



Building a Trustee Toolbox

**An Orientation Kit
For Public Library Directors**

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INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dear Georgia Public Library Director,

It is my conviction that knowledgeable trustees are essential to smooth functioning of the board-director team in governing and managing a public library system. Conflicts that occur between the Board and the Director are often the result of role confusion or lack of understanding of the difference between policy making and administration. This kit is designed to help you start your library board members on the right track, so that you and the board can work effectively in the best interest of the library and your community.

This toolkit was developed as a directed independent study project through Valdosta State University's Department of Information Studies. It would not have been possible without support and guidance from the following people:

- **Dr. Lamar Veatch**, State Librarian, Georgia Public Library Service, Atlanta
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- **Steve Schaefer**, Director, Uncle Remus Regional Library System, Madison

Finally, I want to acknowledge Chestatee Regional Library System, Dawsonville. It was there that I had the opportunity to work with many trustees over the years and learned much of what serves as the foundation for this work.

Lyn Hopper

Assistant State Librarian for Library Development
Georgia Public Library Service
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HOW TO USE THIS ORIENTATION KIT

This kit is designed to help you plan and conduct an orientation session for new trustees as they are appointed to the library board. On the following pages, you will find a bulleted list to help you organize for the orientation, a sample agenda for your session, divider pages, and handouts that you can tailor to your own needs.

Think

First, spend some time thinking about your library board and what a new member might need to know to quickly and successfully integrate and be productive. Often, individuals appointed to the library board know little about your library, libraries in Georgia, or library issues and concerns.

1. What is the new board member's background? How much experience have they had with your library or other public libraries?
2. What information will the new board member need immediately in order to do his or her job?
3. How can you make the most of the brief orientation period by providing the most essential information and tools?

Review

Next, review the materials offered in this kit and consider whether and how they should be adapted for your use.

4. Which pieces of the kit are appropriate for your use?
5. How will you adapt the materials to be most relevant to your audience and your library?
6. What's missing that you will need to supply?

Assemble

Consider questions 2 and 6 above to determine what you need to gather to complete the board orientation packet. This may provide a good opportunity to organize some of your existing materials (e.g., pull together all library policies into a policy handbook), create useful documents (e.g., write a one-page history of the library system), develop a presentation about your library system, or update library promotional pieces (such as your general brochure).

7. Are there items you need to organize, create, or update that will be useful in the future?
8. What library system information will be most important in helping the new trustee learn more about the job?
9. What information should be set aside to cover later? (You don't want to overwhelm the new board member!)

Plan

Advance planning will help ensure a successful orientation that builds your new board member's confidence. The board chair, and perhaps other board members, should be involved in the planning and delivery of the orientation session. While the director serves as an important resource for the new trustee, the board chair and other board members are his or her peer group. They can make the new trustee feel a part of the group and provide behavioral modeling. A special invitation to the orientation from the board chair is a nice touch.

10. Use the planning checklist included in the kit on p 6.

11. Determine the time, place, and duration of the orientation session *with the new trustee's convenience in mind*. Note that the sample agenda on p. 12 is for a 3- to 4-hour session, but you may need to plan a shorter (or longer) session, depending on your situation.
12. Involve the board chair and/or other board members in the planning as well as in the session itself.
13. Develop your agenda and assign responsibilities.

Implement

Once you have given some thought to the orientation, reviewed the kit, assembled your own materials, and planned the session, you are ready for the event. Then, it's show time!

14. Arrive early to be sure everything is ready.
15. Present yourself as relaxed, but enthusiastic.
16. Have fun!

Evaluate and Follow Up

Use the feedback from your orientation session to plan future sessions. Observe the new trustees as they interact with others and participate in board meetings. This will inform your evaluation of the orientation's effectiveness.

Don't assume the trustee will leave the orientation session completely prepared to do his or her job! Before the trustee leaves the orientation, you may want to establish a follow-up time when you will meet the new board member again to answer any questions or provide more information. This might be a lunch meeting and involve others you would like the trustee to meet, for example, the president of your Friends of the Library group, or key library staff.

17. Set a follow-up time to meet with the new trustee.
18. Observe the new trustee as he or she works with the board during the year.
19. Use the information you gather from the evaluation and your observation to plan the next orientation session.

PLANNING CHECKLIST

Things to Consider

- What are your major objectives for the session? Begin with the end in mind.
- Who should be involved in conducting the orientation session?
- How long should the session last? Will a meal be included? Will there be time for a library tour?
- What are the best day of the week and time of day for the trustee(s)?
- Has the trustee ever served on other nonprofit or governmental boards? What other boards is the trustee on now?
- What else do you know about the trustee that will help you get acquainted?
- What are the current issues facing the library system? Are there any problems the trustee(s) should be aware of?
- Do you have an up-to-date policy handbook?

