3. GOVERNANCE

Public libraries in Connecticut may be municipal government departments or associations. The library governing authority adopts and provides oversight of budgets, supervises the library director, adopts policy and sets direction. This entity can be the library governing board or the local municipal authority.

There are two types of library boards: governing or advisory. A library advisory board advocates for the library and represents the community by advising the library director and the library governing authority. Trustees of governing library boards are public officers and are legally responsible for the governance of the library and conducting its operations in accordance with local, state and federal laws.

Library directors and staff use sound library administration and management practices to apply the policies and statutory obligations of the governing body to the daily operations of the library.

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3.1. Governance

**BENCHMARK:** The library is established and operated in accordance with relevant state and federal laws and local ordinances.

**Essential**
- The library has a mission statement.
- The board complies with *Freedom of Information (FOI)* requirements.
- The library operates under a document (e.g., town charter or ordinance) that legally established the existence of the library and the powers of the governing authority.
- The library advisory/governing board is authorized by a governmental authority with approved responsibilities and powers.
- A non-municipal (association) library has a memo of agreement with the town/city delineating the responsibilities of each.
- There is a job description detailing the responsibilities of board members.
- The library board has a written and approved set of bylaws for its operation.
- The members of a municipal library board reside in the community that the library serves. The members of an association library board are representatives of the community it serves.
- The board holds meetings no less than four times a year.
- The minutes of all board meetings are distributed to the staff.
- The minutes of all board meetings are available to the public in compliance with FOI requirements.
- The board receives financial, narrative and statistical reports for review at each meeting.
- The board conducts an orientation program for each new board member.
- The board of an association library maintains *Directors and Operators liability insurance* for all board members.
- The board prepares a *written performance evaluation* of the library director every year.
- The library director attends all board meetings.
- The library director is an ad hoc member of all board committees.
- There is a board handbook for each member providing essential information.
- The board has a code of ethics policy.

**Enhanced**
- Meets Essential level.
- The bylaws are reviewed at least every three years.
- The governing body has the authority for hiring, evaluating and firing the library director.
- The board provides annual training and/or continuing education for all board members.
Exemplary

- Meets Enhanced level.
- The bylaws include specific terms and term limits for board members.
- The board conducts an annual self-assessment.
3.2. Governance: Library Director

*BENCHMARK:* The library is appropriately managed to ensure the development and delivery of services that best meet community needs.

**Essential**

The library director:

- Has an MLS from an ALA approved institution. (Libraries with populations of under 5,000 may substitute a library director with substantive and demonstrable training in library science to meet this level.)
- Is given a job description detailing his/her responsibilities.
- Has the responsibility for creating job descriptions, hiring, evaluating and firing staff.
- Provides appropriate administrative reports for review at each board meeting.
- Keeps the board informed on a regular basis of regional, state and national library issues.
- Engages in the community.

**Enhanced**

- Meets Essential level.
- There is a full-time (35 hours per week) library director responsible for the daily management of all library operations.
- There is a document stating the relationship between the board/governing authority and the library director.
- The library director engages in professional development.
- The library director actively participates in community organizations.

**Exemplary**

- Meets Enhanced level.
- The library director participates in regional, state and national library organizations and initiatives.
3.3. Governance: Planning

**BENCHMARK:** The library has a current and comprehensive strategic plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ The library has a current <a href="#">strategic plan</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ The strategic plan is readily available to the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ The library director facilitates data collection and analysis as the basis of the plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Working with the library board, the library director develops the plan with participation from library staff, stakeholders and community members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ The library director implements the plan with staff, stakeholders and community members and reports on progress to the board.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ The library has a technology plan prepared by the director and the staff and approved by the board.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Enhanced</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Meets Essential level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ The library has a current strategic plan which is reviewed at least annually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ The technology plan is reviewed and revised annually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ The library has an <a href="#">emergency preparedness plan</a> coordinated with the town’s plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ The library board and library director prepare a long-range capital plan.</td>
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<th>Exemplary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Meets Enhanced level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ The library board and library director prepare a long-range financial plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ A new strategic plan is developed every three to five years.</td>
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</table>
3.4. Governance: Policies

**BENCHMARK:** The library administration employs acceptable policies in its daily operations.

**Essential**
- The library has a set of policies proposed by the director and approved by the board that is readily available to the staff and the public.
- Each policy is reviewed by the library board at least every three years or more often if needed to reflect changing local needs or state or federal laws.
- The policies are implemented by the library director.
- The library has policies on:
  - American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights
  - Challenged Materials
  - Circulation
  - Code of Conduct
  - Collection Development (including de-selection—i.e., weeding)
  - Confidentiality
  - Customer Service
  - Financial Development, Foundations, Investment and Endowments
  - Freedom to Read and Freedom to View
  - Gifts, Memorials and Sponsorships
  - Internet/Public Access Computers
  - Meeting Rooms, Displays and Exhibits
  - Personnel (if not covered by town policies)
  - Volunteers
  - Website
- These policies are coordinated with other relevant agencies.

