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NCPLDA

North Carolina
Public Library Directors Association

GUIDELINES FOR NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC LIBRARIES 1998

Adopted Nov. 13, 1998

INTRODUCTION

The North Carolina Public Library Director's Association (NCPLDA) appointed a committee in December 1996 "to review the 1987 *Standards for North Carolina Public Libraries* and to update them as necessary with a particular emphasis on the impact of computer and other technologies on public library buildings and services." The Committee's responsibilities included:

> 1. to solicit input from the membership regarding possible changes.
>
> 2. to review public library standards from other states to see if they should be adopted in North Carolina
>
> 3. to provide a draft document for approval by NCPLDA.

The Committee began its work with a first meeting on February 7, 1997.

Input to the Committee came from the NCPLDA membership both formally and informally throughout the process. Public library standard and guideline documents from other states were reviewed, as were writings about standards in the library press (see the bibliography in Appendix A for items used). Of particular interest to the Committee was the work of the Public Library Association's (PLA) ReVision committee charged with updating and revising an earlier planning document, *Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries* (ALA: Chicago, 1987). This work resulted in the recent publication of *Planning for Results; A Public Library Transformation Process* (Himmel & Wilson, ALA: Chicago, 1998). The new publication continues PLA's emphasis on planning services based on community

needs. It emphasizes more strongly the need for measures of success showing the difference that a public library makes in its community.

Over a period of many months, the Committee deliberated about the purpose of public library standards in North Carolina and the anticipated use such standards would receive. The Committee chose to call the resulting document "Guidelines" rather than "Standards" realizing that each community is unique in many ways and that it is the professional responsibility of the public library director in conjunction with other decision makers in the community to determine appropriate levels of service.

What we offer in this document is our best judgment of important minimum levels of resources and activities necessary to achieve the shared common purpose of all public libraries to provide access to information contained in books and other media for all community members. The Committee struggled to accommodate the differing needs of small, medium and large public library systems and individual branches. The resulting eight categories of requirements are similar to those in the 1988 document and to those of other states.

Members of the Committee embrace the concept of designing special service responses for unique community needs. We encourage public libraries to explore possible service responses and to tailor these to their own communities. To this end, we have solicited peer institutions in the State who have established reputations for excellence for service in particular areas. We have asked each one to write a brief description of the selected service response in a standard format. We append these descriptions as concrete examples and encourage other libraries to design their own service responses in the spirit of PLA's approach. These descriptions are provided in Appendix C.

The Committee that has provided these new guidelines includes dedicated library professional from small, medium and large public libraries, as well as representatives from the library/information educational community and the State Library. These individuals are:

- o Dr. Evelyn Daniel, School of Information and Library Science, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill *(daniel@ils.unc.edu)*

- o Kem Ellis, Director, High Point Public Library *(kem.ellis@ci.high-point.nc.us)*

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- o Beth Mueller, Director, Appalachian Regional Library (no longer at Appalachian Regional)

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- o Caroline (Cal) Shepard, Chief, Library Development Section, State Library of North Carolina (no longer at the State Library)

- o William Snyder, Director, Henderson County Public Library *(wsnyder@henderson.lib.nc.us)*

- o Jerry Thrasher, (Chair), Director, Cumberland County Public Library & Information Center *(thrasher@cumberland.lib.nc.us)*

We urge public library directors, trustees, local government officials, and the general public to use these guidelines and suggested service responses to reach beyond today's needs. Your planning for your public library must adapt to an environment of constant technological, informational, and societal change. This publication will give library administrators and governing boards useful guidelines to help develop your local level of public library service well into the first decade of the 21st century.

/s/ Jerry Thrasher

PLANNING

Long and short range planning is essential if a library is to be effective in serving the needs of its constituency. Library Board and Director share the responsibility for ensuring that a regular planning cycle is maintained and that the community is represented in the planning process. Ideally, the library's planning process is part of a larger community planning effort.

1. The library completes a formal study to determine community needs for services at least once every five years and uses the Public Library Association's planning documents to select appropriate service responses.

2. The library has a written long range plan, approved by the governing board and available for public inspection, which includes:

   a. a statement of mission and goals that clearly describe the purpose of the library, its role in the community, its vision for the future,

   b. specific strategies for achieving the vision, and

   c. measurable objectives for evaluating progress towards reaching the goals.

3. The library documents use, conducts surveys, and uses other appropriate measures to monitor effectiveness and efficiency in meeting objectives.

4. The Library Board and the library administration review and update the long range plan annually and evaluate the library's performance on the basis of stated objectives and the North

Carolina Public Library Guidelines.

GOVERNANCE

North Carolina law provides for the establishment and maintenance of public libraries (General Statutes of North Carolina, article 14, chapter 153-A) Government officials, library boards, librarians and library staff should be familiar with the legal provisions affecting library service (see Appendix B).

