

# *Evaluating the Director*

Trustees evaluate the director all of the time—by what they see in the library, what they hear from the public and what they perceive as the library’s reputation in the community. But that informal consideration does not take the place of a formal review of the director’s performance.

There are several good reasons for an annual evaluation. It:

- Provides the director with a clear understanding of the Board’s expectations and its perceptions of how those expectations are being met.
- Identifies the Board’s concerns and initiates a procedure for actions to be taken.
- Creates an opportunity to review and acknowledge the director’s accomplishments as well as to establish a record of unsatisfactory performance if there is ever cause to terminate employment.
- Demonstrates sound management and accountability to community officials and the public.

Boards often delegate the task of developing a preliminary evaluation of the director to the personnel committee or a specially appointed committee, especially if particular trustees have experience in human resource management. The key is to be consistent and decide ahead of time who will take part. Although a special committee can do the preliminary evaluation process, the entire Board should review, discuss and approve the final written evaluation.

To be effective, the evaluation process needs to match the specific local situation. The current trend in employee evaluations is toward clearly stated performance goals and measured outcomes. The clearer the expectations, the easier the process will be. In fact, the evaluation process is difficult only when the Board is unsure of what process to follow or what criteria to use.

## *The Basis for the Review*

Although your specific library situation will determine what you will consider when evaluating the director's performance, the starting point should always be the director's written job description. This document must be kept up to date so that it is a realistic statement of the work that the Board expects the director to do. A director should never be faulted for failing to do something that was not agreed upon at the time of hire or at a later Board meeting.

During the evaluation, the director and Board can agree on a list of objectives that can be used as a basis for evaluation the following year. The list should be closely related to the library's long-range plan (see Chapter 15-2, Planning for the Future). It is important to remember that it might not be possible for the director to meet all of the objectives and that failing to do so does not necessarily indicate poor job performance. More important to consider when evaluating objectives are the progress, initiative and willingness of the director to expand the limits of his or her work and understanding.

Other important parts of the review are the success of the library in carrying out service programs and resource management. Monthly financial statements, statistical reports and other management documents offer a more reliable assessment of the library director's performance than do subjective comments from individuals.

As part of the performance evaluation, it can be helpful to have the library director fill out a copy of the evaluation form as a self-assessment. Comparison of the director's form and the committee or Board's completed form will establish areas of agreement and indicate work to be done in resolving differences. The Board can decide if the director's self-assessment is to be considered part of the permanent record. Either way, the director should have the opportunity to respond in writing to reviews if she or he chooses to do so. No performance review should ever be placed in a personnel file without the knowledge of the director.

All discussions of the director's job performance should be carried out in legally posted and conducted meetings. (See Chapter 4-4, Complying with the Law, for more information about the Open Meeting Law.)

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### ***Prevent Surprises During the Annual Performance Evaluation***

- ✓ Work with the director to resolve performance problems when they occur.
- ✓ Be willing to discuss the issue and offer solutions.
- ✓ Acknowledge good work and accomplishments.

## *Review Criteria*

Sample of evaluation forms are included at the end of this chapter (beginning on page 10-7). These can be adapted to your library situation and your director's written job description. The following list gives you some points to consider in finalizing the evaluation process and considering a list of objectives for the coming year.

### *Preparing and managing the budget*

- Is all the necessary staff work completed in a timely manner prior to presentation to the Board?
- Does the budget cover all necessary expenses?
- Are funds allocated or reserved for unanticipated contingencies?
- Are the funds effectively allocated?
- Are midcourse corrections minimized?

### *Managing the staff*

- Are positive management/staff relations maintained?
- Are fair and equitable policies proposed for Board adoption and then fairly administered?
- Have grievances been filed? If so, what is their nature?

### *Professional state-of-the-art awareness*

- Are innovative methods of service delivery, technical processes, etc., studied thoroughly; implemented only after they fit the needs of the institution and are proven to be cost effective?
- Does the director maintain an adequate knowledge of the current state-of-the-art?
- Is the staff encouraged and assisted in maintaining an awareness of technological advances in the profession?
- Conversely, how prone is the director to adopting change for change's sake?

### *Collection management*

- How adequate is the library's program of determining user needs/wants and translating these into acquisitions and services?
- Have adequate criteria been established to enable the library to react systematically to materials budget cuts?

