

Library Board Orientation Kit

Module 1: Introduction

Key points covered in this module

1. Context for the *Library Board Orientation Kit*
 2. Overview of the modules
 3. How to use the modules within the *Library Board Orientation Kit*
 4. General tips for board orientation
 5. Principles and purpose of library service
 6. Key orientation resources
 7. “Frequently Asked Questions” and where to find the answers in this kit
 8. Acronyms and selected terms
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1. Context for the *Library Board Orientation Kit*

Trustee Orientation Kit began in 1991 as a response to the Ontario Public Library Strategic Plan *One Place to Look*. Since then, basic board orientation materials have been made available to every trustee in the province through the Ministry responsible for public libraries. This Kit is the fifth edition.

Since its inception, the *Trustee Orientation Kit*, part of the *Library Trustee Development Program*, has been led by Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS) and supported by Ontario Library Service–North (OLS-N) and the Ontario Library Boards Association (OLBA), with the assistance of the Ministry responsible for public libraries. With the 2004 edition, the name has been changed to *Library Board Orientation Kit* to focus attention on the board as the legal entity, rather than on the individual trustee.

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2. Overview of the modules

Module	Content
1. Introduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Context for the <i>Library Board Orientation Kit</i> 2. Overview of the modules 3. How to use the modules within the <i>Library Board Orientation Kit</i> 4. General tips for orientation 5. Principles and purpose of library service 6. Key orientation resources 7. “Frequently asked questions” and where to find the answers in this kit 8. Acronyms and selected terms
2. The board’s first meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public libraries in Ontario 2. What do public libraries do? 3. Major responsibilities under Ontario’s library legislation 4. How are public libraries funded? 5. What are the different types of public libraries? 6. How are library boards organized? 7. How do different types of public libraries fit into the Ontario library community? 8. Overview of roles and responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board roles • CEO roles 9. Discussion: Learning about your own library 10. Resources for this module
3. Legal Responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Director’s liability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustee or director • Standard of care • Conflict of interest 2. Specific legislative liability 3. Defensive practices to protect the Board 4. Indemnification and insurance 5. Implications of the <i>Municipal Act</i> on public libraries 6. <i>Public Libraries Act Frequently Asked Questions</i> 7. Discussion: <i>Public Libraries Act Frequently Asked Questions</i> 8. Resources for this module
4. Meeting Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board meetings 2. Agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly • Annual • Consent agendas 3. Officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairperson • Vice-chairperson • Secretary • Treasurer • Chief Executive Officer

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<p>Meeting management (continued)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Committees 5. Chairing more effective meetings 6. Rules of order 7. Closed sessions and confidentiality 8. The Board acts only as a unit 9. Code of conduct 10. Minutes 11. Preparation for meetings 12. Discussion: Checklist to evaluate your meetings 13. Resources for this module
<p>5. Role of the board: governance</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is governance? 2. Foundation documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Libraries Act • Library by-laws 3. What the board does <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Written policy is best ○ What policies should the library have? ○ New policy requirement under the Municipal Act • Define the purpose and direction • Demonstrate accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use resources wisely ○ Hire a qualified CEO ○ Clearly delegate authority ○ Evaluate the CEO annually ○ Measure and report on results • Act as a bridge • Evaluate the board regularly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How can the board evaluate its own performance? 4. A model for governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy Governance® 5. Discussion: The role of the board 6. Resources for this module
<p>6. Financial control</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial accountability to council 2. Defining your financial role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Board treasurer ▪ Working closely with the municipality 3. The Board and the budget process 4. Financial monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Board and monthly financial reports ▪ What should the monthly financial report look like? ▪ Knowing what questions to ask 5. Your financial policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Procurement policies required in 2005 6. Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ External ○ Internal 7. Discussion: How does the budget process operate in your library? 8. Resources for this module

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<p>7. Policy development</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the staff role in developing policy? • Written policy is the most effective • The policy manual • 3 steps to developing policy • Eliciting input on your policy • Review policies regularly and revise them as necessary • Some characteristics of good policy 2. Decision-making: A key skill in developing policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking with one voice 3. Discussion: Policy checklist 4. Resources for this module
<p>8. Planning</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board and planning 2. The planning process 3. What is planning? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning answers these questions ▪ Planning is important because... 4. What is the board's role in the planning process? 5. The importance of strategic thinking 6. Measuring outcomes 7. Planning tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The Library's Contribution to Your Community</i> ▪ <i>Ontario Public Library Guidelines</i> 8. Discussion questions 9. Resources for this module
<p>9. Key board relationships</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board to CEO 2. Board – Municipal council 3. Board – Community 4. Board – Broader library community 5. Group dynamics and board communication 6. Discussion: building a relationship with municipal council 7. Resources for this module
<p>10. The library as a community development partner</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Libraries are a shared responsibility 2. What is community development? 3. Understand the community 4. Build some key relationships 5. Earn respect 6. Work collaboratively 7. The Importance of Measurement 8. Developing this new focus 9. Discussion: Matrix of board-community connections 10. Resources for this module