Things to Assemble

- Materials listed in this kit
- Notebooks or other means of organizing the materials
- Library policies or policy handbook
- Pencils and/or pens
- Overview of the library system (brief PowerPoint or other promotional presentation that is used with local groups)
- Equipment needed
- Other supplies needed (e.g., flip chart and markers)
- Examples (or gift copies) of professional books and materials for trustees (e.g., a copy of *The Successful Library Trustee Handbook*, by Mary Y. Moore)
- Trustee name badge(s) if your library provides them
- Promotional items as giveaways (e.g., library tote bags)
- Refreshments

Things to Remember

- Schedule the meeting space.
- Invite the trustee(s) well in advance.
- Remind trustee(s) a few days before the session.
- Coordinate the presentation with board chair, staff, or other presenters.
- Alert staff to the event.

Conducting the Session

- Point out rest rooms and adjust the thermostat as needed for the comfort of the group.
- To maintain interest, alternate presenters.
- At the beginning of the session, have participants introduce themselves and tell why they agreed to serve on the library board (and/or share something else about themselves).
- Emphasize the importance of the trustee's job, but make the workshop fun.
- Leave plenty of time for questions.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS FOR ORIENTATION PACKET

The orientation packet is for use at the session, but also for the trustee’s reference later. Here is one suggested organization outline for the orientation materials and agenda:

- Getting Started: Welcome, Objectives, Agenda
- About the Library Board: Trustee Responsibilities, Meetings and Logistics, Recent History
- About the Library System: History, Organization, Direction and Plans, Funding and Budget, Benchmarks and Statistics, Policies
- Relationships: Director’s Responsibilities and Background, Friends/Foundations, Media and Community Relations
- Next Steps: Continuing Education, Orientation Feedback

Following are some suggested materials to be included in the orientation packet. Be sure to write in the materials you want to include about your local library system and any others appropriate for your situation.

Getting Started

- Section Divider (p. 9)
- Welcome & Just the Facts (p. 10)
- Objectives (p. 11)
- Agenda (p. 12)
- Library Board Quiz (p. 13)
- Other _____

About the Library Board

- Section Divider (p. 15)
- Board Member Job Description (sample in Appendix G of *Tools for Trustees* manual)
- Constitution & Bylaws
- Board Roster
- Schedule of Board Meetings
- Minutes for the Previous Year
(Note: In a system with more than one board, you may want to include the governing board documents as well—or all board documents.)
- Other _____

About the Library System

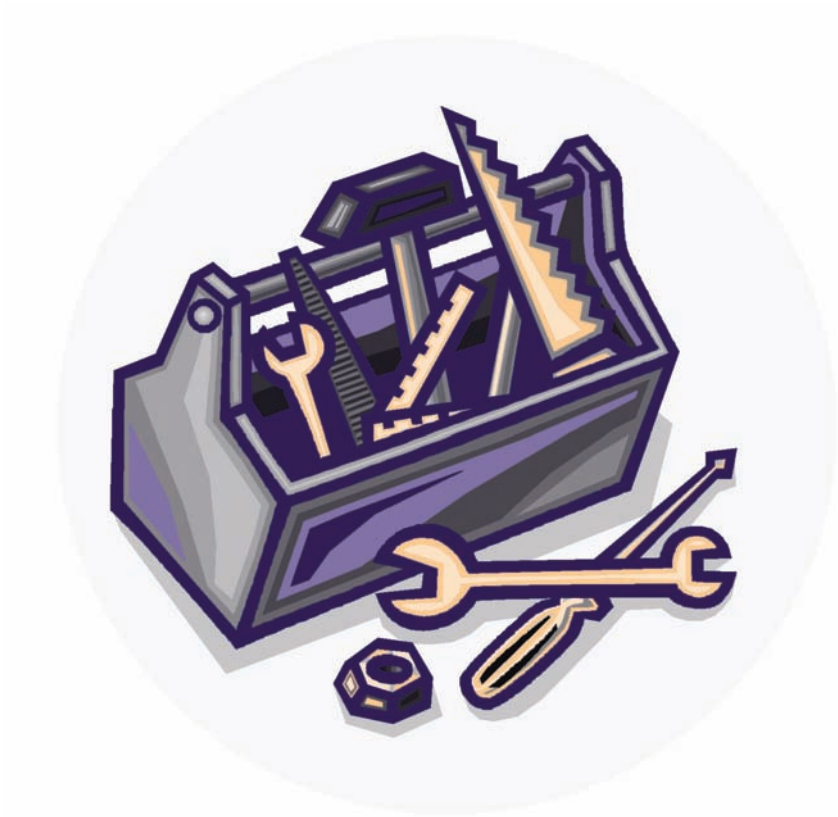
- Section Divider (p. 16)
 - Summary Page (p. 17, or substitute your Library Fact Sheet)
 - History
 - Organization Chart
 - Strategic or Library Action Plan
 - Current Budget
 - Latest Publications (newsletters, annual reports, fact sheets, brochures)
 - Statistical Information (current as well as showing trends over time)
 - Policies
 - Other _____
-
-