### ***Implementation of Board decisions***

- Are Board decisions implemented on a timely basis?
- Once a decision has been made, does the director fully and enthusiastically back Board decisions or are they sometimes presented to staff in an apologetic or deprecatory manner?

### ***Use of the library***

- How effectively are library services communicated to the public?
- Is a realistic balance established between promotion of services and budget constraints?
- Are circulation trends and in-house use adequately analyzed and are there appropriate reactions to the results of such analyses?
- How well is information on new services communicated to the public?

### ***Development of staff***

- Are potential managers encouraged to develop career goals?
- Are internal candidates for promotion competitive with outside candidates for management positions?
- Does the director adequately justify the need for, actively campaign and adequately account for staff development funds?
- Is cross-training leveraged to provide service to the public?

### ***Utilization of staff***

- Is there a clear separation of professional and clerical tasks for staff guidance?
- Have peak service hours been identified and staff deployed accordingly?
- Are functions analyzed periodically with the objective of combining, eliminating and/or creating new positions?

### ***Community development***

- How active is the director in the community?
- Is the director “visible” to large segments of the population?
- Is the director available for speaking engagements in the community?

### ***Activity in professional organizations***

- Does the director actively participate in MLA, ALA, PNLA, etc.?
- Does the director hold office in professional organizations?

- Has the director published articles in professional journals?

### *Policy recommendations to Board*

- Is adequate staff work completed prior to presentation to the Board?
- Are reasonable alternatives recommended?
- Are policy recommendations generally proactive rather than reactive?
- Are policy recommendations usually necessary and appropriate to the efficient operation of the library?

### *Friends of the Library*

- Has the director actively promoted the formation and/or maintenance of a Friends group?
- Does the director provide adequate support to the organization?
- Has the director helped define the role of the Friends group?

### *Maintenance and construction of physical plants*

- Within the imposed budgetary constraints are the buildings and grounds adequately maintained?
- Does the director have an outgoing program that provides adequate information on the need for new and/or remodeled facilities?

### *Establishing priorities*

- Are the director's recommended priorities in concert with the library's mission as defined by the Board?
- Do these priorities appropriately reflect community needs?
- Are priorities established proactively or reactively?

### *Staff selection*

- Is staff selection accomplished at appropriate supervisory levels and with adequate use of staff resources?
- Is adequate emphasis placed on equal opportunity employer/affirmative action and is the director's commitment to these principles communicated to the staff?
- Is the selection process designed to ensure the selection of the best person for the job?

### *Short- and long-range planning*

- Do the director's short- and long-range plans reflect Board priorities?
- Are the short- and long-range plans updated on a continuous basis to reflect changing circumstances?
- Are the director's accomplishments in sync with the short- and long-range plans?
- Are the short- and long-range plans flexible enough to allow for changing circumstances?
- Does the director provide adequate information to the Board on the implementation, revision, etc., of short- and long-range planning?

### *Miscellaneous rating factors*

- Are "hard decisions" made and implemented or are they deferred or ignored?
- Does the director display adequate initiative or rather merely react to necessities?
- Is the director objective in making the necessary decision or do personal prejudices intrude too often?
- Is the director consistent in decisions that affect the staff and/or public?
- Is the director open with the Board or does a "hidden" agenda intrude too often in the relationship?
- Does the director set an example for the staff through professional conduct, high principles, business-like approach, good work habits, etc.?

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## ***Evaluation Form – Sample 1***

Name:

Evaluation Period:

Responsibilities	Expectations and Goals	Comments

### Overall Performance

Comments:

Performance Rating:

Above satisfactory     Satisfactory

Below satisfactory

Employee:  Agree     Disagree

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## ***Evaluation Form – Sample 2***

### **CRITERIA FOR DIRECTOR'S EVALUATION**

#### **Budgeting and Financial Management:**

- Manages the library's resources appropriately
- Involves Board members appropriately in managing library resources
- Prepares budgets and oversees preparation of financial statements so Board members can understand them

#### **Communications**

- Attends all Board meetings and participates appropriately
- Writes well-written reports and proposals, containing enough information to help Board members make informed decisions without being wordy or lacking in essential details
- Represents the library at important state, regional and national meetings and reports on significant happenings
- Communicates appropriately with elected officials, Friends of the Library, patrons and others
- Is responsible for public relations, effectively communicating library services to the public

#### **Physical Plant:**

- Supervises the general maintenance of buildings and grounds
- Informs Board of the status of building and grounds

