

ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE

OUTCOME

The library is an efficiently managed community resource that provides high-value library services to all through the effective stewardship of public funds.

OVERVIEW

GOVERNING AUTHORITY

Public libraries in Colorado are established as either:

- a municipal, county, or other government department, or joint library, or
- a separate governmental agency referred to as a library district.

MUNICIPAL, COUNTY, OR OTHER LIBRARIES

Public libraries that are part of an existing government entity, such as a town, county, and/or school system, report to the governing authority for the local entity (e.g., the city council, county board of commissioners, or other local leadership) and typically use the local governmental fiscal, human resources, facilities, technology, and other organizational systems. Municipal, county, and other local government department libraries have a board of trustees, a formal group of community members, that advises the library as defined by law (C.R.S. § 24-90-108). These boards may be “advisory” in nature as opposed to holding governing authority for the library. The scope of advisory library boards’ authority is set forth in local agreement or charter and varies locally.

Library staff generally are employees of the town or county though employment arrangements may vary based on local practices. Municipal, county, or other libraries may be subject to local reporting requirements in addition to those imposed by state law.

LIBRARY DISTRICTS

A library district is a governmental entity with its own governing authority, a board of trustees. The library district’s board includes responsibilities for fiduciary, facilities, and organizational systems. The library director reports to the library board of trustees, and staff are employees of the library district.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES

The powers and duties of public library boards of trustees are defined in the Colorado Revised Statutes, § 24-90-109, including additional responsibilities for library district boards.

Municipal, county, and other boards of trustees have a charter or other local agreement to distinguish the charge of the library board from that of the local government leadership. Because of local agreements, the municipal, county, and other library board’s responsibilities will vary; however, the checklists below provide key areas of accountability.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The library director brings the library vision, mission, and values to life. To this end, the director oversees staff, facilities, and operations. The library’s practices are defined in a set of policies adopted by the library board and administered by the library director.

ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE ESSENTIALS CHECKLIST FOR ALL PUBLIC LIBRARIES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- ☐ Earns the public trust by representing all members of the community, ensuring effective stewardship of public funds, and supporting the vitality of the library within the community.
- ☐ Complies with all relevant laws, including the Colorado public library statute specific to the Powers and duties of the board of trustees, C.R.S. § 24-90-109.
- ☐ Adopts and uses bylaws that outline the library board's purpose, roles, and operational procedures. The library board of trustees reviews bylaws at least every three years. Library Districts: Submit updated bylaws to the Colorado State Library as required by law, C.R.S. § 24-90-109(1)(a).
- ☐ Convenes regular, open board meetings in compliance with the Colorado Open Meetings ("Sunshine") law, C.R.S. §§ 24-6-401 & 402. The library director or a designee is present at all board meetings. Agendas are posted publicly in advance and written minutes are available to the public.
- ☐ Plans for and implements procedures for public transparency with all communications. Provides access to public records in compliance with Colorado Open Records Act (CORA). C.R.S. §§ 24-72-201 – 24-72-205.5.
- ☐ Represents the needs, interests, and aspirations of all residents in the community when guiding library policies, strategic planning, and other board responsibilities.
- ☐ Hires and supervises the library director, according to a written job description. (Municipal, County, Other Libraries: This responsibility may vary locally as outlined in a written charter or intragovernmental agreement of the local governing authority.)
 - ☐ Supervision includes developing and monitoring performance expectations for the library director and library that are then used in annual performance reviews.
 - ☐ Selects and supports the director that has or may earn a master's degree in library and information science (MLIS), public administration, business administration, and/or other related education, equivalent experience, and comparable skills to effectively direct all aspects of library operations.
 - ☐ Supports the Director in professional development.
 - ☐ Defers to the library director on all aspects of library operations, including the responsibilities for library staff supervision, collections, programs, and services.
- ☐ Secures adequate funding and practices responsible fiscal management of the public money, including oversight of financial management of the budget in alignment with the library's strategic plan, local, state, and federal laws, and local agreements. See also the Budget and Fiscal Standard for specific requirements and details.
- ☐ Enacts policies to ensure that all residents of the library service area have access to tax-supported public library services. Reviews and revises policies regularly based on local protocol and approves new policies. When necessary, use equity impact analysis and other assessments

to ensure fidelity with the core values of the library profession. (Municipal, County, Other Libraries: The policy responsibilities may vary locally as outlined in a written charter or intragovernmental agreement of the local governing authority.)