North Carolina libraries operate under a number of different administrative structures that include both governing and advising boards. Local situations will impact how these guidelines are implemented.

1. The library board has a written set of by-laws, approved and reviewed annually, that define the responsibilities and authority of the board and prescribe the conduct of its meetings.

2. Board meetings with the library director in attendance are held no less than four times a year at a time and place convenient for the library board and for the community and in accordance with the state law on open meetings.

3. Each library board member has received a thorough orientation to his or her role as a trustee and to the library itself within two months of their appointment to the board.

4. At least one member of the library board has attended a minimum of one regional or state-wide library related activity each year.

5. The library has written policies, approved by the library board, that are reviewed annually.

6. Board members serve no more than two consecutive terms or twelve consecutive years.

7. The library board has endorsed the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*, the *Freedom to Read Statement*, and the *Freedom to View* statements.

8. Each library board member is a member of the North Carolina Library Association (NCLA). The board chair is a member of the American Library Trustee Association.

9. Members of library boards are covered by liability insurance.

ADMINISTRATION

As chief executive officer, the library director administers policies adopted by the library's governing authority.

1. The library meets all the requirements to receive funding from the State Aid to Public Libraries Fund.

2. In concurrence with the General Statutes of North Carolina (G.S. 153A-264) any resident of the county or city, as the case may be, is entitled to the free use of the library.

3. The library's procedures are written and up to date.

4. The library director is a member of the North Carolina Public Library Directors Association (NCPLDA). The library director actively participates in NCPLDA and other local, statewide, and national professional library association efforts to plan for the development of public libraries.

FINANCE

1. The Library Board and Director identify and advocate annually for the budgetary needs of the library. The local funding authority approves an operating and capital budget to accomplish the objectives in the library's long range plan.

2. The annual budget includes stated performance outcomes and the library director is given authority to use budgeted funds flexibly to achieve the outcomes.

3. The library files the application for State aid and supporting documentation by stated deadline.

4. The library identifies and applies for federal and other applicable state and special grants, and seeks individual private support, to provide for enhancements to basic services.

5. The Library Board and administration keep local, state, and federal elected officials informed of legislation affecting library financing and educated about needed appropriations.

6. The library has an established system for maintaining accountability for funds received and expended and for reporting to funding authorities.

7. Financial and grant reports are completed in the proper form and by required deadlines.

8. The library follows applicable federal, state, and local purchasing and financial regulations.

9. The library's finances, including all funds received and expended, are audited annually according to generally accepted accounting principles.

STAFFING

The key to any successful library is a well-trained staff dedicated to providing the highest possible levels of library services. Recruitment of well-qualified personnel and their continuing efforts to improve their skills and attain new competencies is a high priority for all libraries. The staff is the most important resource in addition to being the proportionally largest item in the library budget.

1. Every library follows a written personnel policy that, at a minimum, addresses the following:

a. The appointment, promotion, and dismissal of personnel

b. Position descriptions and performance measures for each position

c. The specified probationary period, grievance procedure, and periodic evaluation process

d. Benefits including annual and medical leave, retirement, and medical coverage

e. Absence with pay for continuing education activities

f. Paid library holidays and days when the library will be closed in a clearly stated schedule

g. Equitable compensation following a plan modeled on either comparable local schedules (such as the school system) or local government employees if the library is a part of local government.

The libraries that are a part of local government adhere to the local government's personnel policies. The librarian works with other government departments to fashion forward-looking changes to these policies.

2. Professional librarians are paid no less than the minimum salary recommended by the State Library. Support staff and technology specialists are paid a salary or hourly wage comparable to similar positions in local government.

3. The library supports and encourages staff to enhance basic skills, acquire new skills, keep current on new developments in public libraries, and renew their enthusiasm for library work. Attendance at library conferences, participation in course work, seminars, and other in-service training offerings all provide opportunities for library staff to improve their knowledge base and to add new skills. The library provides paid work time and funding for related expenses for such training. Special emphasis is placed on the need to train staff in the use and maintenance of information technologies.

a. At least 2% of the personnel budget is allocated to in-service training and continuing education.

b. Each library brings its staff together annually for a minimum of eight hours of education and training.

c. Each library has an established in-service training schedule that includes provision for each staff member to participate in at least one opportunity annually for education and training.

4. Staffing levels are sufficient to carry out the library's mission, develop and implement the library's long range plans, and carry out the primary and secondary service responses selected as appropriate to the community. The following minimum guidelines are recommended:

a. One full time equivalent (FTE) staff person is provided for every 2,000 people in the service population; at least a third of FTE staff are librarians with MLS degrees.

b. A full service library facility has a state-certified Public Library Manager, a Children's

Librarian, and a Reference Librarian.

c. Circulation staff are provided at the rate of one FTE staff person per 25,000 annual circulations.

d. Additional staff are provided for administrative, technical and support services. At least one computer technician is on call at all times the library is open.

e. Additional staff or contract services are required for security and maintenance of library facilities.

f. Libraries provide additional staff for a higher volume of use and the provision of specialized service responses.

g. Regardless of size, all libraries have at least two persons on duty at all times the library is open.

