

# **CORE COMPETENCIES FOR NEW JERSEY LIBRARY TRUSTEES AND COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS**

*Adopted by the New Jersey Library Trustee Association May 2004*

New Jersey's public libraries are vital community centers dedicated to lifelong learning. The success and achievements of public libraries depend upon the leadership, commitment and dedication of its trustees. Library trustees have legal and fiduciary obligations to ensure that all public libraries provide the highest quality of library service. These core competencies enumerate skills, qualities and abilities essential for trustees to undertake their duties.

The New Jersey Library Trustee Association strongly believes that each trustee must be aware of the issues, opportunities, and challenges facing public libraries. Continuing trustee education for all trustees must be a priority to ensure that trustees can fulfill their responsibilities.

## **A. PHILOSOPHIES AND ETHICS**

- Understand the mission and role of your public library.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the legal and regulatory environment of your public library (NJSA 40:54-1. et seq. for municipal libraries; NJSA 15A for association libraries; NJSA 40:33-7 for county libraries; and NJSA 40:54-29.10 for joint libraries).
- Understand and demonstrate ethical behavior using your Board's Code of Ethics as a guideline.
- Understand the functions of a public library: public services, technical services, administrative service, technology and children's services.
- Stay current with developments in state and federal law and regulations pertaining to public libraries. Participate in continuing education opportunities sponsored by the NJ State Library, NJLTA, NJLA, the New Jersey Library Network and county trustee organizations.
- Uphold the principles of intellectual freedom.
- Ensure your library's participation in the services of the New Jersey Library Network and local resource sharing arrangements.

## **B. BOARD ATTRIBUTES**

- Demonstrate good interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate effectively and diplomatically.
- Demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively with other board members, public officials, and other groups to promote growth for the library.
- Attend and participate in all library board meetings.

## **C. ADMINISTRATION**

- Understand the legal structure of your library and the environment in which it operates.
- Understand the budgeting process within the community including how to use statistics effectively to demonstrate library utilization.
- Know your community by reviewing census data and other available documentation. Support the development of programs and services, which impact all segments of your population.
- Develop a strategic plan with specific strategies to support your public library's mission and goals.
- Develop and understand Board by-laws and Board procedures.
- Develop policies and procedures for your public library.
- Understand the principles of personnel management, including the role of the library director, who administers the day-to-day operations of the library, and that of the library board which sets policy.
- Recruit and evaluate the library director.
- Understand relevant state and federal laws pertaining to employment and personnel practices.
- Have knowledge of the physical plant and its maintenance and be able to plan for capital improvements.
- Provide support for training and continuing education opportunities for library staff and board.

## **D. ADVOCACY**

- Advocate for your library, everywhere with everyone.
- Seek opportunities to ensure sufficient income and resources to provide optimal library service.
- Support legislative initiatives to improve libraries and library services such as those endorsed by the N. J. Library Association and the N. J. Library Trustee Association.
- Develop and implement an effective public relations plan for your library.
- Maintain positive relationships with officials at all levels of government, with the Friends of the Library and all segments of the community.