

A STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND PRINCIPLES

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

In order to exercise its powers and responsibilities most effectively, the Board encourages appointing authorities to consider candidates who are committed to the library's purpose and have time to give to its affairs; who will maintain an awareness of modern library service in preparation for making knowledgeable decisions in the interest of a better library; and who will contribute independent thought and work cooperatively with other Board members for the common good.

LIBRARY PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

The Board believes that a democratic society must have informed citizens; that people can better achieve enrichment and fulfillment through the use of available information and knowledge; and that the public library is the focal point in the community for both formal and informal association with information and ideas.

The Library has concurrent responsibilities to provide materials and services to the individual citizen, to community organizations, to governmental and social agencies, and to business and industry. Its resources and services must be available to the entire population regardless of age, sex, or physical condition; regardless of economic, ethnic, religious, or political status.

The Board is aware that the economic order, social structures, and attitudes of society are subject to constant change. As a public service institution, the Library must adapt to change to retain a relevant role in society. Its services must assist people in adapting to constantly evolving situations in their lives.

In achieving its purpose, the Library must seek an active partnership with other public and civic organizations and institutions. Through cooperative effort, the correlation and reciprocity of services and access to combined resources can benefit the entire community.

The Library should involve citizens in the identification of information needs and should develop programs to meet those needs. It has an obligation to create a broad awareness of library resources and services and to stimulate their use.

ADMINISTRATION

The County of Sampson delegates authority for management to the Library administration and the Board supports the administration's efforts to implement library policies. It expects continuous evaluation of current operations; research, planning, and development; the recommendation of goals, objectives, and priorities; and the utilization of sound principles of management for maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

It encourages staff participation in the decision making process in their areas of concern.

FINANCE

The Library must operate within its certified Annual Budget. The Board is committed to the development of a service program which can be sustained on a current and realistically projected level of financial support. It is imperative that annual priorities for spending be established through a comparative evaluation of needs. Available funds must be divided between the continued acquisition of material resources, equitable compensation of personnel, and the requirements of the physical environment in order to provide maximum public service.

The Library is committed to the continued development of service commensurate with public demand and financial support. Both short and long range plans, developed with citizen participation, must reflect a constancy of effort to improve library funding.

At the state level, cooperative efforts between the library community and the legislature are encouraged to develop a more adequate base of tax support. At the local level, supplemental funds should be sought from federal monies available to political subdivisions; from the electorate, and from corporate, foundation and comparable grant sources. Gifts and bequests from private donors are encouraged for specific or general purpose.

PHYSICAL FACILITIES

The Board endorses the role of the Main Library as the comprehensive service and support center for a system. It is equally committed to the provision of supplemental service delivery systems for the convenience of library users throughout the county.

The number and location of library outlets shall be determined by the availability of funds, by population distribution and transportation patterns, by natural and man-made barriers to convenient access, and by the volume and nature of use of library resources. The types of delivery systems provided shall retain the flexibility to be adapted to shifting concentrations of population and to changing needs of communities or areas to be served.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

The Board endorses the traditional services of selecting, organizing, and maintaining information resources and providing a high quality of staff assistance to the user in finding what is needed, either in the local collection or from other available sources. Effective lending procedures should permit the use of materials at a time and place convenient to the user and insure their return for use by others. Sponsorship of program activities, in or outside of libraries, which contribute to the education, information, or enrichment of the community are a natural part of library service.

A continuous program of public information should increase citizen awareness of the value of library resources and services. Efforts shall be made to minimize environmental and operational barriers to library use and to integrate human and technical resources to achieve service goals.

Access to information is the key to effective library service. A wide variety of dissemination techniques is endorsed, including a network of library branches, bookmobiles, and special vehicles for service to the handicapped, institutionalized or homebound; on-premise use of resources with assistance from specialized personnel and equipment; borrowing privileges; telephone or mail services; access to resources of other institutions; and meeting rooms for public use.

Continuous research shall be conducted to identify new community needs, whether of individual or group users, or of the non-user. The Library will accommodate those needs within the limits of financial capability and according to periodically determined priorities.

MATERIAL RESOURCES

The Library is more than a mere warehouse of books. A wide variety of media should complement and supplement print materials. The Library subscribes to the principle of intellectual freedom and the individual's right to read. Under well-defined selection criteria, materials shall be provided: (1) to facilitate the informal self-education of all citizens; (2) to expand and enrich resources on subjects in which individuals or groups are pursuing formal education; (3) to meet the informational needs of the population; (4) to support the educational, civic, and cultural activities of groups or organizations; and (5) to encourage citizens to include the use of the library in their leisure.

The Board shall adopt effective measures to protect library materials and other property from loss, theft, mutilation or other damage. It shall resist efforts by special interest groups or individuals to control the nature or content of the library collections.

PERSONNEL

The Board believes in the dignity of the individual and of constructive work; it believes in the importance of self-fulfillment. It endeavors to provide an environment conducive to the maximum development of each staff member. It is committed to equitable treatment of each employee through the development of well-defined county policies which include a job classification and pay plan, liberal fringe benefits, and nondiscrimination because of race, sex, marital status, national origin, age, political opinions, or religious beliefs. It believes that affirmative action and equal opportunity provisions, staff development, career advancement and performance evaluations contribute to a job satisfaction and high morale. It believes in a measurable contribution from employees, with financial rewards compatible with other local salary scales for comparable work and training.

The Board encourages staff membership and participation in professional and civic organizations, attendance at conferences and workshops, with paid time allowances and expenses when possible, and the constant development of inter-agency relationships. It believes in the singular importance of communication with staff and acknowledges the value of staff participation in making recommendations affecting personnel and operational problems; it encourages staff attendance at Board meetings. County policies are recorded and described in detail in Personnel Manuals which are available to all employees.

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RELATIONSHIPS AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER LIBRARIES

The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science says that "... the total library and information resource in the United States is a national resource which should be strengthened, organized, and made available to the maximum degree possible in the public interest. This national resource is the cumulated and growing record of much of our nation's and indeed, the world's total cultural experience – intellectual, social, technological, and spiritual ... all people of the United States have the right, according to their individual needs, to realistic and convenient access to this national resource for their personal enrichment and achievement, and thereby for the progress of society."*

Sampson-Clinton Public Library actively promotes cooperation with other libraries to ensure its users access to the information they need. Within limits set by policy and budget, the library's resources are available to any patron, even if she or he has access to other libraries, whether public, academic, school, or special. Whenever possible, reciprocal arrangements are made with these other libraries so that the combined resources of the entire library community may be used to satisfy the information needs of the public.

The library supports planning for and participation in networks of cooperating libraries to share resources and technology, exchange information and avoid unnecessary duplication of materials. The library also makes available materials from other libraries through existing state and regional inter-library loan systems.

The library is open to staffs of other libraries and encourages formal and informal continuing education of its own staff through field trips and workshops at other library facilities.

The library believes that through cooperative efforts, a larger share of the public will better understand the function and value of library service and libraries in general will benefit from a broader base of support.

*National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. "Toward a national program for library and information services: goals for action, a summary." U.S.G.P.O., 1977, p.3.