

United for Libraries



Association of Library Trustees,
Advocates, Friends and Foundations
A division of the American Library Association



Short Takes for Trustees

Working Effectively with
Friends

Resource Guide

© United for Libraries: The Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations. This resource guide is for use by libraries that have purchased access to the Short Takes for Trustees video series, or by libraries included as part of a region or statewide purchase of the Short Takes for Trustees video series. No portion of this resource guide may be copied or distributed.

United for Libraries
859 W. Lancaster Ave
Unit 2-1
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

Toll Free: (800) 545-2433, ext. 2161
Direct Dial: (312) 280-2161
Fax: (484) 383-3407
Web site: www.ala.org/united
E-mail: united@ala.org

November 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Separate but Complementary Roles of Trustees, Director, Friends	1
Trustee Tip Sheet #1: The Role of Library Trustees	2
Trustee Tip Sheet #2: The Role of the Friends Board	4
Trustee Tip Sheet #4: Sample Memorandum of Understanding	6
Trustee Tip Sheet #5: Library Support for Friends Activities	8

Working Together: Roles and Responsibilities Guidelines

Responsibilities of	Library Director	Library Board	Friends
<p>General Administrative</p>	<p>Administer daily operation of the library including personnel, collection development, fiscal, physical plant and programmatic functions. Act as advisor to the board and provide support to the Friends and community groups.</p>	<p>Recruit and employ a qualified library director; maintain an ongoing performance appraisal process for the director in accordance with town charter.</p>	<p>Support quality library service in the community through fund raising, volunteerism and serving as advocates for the library.</p>
<p>Policy</p>	<p>Apprise library board of need for new policies, as well as policy revisions. Implement the policies of the library as adopted by the library board.</p>	<p>Identify and adopt written policies to govern the operation and program of the library.</p>	<p>Support the policies of the library as adopted by the library board.</p>
<p>Planning</p>	<p>Coordinate and implement a strategic plan with library board, Friends, staff and community.</p>	<p>Ensure that the library has a strategic plan with implementation and evaluation components.</p>	<p>Provide input into the library's strategic plan and support its implementation.</p>
<p>Fiscal</p>	<p>Prepare an annual budget for the library in accordance with town charter.</p>	<p>Seek adequate funds to carry out library operations. Assist in the preparation and presentation of the annual budget in accordance with town charter.</p>	<p>Conduct fund raising to support the library's mission and plans.</p>
<p>Advocacy</p>	<p>Promote the mission of the library within the community. Educate the library board, Friends and community regarding local, state and federal issues that impact the library.</p>	<p>Promote the mission of the library within the community. Advocate for the library to legislators.</p>	<p>Promote the mission of the library within the community. Advocate for the library to legislators.</p>
<p>Meetings</p>	<p>Participate in library board and Friends meetings. Ensure that there is a liaison from the board to the Friends and vice versa.</p>	<p>Participate in all board meetings. Appoint a liaison to the Friends Board and become a member of the Friends.</p>	<p>Maintain a liaison to the library board.</p>
<p>Networking</p>	<p>Encourage City Board and Friends to join state and national professional organizations and make them aware of educational opportunities.</p>	<p>Join the Association of Connecticut Library Boards as a resource for policies, operations and advocacy for libraries.</p>	<p>Join the Friends of Connecticut Libraries as a resource to better support the library.</p>



tip sheet #1

Tools for Trustees

THE ROLE OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

It is not uncommon for the role of the Friends and the role of the public library Trustees to become confused. What authority and responsibilities do the Friends have? What is the role of the Trustees? Should an individual serve on both boards? If either of these groups is unsure of the limits of their respective authorities, conflicts can, and often do, arise. Tip Sheets #1 and #2 outline the roles of the Trustees and the role of the Friends, specifically indicating where their work and communication should overlap or complement each other.

There are typically two types of Trustee Boards - a) a governing board or b) an advisory board.

1. The **Governing Board** is either elected by the general population or is appointed by the city or town's elected council. This type of board has full authority over the governance of the library. This Board hires the library director, sets policy, and works closely with the director in establishing and presenting the library's budget to the city.
2. The **Advisory Board** typically exists where the library is a city department, the library director is hired by the city, and the library director reports directly to the city manager or mayor. The Advisory Board typically has less governing authority though it may be an appointed or elected Board. By law in most states, this Board still has responsibility for policy setting, but does not have responsibility for the budget or the direct oversight of the library director.
3. In both cases, the library Board of Trustees has the authority for developing and implementing the policies that govern library services.
4. In both cases, the library Board of Trustees works with the library administration in planning and goal setting for the library.
5. In both cases, the library Board of Trustees should meet at least monthly with the library administration in an open meeting where a Friends liaison should be present and have an opportunity on the agenda to update the Board of Trustees on the Friends' activities.
6. In both cases, a member of the library Board of Trustees should be appointed to act as a liaison to the Friends and attend their meetings and as many of their functions as possible.

continued on reverse

7. In both cases, all members of a library Board of Trustees should become personal members of the Friends at the highest level they are able.
8. Individually and collectively, Trustees should act as advocates of libraries and present the library point of view to their locally- and nationally-elected legislators and leaders.
9. At least yearly, the library board should plan a joint meeting to discuss mutual concerns with Friends. This can be done in conjunction with a breakfast or dinner meeting.

