

New Wisconsin Public Library Standards Released

By *Bradley Shipps, director*
Outagamie Waupaca Library System

The sixth edition of the Wisconsin Public Library Standards was released in April 2018. You can find it at: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/library-standards>. This new set of standards has been completely revised. Here are some highlights from the changes:

This edition is more concise. Based on feedback received from the public library community, this edition of the Standards has been curtailed to contain only the information pertinent to public library standards. Important information included in past editions, such as planning, can be found in other resources offered by the Public Library Development team and other professional sources. The new edition includes the following categories:

- Statutory requirements
- System membership requirements
- Governance
- Administration of the library
- Funding
- Staffing
- Collections and resources
- Programs and services
- Public relations
- Access
- Facility

Each standard is presented as a statement, allowing the library to easily determine whether it meets the criteria.

Technology standards have been integrated into the other categories.

The Standards Task Force deliberated over whether or not to have a separate section of technology standards, as was found in the public



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library standards documents from other states. However, the task force determined that when technology standards were introduced in earlier editions, it was to encourage implementation of various technologies in libraries. Today, technology tools are now integrated into even the most basic of library services. As such, any standards relating to technology have been incorporated into other categories.

Quantitative standards are more granular. For many public libraries, the past model for quantitative standards was not granular enough to prove useful. The new model introduced in this edition provides the granularity necessary for libraries to more accurately assess their levels of service.

Standards have a tiered structure. Perhaps the most significant change in this edition of the Public Library Standards is the application of a tiered structure for the qualitative as well as the quantitative standards. There are three levels of service:

- Tier One – The minimum services that should be available to all residents of the state.
- Tier Two – An expansion of services beyond the basic.
- Tier Three – The highest level of service.

How should you use the standards? The standards are a guide and a self-evaluation tool to compare your library to similar libraries, identify strengths, and recognize areas where service can be improved. Use your results to inform planning decisions, to develop community pride in your strengths, and to build community support for service improvements.

Wisconsin Library Trustee Training Week 2018



The Fifth Annual Wisconsin Trustee Training Week will be August 13-27. Each day at noon there will be a one-hour online information session you can attend from office or home, or on the go. All library board trustees, staff, volunteers, and Friends group members are welcome to participate. There is no charge, and the webinars will be recorded. What's a webinar? It's like a seminar, but instead of traveling to it, it travels to you. You can access webinars using your PC, tablet, or smartphone.

This year's great lineup consists of:

- **Mon., Aug. 13**
Orientation for New Library Board Trustees
- **Tues., Aug. 14**
Effective Boards Have Effective Meetings!
- **Wed., Aug. 15**
From Advocate to Activist
- **Thurs., Aug. 16**
Wisconsin Public Library Standards, 6th Edition for Trustees
- **Fri., Aug. 17**
Crafting Your Library's Story with Data

For more information and registration go to <http://www.wistrusteetraining.com/>

Fall Trustee Workshops

Winnefox will be presenting two workshops for trustees this fall. These sessions are open to any library trustee. Information is at the links below.

Trustee 201 : The Library Board as Employer

Tues., Oct. 2, 1–3 p.m., Berlin Public Library

Register at <https://extranet.winnefox.org/ce/Trustee201-Berlin>

Trustee 301 : Wisconsin Open Meetings and Public Records Laws

Wed., Oct. 10, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m., Ripon Public Library

Register at <https://extranet.winnefox.org/ce/Trustee301-Ripon>

Public Records and Library Trustees

By Mark Arend, Assistant Director
Winnefox Library System

As you know, Wisconsin law requires that all records, correspondence, and other documents created or received by public entities be kept for a specified length of time and, in most cases, must be released to anyone asking for them. Usually this doesn't affect library trustees, as records are kept and maintained by the library director or the municipal clerk.

Most discussions of public records are aimed at institutional custodians—the library director or clerk—but an article in the January 2018 issue of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities magazine, *The Municipality*, is a little different. It takes a look at records that are held or created by individual officials, like library trustees.

There isn't room here to go into the ins and outs of the public records law, but there are a few points to remember:

1. Whether or not something is a record is determined by content, not format. The written word, audio recordings, and video recordings can all be public records. An email or text message relating to library business would usually be considered correspondence and treated no differently than a letter on paper.
2. Multiple copies of documents distributed to the board are not considered records. Only the original, which is kept in the library files, is a record.
3. Who has the duty of maintaining a record depends on where the record originated and the topic.
 - a. As a public official, anything you create relating to library business is a public record and must be kept by the creator.
 - b. You must also keep documents, such as correspondence, you receive from members of the public or from other agencies.

For the most part, records you need to be concerned about will be correspondence of some type: letters (or email) received by you from members of the public

and your response, email and texts between trustees, or correspondence you engage in on behalf of the board.

While there are no clear guidelines as to how long you must retain these records the League of Municipalities recommends you keep them at least as long as you are a trustee.



Our suggestion is that the library create a file to collect records of individual trustees. Any correspondence, or other record, you create, send, or receive would be copied and deposited in this file to be maintained in the same way as other library records. You would not need to worry about keeping the official record but could then dispose of your personal copy as you please. Any requests could be referred to the library for action.

You can read this article online on the League's site: <http://www.lwm-info.org/828/The-Municipality-Magazine>. It will be available there for one year, until January 2019.

Trustee Essentials 15: The Library Board and the Public Records Law has further information on the Public Records Law <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/pld/pdf/TE15.pdf>

The Department of Justice's Office of Open Government has detailed information on this law <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/office-open-government/office-open-government-resources>

FAQ

Our village clerk attends library board meetings and would like to vote. Can she?

No. Only trustees appointed by the village president and approved by the village board (or those appointed by the county chair and county board) have voting rights. We sometimes are asked a similar question about members of the city council appointed as a “liaison” to the library board. The answer is the same: only properly-appointed library trustees can vote.

Save the Dates – 2018

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Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Annual Conference Oct. 23-26

Radisson Hotel La Crosse and La Crosse Center

Wisconsin Trustee Training Week

Aug. 13 – 17, online.

Have questions?

Contact us and we'll try to help.

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If you have questions, comments or suggestions for future articles, send them to:

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