Relationships

- Section Divider (p. 18)
 - Director's Job Description
 - Director's Résumé
 - Friends of the Library membership form
 - Community Surveys
 - Other _____
-
-

Next Steps

- Section Divider (p. 19)
 - Library Board Quiz Answer Key (p 20)
 - For More Information... (p. 21)
 - Orientation Feedback Survey (p. 22)
 - Other _____
-
-



Getting Started

WELCOME TO THE LIBRARY BOARD!

Thank you for accepting an appointment to the Library's Board of Trustees! Your engaged and informed board service will enhance the lives of the people in your community for years to come.

We hope you will find public library trusteeship a rewarding and interesting assignment. This orientation packet and the accompanying *Tools for Trustees: the Georgia Public Library Trustee Manual* will help you get acquainted with your new job. Please don't hesitate to ask if you have questions about any of this material. Librarians are in the information business, and we want to connect you with the resources you need to be successful. Thanks again for serving your community in this important role.

Just the Facts

Trustee Name _____

Name of Board _____

Appointing Agency _____

Date of Appointment _____

Term of Office _____ to _____
beginning date *ending date*

Library Director _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Address & Phone of Library _____

_____ Phone _____

Notes _____

Objectives of Orientation

Library director's objectives:

- To acquaint the new trustee with the library system, the board chair, and the director.
 - To help the trustee understand basic responsibilities of the job.
 - To raise the trustee's awareness of additional resources for more information.
 - Other: _____
-

Trustee's learning objectives:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

SAMPLE AGENDA

**[name] Library Board of Trustees
Orientation Agenda
[date, time]
[place]**

- 8:45 Refreshments
- 9:00 Welcome & Introductions [name], Library Board Chair
[name], Library System Director
- 9:15 Library Board Quiz [pre-assessment]
- 9:30 Review Agenda and Objectives
- 9:45 Your Trustee Toolbox [review materials]
Orientation Notebook
Tools For Trustees: The Georgia Public Library Trustee Manual
[Other: e.g., Library Card]
- 10:00 Introduction to the Library System [this could be a brief PowerPoint or other presentation about the library that is used with outside groups]
- 10:15 Break
- 10:30 The Library System Library System Director
Services
History
Organization
Funding and Budget
- 11:00 The Library Board of Trustees Board Chair
Your Job as a Board Member [may want to use Chapter III of *Tools for Trustees*]
Board Organization and Meetings
Expectations of Trustees
- 11:30 Questions and Answers
[Library Board Quiz can be used as a post-assessment here or you may just review answers]
- 12:00 Library Tour
- 12:30 Lunch [optional—perhaps provided by a local business or the Friends of the Library]

LIBRARY BOARD QUIZ

True or False

- _____ 1. My library system has only one governing board of trustees.
- _____ 2. The governing board for the library system is responsible for setting library policy.
- _____ 3. The minimum educational requirement for a professional librarian in Georgia is a Bachelor's degree.
- _____ 4. Library boards must adhere to the state open meetings law.
- _____ 5. The library director appoints trustees to the board.

Multiple Choice *(Circle ALL answers that apply.)*

- 1. A board can go into "executive session"
 - a. to discuss a particular personnel issue
 - b. to discuss a policy decision
 - c. to hear a complaint about a book
 - d. to vote on a hiring decision
- 2. Which of the following local government agencies provide local tax support for public libraries in Georgia?
 - a. city governments
 - b. county governments
 - c. local boards of education
 - d. area planning & development authorities
- 3. What is (are) the major function(s) of library trustees in Georgia?
 - a. approve library policies
 - b. act as advocates for the library at budget time
 - c. hold fundraisers or solicit donations to provide "extras" for the library
 - d. make recommendations regarding hiring or supervision of personnel
- 4. What is (are) the major function(s) of library directors in Georgia?
 - a. suggest library policies
 - b. act as advocates for the library at budget time
 - c. manage day-to-day operations of the library
 - d. make decisions regarding hiring or supervision of personnel
- 5. What is (are) the major function(s) of Friends of the Library groups in Georgia?
 - a. suggest library policies
 - b. act as advocates for the library at budget time
 - c. hold fundraisers or solicit donations to provide "extras" for the library
 - d. make recommendations regarding hiring or supervision of personnel

Fill in the Blank

1. My library system serves the following county(ies): _____

2. Board meetings are held _____ times a year for the board on which I serve.
3. My board appointment is for a _____ -year term.
4. One place I can turn for more information is _____

I Need to Know More About

1. The Library Board, specifically:
2. The Library System, specifically:
3. The Library Director, specifically:
4. The Community, specifically:

[Answers to True Or False and Multiple Choice questions can be found on page 29.]



