

# THE DIRECTOR'S JOB

## WHAT DOES THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR DO?

The director of a public library is an administrator and business manager with ultimate responsibility for the successful operation of the library. The library director plans and carries out library goals and objectives, prepares budgets, purchases materials and equipment needed to run the library, supervises employees, arranges for maintenance of the building and grounds, creates publicity for the library, prepares grant applications, collects statistical data to evaluate the efficiency of the library and establishes cooperative relationships with the Library Board and governing authority. The director also serves as the lead professional librarian who is knowledgeable of library best practices, sets an example for others in the delivery of reference and readers' services, and uses technology to enhance library operations.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE PART OF THE LIBRARY PROFESSION?

The American Library Association has developed and adopted the following 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.

- 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.
- We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
- 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.
- We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.
- 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.
- We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
- 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.
- 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.

Adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; and January 22, 2008.

Source: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/proethics/codeofethics/codeethics>

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## GET ON BOARD QUICKLY

As a new director, it is vital that you learn a few things about your new job and your working environment as soon as possible after accepting your position. One way to acquaint yourself with the library and your new responsibilities is to do a walk-around, look-around tour. Tour the building, grounds, and all offices. Visit with staff, board members, and your counterparts in local government. Ask open-ended questions, (e.g. what do you like best/least about working here) and listen carefully to the answers.

The director must have an efficient workspace. Make it a priority to organize the director's work area so it serves your needs. If there is not an office, create a niche somewhere in the library for the administrative work you have to do. You should have fingertip access to certain files, statistics, and directories that you are sure to need on a daily basis, or may need at a moment's notice (see Appendix D). Being prepared to respond to the public, press, or library board, for information about the library is an important part of the director's job (see Appendix E).

Locate your budget and grants information. If you don't know how your library is funded, find out immediately. Schedule a meeting with the board chair and the budget officer for your funding authority (e.g. city manager or accounting office). Do not wait until a new budget is due. If you are unsure about the status of a grant, contact the State Library.

#### **MUST DO IMMEDIATELY**

- Tour the library in-depth (inside and outside)
- Meet with staff as a group and individually
- Meet with library board of trustees
- Complete the *New Director's Checklist* (Appendix D)
- Review the list of *Documents to Have on Hand* and the list of *Laws You Should Know About* (Appendix E)