

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 2: Policy Making for the Library

Policies Defined	2.1
Responsibility for Developing Policies.....	2.2
The Kinds of Policies a Library Needs.....	2.3
Getting Help with Developing Policies.....	2.4

Section 2: Policy Making for the Library

2.1 – Policies Explained

Policies refer to the philosophy, rules and regulations under which the library operates. The library board decides on policy. The implementation of policy through the use of procedures is the duty of the library's administration. As noted, procedures are the steps or details to implement the policies.

If the library does not have a policy manual, the board minutes may be checked for motions, which established policies in the past. As noted, if there is already a file of policies in the library or in the board files, these can be built upon.

In any case, the board and director should determine what policies are needed and what they should be for the particular library. Thereafter, the board and staff should use the manual and review its provisions, making changes as necessary.

Policies can be developed for day-to-day operations of the library, for the board's own operations and for special uses, such as for a volunteer program or for Internet usage.

Some policies are broad statements, such as those on intellectual freedom. Other policies are narrower, covering decisions such as the hours the library is open, personnel practices or fines.

Policies are public – open to view. They are designed to prevent favoritism and unfairness. They can answer questions and may prevent disagreements. They help to avoid making decisions on a case by case basis. They create a framework for a well- functioning library.

2.2 – Responsibility for Developing Policies

Determination of policies is a clear responsibility of the library board. The board should not, however, act alone. Rely on the director and staff for suggestions, on research from the literature and on the State Library and regional resources for models and consultation. Many libraries post their public policies on the library's website. Sample policies provide guidelines but ultimately local conditions must be incorporated to create effective policies. When in doubt about the legality of a policy, always consult your library's lawyer.

Policies should be assembled in a manual, and posted on a library's intranet or Internet, as appropriate. They should be reviewed with some frequency to reappraise the need. The board should establish a regular schedule of review.

Trustees reviewing and making policy should regard policies as the rules under which the library operates in pursuit of its goals. If policies are obsolete, they should be eliminated.

In developing or reviewing a policy manual, the best process is for the board and director to determine what policies are needed. The best policies are the ones that will be effective over a reasonable length of time.

2.3 – The Kinds of Policies a Library Needs

Below are examples of policies that the board should adopt. This is not an exhaustive list of policies.

1. General

- ◆ mission and goals statement
- ◆ specific objectives with timelines
- ◆ division of responsibilities between board and staff
- ◆ conduct of board meetings; Bylaws; Open Meetings
- ◆ public statements and announcements
- ◆ media contacts
- ◆ relationship with the Friends of the Library

2. Organization and Administration

- ◆ organization charts – clear lines of authority, chain of command

3. Personnel

- ◆ job descriptions
- ◆ performance standards
- ◆ salary schedule for each job classification
- ◆ employee recruitment, selection, and appointment
- ◆ Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)– drug-free workplace – harassment
- ◆ conditions of employment
 - work hours, breaks, holidays, overtime, vacation, sick leave, jury duty, etc.
 - in-service training and continuing education
 - performance reviews and evaluation
 - promotions and transfers
 - disciplinary action
 - separation procedures
 - grievances and due process hearings
 - benefits – health, dental, Public Employee Retirement System (PERS), parking, etc.
 - association memberships
 - meeting and travel expenses

4. Finance

- ◆ relationship with governing body
- ◆ board and governing body's respective responsibilities for funding and expenditures
- ◆ financial procedures – make them clear to board, other officials, and the public
 - budgeting
 - accounting
 - reporting
 - auditing
- ◆ non-resident fees
- ◆ fines, charges for lost or damaged materials
- ◆ insurance and bonding
- ◆ solicitation or sales in library
- ◆ gifts, donations, memorials

5. Trustees / Continuing Education

- ◆ memberships (e.g., professional association dues, such as for NJLTA, ALTA, etc.)
- ◆ meeting expenses for trustees (e.g., reimbursement for mileage, parking, travel expenses, such as fees and fares for transportation, meals, lodging, conference registration, and tuition).

6. Buildings and Public Services

- ◆ hours of operation – holiday schedule – seasonal variations
- ◆ eligibility for building use
- ◆ eligibility to borrow, non-resident use regulations, registration
- ◆ loan periods, overdue policies, reserves, interlibrary loans
- ◆ confidentiality of library circulation and computer use records
- ◆ Reference and information
- ◆ Internet access and use
- ◆ computer usage
- ◆ meeting room use – special uses such as exhibits and displays
- ◆ patron conduct rules
- ◆ unattended children
- ◆ public safety
- ◆ programming and outreach services if appropriate
- ◆ bulletin board use, material distribution
- ◆ maintenance, security, lost and found
- ◆ copy, fax machines and other equipment use
- ◆ audiovisual equipment
- ◆ building emergencies
- ◆ inclement weather
- ◆ Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance

7. Collection Management

- ◆ intellectual freedom statements
- ◆ censorship, access and challenged materials procedures
- ◆ **Reconsideration of Library Materials Statement and form** – see Supplementary Documents for sample reconsideration form.
- ◆ **Library Bill of Rights** - see Supplementary Documents
- ◆ **Freedom To Read** – see Supplementary Documents
- ◆ collection development: selection and weeding
- ◆ gifts and donations
- ◆ special collections

8. Community Relations

- ◆ public relations and publicity
- ◆ coordination with other community agencies and local government
- ◆ cooperation with other libraries, reciprocal borrowing
- ◆ coordination with local schools
- ◆ volunteers
- ◆ Friends groups
- ◆ complaint procedures
- ◆ suggestion process for the public
- ◆ cooperative purchasing and interlocal service agreements

9. Professional Services

- ◆ utilizing legal services
- ◆ selecting an auditor or an attorney
- ◆ contract review

2.4 - Getting Help in Developing Policies

NJLA, NJLTA and the NJ State Library are resources on current practice.

Neighboring libraries are another source of sample policies and procedures, particularly on their websites. The Public Library Association's website, www.pla.org has information on its [Planning for Policies](#). Additionally, a variety of sample policies from public libraries may be viewed at <http://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/dld/help/samples>

Policies on personnel can be developed or reviewed with the help of [NJLAModelPersonnel Manual](#) developed by the Personnel Administration Committee of the New Jersey Library Association. For more information, contact the NJLA at www.njla.org.

Also, municipal and county personnel policies should be considered when developing policy for the library.

In determining salaries, consult the New Jersey Library Association's [Salary Guidelines](#) available online at www.njla.org. Local salary ordinances should and the use of salary surveys within the library's service area should also be considered.

The high standards of performance required to make the library work effectively for the community should be recognized. Planning to supply the resources necessary to achieve them is imperative. They are a key part of the basis of personnel policies, salaries and benefits.

There are matters on which the board is the final authority by law or by local policy. Identify these and be sure they have matching procedures. Examples are the employee grievance procedures, handling of challenges to materials and required reporting.

Remember, sample policies offer helpful guidelines for policy development. However, ultimately the local situation and conditions must be assessed and incorporated into effective policies for each library.

Online Resources

Policy & Its Development

http://www.njstatelib.org/ldb_files/imported/Trustees/Trustee_Institute/Policy_and_Development.ppt

Will it Hold Up in Court? Writing Enforceable Policies

http://www.njstatelib.org/ldb_files/imported/Trustees/Trustee_Institute/EnforceablePolicies.ppt