

Trustee Essentials

Chapter 12: Library Standards

Library Standards

- All Wisconsin residents need and deserve at least a basic level of library service. The standards provide a way to measure a basic level of quality for public library service and also provide a pathway to excellence in library service.
- Today's library staff must master not only the skills and knowledge necessary to provide traditional library services, but also the new and constantly changing skills and knowledge required to utilize the latest in information technologies. Challenges also face the trustees and other government officials responsible for securing the funding and other resources necessary to provide library service that meets current needs and expectations.

Library Standards

- WPLS attempts to cover the services, resources, and other requirements for basic library service that should be available to all residents of the state, including those who face physical or other barriers to their use of public libraries. Wisconsin's public library standards are entirely voluntary, but every library in Wisconsin is encouraged to meet the standards covered by the checklists in the Standards publication.

How to Use the Standards

- If your library does not meet certain standards, you can work with your library director to develop a plan to work toward achieving those standards in the future.
- Quantitative standards are provided for a number of library service parameters, such as hours open, staffing levels, collection size, and collection expenditures. Quantitative standards are established at four levels of effort: basic, moderate, enhanced, and excellent.

Library Planning and the Standards

- In the context of a local planning process, your planning committee can use the checklists to gather information about the library and the community during the information-gathering phase of the planning process. The Standards can also help the planning committee establish objectives for the plan.

Discussion Questions

1. Why should our library be concerned about state standards when those standards are voluntary?
2. Do new technologies reduce the need for your library to provide traditional library services? Why or why not?