

Introduction

A trustee is part of a decision-making team that includes the rest of the board and the library director. For a board to function effectively, all members must bring enthusiasm, preparation and dedication to the task as well as a firm understanding of the different roles played by the board, the director, and staff.

This handbook consists of basic information needed by you, the trustee, to be an effective board member and library advocate. Each chapter includes sources of additional information that can help if you run into an issue or question not addressed.

Since the governance models of Maine libraries are quite varied, the information supplied in various chapters won't necessarily apply to your type of library. It is also important to remember the information in this handbook should not be considered legal advice. Library boards should consult with an attorney for legal information pertinent to their specific situations.

How to use this handbook

- As an orientation tool for new board members
- As a reference for specific questions:
 - Laws and governance of libraries
 - Roles and responsibilities of trustees
 - Library professional ethics
 - Community engagement and advocacy
- Explore it chapter by chapter as discussion starters on topics that the board is interested in learning more about
- As a guide to further resources on specific topics

We hope you and your board find this handbook useful as you work to guide the library to better meet community needs now and into the future.

Editors for the 2021 revision:

Maine State Library staff:

Deborah Clark, MLIS, Library Management Specialist
Lisa Shaw, Small and Rural Libraries Specialist
Stephanie Zurinski, MLS, Continuing Education Coordinator