



Trustee Update

Library News You Can Use

It's that time of year...

The director of your library is currently working on the state Public Library Annual Report, as required by state statute (43.58(6)). The report is filed online, and, while due March 1, SCLS requires that member libraries complete the report by Feb. 15 so it can be reviewed prior to submitting to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Once completed, two printed and signed copies are sent to SCLS (one of which is sent to DPI), one copy is kept on file at the library, and one copy is provided to your municipality.

Although the director completes the report, it is a report from the library board, so it is important that the board review the report and formally approve it at a library board meeting. Following approval, the report must be signed and dated by the library board president (and library director).

Completing the report is a big job, but

an important one. Detailed instructions from the state ensure that data is reported the same way from year to year, and from library to library. You can review your library's current and past data to evaluate performance, and you also can compare your library to other libraries.

Data from past annual reports is available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/dm-lib-stat.html>.

Perhaps the most important use of the data is as a tool to support your advocacy efforts. In the first Trustee Update newsletter, we told you that library board trustees need to be strong advocates

for their library. Telling the library's story to funders and decision makers requires both statistical and anecdotal data, and the annual report is an excellent source for statistics. You can show, for example, that the number of items the library has checked out over the past five years has increased at a much

greater percentage than the amount of local funding (see graph). Use the statistical data that best supports the point you want to make. A chart or graph is a good way to present the data so it can be easily understood. ❖

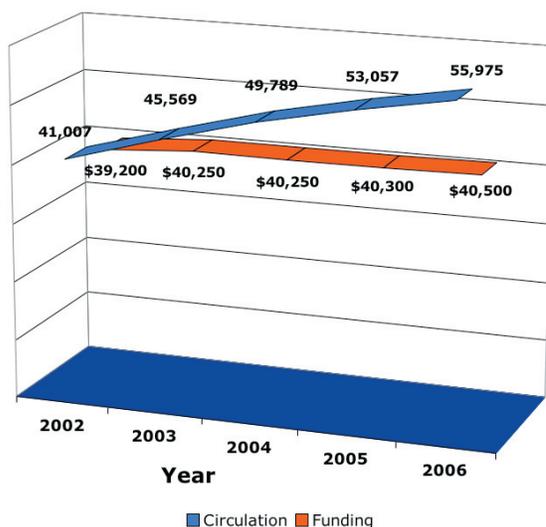
Budget work is all year round

Although you are just beginning to spend the library's 2008 budget, it is already time to begin thinking about your 2009 budget request!

Your municipal governing body should hear from the library, and library board, all year round, not just at budget request time. You should be telling them all the good things going on at the library, sharing anecdotes from satisfied users (Is your library staff keeping a file of positive comments and stories to share?), informing them about progress on the goals in your strategic plan, and highlighting new services or materials. The library also can illustrate its usefulness by providing research on various topics the municipal board debates throughout the year.

The beginning of a new year is the time to review the data in your state annual report (see related article) for trends, areas that may need change, as well as any funding inequities you want to try to address in the next budget request. It is also a good time to review what things worked well in last year's budget request process, and begin to plan for those things you may want to do differently this time around. ❖

Sample Circulation vs. Funding



Did you know...

... that in 2006, SCLS member libraries circulated almost 12.1 million items, including 3.9 million children's items and 8.2 million adult items. Statewide, about 59.6 million items were circulated (excluding interlibrary loan). SCLS member libraries reported nearly 6.6 million visits, compared to 32.8 million statewide.

--from 2006 Wisconsin Public Library Statistics (DLTCL)

Get your ducks in a row

Start the new year off right

Whether or not you are the type who makes New Year's resolutions, it is not a bad idea to resolve, at the beginning of the year, to be sure the library board is well organized.

State statutes prescribe that library board terms are for three years (43.54(1)(b)). Take a look at the terms of your library board members, and for those that expire are the members willing to continue? If not, do you have names of replacements (people who will faithfully



perform the duties of a library trustee, as described at <http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/te1.html>) ready to suggest to your municipal governing body? Remember that as soon as possible after the beginning of new terms, the board must elect officers (43.54(2)). And while you're at it,

the new year is a good time to review the library's goals for the coming year.

Trustee Essentials, published by the Division for Libraries, Technology, and Community Learning (DLTCL), a division of DPI, is an excellent resource for your library board—not only for getting organized at the beginning of the year, but all year round. Every library board trustee should have his or her own copy to refer to as needed. It is also a valuable tool for orienting new trustees, as well as conducting continuing education sessions for the entire board throughout the year. It can be found online at <http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/handbook.html>. ❖

SCLS staff contacts:

Questions about preparing library budget requests, the annual report, Wisconsin library law, or library trustee powers and responsibilities? Contact Cheryl Becker at (608) 246-7973 or cbecker@scls.lib.wi.us.

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