#### **Policies and Guidelines:**

- Recommends policy changes as needed, with suggested wording
- Implements Board policy and guidelines appropriately

#### **Staff Recruiting and Supervision:**

- Keeps the Board informed about staff changes
- Administers salaries, involving the Board appropriately
- Delegates responsibility and authority to staff members in a way that empowers them to do their jobs well and accomplish the mission of the library

#### **Staff Training:**

- Prepares and presents training opportunities for staff members and trustees
- Attends appropriate continuing education opportunities

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## LIBRARY DIRECTOR PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

### **Goal Setting:**

The following are goals agreed upon by the director and the trustees for the director to accomplish during the next twelve months:

### **Comments:**

1. Noteworthy accomplishments of the director during the past year have been:

2. Situations that might have been handled differently were:

3. Additional comments:

*From Richards Free Library, Newport Regional Library, Newport, New Hampshire, 2005*

## ***Evaluation Form – Sample 3***

Job Title: Library Director

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Evaluation: End of probation \_\_\_ Annual \_\_\_ Final \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Administrative Services Duties:**

1. Act as the Board's executive officer.
2. Serve as the technical adviser to the Board.
3. Implement the policies of the library as established by the Board.
4. Prepare the draft of the annual library budget for Board discussion and approval.
5. Participate in the presentation of the adopted budget to local officials.
6. Receive and expend library funds according to established guidelines and maintain accurate and up-to-date records showing the status of library finances.
7. Recruit, select, hire, supervise, evaluate and terminate if necessary library staff in conformity with library policy and state and federal law (and any applicable local civil service regulations and/or union contracts).
8. Prepare Board meeting agendas and necessary reports in cooperation with the Board president, and notify Board members of scheduled meetings.
9. Prepare state annual report for review and approval by the Board.
10. Inform and advise the Board as to local, regional, state and national developments in the library field and work to maintain communication with other area libraries and the library system.

Rating: Excellent < 6 5 4 3 2 1 > Poor

Narrative evaluation and assessment of effort in achievement of annual objectives:

### **Collection Management Duties:**

1. Select or direct the selection of materials for all media and all age groups, based on the library's approved collection development policy.
2. Catalog and classify library materials according to accepted standards and maintain the public catalog.
3. Process materials to provide appeal, protection and control.
4. Develop and maintain a regular weeding schedule.
5. Periodically review the collection development policy and make recommendations to the Board for revisions.
6. Oversee the shelving and organization of materials.
7. Prepare and distribute overdue notices to users with overdue or lost materials.
8. Maintain an accurate and up-to-date database of user registrations and activities, including information adequate to support reimbursement requests for nonresident borrowing.

Rating: Excellent < 6 5 4 3 2 1 > Poor

Narrative evaluation and assessment of effort in achievement of annual objectives.

### **Service and Service Promotion Duties:**

1. Develop and execute an array of service programs to address the various needs of users and to make the library more accessible to all. These might include: preparation and dissemination of bibliographies of popular topics and genre collections; tours of the library for school, daycare and home-school groups; inclusion of interesting displays of an educational or cultural nature; presentations to local organizations or groups on the benefits offered by the library; provision of storytime sessions for small children, and teen and adult book discussion sessions; support of a summer reading program; acquisition of special materials and provision of accommodations to encourage use of the library by individuals with special needs; development of a home-bound service for residents unable to visit the library.

2. Provide friendly and efficient direct assistance to users checking out materials, requesting directional or community information or seeking materials or information on specific topics.
3. Prepare news releases and submissions to the media to announce new or special services and events that spotlight the library.
4. Assist and guide local volunteer groups (e.g., Friends of the Library) who wish to help with library promotion, fundraising and enhancement of services.
5. Prepare grant applications, when grant opportunities are offered, to supplement local funding of library operations and development.
6. Maintain records showing all programs offered and number of attendees at each.
7. Continually investigate the value, costs and logistics of adding library services, new media and new technologies to keep the library current and proactive in its service provision to the public.
8. Conduct on-going evaluations of existing library programs, services, policies and procedures, and submit recommendations for improvements to the Board.

Rating: Excellent < 6 5 4 3 2 1 > Poor

Narrative evaluation and assessment of effort in achievement of annual objectives.

