

March 2014 – Trustee Tip of the Month

Trustee Recruitment – Recommended Practices

One of the most important decisions the board makes is the choice of who will serve as a trustee on the library board.

Having a board policy that outlines the method by which new trustees will be chosen ensures building a balanced board of diverse members who can successfully work together to provide the highest quality library facilities and services based on community-defined needs.

A well-rounded board includes people from different areas of the county, members of different age-groups, race, gender, backgrounds, skills, and community influence. The recruitment process is an opportunity to reach out to a wider group of potential new trustees.

A recommended process to help create a well-rounded board includes these steps:

- Check your board bylaws and policies and follow the recruiting method as outlined in them, or revise these documents to reflect any changes in this process.
- Use an evaluation tool for creating a profile of the current board to identify needs gaps in board diversity and thus qualities to look for in a new trustee. An example of a tool: <http://kdla.ky.gov/librarians/trustees/Documents/Manual/Individual%20Worksheet.pdf>
- Study the library's strategic plan and the library's rating on the *KY Public Library Standards* to assess what areas of expertise might help in reaching future goals.
- Create a trustee job description or brochure outlining the library's mission, goals, trustee duties and desired characteristics for library board trustees.
- Create a list of criteria for the selection of the new trustee.
- Market the open trustee position in the library, in the newspaper, on Facebook, as well as asking people you know for suggestions.
- Use an application form and/or interviewing process to find the best match for the current library board goals and needs. The application will provide the applicant's experience, skills, and reason(s) for wanting to serve on the library board.
- Have one or more trustees review the applications and make recommendations to the board. Discussion of applicants and the selection of names to be submitted to the State Librarian and Commissioner may be held in an executive session.
- Once the decision has been made on the names to be submitted for the open position, contact each applicant and provide information on the status of the process, if s/he has not been chosen, and the possibility of consideration for future trustee openings.

The library board and director can provide an overview presentation for interested applicants highlighting the main duties of the board and what will be expected of the trustee in serving on the library board. Also, have the potential trustee attend a board meeting to get an idea of what to expect.

Recruiting and developing talented and committed individuals to serve on the library board can be a time-consuming task. Investing time and energy in the recruitment process will lead to a strong, diverse, and collegial board whose work and decisions create the best possible library for the community, and will provide the community, local officials, and legislators with a clear understanding of the process and demonstrates a commitment to govern in a culture of transparency and accountability.

For forms and tools to help you in your process please consult "Important Documents" at <http://kdla.ky.gov/librarians/trustees/Pages/default.aspx>