

July 2014- Trustee Tip of the Month

Identifying Potential Trustees

A library board is both the communities' representation in the library and the library's representation in the community. It is important for the health of the library that board members possess the skills that the library needs now and are both diverse and also mirror the community's composition.

As covered in the March 2014 Trustee Tip on trustee recruitment available at <http://kdla.ky.gov/librarians/trustees/Documents/Trustee%20Tip%20March%202014-Trustee%20Recruitment.pdf>, a well-rounded board includes people from different areas of the county, members of different age-groups, race, gender, backgrounds, skills, and community influence.

As many seasoned board members know, this can be harder than it sounds. It is for this reason that it is good practice to be aware of what you are looking for in your next board member and to always be recruiting even when there is not a vacancy.

To start, the library needs a strategic plan to identify gaps in the skills needed for the future success of the library. Additionally, in order to help fill the role of being representative of the community, the library board needs to look at the demographic makeup of the county so the board can represent all aspects of the community. A great way to do this is by consulting the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census at <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/> to find out more about your community.

It is advisable to advertise for the person with the characteristics the board desires for the next vacancy. If advertisement doesn't yield results, it is time to go looking for someone to fill your needs. It is often hard to think of names of people who don't overlap socially and professionally with your existing board in order to represent the whole community. To get you started, look at the following community groups for ideas. The list was adapted from *Strategic Planning for Results* by Sandra Nelson for the Public Library Association, American Library Association, 2008.

- Business: Major employers, Chamber of Commerce, business leaders, economic development organizations
- Community Service Clubs: Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, United Way
- Cultural Groups: Art leagues, theatre groups, historical societies
- Educational Organizations: Schools, universities or colleges, home school organizations, Extension Offices, parents of school age children, PTAs, college and school librarians
- Ethnic Organizations: Latino, Asian or African-American groups
- Family Services Organizations: Social services, Family Resource Centers, Senior Centers
- Financial Representatives: Bankers, financial planners
- Government/Political Representatives: Employees of other government agencies, former board members from other SPGEs
- Health Organizations: Hospitals, Health Departments, Mental Health Organizations
- Legal Organizations: Legal Aid, Bar Associations
- Media Representatives: Newspaper, radio, television reporters
- Organizations Serving the Disadvantaged: Goodwill, independent living facilities, state agencies, Habitat for Humanity
- Professional Groups: Board of Realtors, professional women's organizations
- Religious Groups: Ministerial associations
- Youth Services Organizations: Girl Scouts, Head Start, Community Early Childhood Councils

Remember that trustee recruitment is the duty of the library board and not the director. The director is able to help with clerical support, but the choice of candidates is made by the Board. Spending time in an ongoing recruitment process helps to develop a well-rounded board and will help grow your library and strengthen your community immeasurably. It is not an easy task, but worth the time and effort.