

2021-2023 NEKLS Accreditation Standards: Best Practices

Some management and operational practices are not included in the required accreditation standards, or are not fully defined in those standards. NEKLS recommends that libraries implement the following items as best practices to support the best possible library service.

1. Directors and Officers (D&O) **liability insurance** for the library board is recommended. This insurance provides indemnification for board members and library director, or the library itself, against losses in the event a board member or director is sued for alleged wrongful acts in their official capacity. (see standard #5)

2. In addition to the statutory requirement that the board treasurer be **bonded, fidelity bonding** for other board officers, the director and key staff who are involved in money matters is recommended.

The board determines the bond amount, subject to approval by the municipal governing board. Some municipalities and companies require a bond equivalent to at least 10 percent of the liquid assets the treasurer is responsible for handling.

Kansas Statute 12-1226 states "...the treasurer of the library board shall give bond, in an amount fixed by the board and approved by the governing body of the municipality, for the safekeeping and due disbursement of all funds that may come into the treasurer's hands...the treasurer of the library board shall pay out the funds on orders of the board signed by the secretary and chairperson thereof."

Kansas Statute 75-4103 states "[an] officer or employee shall be deemed to have furnished surety if he or she is covered by a blanket bond..."

Kansas Statute 10-803, which addresses **signatures on warrants and warrant checks**, states "Warrants and warrant checks shall be signed by the chairman, mayor, president, trustee, director or other chief official, or in the absence of such officer, by the officer authorized by law to act in such officer's stead, and by the clerk, secretary or auditor or like officer, and the seal, if any, of the municipality need not be attached or impressed or shown by facsimile: Provided, That in manager cities the manager and director of finance, or similar officer, if there be one, shall sign the warrants or warrant checks: Provided further, That a facsimile signature may be used when authorized by the official or officer as provided by article 40 of chapter 75 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated." (see standard #18)

3. **New trustee orientation** is essential to the effective functioning of a library board. At a minimum, orientation should consist of:

- Statutory Power and Duties of the Library Board
- Board Meetings
- Kansas Open Meeting and Open Record Requirements
- Board and Director Roles
- Conflict of Interest
- Key Planning and Goal Documents

(see standard #78)

4. Each member of the library board *should* join the **Kansas Library Association** (KLA) and the Kansas Library Trustee Association (KLTA). Membership for trustees is FREE. Contact NEKLS for more information.

5. A **written planning document** of some sort is crucial to decision-making and resource allocation. This planning document is sometimes called a strategic or long-range plan. The plan should include some or all of the actions below:

- The library will gather and evaluate community-level data, including poverty and unemployment rates, household income, education levels, English proficiency and other population demographics.
- The library will develop Mission and/or Vision statements.
- The library will seek out partnerships with community businesses and/or civic organizations that connect people to the library as a resource.
- The library will create goals and objectives in such areas as digital literacy, economic and workforce development, civic engagement, educational support, health information and sustainable public access to the Internet.
- The library will put in place a process to monitor implementation of the plan.

Libraries are required to file an electronic copy of their strategic plan with the Northeast Kansas Library System.

6. While the components described above are important, a library may choose to conduct a streamlined planning process that uses a reduced level of effort to determine the library's vision and priorities. NEKLS staff are available to assist and facilitate **library planning** efforts. Regardless of the process used, the plan should be revised no less than every three years.

7. Boards are strongly urged to seek **professional architectural consulting** whenever they embark on a repair or renovation project for the library. NEKLS system staff are available to provide basic consulting service on space utilization, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other issues. NEKLS also makes available the services of an experienced library architect to provide consulting on such issues as analysis of sites and existing buildings, utilization of existing library space, and criteria for selection of building program consultants and architects. **Networking assessment and design** is often specialized; libraries should consult a networking specialist. When appropriate, NEKLS will provide a referral to the architect for consulting services. Libraries should seek architectural consulting advice at the earliest possible stage in building projects in order to consider all building options and obtain the maximum benefit from this service. (see standard #12)

8. Although the **technology support** standard of 0.5 FTE to 2.0 FTE, depending on library Service Level, may be met by a combination of library staff and outsourcing, quality technology support is best seen as an integrated staff function rather than as a contractual or outsourced function. A piecemeal approach to technology support is less likely to provide the kind of seamless library technology integration and innovation that is the intent of the standard. The NEKLS technology staff will develop a set of best practices for library technology support and will work with libraries to implement them.