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3. How to use the modules within the *Library Board Orientation Kit*

- The modules within this **Kit** are designed so that boards can complete them at each board meeting during the first year of the term. While it will often be the CEO who will encourage the board to work through the modules as a group, board chairpersons and Library directors/CEOs may lead a 20 minute discussion on the board agenda. They may also be used as handouts at one meeting, with an opportunity for comments and questions at the beginning of the next meeting.
- Modules should stimulate more-in-depth discussions of topics included in the module, or parts of the overall orientation curriculum.
- Individual trustees may choose to complete each module independently. The advantage in reviewing the module as a group is that the activity helps to develop a working relationship among board members.
- After the first year of the term, the **Library Board Orientation Kit** should continue to be used as a key resource.
- References and resources
 - Each section will begin with the “Key Points” contained in the module.
 - Each module will include a set of references and resources at the end of the module.
 - Each section will feature a “Discussion Guide” or “Checklist” as a means of reviewing the module.

4. General tips for board orientation

The **Library Board Orientation Kit** is a tool to support new boards as they learn about their job and their library. The **Kit** is not intended as a substitute for board orientation. Each outgoing library board, in conjunction with the CEO, will provide an orientation session for new library board members. This may be done prior to the board’s first meeting, or form part of that meeting.

The board’s orientation should introduce new boards to the library and its role in the community. It should clearly demonstrate how important the board’s contribution is to strengthening that role.

The length of time needed for a thorough orientation varies from board to board. Most orientation sessions fall in a range of a minimum of two hours to a full-day session.

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4. General tips for board orientation (continued)

The orientation session should include the following topics.

Learn about the board and how it works

- Meet other board members, staff, etc., and lay the groundwork for effective board relationships
- Roles and responsibilities
 - Board roles
 - CEO roles
 - Major legal responsibilities

Learn about your library

- Meet library staff
- Library funding
- Library overview

Learn about how your library meets your community's information needs

- Community overview
- Library priorities
- Strategic plan

5. Principles and purpose of library service

Excerpt from the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto Mission of the public library

The following key missions which relate to information, literacy, education and culture should be at the core of public library services:

1. Creating and strengthening reading habits in children at an early age;
2. Supporting both individual and self conducted education as well as formal education at all levels;
3. Providing opportunities for personal creative development;
4. Stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people;
5. Promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations;
6. Providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts;
7. Fostering inter-cultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity;
8. Supporting the oral tradition;
9. Ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information;
10. Providing adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interest groups;
11. Facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills;
12. Supporting and participating in literacy activities and programmes for all age groups, and initiating such activities if necessary.

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5. Principles and purpose of library service (continued)

Ontario Library Association Statement on the Intellectual Right of the Individual

In affirming its commitment to the fundamental rights of intellectual freedom, the freedom to read and freedom of the press, as embodied in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Library Association declares its acceptance of the following propositions:

- 1) That the provision of library service to the public is based upon the right of the citizen, under the protection of the law, to judge individually on questions of politics, religion and morality.
- 2) That intellectual freedom requires freedom to examine other ideas and other interpretations of life than those currently approved by the local community or by society in general, and including those ideas and interpretations which may be unconventional or unpopular.
- 3) That freedom of expression includes freedom for a creator to depict what is ugly, shocking and unedifying in life.
- 4) That free traffic in ideas and opinions is essential to the health and growth of a free society and that the freedom to read, listen and view is fundamental to such free traffic.
- 5) That it is the responsibility of libraries to maintain the right of intellectual freedom and to implement it consistently in the selection of books, periodicals, films, recordings, other materials, and in the provision of access to electronic sources of information, including access to the Internet.
- 6) That it is therefore part of the library's service to its public to resist any attempt by any individual or group within the community it serves to abrogate or curtail access to information, the freedom to read, view and listen by demanding the removal of, or restrictions to library information sources in any format.
- 7) That it is equally part of the library's responsibility to its public to ensure that its selection of material is not unduly influenced by the personal opinions of the selectors, but determined by the application of generally accepted standards of accuracy, style and presentation.

Approved, Ontario Library Association 1998 Annual general meeting,
November 7, 1998

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5. Principles and purpose of library service (continued)

CLA Statement on Intellectual Freedom

Subject: INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM
Approved by: CLA Council
Date of Approval: June 27, 1974, Amended Nov. 17, 1983 and 1985

All persons in Canada have the fundamental right, as embodied in the Nations' Bill of Rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts publicly. This right to intellectual freedom, under the law, is essential to the health and development of Canadian society.

Libraries have a basic responsibility for the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom.

It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, libraries shall acquire and make available the widest variety of materials.

It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee the right of free expression by making available all of the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups which need them.

Libraries should resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.

Both employees and employers in libraries have a duty, in addition to their institutional responsibilities, to uphold these principles.

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6. Key orientation resources

The following resources are key references that may expand trustees' knowledge throughout the term.

