

Trustee FAQ

Disclaimer: This document is a brief, informal, non-technical description of the role of trustee at the Lisle Library District. It is not an official document of the Lisle Library District and has not been approved by the Board of Trustees. While intended as a useful introductory guide, there is no claim that it free of factual errors or omissions.

I. About the LLD Board of Trustees

a. Who are the Trustees, and what is the Board?

The Board consists of seven elected or appointed district residents who collectively "own" the library, in trust of the public, with the responsibility to see that it serves the public's needs and interests. Our most important functions include hiring the Director, evaluating the Director, writing and maintaining policies in response to state statutes and best public library practices, approving budgets and spending, and strategic planning.

A trustee is an official of the State of Illinois, and must swear an oath to uphold the constitution of the State of Illinois and the United States constitution.

Trustees serve without compensation.

b. Who are the current members of the Board?

Please visit our [web site](#).

c. How does someone obtain a seat on the Board?

Ordinarily, one is elected in the consolidated elections in April of odd-numbered years. This principally requires collecting and filing signatures from at least 50 registered voters of the district in order to appear on the ballot. Candidates can choose 2- or 4- year terms.

When a vacancy occurs, state statutes allow current trustees to appoint the replacement. LLD announces the vacancy, solicits applications, conducts interviews and appoints from the interview pool.

d. What do LLD trustees do?

The main requirement is to attend Board meetings, usually the second Wednesday of each month, beginning at 7:30pm.

Meeting packets prepare the trustees meaningfully to participate in Board discussions. Each packet contains an agenda, minutes from the Board and committee meetings that were held during the previous month, reports from the Director and Assistant Director, reports from the department heads (Circulation, Adult Services, Technical Services and Youth Services - these are quarterly), investment

activity report, financial statement and the Treasurer's report. Packets are available in trustee mailboxes at least 48 hours prior to each meeting, and usually by the evening of the previous Friday.

Additionally, trustees usually serve on one or more committees. Our standing trustee committees are Physical Plant, Personnel Policies and Finance; and our current ad hoc committees, which include trustees and staff, are Facilities Steering committee, Financial Goals and Information Stewardship.

Committees typically meet on Wednesday evenings when the Board is not in session, but occasionally other days and times, depending on trustee availability.

Note that committees study issues and offer recommendations to the Board, but do not take binding actions.

e. What is the difference between the Board and the Administration?

The Board is responsible for accountability, in a broad sense, and for writing policies; the Director handles administrative implementation of policies and staff management.

Trustees are not LLD employees, and the Director is not a trustee of LLD.

Trustees should not be involved in the day-to-day running of the library. This includes personnel matters, such as promotion, evaluation, hiring, termination, and assignments; budgeting of individual departments; selection of materials; and choice of programs or presentations. Conversely, the Director does not have a vote in Board or committee meetings, does not choose committee members or appoint committee chairs or Board officers. Although the Director proposes agendas for Board and committee meetings, the committee chairs, who are trustees, preside at meetings and have final authority over agendas.

But there is always some overlap. The Board may ask the Director's opinion about best practices, or the most effective policy to satisfy a certain statute; and the Director may solicit the advice of one or more trustees regarding the administrative implications of a policy revision.

In practice, the line separating Board from Administration is constantly being renegotiated, depending on the current Director, the make-up of the Board and the issue at hand.

f. What is the orientation process for new trustees?

We are currently developing a uniform process, but important elements of any orientation include online training on the Open Meetings Act and discussions of current board and committee projects, ethics and values, administrative versus board functions and parliamentary process.

g. What development opportunities are provided for trustees?

LLD pays for certain journal subscriptions, conference registration, and professional memberships for trustees.

II. Laws and Statutes

a. What is the Open Meetings Act?

As a unit of government, the Board of Trustees owns the library in trust of the public. This includes the power to tax and spend. The public therefore has a right to attend our meetings, observe our deliberations and, within limits, express their opinions and concerns. (Exceptions include Board discussions about personnel and disciplinary matters.) Importantly, this also imposes an obligation on trustees not to negotiate, persuade, or in any other way discuss the public's business with each other "behind closed doors." The Open Meetings Act defines the meaning, terms, conditions and limits of this responsibility.

It is essential that each trustee become familiar with the provisions of the Open Meeting Act.

b. What is a "library district"?

Most libraries have boundaries entirely within a municipality, and legally are divisions within the municipal government. These municipal libraries, such as Naperville, Downers Grove and Aurora, are ultimately accountable to the authority of city hall and the mayor. Other libraries have boundaries within more than one municipality; Lisle, for example, extends into parts of unincorporated Naperville and Woodridge. For this reason we are a library district.

Each type of organization has its own distinctive features:

	Municipal	District
Revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operating funds are allocated by the municipality• Budgets are approved by city hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Board levies taxes on its own authority• Board approves budget and B&A
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trustees are appointed by, and can be removed by, the mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trustees are elected by voters, or, in cases of vacancy, appointed by the current Board

On balance, LLD is very glad to be a library district.

c. Which state official regulates public libraries?

We file an annual report, the IPLAR (Illinois Public Library Annual Report), with the Illinois Secretary of State, which gives information on our hours of operation, finances, property and other essentials.