

Wise Practices: Library Director Evaluation & Compensation

This resource assumes that your library has the wise practice of the board chair and the library director sharing the responsibility and leadership for library director evaluation and compensation. Together, you strive to create a process and experience that includes, but is not limited to, what has been provided in this resource. This is not a prescriptive document telling you what you “must” do. Instead, please consider this as a starting point for conversations with your director or board chair.

As you review and develop your library director evaluation and compensation process, consider the following:

- What is the role of the board chair in the evaluation and compensation process?
- What is the role of the library director?
- What are the expectations of current and experienced board members?
- What was learned from last year’s evaluation and compensation process, and what could be done differently?

Wise Practices resources from ABCPLD and BCLTA are works-in-progress and the content, usability, and applicability will be updated with input from library directors, trustees, federations, and the Public Libraries Branch.

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Library Director Evaluation

For each item below, please consider the accompanying questions as a starting place for a conversation.

Item	Questions	Status
Job Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the job description accurately represent the scope of the work? If not, what needs to be changed or articulated differently? • If there's quite a lot that isn't accurate, does the job description need to go through a more formal review process before the annual evaluation? 	
Designing the Evaluation Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on past experience of evaluations, what would the director and board like to see different next time? • What have been the points of frustration in how you're currently doing evaluations? How will this inform any changes you may want to make? • Some libraries include a self-evaluation by the director. Will you do this or not, and why? • It's common practice to base evaluations on strategic plan and operating plan outcomes. Will you do this or something else, and why? • Some libraries include feedback from director's colleagues at the city or a few library staff. Will you do this or not, and why? 	
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's the best time of year to schedule an annual evaluation? Said another way, when is the board most familiar with the director's work and most able to offer knowledgeable comments? • Does your board chair and director already have a habit of having regular informal conversations throughout the year? These informal conversations are an opportunity for the library director to receive ongoing feedback from the board chair, so nothing is a surprise when it comes to the annual evaluation. If 	

	you're not having these already, why not? What would need to change to make this a possibility?	
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Library Director Compensation

When it comes to compensation, it is helpful to remember that "it all depends." It depends on the local social and economic factors, the experience and education of the library director, the budget, the expectations and scope of responsibilities, and other complexities such as the local economy, tax revenue, and local government budgets. Your local context is more than just the size and regional location of the library.

It is also helpful to keep in mind that a decent salary and benefits package is critically important for retaining a valued employee. Public libraries bring a unique value to the communities they serve and the most significant investment in that unique value is through staffing. The board holds fiduciary responsibility regarding being an employer and for the oversight of the budget. There is a sweet spot where the values and opinions of the board, their fiduciary responsibility, the budget, and the desire to retain a valued employee meet.

Item	Points to Consider/Questions	Status
Compensation Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most straightforward way to find out about library director compensation packages is to ask your director to bring 3-5 compensation packages that are comparable to your context. • In general, the best "localized" comparison would come from looking at equivalent local government salaries and the scope of those positions. A fair director wage should look similar to a recreation/culture manager at the very least, or more accurately a Sr. manager or CAO. • If this makes you uncomfortable, please keep in mind that it is one of the benefits of the public sector that no one is making a profit, the funding and budget allocation is transparent, and so the library director knows what is possible and what is reasonable for their salary. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At your library, do you have a practice of asking your library director to do compensation research? If not, why not? 	
<p>The Compensation Package</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aside from the salary, compensation packages also commonly include sick and vacation days. • Another compensation to consider, especially if money is tight, is offering your director a flexible schedule to meet personal needs. These kinds of “soft compensations” can be significant for retention. • If the board is discussing compensation, it is common practice that the board goes in camera to discuss what they think is the best compensation. The board then brings the library director in camera for further discussion. Sometimes at that point more information is needed, but a deadline is set, and in all cases that we’ve heard about, an amicable agreement is reached. • It is ok and actually a positive sign if the library director negotiates their compensation package. For new hires, boards should expect this of a quality applicant. • Based on past experience of compensation conversations, what would the director and board like to see different next time? • What have been the points of frustration in how you’re currently doing compensation? How will this inform any changes you may want to make? 	
<p>Annual Increases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please keep in mind that everyone deserves at least a cost of living increase each year. This is typically 2-3%. • Beyond that, it is at the Board’s discretion to award an additional increase based on performance (ie achieving the operating plan outcomes), increased scope in the job description, increased responsibility, or an additional credential like an MLIS degree. • It is not common practice in the public sector to offer bonuses. Keep in mind that transparency and accountability are foundational to your board roles and responsibilities. 	

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