### **Facilities Management Duties:**

1. Oversee care and maintenance of the library building and grounds.
2. Oversee the work of custodial staff.
3. Regularly review building needs and advise the Board in its planning for future expansion or development.
4. Assess the adequacy of existing facilities in regard to the provision of automated services.

Rating: Excellent < 6 5 4 3 2 1 > Poor

Narrative evaluation and assessment of effort in achievement of annual objectives:

Director's objectives for the coming year (agreed to by Board and director):

**Certification:**

Board President's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Library Director's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*From Trustee Essentials: A Handbook for Wisconsin Public Library Trustees prepared by the  
DLTCL with the assistance of the Trustee Handbook Revision Task Force. Copyright 2002  
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. This publication is also available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/handbook.html>*

## Evaluation Form – Sample 4

*Form Instructions:*

1. Each Board member should individually respond to this form.
2. To help in completing the form, Board members can refer to past Board minutes, usage statistics, program results and other information sources from the year.
3. Return the completed form to the Board President for inclusion in the Summation Form that will be used during the face-to-face meeting with the director.

Scale: E = excellent S = satisfactory N = needs improvement U = unknown

Area of Organizational Health	Rating			
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**Customer Service & Community Relations**

• Level of patron satisfaction	E	S	N	U
• Customer service received by patrons	E	S	N	U
• Consistent application of policies that affect the public	E	S	N	U
• Services are communicated to the public effectively	E	S	N	U
• Working relationships and cooperative arrangements with government officials, community groups and organizations	E	S	N	U
• Awareness of community needs	E	S	N	U
• Mechanisms are in place to hear from patrons and the community at large	E	S	N	U
• Library is being marketed to the community	E	S	N	U

Comments

CS&CR TOTALS: E\_\_ S\_\_ N\_\_ U\_\_

**Organizational Growth:**

• The library is making progress on its long-range plan (LRP)	E	S	N	U
• Services to meet the goals and objectives of the LRP are carried out with staff and trustee involvement	E	S	N	U
• Goals and objectives are evaluated regularly	E	S	N	U
• Creativity and initiative are demonstrated in creating new services and programs	E	S	N	U
• Collection is responsive to changes in the community	E	S	N	U
• The library is responsive to changes in the community	E	S	N	U
• Staff are aware of library's long-range plan, policies and activities	E	S	N	U

- There is a working knowledge of significant developments and trends in the field. E S N U
- Building and grounds are kept up and needed repairs and maintenance are done on a timely basis E S N U

Comments:

OG TOTALS: E\_\_\_ S\_\_\_ N\_\_\_ U\_\_\_

**Administration and Human Resource Management:**

- Work is effectively assigned, appropriate levels of freedom and authority are delegated. E S N U
- \* Job descriptions are developed; regular performance evaluations are held and documented. E S N U
- Personnel policies and state and federal regulations on workplaces and employment are effectively implemented. E S N U
- Policies and procedures are in place to maximize volunteer efforts. E S N U
- Staff development and education are encouraged. E S N U
- Staff understand how their role at the library relates to the mission. E S N U
- Library climate attracts, keeps and motivates a diverse staff of top-quality people. E S N U

Comments:

A&HRM TOTALS: E\_\_\_ S\_\_\_ N\_\_\_ U\_\_\_

**Financial Management/Legal Compliance/Fund-raising:**

- Adequate control and accounting of all funds takes place; library uses sound financial practices. E S N U
- Budget is prepared with input from staff and trustees; the library operates within budget guidelines E S N U
- Official records and documents are maintained; library is in compliance with federal, state and local regulations and reporting requirements (such as annual report, payroll withholding and reporting, etc.) E S N U
- Positive relationships with government, foundation and corporate funders are in place E S N U
- Funds are disbursed in accordance with budget, contract/grant requirements and donar designations E S N U

Comments:

FM/LC/F TOTALS: E\_\_\_ S\_\_\_ N\_\_\_ U\_\_\_

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**Board of Trustee Relationship:**

- Appropriate, adequate and timely information is provided to the Board. E S N U
- Support is provided to the Board. E S N U
- The Board is informed on the condition of the organization and all important factors influencing it.
- The Board works effectively. E S N U

Comments:

BTR TOTALS: E\_\_ S\_\_ N\_\_ U\_\_

Additional comments:

*Mid-Hudson Library System, Poughkeepsie, New York, 2006. For more trustee resources, see <http://midhudson.org/trustee/main.htm>*