Should a member of the library Board of Trustees also serve as a member of the Friends of the Library Board? The generally accepted wisdom is “no.” There are a number of reasons for this:

1. It can imbue a single member with more power and authority than his or her peers on each of the boards.
2. There can be a perceived conflict if a member of the policy making Board is also in a decision making role on the Friends Board that helps fund the library's services.
3. There can be a potential conflict of interest when a policy the library Board of Trustees is proposing might not be considered to be in the best interest of the Friends. For example, deciding to give discarded library materials to an outsourced agency or proposing the establishment of a foundation for fundraising.

Even if your Trustee Board and Friends Board are working in perfect harmony right now, no precedent should be set that will allow possible conflicts in the future. Though it is the case that a Trustee Board member may take a leadership role in creating a new Friends group and therefore have a decision making role in both for awhile; this should be considered a temporary necessity and the new Friends should elect officers (other than library Trustees) as soon as possible.

For more information, see *United for Libraries' Toolkit #3, "Friends and Libraries: Working Effectively Together"* in the Friends and Foundations Zone at www.ala.org/united. In addition, see the chapter on “Organizational Effectiveness” in *101+ Great Ideas for Libraries and Friends*, available in the Friends & Foundations Zone and the Trustee Zone.

updated 5/13

United for Libraries

Sally Gardner Reed, Executive Director
109 S. 13th St., Suite 117B
Philadelphia, PA 19107

(800) 545-2433, ext. 2161
fax (215) 545-3821
www.ala.org/united

tip sheet #2

Tools for Trustees

THE ROLE OF THE FRIENDS BOARD

It is not uncommon for the role of the Friends and the role of the public library Trustees to become confused. What authority and responsibilities do the Friends have? What is the role of the Trustees? Should an individual serve on both boards? If either of these groups is unsure of the limits of their respective authorities, conflicts can, and often do, arise. Tip Sheets #1 and #2 outline the roles of the Friends board and the role of the Trustees, specifically indicating where their work and communication should overlap or complement each other.

Friends are citizens who value the service of libraries and volunteer to help them. Friends usually operate with a self-elected board of directors representing the community.

1. Friends may be future Trustees, and Trustees future Friends; however, there should be no overlapping boards (see below).
2. Friends are kept informed of the library's plans, progress, and challenges by the library director.
3. A Friends board member should be appointed as a liaison to the library's board of Trustees. This liaison should attend all Trustee meetings, be prepared to report Friends issues and activities to the Trustees, and report back to the Friends.
4. Friends recognize that they do not perform a policy-making role for the library, but should feel that their opinions are valued by the Trustees.
5. Friends support policies set by the library Board of Trustees.
6. Friends serve as "connecting links" between the library and community, interpreting one to the other.
7. Friends funds supplement the library's operating budget to provide materials and programs that enhance the library's service. Friends funds should not replace money that is normally provided by the city or institution for library operations. Friends decide how to spend their money after conferring with the library director and library Board.
8. Fundraising by the Friends is done with the knowledge of the Trustees and in coordination with the library director.

continued on reverse

9. Individually and collectively, Friends use their influence to assist the library in obtaining desired financial support from the community or institution by representing the library point of view to local government, academic leadership, legislators and the media.

Should a member of the library board also serve as a member of the Friends of the Library board? The generally accepted wisdom is “no.” There are a number of reasons for this:

1. It can imbue a single member with more power and authority than his or her peers on each of the boards.
2. There can be a perceived conflict if a member of the policy making Board is also in a decision making role on the Friends Board that helps fund the library’s services.
3. There can be a potential conflict of interest when a policy the library Board is proposing might be considered not in the best interest of the Friends. For example, deciding to give discarded library materials to an outsourced agency, or proposing the establishment of a foundation for fundraising.

Even if your Trustee Board and Friends Board are working in perfect harmony right now, no precedent should be set that will allow possible conflicts in the future. Though it is the case that a Trustee Board member may take a leadership role in creating a new Friends group and therefore have a decision making role in both for awhile, this should be considered a temporary necessity, and the new Friends should elect officers (other than library Trustees) as soon as possible.

For more information, see *United for Libraries’ Toolkit #3, “Friends and Libraries: Working Effectively Together”* in the Friends and Foundations Zone at www.ala.org/united. In addition, see the chapter on “Organizational Effectiveness” in *101+ Great Ideas for Libraries and Friends*, available in the Friends & Foundation Zone and the Trustee Zone.

updated 5/13

United for Libraries

Sally Gardner Reed, Executive Director
109 S. 13th St., Suite 117B
Philadelphia, PA 19107

(800) 545-2433, ext. 2161
fax (215) 545-3821
www.ala.org/united

tip sheet #4

Tools for Trustees

SAMPLE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Sample Memorandum of Understanding Between Friends and Libraries

The following will constitute an operating agreement between the Friends of the Anytown Public Library (Friends) and the Anytown Public Library (Library). It will stand until and unless it is modified by mutual agreement of the Friends executive board and the Anytown Public Library administration. The Friends mission is to raise money and public awareness in the community to support the services and programs of the Library. As a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization, however, it is a legally distinct entity and is not a part of the Library.