- ❑ Oversees all library property, including building(s), grounds, land purchases, contracts, etc. (Municipal, County, Other Libraries: This responsibility may vary locally as outlined in a written charter or intragovernmental agreement of the local governing authority.)
- ❑ Publishes an annual report and submits required data to the local government and the Colorado State Library in accordance with C.R.S. § 24-90-109(2) & (2.5). Distributes reports to community leaders, partners, and the public for additional transparency.
- ❑ Sets at least one annual goal for the board's continuing education and performance in alignment with the library's strategic plan and annually reviews the board's performance.
- ❑ Integrates annual board continuing education and performance related to the values and ethics of the library profession.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR

- ❑ Liaise between the governing authority and library staff, including communicating priorities to staff and sharing significant staff concerns that may inform governing decisions.
- ❑ Prepares and presents regular reports, budget updates, and recommendations to the library's board of trustees/governing authority.
- ❑ Hires and supervises library staff members who are representative of local community demographics.
- ❑ Manages the library daily by planning, organizing, and directing building and grounds maintenance, technology, collections, services, and programs for all people in the community.
- ❑ Upholds (with the help of staff) written policies and procedures for the library, including supervision, operations, fiscal matters, and services (See resources for library policies examples.)
- ❑ Writes and oversees procedures that align with policies and library professional ethics. Regularly reviews and revises policies and procedures, recommending new policies to the board when necessary. Ensures staff are trained to implement all policies and procedures.
- ❑ Maintains written emergency procedures, risk management plans, and other guidance for continuity of library operations.



4: Maria DeHerrera- Founder and Director of Conejos County Library District.

- ❑ Attends professional development to gain resources, skills, and strategies to improve the library. Participates annually in at least one regional, state, and/or other workshops and brings back ideas to implement that benefit library services to the community.
- ❑ Is a member of local organizations, especially those undertaking community priorities that align with the library's mission.
- ❑ Is a member of one or more library associations to support professional development.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES & DIRECTOR

- ❑ Develop a strategic plan for the future of the library with attention to sustainability and strengthening the community. (See the Evaluation and Planning Standard for more detail).
- ❑ Recruit qualified candidates for library board openings that reflect the demographics of the population served by the library. Uses state requirements (C.R.S. § 24-90-108) to coordinate appointments made by the local leadership.
- ❑ Orient and onboard new library board members with fidelity.
- ❑ Ensure public trust through transparent communications, public reports, and frequent communications with the community.
- ❑ Meet with elected officials, community leaders, and other stakeholders to share library impact stories and needs and gain information on other local organizations and community priorities. Convey the library's value to position the library as a vital community hub.
- ❑ Administer the library in accordance with state and local codes and ordinances, including Colorado Library Law, C.R.S. § 24-90-109.
- ❑ Comply with federal and state laws applicable to libraries, including but not limited to the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, Privacy of User Records (C.R.S. § 24-90-119), Colorado data security laws for government entities (C.R.S. §§ 24-73-101 – 24-73-103), Internet Protection in Public Libraries (C.R.S. § 24-90-601, et seq.), and the Science of Reading (C.R.S. § 24-90-121).
- ❑ Library Districts: Maintain adequate insurance covering property, cyber security, and other liability. Comply with legal requirements for records retention, contracts, budgeting, etc.

ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE ESSENTIALS + CHECKLIST FOR LARGER LIBRARIES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- ❑ Participate in the legislative and policy processes at the local, state, and national levels to strengthen the future of libraries.
- ❑ Prioritizes the selection of a director who has an MLIS and/or master's in public administration to effectively direct all aspects of library operations.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR

- ❑ Develops innovative processes and services, sharing freely with others to lead all public libraries into the future.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES & DIRECTOR

- ❑ Track effectiveness of library services and collections through administration and analysis of library data, user surveys, community feedback, and other assessment and evaluation tools and measures.



5: Library sign at the Baca Grande Library, Northern Saguache Library District.



6: Children enjoying an early literacy toy at the library.

BUDGET & FINANCE

OUTCOME

The community is enriched by a library that is sufficiently funded and transparently administered to meet and anticipate community needs.

OVERVIEW

Colorado public libraries receive an average of 93% of their funding from local tax revenues. Libraries earn the public trust by being accountable and transparent about the use of public funds. Libraries are proactive in these responsibilities and demonstrate transparency by reporting financial and performance information on a frequent, consistent, and reliable basis.