**Enhanced**
- Meets Essential level.
- The Library has policies on:
  - 3-D Printer Use (if applicable)
  - Access
  - Bulletin Board and Handouts
  - Conflict of Interest
  - Cooperation with Other Libraries
  - Equipment Use
  - Interlibrary Loan
  - Programs
  - Resident and Non-resident Use of Library
  - Staff Development
  - Technology Use
  - Unattended Child (coordinated with police)
Exemplary
- Meets Enhanced level.
- The library has policies on:
  - Proctoring
  - Public Comment at Board Meetings
  - Tutoring

3.5. Governance: Funding

**BENCHMARK:** The library is accountable for its judicious use of funds and is in compliance with required fiscal procedures.

Essential
- The library is in compliance with required fiscal procedures.
- The administration prepares an annual budget proposal that accurately reflects the needs of the library and the community it serves.
- The budget is reviewed and approved by the library board.
- The budget is presented to the funding authority.
- The library board advocates for the budget with the funding authority.
- The library submits required statistics to qualify for state funds.
- The library has an established donations and gifts program.
- The library has current policies and procedures regarding payroll, check signing authority, expense reimbursement, cash management, whistleblower, conflicts of interest and document retention.

Enhanced
- Meets Essential level.
- The library fosters community financial support through Friends of the Library groups, foundations and other organizations.
- The library pursues partnerships and grants that align with its mission and goals.

Exemplary
- Meets Enhanced level.
- The library has an endowment fund or foundation to meet future goals.
3.6. Governance: Assessment

**BENCHMARK:** The library collects and analyzes appropriate data to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of programs and services.

**Essential**
- The library:
  - INCLUDES data collection and analysis as a key component of planning.
  - Reports annually to the board and the public on the impact of library services on the community.
  - Completes and submits the [Annual Statistical Report](#) to the State Library.

**Enhanced**
- Meets Essential level.
- The library uses a variety of data collection techniques to demonstrate impact and outcomes of programs and services.

**Exemplary**
- Meets Enhanced level.
- The library uses the data it collects to support marketing and advocacy efforts.
3.7. Governance: Advocacy, Public and Community Relations

*BENCHMARK:* The library implements a comprehensive advocacy and public relations program as part of its strategic plan.

**Essential**
- Information on library services is readily available to the public.
- The library board promotes the library to the community as outlined in the strategic plan.
- The library director or appointed designee is responsible for media relations.
- The library provides a process for users to communicate concerns and suggestions.
- The library responds to comments and suggestions when contact information is provided.
- The library provides information to the public to keep them informed of its financial needs.

**Enhanced**
- Meets Essential level.
- The library partners with community groups for their mutual benefit.
- The library develops communication channels with schools for their mutual benefit.
- There is a library presence at significant town events.

**Exemplary**
- Meets Enhanced level.
- The library regularly holds focus groups with members of the public on library issues.
- The library has a marketing plan that reflects community needs and interests as part of its strategic plan.
3.8. Governance: Friends of the Library (where applicable)

**BENCHMARK:** The library encourages active community support through Friends of the Library groups and/or library foundations.

**Essential**
- The library has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends of the Library. This group needs to abide by state and federal regulations in order to be the library’s official Friends organization.
- The library director or appointed designee serves as liaison to the Friends to ensure that the Friends have needed information regarding the library.
- The library provides information to the Friends about state and national Friends groups.
- A member of the library board serves as an ex officio representative to the Friends board.

**Enhanced**
- Meets Essential level.
- A member of the Friends is appointed to serve as a liaison to the library board.
- The library involves the Friends as stakeholders in strategic planning and fund-raising activities.

**Exemplary**
- Meets Enhanced level.
3.9. Governance: Volunteers (where applicable)

**BENCHMARK:** Library policy encourages the use of volunteers as appropriate.

**Essential**
- The library has written policies regarding volunteers and those performing community service.
- There is a handbook for volunteers.
- There is a training or orientation program for volunteers.

**Enhanced**
- Meets **Essential** level.
- The contribution of volunteers’ work is formally recognized at least annually.
- Volunteer activity supplements but does not replace paid staff work activities.

**Exemplary**
- Meets **Enhanced** level.
- The library has a volunteer coordinator.
- The library evaluates volunteers annually.
3.10. Governance: Resources


Association of Connecticut Library Boards.

Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations.


Friends of Connecticut Libraries.


Sample Connecticut Library Policies.