The Library agrees to include the Friends in the long-term planning process to ensure that the Friends are aware of the goals and direction of the Library.

The Library agrees to share with the Friends the library's strategic initiatives at the beginning of each fiscal year and discuss with Friends how their resources and support might help forward these initiatives.

The Library agrees to supply the Friends with a "wishlist" each year that indicates the anticipated needs for Friends support.

The Library agrees to provide the Friends with staff support to assist them with development of the newsletter, mass mailings, meeting coordination, and Friends promotional materials.

The Library agrees to provide public space for Friends membership brochures and promotional materials.

The Library agrees to provide the Friends with space in the Library for book storage and sorting, book sales, and office needs.

The Friends agree to publicly support the Library and its policies.

The Friends agree to include a member from the library's administration as a non-voting presence at all Friends' meetings and to allow room on the agenda for a library report.

The Friends agree that any and all monies raised will be spent exclusively for library programs, services, and other Library defined needs unless otherwise agreed to by both the Friends and the Library.

continued on reverse

The Friends agree that the library administration has the final say in accepting or declining any and all gifts made to the library.

The Friends agree to engage in advocacy efforts on behalf of the Library under the guidance of the Library and the Library's Board of Trustees.

The Friends agree that if they cease to actively fundraise and promote the Library, they will disband, allowing for a new Friends group to be established in the future.

updated 5/13

United for Libraries

Sally Gardner Reed, Executive Director
109 S. 13th St., Suite 117B
Philadelphia, PA 19107

(800) 545-2433, ext. 2161
fax (215) 545-3821
www.ala.org/united

tip sheet #5

Tools for Trustees

LIBRARY SUPPORT FOR FRIENDS ACTIVITIES

United for Libraries is often asked if library staff should spend some of their time working with Friends, or if a library should share some of its resources to help a group be successful. Some have even wondered if staff time or library resources spent on Friends is a conflict of interest or a misuse of tax dollars! What we have found is that some of the best and most successful Friends groups do, indeed, receive support from the library. Some larger libraries whose Friends groups raise hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars actually have a library staff member hired expressly to support the work of the Friends. It's called development! It's hard to argue that it's not in the library's best interest to spend, for example, \$2,000 of library time and materials on Friends promotion and development when they get back \$25,000 in gifts from the group each year!

Below are some frequently asked questions that can help guide the library in deciding just how much time and materials should be devoted to the Friends' work.

Is there a formula we should follow to know exactly how much library time and how many resources should be spent helping the Friends?

There really isn't any set formula, but some "common sense" rules can guide you. For example, the amount of library support should just be a fraction of the amount the Friends donate to the library each year. In addition, the amount may vary over time. Often, new Friends groups are created by the library staff or Trustees, and in the first year, this fledgling group will no doubt need a lot of support in terms of planning meetings, promotion, copies, flyers, brochures, and membership recruitment mailings. Once the group is up and running, however, it will be able to operate with less staff time (in meetings, for example) and perhaps in support for flyers and postcards.

Other groups will work more closely with the library by creating joint programs, working on grants together, sharing library and Friends promotional campaigns, or printing a joint newsletter. Staff interaction with Friends may spike significantly depending on circumstances; for example, if the library is trying to pass a bond issue or make the case for a new building and the Friends are on the front lines of promotion.

For every library, the support will vary based on the Friends' needs, the staff's time, and the benefit coming back to the library in terms of annual donations by the Friends.

Are there circumstances under which a library should withhold some level of support?

continued on reverse

Certainly if a Friends group is not contributing back to the library on an appreciable and regular basis, the library should discuss with the Friends the level of financial contributions the Friends should make in exchange for staff and library support.

Also, beware of “creep!” A Friends group is an autonomous organization with its own 501(c)(3) status. The group should be self-sustaining to a large degree, and should be running its own organization and planning its own fundraising events. A library staff that pitches in too freely with the work may be lessening the engagement by the group’s members, and this is not sustainable over the long term.

Are there other benefits to the library besides money that supporting Friends provides?

Absolutely. Friends are called “Friends” for a reason. The best libraries in the country have tremendous community support. When the library works actively with Friends, it is creating powerful community advocates and promoters. Nobody knows better than a library Friend the importance of the library in the community. The more closely the library and Friends work together, the stronger the message, and the better that message gets out to the community.

United for Libraries strongly recommends that Friends and libraries develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) so that as the players change, the commitment from the library and the Friends stays stable.

For further information on Friends donations and a sample of a MOU, see Fact Sheet for Friends and Foundations #23, “Guidelines for Giving,” and Tip Sheet #4, “Sample Memorandum of Understanding.”

updated 5/13

United for Libraries

Sally Gardner Reed, Executive Director
109 S. 13th St., Suite 117B
Philadelphia, PA 19107

(800) 545-2433, ext. 2161
fax (215) 545-3821
www.ala.org/united