

Free Educational Resources for Trustees

By Lisa Peet

For the past year and a half, Trustees' Corner has been featuring in-depth content by and about board members from all types of libraries nationwide. But we would be remiss if we didn't take time to highlight some of the quality free educational resources for trustees that can be found elsewhere.

United for Libraries (UFL), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), identifies itself as "the only national organization that supports those who support libraries"—trustees, Friends, and foundation members. Its Resources for Trustees page (www.ala.org/united/trustees) provides a range of solid Trustee 101 material.

This includes a series of organizational tools that board members will find informative and useful at any point in their careers, such as sample library director evaluations and the *Public Library Trustee Manual: A Template for Use by State Library Agencies and Public Libraries* (ow.ly/ev00309EIK5), developed by the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), which offers a basic overview of what an effective trustee and library advocate needs to know. For matters less quantifiable, the Public Library Trustee Ethics Statement (ow.ly/M5L6309Elwq) spells out some basic issues of integrity for board members to keep in mind.

A list of Sample Library Policies (www.ala.org/united/trustees/policies) offers useful up-to-date boilerplate for a range of subjects, from library ethics to whistle-blower policy to 3-D printing policies and procedures. UFL's tip sheets (www.ala.org/united/trustees/tipsheets) cover a variety of topics, from the role of library trustees to guidelines for evaluating the library director to "when Friends aren't friendly." "Hopefully, you'll never need it," noted UFL executive director Sally Gardner Reed, "but when you need it, you really need it."

While the group's Trustee Zone requires UFL membership to access, it holds a wealth of resources including UFL's newsletter *The Voice*, toolkits for trustees, practical guides that cover trustee self-evaluation and hiring outside experts, a series of presentations and workbooks about trustee-related advocacy issues, and the Ask a Trustee column. It also offers access to a number of Trustee Academy webinars, which, although requiring a small fee, may be subscribed to by state libraries; boards are encouraged to check whether their state has purchased a subscription before paying on an individual library basis.

Trustees who aren't members of UFL or ALA can still take part in the UFL Listserv. To join, send an email to sympa@lists.ala.org. In the subject line of your message type "subscribe trustees," followed by your first and last name, and leave the body of the message blank (remove any

automatic signature). You should receive a welcome email; once you respond, you can set up a password and begin receiving messages and posting to the group, as well as gaining access to the Listserv archive.

LOCAL HEROES

UFL also provides a comprehensive list of links to state library resources (ow.ly/crd6309GsS5), including state-specific trustee guidelines. Although board regulations vary slightly by state, several state library organizations have extensive guidelines that can serve as a useful starting point for trustees anywhere.

The most recent edition of the *Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State* (ow.ly/wlMz309Flya), codeveloped by Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, coordinator of library sustainability for the Mid-Hudson Library System, Poughkeepsie, NY, and a 2010 *Library Journal* Mover & Shaker, has been referred to as "the definitive guidance for library trustees."

The 106-page Trustee Facts File (ow.ly/v2LH309Eph7), issued by the Illinois Library Association and Illinois State Library, goes beyond the details of basic trustee responsibilities to discuss issues around intellectual freedom, budgeting and financial management, facilities, continuing education for trustees, and advocacy.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's "Trustee Essentials" (ow.ly/v0wF309FK1A) offers a solid and applicable overview of topics such as bylaws, how to run an effective board meeting, hiring a library director, and policy development.

EDUCATION FOR ALL

Advocacy is an increasingly important responsibility for all members of library organizations, particularly trustees. A good resource for national advocacy actions and history is EveryLibrary (everylibrary.org), a national nonprofit political action committee for libraries. Among other efforts, EveryLibrary worked to defeat LB969 last year, a bill that would have dismantled library boards of trustees in Nebraska; the website provides detailed narratives of library campaigns across the country that can serve as examples of what to do (and sometimes what to watch out for).

WebJunction, a program of OCLC Research, offers a number of resources aimed at trustees and Friends groups (ow.ly/otHG309GF64) as part of its professional development series. Most of the past webinars are available as archived recordings—viewers are asked to log in to WebJunction's free Course Catalog—or as slide decks.

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