and other local agencies.
C	C	50. The library ensures that staff maintain contact with schools, community organizations, businesses, and other agencies within the library's service area.
C	C	51. The library develops specific strategies to inform patrons with disabilities, non-English-speaking patrons, and adult new readers of its materials, programs, and services, including dissemination of publicity materials in alternate formats, in languages other than English, and using basic vocabulary.