The library's governing authority seeks and secures funding from local taxes and other public and private sources. The library governing authority (library district board of trustees or city/county municipal, county, other government), in coordination with the director, monitors revenue and expenditures and allocates funds with integrity and to support library goals.

LIBRARY DISTRICTS

Library districts, as independent taxing authorities, follow additional fiscal policies and procedures consistent with state law that go beyond municipal, county, and other local library requirements. For this reason, this standard includes additional checklist items for library districts.

FUNDRAISING

Many libraries have separate fundraising strategies, such as a "Friends" group and/or foundation with a 501(C)(3) status. These organizations manage donations, grants, endowments, fundraising events, and/or other funding. These efforts allow for additional library offerings and are supplemental to local tax and other public funding.



7: Montrose Regional Library Bookmobile.

FINANCE & BUDGET ESSENTIALS CHECKLIST FOR ALL PUBLIC LIBRARIES

- ❑ Develop an annual budget based on the library's strategic plan and other key objectives for approval by the library governing authority. Library Districts: Comply with Colorado requirements outlined in law, C.R.S. § 24-90-109(1)(d); (e)(II); & (I)(II) and § 29-1-101, et seq., and the Department of Local Affairs Local Government Budget Calendar.
- ❑ Prepare and review monthly financial statements that include comparison to budgeted amounts and make financial information available to the public to ensure responsible and transparent use of funds.
- ❑ Establish policies and procedures for the library's financial management, including budgeting, purchasing approvals, procurement, contracts, reimbursement, petty cash, etc. Library Districts: Additional policies and procedures include records retention, budget processes, contracts, control of asset disposal, annual audits, reserve funds, etc.
- ❑ Maintain reliable bookkeeping software with scheduled funding updates, security, password access, and back up, rather than financial details saved on a single device.
- ❑ Prepare, review, and approve the budget. In coordination with the library director and other financial library staff, the governing authority approves the budget and expenditures and tracks expenditures and reports. Library Districts: The board of trustees approves the budget and large expenditures as defined by policy. Municipal, County, Other Libraries: The town and/or county governance oversees the budget and expenditures. The library board advises on and advocates for expenditures in alignment with the strategic plan.
- ❑ Use group purchases and collective bargaining opportunities to expend funds effectively and efficiently.
- ❑ Follow financial management guidelines and fiscal procedures consistent with federal and state law and local government requirements.
- ❑ Participate in the State Grants to Libraries program administered by the Colorado State Library.
- ❑ Develop a long-term finance plan (minimum three years) in conjunction with the library's strategic plan to identify resources that address future needs of the community. The long-term financial plan includes categories and amounts that are tracked and updated over time.
- ❑ Determine product life cycles when purchasing new products and budget for repairs and spare parts if the library is able to support any equipment beyond its warranty period.



8: The donor wall at Pine River Library.

- ❑ Contract with local and/or minority owned businesses when feasible.
- ❑ Library Districts: Commission and accept an independent financial audit as required by law for library districts. Municipal, County, Other Libraries: Participate in audits as required by the local library governing authority.
- ❑ Library Districts: Develop fund balance policies to always ensure appropriate levels of funds and in consideration of TABOR requirements when applicable; develop policies to address situations when funds are used as well as when targeted fund balances are not achieved.

BUDGET & FINANCE ESSENTIALS + CHECKLIST FOR LARGER LIBRARIES

- ❑ Explore local, state, and national fundraising opportunities, sponsorships, partnerships, grants, donations, and gifts for special projects or as a supplement to local funding.
- ❑ Establish financial policies and procedures, when relevant, to address audits, capital assets, investments, borrowing, etc.
- ❑ Analyze the budget and expenditures annually including using peer library comparison data, performance toward goals, and other standards and best practices.
- ❑ Engage with professional organizations that support development and resources in financial best practices, such as the Government Finance Officers Association and the Colorado Government Finance Officers Association.
- ❑ Encourage community financial contributions through Friends, foundations, philanthropists, and/or other organizations.
- ❑ Develop a capital infrastructure plan with a depreciation schedule for library assets, a multi-year capital replacement plan with estimated budget amounts for depreciation, and when appropriate, an established asset reserve account for replacement and construction costs.
- ❑ Foster a library culture of philanthropy and employee giving through events and systems, such as payroll deduction.



9: Cake pan collection at the Lamar Public Library.