

Library Director Hiring Process Overview (Trustee Toolkit)

- Appoint a search committee to develop the recruitment package. This could include developing or revising the job description, considering how best to promote the recruitment, and determining the strengths, qualities, and attributes of the idea direct. Conduct an exit interview with the outgoing director. What expertise is needed to fulfill the library's mission, vision, and strategic plan? (Note: many organizations use recruiters to facilitate the search process, and this is something that the board may consider. The board may consult with other libraries through their [cooperative library system](#) for recommendations on recruiters, if needed).
- In the case where the library director is a city or county employee, it will be up to that government to advertise formally for the position, but the board can make the vacancy known and encourage applicants. The position should at a minimum be posted on the [listserv](#) managed by the California Library Association and other free or low-cost resources for advertising library director positions both within California and nationally; see the Resource Guide. Announcements should include the job title, duties, qualifications, salary, application timeline, highlights about the community and a contact person.
- Agree in advance on the methods for screening, ranking, requesting references, and evaluating applicants. The board or board committee then checks applicant references, evaluates qualifications, and arranges interviews with promising candidates, again considering the qualities needed to fulfill the library's mission, vision, and strategic plan. A uniform list of questions should be developed for both the interviews and for contacting references. These questions should be reviewed by someone knowledgeable about employment and discrimination law. Once candidates have been selected for interviewing, prepare for interviews. Consider sending background information on the library and community to the final candidates, to include the library strategic plan, policy manual, and budgets for the last several years. Follow the list of questions created earlier with opportunities for additional questions as conversation dictates. Be careful, however, to follow the rules and procedures for interviews established by the local government, to avoid any issues with discrimination. The interview is a mutual evaluation process. The search committee/board should share with all candidates the negative, as well as the positive, aspects of the position.
- After completing the interviews, the board or committee meets to review the interviews and references, discuss responses, and rank the candidates in order of preference. Once a decision is made, the successful candidate is officially notified. A written notice that includes agreed-upon title, salary, employment conditions and deadlines is very important. The candidate should also reply in writing. Once the chosen candidate has accepted, other candidates should be notified at once. If there is no strong candidate, recruitment should reopen.
- Introduce the new director to board members, the staff, appropriate community leaders, and government officials. Arrange news releases and consider a library open house reception. Create an onboarding package for the new director, including background information, policies, budgets, minutes, manuals, reports, and measurable milestones for three months, six months and one year.

- Depending on local practices there may be a probationary period for the new director, generally lasting from six months to one year. Probation is usually considered an extension of the hiring process, during which an employee can be more easily released. Provisions for probationary periods are often written into collective bargaining agreements which may cover the director's position, and the board should be aware of these provisions. Again, the board should adhere to the jurisdiction's practices regarding probation.

In the probationary process, each measurable milestone as mentioned above should include documentation of goals met as well as adjustments and corrections if they are changed. To ensure that the new director is performing as expected, agendaized, closed-session reviews should be held quarterly during board meetings using appropriate Brown Act language (example: PERFORMANCE EVALUATION [Government Code Section 54957] Title: Library Director).