5. Each member of the library staff is evaluated at least once a year. The evaluation is based on established performance standards and an agreed-upon work plan.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

A function of the public library is to assemble, organize, preserve and make easily and readily available to all people a variety of resources that will meet the needs and interests of the community.

1. The library's collection reflects the needs of the community and the service response choices the library has made. Materials in a variety of formats are required.

2. The library owns a minimum of two books per capita plus other material. The library spends no less than 20% of its annual budget for print materials, audiovisual materials, and electronic information services.

3. The library considers the diverse needs, interests and differing points of view when developing a collection of resources that cover a broad range of subjects. While the collection contains materials setting forth a variety of views on topics, this does not imply that the library provides equal numbers of books and other materials on each topic.

4. The library has a written collection development policy that addresses its priorities for the planned selection and review of library holdings and relates these priorities to its mission statement. The policy

     a. endorses the Library Bill of Rights and its interpretations, the Freedom to Read statement and related policies and guidelines protecting the freedom to read

     b. specifies the criteria and sources used for selection

     c. identifies who has responsibility for materials selection

d. establishes a procedure for reconsideration of material in the collection, including electronic resources

e. adopts a professionally recognized method (such as the CREW method) to weed damaged, worn or outdated materials

f. in making selections between hard copy and electronic material, considers issues of content, ease and speed of use, effectiveness of use, and volume of use, as well as license and copyright conditions, long-term maintenance, staff skills and cost.

5. The cataloging and classification of materials uses technical standards established by the State Library of North Carolina.

6. In order to maintain the currency of the collection, at least 5% of the collection is withdrawn annually. Special collections, such as genealogy, local history, and the like, are not included in this percentage.

7. As current information obtained from electronic sources becomes more heavily used, hard copies of magazine titles are chosen primarily for browsing rather than for reference use.

8. Public libraries provide a core collection of printed reference materials as well as access to electronic delivery of information.

9. Developing a current, attractive and relevant collection requires adequate funding and professionally-trained collection managers. The number of materials owned by a library is less important than the quality of its collection and the use the materials receive.

10. In addition to making materials available within the library, the public library provides interlibrary loan and/or document delivery services to assist individuals in securing needed resources beyond the local library's collection.

ACCESS TO LIBRARY SERVICES

Access to library services is available from the library itself, from the users' home, business, and/or school in order to provide convenient and increased use of library resources.

1. The regular schedule of hours a library is open is clearly posted, regular, and consistent for different days. Opening hours are developed for the convenience of the public and include morning, afternoon, evening and weekend hours.

2. A full service library facility is open a minimum of 60 hours/week; all library services are available whenever the library is open.

3. Ninety percent of the service population is no more than a 15-minute drive to a library. Individuals and groups who lack regular transportation to a library are served by a bookmobile or other outreach service. These services have regularly scheduled stops based upon community needs. At a minimum, reader's advisory and loan service are provided at all bookmobile and

outreach stops.

4. Public access to the Internet is available at all library locations.

5. Remote reference service (via telephone, email, and/or fax) is available to the public. Response to such inquiries is provided within 24 hours.

6. Remote access to the library's catalog is available to library users 24 hours per day. Remote access to other library catalogs is also provided.

7. The library and its programs are accessible to people with disabilities.

8. The library provides appropriate technology to assure equal access to library services for specialized populations (including but not limited to the homebound, the institutionalized, and non-English speaking populations).

9. The library provides public training in the use of its resources to ensure that all citizens have the necessary skills to take advantage of print and electronic resources.

FACILITIES

The public library building gives the local community a motivating invitation to enter, read, listen and learn. A model library building is designed to be flexible enough to respond to changing use and service patterns. The building houses a variety of collections growing in scope and format. The building is planned for user efficiency to encourage extensive public use, and for staff efficiency to encourage economy for the provision of library services.

1. The Library Board monitors the quality and level of service responses for the library and advocates for adequate space to carry out services.

2. The library staff and the Library Board review library space needs of the service population at least every five years as part of the total library planning process that results in a formal written document of facility needs. Facility needs are determined based on population size, density, growth projections, and distance from existing facilities.

3. Every library system has at least one full-service library facility with a minimum gross square footage of 16,000 square feet regardless of population served. Library systems serving more than 25,000 people provide library facilities totaling not less than 0.65 square feet per capita, with at least one facility of not less than 16,000 square feet.