9. As online services continue to develop, and library users increasingly connect their personal devices to the library's network, libraries need to continuously evaluate and improve their **connectivity speed**. When Internet Service Providers do not supply adequate business level connectivity, libraries should pursue projects to bring fiber and other high-speed Internet service to their communities. NEKLS will work with libraries to pursue connectivity improvement projects.

10. The American Library Association has collected information on various aspects of **Intellectual Freedom** and assembled it at the website below. "ALA actively advocates and educates in defense of intellectual freedom—the rights of library users to read, seek information, and speak freely as guaranteed by the First Amendment. Intellectual freedom is a core value of the library profession, and a basic right in our democratic society. A publicly supported library provides free, equitable, and confidential access to information for all people of its community."

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom>

(see standard #6)

11. The **Kansas Open Records Act (KORA)** is addressed in K.S.A. 45-215 through 45-223. Public records are records made, maintained, created or possessed by a public agency. They may be in any form, including electronic storage. The content of records varies widely; some track the routine activities of government while others contain personal information about citizens and businesses. For additional information, visit: <http://ag.ks.gov/open-government/kora-faq>

As part of KORA, each library must designate a **local Freedom of Information Officer**. Many library boards designate the library director to serve this role. Kansas Statute 45-226 states, *(a) The governing body of every public agency in Kansas which maintains public records shall designate a local freedom of information officer.*

(b) The local freedom of information officer or the local freedom of information officer's designee shall:

(1) Prepare and provide educational materials and information concerning the open records act;

(2) be available to assist the public agency and members of the general public to resolve disputes relating to the open records act;

(3) respond to inquiries relating to the open records act;

(4) establish the requirements for the content, size, shape and other physical characteristics of a brochure required to be displayed or distributed or otherwise make available to the public under the open records act. In establishing such requirements for the content of the brochure, the local freedom of information officer shall include plainly written basic information about the rights of a requestor, the responsibilities of a public agency, and the procedures for inspecting and obtaining a copy of public records under the open records act.

(see standard #6)

12. Library board officers with signature authority may choose to use **facsimile signatures** as a means to expedite the processing of checks. Kansas Statute 75-4001 through 75-4007 addresses the use of facsimile signatures. (see standard #18)

Kansas Statute 75-4002 states, "Any authorized officer, after filing with the secretary of state his or her manual signature certified by him or her under oath, may execute or cause to be executed with a facsimile signature in lieu of his or her manual signature: (a) Any public security, provided that at least one signature required or permitted to be placed thereon shall be manually subscribed, and (b) any

instrument of payment. Upon compliance with this act by the authorized officer, his or her facsimile signature has the same legal effect as his or her manual signature.”

13. Kansas Statute 75-1122 requires certain financial procedures for libraries with budgets between \$275k and \$500k. Contact NEKLS for more information on financial review best practices for budgets under \$275k (see standard #20)

14. The ***Kansas Public Library Youth Services Guidelines*** are intended to help libraries measure their current level of library services to children and youth, and to help them improve program, collection and information access to children and youth in their local libraries. The latest version of the Kansas Public Library Youth Services Guidelines was developed by the Kansas Library Consultants for Youth (KLCY), coordinating with the State Library of Kansas. (see standard #34)

View the guidelines at: <http://systems.mykansalibrary.org/youth-services-guidelines/>

15. Appendix A illustrates **minimum salary ranges for directors**. Increasingly, Service Center I libraries have an opportunity to hire a director possessing a Master’s degree in Library Science (MLS). While the standards *do not require* a Service Center I director to possess an MLS, library boards may wish to consider such candidates. NEKLS encourages library boards to consider a salary range that is appropriate to the director’s responsibilities and qualifications. To this end, NEKLS recommends starting new hires with an MLS at a rate above the 3rd year level for those with Bachelor’s degrees and APPLE completion. The salary range for Service Center II directors with APPLE certification and a Bachelor’s degree would be a good range to consider.