Trustee Tips:

Trustee Tips are bulletins on topics of concern to library board members. These publications can be found by using the "Publications" link on the main SOLS page (www.sols.org) or directly at <http://www.sols.org/publications/trusteetips/index.htm>. Many of the SOLS publications mentioned in the **Library Board Orientation Kit**, including **Sourcebooks**, are now posted on the SOLS website at <http://www.sols.org/publications/index.htm>. Also included on this site is an annotated summary of current trustee publications. Titles in the series include:

- #3- **The board and the budget: Monitoring financial reports** - Summer 1992
- #4 - **A library built on cooperation: the board's relationship with the CEO** - October 1992
- #5 - **The role of the board in advocacy and lobbying** - Winter 1992/93
- #6 - **Why conduct CEO performance appraisal?** - Spring 1993
- #7 - **The board's role in recruiting new members** - Fall 1993
- #8 - **Should our library form a "Friends of the library" group?** - Winter 1993-94
- #9 - **The board and policy 1: Constitution and by-laws** - September-October 1994
- #10 - **Conflict of interest and the public library board** - Spring 1995
- #11 - **Is fundraising the answer?** - April 1996
- #12 - **The library board as employer** - May 1996
- #13 - **How to run effective board meetings** - June 1996
- #14 - **Launching a successful community "partnership"** - January 1997
- #15 - **The value of the library in a community** - November 1998
- #16 - **Cultivating your friends** - January 1999
- #17 - **The board as employer: making the most of your staff resources** - March 1999
- #18 - **The Internet: Issues for the library board** - November 1999
- #19 - **The board and policy 2: Writing policy** - December 1999

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Trustee Tips (continued):

#20 - **Library board and municipal council collaboration** - September 2000

#21 - **How well have you governed?** - December 2000

#22 - **Connecting with your community** - May 2002

#23 - **Understanding the board's role in advocating for funding** - June 2002

#24 - **Library board recruitment 2003** - September 2003

#25 - **Building effective relationships between the library and the municipality** - November 2003

OLTA/OLBA handbook (a publication of the Ontario Library Association)

Speaking up for libraries: library trustees in action – Video

Bibliography

Carver, John. **Boards that make a difference: A new design for leadership in nonprofit and public organizations**. Second Edition, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1997.

Carver, John and Carver, Miriam Mayhew. **Reinventing your board: A step-by-step guide to implementing policy governance**. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1997.

Manley, Will. **For library directors only: Talking about trustees = For trustees only: Living with your director**. McFarland, 1993.

Michigan Public Library Trustee Manual. Produced by the Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries at <http://www.michigan.gov/hal/> (Select 'For the professional', then 'Libraries, Librarians and Media Specialists')

Paquet, Marion A. **A handbook for cultural trustees: A guide to the role, responsibilities and functions of boards of trustees of cultural organizations in Canada**. University of Waterloo Press, 1987.

The Policy governance fieldbook: Practical lessons, tips and tools from the experience of real-world boards. Caroline Oliver, General Editor. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1999.

Starr, Dr. Kevin. **Trustee tool kit for library leadership**. California State Library, 1998.

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Utah Public Library trustee handbook public library board basics, Utah State Library Division, 2000.

Williams, Lorraine M. *The Library trustee and the public : Partners in service*. Canadian Library Association, 1987.

Web resources

Board Café - www.boardcafe.org

Carver governance - www.carvergovernance.com

Non-profit boards and governance review - <http://charitychannel.com/nbgr.shtml>

7. “Frequently asked questions” and where to find the answers in this Kit

Questions	Where to find the answers in the kit
What is the board’s job?	Module 2 – Making the most of the board’s first meeting Module 3 – Legal responsibilities Module 5 – The role of the board
Questions on the Act: Are library board members paid? How long do library trustees serve? Can the board chair vote on an issue? Can libraries charge residents for a library card? When does the term of the library board end?	Module 3 – Legal responsibilities: This module includes the most recent “Frequently asked questions” compiled by the Libraries Division of the Heritage and Libraries Branch, Ministry of Culture.
Who should be involved in hiring staff?	Module 2 – Making the most of the board’s first meeting
Who hires the library CEO?	Module 2 – Making the most of the board’s first meeting
What is conflict of interest?	Module 3 – Legal responsibilities
Who is the employer of library staff: the library board or the municipality?	Module 2 – Making the most of the board’s first meeting

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7. “Frequently asked questions” and where to find the answers in this Kit (continued)

What is a Trustee Council?	Module 1 – Introductory module, Acronyms
What does “In camera” mean?	Module 4 – Meeting management
Who appoints library boards?	Module 2 – Making the most of the board’s first meeting
Why is policy important?	Module 5 – Role of the board Module 7 – Key tools and necessary skills
What is VDX?	Module 1 – Introductory module - Acronyms
What is a “consent agenda?”	Module 4 – Meeting management
What is a LAC?	Module 1 – Introductory module - Acronyms
What is the budget process?	Module 6 – Financial control
What kind of relationship should the board develop with municipal council?	Module 9 – Key board relationships

8. Acronyms and selected terms

(Please note that these terms are posted in a separate file)