4. Public libraries provide space to accommodate the multiplicity of public electronic workstations and associated services.

5. In planning for remodeled, replacement or new library facilities; a written building program is developed by the library management and a Library Building Committee with public input.

6. Major library construction projects require the services of architects and other necessary

specialists, such as library building, interiors and library technology consultants.

7. Adequate public parking is essential for the success of a library facility. Available public parking represents at least one parking space for every 200 square feet of gross square footage of the facility. Additional space for parking is needed if the library provides public activity rooms, story time rooms, computer rooms, conference rooms, or other special purpose facilities.

8. Library facilities of 25,000 square feet or less are on one floor to reduce supervision, maintenance, and operational costs.

9 Proper heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems maintain relative humidity levels of 45% to 55% year round for library facilities. Stricter standards are required for special collections. Lighting standards meet standards for libraries.

10. Modern library facilities are dependent on computer technology to support internal operations and to provide public electronic information services with access to the Internet. A demark or telecommunication room is provided to manage incoming cabling and house routers, hubs and other telecommunication equipment for the distribution of electronic communication throughout the library.

11. All library facilities meet local, state and national building codes for fire, safety, sanitation, handicapped access.

TECHNOLOGY

1. The library system provides public access to electronic information (Internet, CD/ROM products, online databases and the like) at each library location. Electronic information services are available at all hours that the library is open.

2. Each library facility has at least one computer workstation for every 2,500 people in its designated service area. At least 50 square feet are allotted for each public workstation. Each library has one printer for each stand-alone computer workstation or at least one networked printer for every five computers.

3. Cataloging and circulation functions are automated according to State Library of North Carolina technical standards (Minimum Standards for Library Automation in North Carolina [http://statelibrary.dcr.state.nc.us/lsta/minstds810.pdf] and OCLC Batchload Guide: Technical Information for Batchloading: Algorithms, Tape, and Record Requirements [http://www.oclc.org/oclc/man/7123bach/app-b.htm]).

4. Each library system has a library website describing the services of the library system and containing links to selected related sites.

5. All newly purchased hardware and software in the library meet current Minimum Specifications for New Purchases [http://statelibrary.dcr.state.nc.us/ld/minspec.htm] set by the State Library of North Carolina and are replaced according to State Library guidelines [http://statelibrary.dcr.state.nc.us/hottopic/techplan/equipol.htm].

6. At least one full-time computer technician is designated for every 50 computer workstations and related printers and peripherals.

7. A systems manager is assigned to each library system.

8. Each library facility has at least one staff member designated and trained to communicate with computer technicians and to perform basic troubleshooting.

9. Library staff have appropriate training in basic computer use, computer operating systems and all electronic formats available to the public and for staff use. Quarterly technology updates are provided for library staff.

10. Budgetary provisions are made for ongoing computer training for the staff.

11. In-house training experts are selected and trained.

12. The library has a technology plan that represents both current and future technology projects. Projects planned for the next two to five years are identified in the plan.

13. A policy on technology upgrades and replacements is adopted with funds budgeted for this purpose.

14. The technology plan is reviewed and updated yearly to evaluate progress and to determine goals and objectives for the coming year.

15. A technology committee is appointed to plan and oversee all library technologies.

PUBLIC PRESENCE

Public presence speaks to the library's relationship with the community it serves. An effective public presence ensures that the community is aware of the library and values its contributions.

1. The library contributes to community well-being through participation in community planning efforts.

2. The library collaborates with other community agencies and institutions in implementation of plans.

3. The library's Board demonstrates awareness of the services offered by the library and is actively involved in promoting the library.

4. The library director plays a leadership role in community planning efforts and communicates regularly to important constituencies in the community.

5. All library staff members exhibit a positive and helpful attitude.

6. A library advocacy group is established to promote the library, to raise funds, and to provide

volunteers.

7. The librarian, in collaboration with members of the Board, the staff, and the community develops and implements a systematic plan to market the library. The plan builds on the community analysis and

> a. identifies target audiences and devises a strategy for increasing their awareness of appropriate services.

> b. establishes measurable objectives and designs specific activities to accomplish them.

> c. incorporates use of an appropriate mix of media and technology in the objectives.

> d. develops a training/orientation program on customer service for staff and volunteers.

> e. sets money aside in the annual budget to accomplish the objectives and the customer service training program.

> f. gathers citizen input on the use and effectiveness of services provided and uses quantitative measures to monitor progress toward the achievement of objectives.

> g. on a regular basis, evaluates the choice of target audiences, the strategies to reach them, and the particular objectives. Revises the plan.

9. The library's facility is easily located and clearly identifiable as a library.

10. The library has a complaint procedure in place and responds to complaints in timely fashion.

11. The library reviews its policies and procedures regularly to identify potential barriers to good customer service.

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