

## The qualities needed in a trustee

As a potential trustee, you should be:

- Interested in making a difference in the future success of your community
- Available to attend board and committee meetings and to come prepared to contribute to the discussions
- Willing to become more aware of the bigger picture by learning about public library issues and concerns at both the provincial and the national levels
- Prepared to represent the interests, concerns and attitudes of your community
- Open to learning about library programs and services that give your community the level of access to information and enrichment that it needs
- Enthusiastic about working with other board members and the Chief Executive Officer in a team process designed to provide programs and services that meet the greatest number of needs in your community
- Committed to being an active participant in Board leadership activities in your community

## The legal requirements

The Public Libraries Act and its Regulations, not the Municipal Act, legally control public library boards in Ontario.

Municipal Council is responsible for determining the composition of library boards and for appointing library board trustees immediately following municipal elections and when vacancies occur. Effective 2006, positions are for four years, concurrent with the term of Municipal Council.

Public library boards can be composed of a minimum of five members. Although there is no maximum number, most municipalities have appointed boards of between 7 and 9 members.

Municipal Council can appoint its own members to the public library board, up to one less than 50% of the total number of library board members. The majority of a library board must be comprised of citizens appointed from the community. County Council has the option of appointing a bare majority of its Councillors.

An advertisement must appear in local newspapers soliciting applicants who are:

- At least 18 years old
- A Canadian citizen
- A resident of the municipality within which the library operates
- Not employed by the library or the municipality

## The selection process

It is recommended that a municipality pass a by-law to formalize selection procedures for:

- Advertising vacancies
- Requiring all candidates to attend a mandatory information session
- Developing criteria for selection of candidates
- Establishing a selection committee
- Developing a structured interview process.

Important considerations include:

- Consultation with the existing library board Chair and the Chief Executive Officer to determine the current needs of your community and gaps which may exist in the current board composition
- Developing a set of questions that all candidates will be asked during the interview to ensure fairness and meaningful comparison of candidates. Your library's Chief Executive Officer is a valuable resource for helping Council develop interview questions.

## The bottom line for your community

Research studies from coast to coast and in every jurisdiction consistently find the Public Library to be the most visible and important service to the citizens of a community.

Selecting strong, responsible Board members who are dedicated to your community and its successful development works for everyone.

**Take time. Take care. You and your community have everything to gain.**