About the Library Board



About the Library System

ABOUT THE LIBRARY SYSTEM

Official Name _____

County(ies) Served _____

Board(s) _____

Funding Agency(ies) _____

Fiscal Year runs from _____ to _____
(month, day) *(month, day)*

Funding for the Current Fiscal Year (FY20xx)

State Funding \$ _____

Local Funding \$ _____

Generated Income (fines, fees) \$ _____

Gifts and donations \$ _____

TOTAL Library System Budget \$ _____

Usage Statistics for the Last Fiscal Year (FY20xx)

Registered Borrowers _____ as % of population _____

Circulation (Check-outs) _____ per capita _____

Library Visits _____ per capita _____

Program Attendance _____ per capita _____

Other _____

Notes and Other Information _____



Relationships



Next Steps

LIBRARY BOARD QUIZ ANSWER KEY

True or False

1. True. Even though multi-county systems have boards representing each county, the regional board is the governing board for all library activity throughout the service area.
2. True. The library director and/or staff usually draft policy documents, but the governing board must understand, approve, and uphold those policies.
3. False. A professional librarian in Georgia must hold a Master's degree in Library Science from an institution accredited by the American Library Association.
4. True. The open meetings law applies to all boards and committees of those boards. Also, the library director or his or her designee must be present at all library board and board committee meetings.
5. False. Appointments are made by local taxing agencies (cities, counties, or school boards) that financially support the library on an ongoing basis.

Multiple Choice

1. The only correct answer is a, to discuss a particular personnel issue. No voting may take place in a closed ("executive") session.
2. a, b, and c. Cities, counties, and school boards may provide ongoing tax support to libraries.
3. a and b. Boards of trustees generally do not engage in fundraising. The hiring and supervision of personnel is typically delegated to the library director (except for the hiring and supervision of the director).
4. a, b, c, and d. Note that for b (budget advocacy), directors are usually less effective than trustees, Friends of the Library, and library users. Library directors and staff are seen as having a vested interest, whereas others are seen as representing the interests of the community.
5. b and c. It is not ever appropriate for Friends groups to get involved in management (personnel) or governance (policy) of the library.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Organizations

- American Library Association, American Library Trustee Association (ALTA), at <http://www.ala.org/ala/alta/alta.cfm>
- Friends of Georgia Libraries (FOGL), at <http://www.georgia-friends.org/>
- Georgia Library Association (GLA), Trustees, Friends & Advocates Division, at <http://gla.georgialibraries.org/>

Resources for New Board Members

- Your library system director
- Your library board chair and other trustees
- *Tools for Trustees: The Georgia Public Library Trustee Manual* at <http://www.georgialibraries.org/lib/publications/trusteemanual/>
- TRUSTEES-L electronic discussion list (join at <http://www.georgialibraries.org/trustees/>)
- The Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) Web site, at <http://www.georgialibraries.org/>
- *The Successful Library Trustee Handbook*, by Mary Y. Moore (American Library Association, 2005). Available on loan from Georgia Public Library Service.

Additionally, many articles, books, organizations and Web sites are listed in the Resources section of *Tools for Trustees: The Georgia Public Library Trustee Manual*.

BOARD ORIENTATION FEEDBACK SURVEY

Name of System: _____

Date of Orientation: _____

Please give us your reaction to the orientation session so that we may continue to provide useful orientation to new board members.

	Very Useful	Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful
ORIENTATION MATERIALS	1	2	3	4
PRESENTATION	1	2	3	4
DISCUSSION, Q&A	1	2	3	4
LIBRARY TOUR	1	2	3	4

Was the orientation period:

- _____ too long?
- _____ too short or rushed?
- _____ adequate?

What was MOST HELPFUL about your orientation?

What was LEAST HELPFUL about your orientation?

What will you do next to learn your job as a library trustee?

Do you have suggestions for additional materials or ways to improve orientation?

ORIENTATION KIT FEEDBACK SURVEY

Please give us your feedback and suggestions for improving this kit.

	Very Useful	Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful
HOW TO USE THIS KIT	1	2	3	4
PLANNING CHECKLIST	1	2	3	4
SUGGESTED MATERIALS FOR ORIENTATION PACKET	1	2	3	4
DIVIDER PAGES	1	2	3	4
SAMPLE HANDOUTS	1	2	3	4
ORIENTATION KIT (OVERALL)	1	2	3	4

What did you like best about the kit?

What did you find least useful?

Do you have suggestions for additional materials in the kit that would be helpful to you?

What other ideas do you have for making the kit more useful to you?

Thanks for your feedback and suggestions!

Please send your completed feedback form to lhopper@georgialibraries.org or mail or fax to:
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