

# **Search for a New Director**

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Replacing a library director is a difficult and challenging task under the best of circumstances and can be downright frustrating under others. One thing is for certain and that is that the Board of Trustees must immediately gear up for the departure of the library director and make certain that the Board has everything it needs in order to conduct a thorough search for a replacement. This documents outlines areas which should be carefully considered as soon as the board learns that the library director is resigning or retiring.

### **Before Your Library Director Leaves the Building**

Designate a knowledgeable staff person to be Acting Director in charge of the library. Negotiate a reasonable salary increase, or honorarium to compensate for the additional responsibilities. Clarify this person's responsibilities to both the Acting Director and the staff and provide both with an estimate on how long a period is expected. Establish to whom on the Board, the Acting Director should communicate between Board meetings and clarify the Board's expectations of the Acting Director. The Acting Director will communicate with BCCLS for your library and attend System Council and other meetings where your library's attendance is required.

Ask your Library Director to provide you with the following which will assist you in the search for a replacement:

- Full details on current salary and benefits for the position
- Current job description for the Library Director's position
- Copy of the current employment contract (if applicable)
- Contact information for Civil Service representative (if applicable)
- Copy of the latest BCCLS Salary Survey

If time permits, your Library Director should spend some time with the Acting Director designee in order to acquaint that person with the organizational structure, etc., of the Library Director's office. Ask your Library Director to provide you with the following which will assist your new Acting, Interim, or new Library Director when assuming the position:

- Copy of all established operating policies for the library
- Job descriptions and salaries for all staff members
- Monthly director's report and Board of Trustee meeting minutes for the preceding year
- Current year's budget and financial reports for the current year

### **Once Your Library Director Leaves the Building**

No matter how short the planned period between a library director leaving the building and a new library director being appointed, there are steps that the library's Board of Trustees should take immediately to ensure that your library's services will not suffer.

- Inform the BCCLS office who has been designated Acting Director in order to make certain that system information is routed to the Acting Director. Inform, via email, the other BCCLS

library directors of the appointment of the Acting Director.

- Consult other documents in this set to clarify BCCLS expectations of Directors; your Acting Director will need to fulfill these.
- While an Acting Director chosen from existing staff can be very effective, in many libraries no one other than the Library Director actually has experience with everything required to run a public library. If your search becomes extended, the lack of a seasoned professional at the helm can cause serious problems. For this reason, Library Boards are encouraged to appoint an experienced Interim Director who holds the MLS degree. The BCCLS office can help you locate an experienced former BCCLS Library Director who has been successful in running public libraries. As with the appointment of an Acting Director, the Board will need to follow the steps outlined above in relation to the Interim Director
- The Acting Director will communicate with BCCLS for your library and attend System Council and other meetings where your library's attendance is required.
- If not already extremely familiar with the BCCLS web site, the Assistant Director should immediately become so since the web site contains a plethora of information that is crucial to the effective operation of a member library including minutes of the BCCLS Executive Board and System Council meetings, Directors packets for System Council meetings, Dates of upcoming events, BCCLS Bylaws, BCCLS policies and procedures, etc.

## Preparing for the Search

Since the goal of the search for a new Library Director is to find someone who fits well with the Board of Trustees, the library staff, and the community, this will be one of the most crucial tasks your Library Board will ever undertake. The search will be made easier if some basic preparations are made prior to beginning the search.

- Discuss with the Board of Trustees how the search will be conducted. Many Library Boards appoint a sub-committee to oversee the search process. Other Library Boards seek the assistance of professional search firms that specialize in public libraries. The BCCLS office will be able to provide you with the names and contact information for such firms. Decide in advance how the arriving resumes will be screened, who will set up appointments, who will check references, who will conduct the initial interview, etc. Library Boards are urged to check the references of those who are seriously being considered for the position. In addition to checking references, Boards of Trustees should feel free to consult with the BCCLS Executive Director who can frequently comment on past experiences with librarians working in the BCCLS system. Review the current job description for this position and adjust or update as necessary. Devise a list of desired qualifications, experience, and other factors that will impinge on your search. Some qualifications are stipulated by law and BCCLS Bylaws (<http://bccls.knowledgebase.co/category.php?id=68>). Your new Library Director must be a full-time employee with an MLS from an ALA-accredited institution and hold or be eligible to hold a professional librarian certificate from the State of New Jersey ([http://ldb.njstatelib.org/Library\\_Law/lwaid002](http://ldb.njstatelib.org/Library_Law/lwaid002)). In addition, your new Library Director must be a resident of New Jersey or be willing to relocate within a year to become a New Jersey resident ([www.nj.gov/dca/lgs/research/reschmenu.shtml#newjerseyfirst](http://www.nj.gov/dca/lgs/research/reschmenu.shtml#newjerseyfirst))
- Establish a benefits package and salary level to be offered to the new director. If your library has been paying its Library Director a fair and reasonable wage, this is not the time to try to save money by cutting the salary to one that is not realistic for your library's well-being. In devising a salary, you will find the most current annual BCCLS Salary Survey to be helpful as it will allow you to see what is being done at other libraries with a similar profile to yours. The benefits and salary information is best done in writing so that there will be no confusion during interviewing and hiring. Please remember to indicate in the benefits package the

amounts that the new director will be expected to contribute for pension, health benefits (<http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/reform-hb-qa.shtml>) , life insurance, etc.

- If your library is a Civil Service library, contact the library's Civil Service representative for guidance in hiring. If your library is not Civil Service, consider an employment contract for the protection of your library. Employment contracts are best devised by attorneys who are conversant in matters pertaining to public libraries. If your library does not have an existing relationship with such an attorney, the BCCLS office can provide you with a list of attorneys for your consideration. Employment contracts protect the library and are generally worthwhile investments.
- Additional pertinent information and assistance can be obtained by consulting the websites of the New Jersey Library Association ([www.njla.org](http://www.njla.org)) and/or the New Jersey Library Trustee Association ([www.njlibrarytrustees.org](http://www.njlibrarytrustees.org))
- Advertise the position. Free advertising is provided by BCCLS on its website ([www.bccls.org](http://www.bccls.org)). When you are ready to post a vacancy on the BCCLS website, email the announcement to [internetservices@bccls.org](mailto:internetservices@bccls.org). The New Jersey Library Association will post job vacancies free of charge for its Institutional Members and charges non-members a modest fee (<http://www.njla.org/jobs.html>) These two websites will probably provide the bulk of your candidates. If you wish to cast a wider net, the American Library Association also hosts a fee-based job list (<http://joblist.ala.org/>). Generally, by law, job vacancies are also posted somewhere that current employees can see them. Some libraries also post all vacancies for the public to see.