Nitty Gritty Policy Manual Makeover

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Iowa

policy

Definition of POLICY

plural **policies**

1   ***a*** : prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs

b : management or procedure based primarily on material interest

2   ***a*** : a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions **to guide and determine present and future decisions**

b : a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body

Why have policies?

- Protects staff and public
  - Primary tool for staff to do their jobs effectively and allow staff decision-making power
  - Offers the public a set of expectations for the library and ensures that they are treated equitably
- Customer service
- Public education
- Cover legal and ethical issues
- Lend credibility to organization
- State Library standards may have policy implications
- Mechanism for administration and staff to translate library priorities into action
- Support for staff and board in the event of legal action

Components of policy development

<u>Purpose Statement</u> – Why? Philosophy

<u>Regulations</u> – The Rules

<u>Procedures</u> – How? Process for operations and services

<u>Guidelines</u> – Best practices

Strategies to policy development

- Local application and decision making
- Ensure that policies are legal and ethical
- Use positive, proactive language and avoid punitive, negative terms
- Use clear, concise language and avoid narrative writing
- Include staff and board in development/review
- Write in a way that allows flexibility but protects both staff and patrons
- Seek best practices
- Set a review schedule
- Train your staff and your board (advocacy)

Limitations in policy development

- Developed by people who don't understand implications or concerns of staff who must implement policy
- Staff doesn't have access to manuals or isn't properly trained
- Not reflective of current practice or library's priorities (mission, goals, and objectives)
- Outdated/not updated regularly
- Don't address current issues/challenges
- Are reactive in nature or punitive
- Written in a narrative format that doesn't separate components: policy statement, regulations, procedures, guidelines
- Poorly written and difficult to understand
- Conflict with local, state or federal laws
- Policies contradict each other or have contradicting elements in a single policy

"Best decision-making model is to estimate, implement, check, and adjust — then to estimate, implement, plan, and adjust again."

from Creating Policies for Results
Sandra Nelson and June Garcia

Transitioning to more effective and efficient policies

Policies prior to 2014

1. Board by-laws
2. ~~Cell phone~~ OUTDATED
3. Collection development
4. Reconsideration of Materials
5. Gift & Donation
6. Selection
7. Community Center discipline and ~~unattended child~~ safety policy
8. Confidentiality of Patrons
9. Interlibrary Loan
10. Internet & Personal Computer
11. Mission Statement
12. Meeting Room Policy
13. Notices and displays
14. Operational Policy
15. Program Policy
16. Sex Offender
17. Volunteer

Manual Makeover

1. Board By-Laws
2. Mission Statement
3. Collection Development

   (Combined Coll Dev, Gift and Donation,   Selection, Reconsideration of Materials)
4. Service Policy

   (Combined operational, notices and displays, interlibrary loan, confidentiality of patrons)
5. Library Conduct Policy
6. Child Safety *REVAMPED*
7. Internet & Technology Policy
8. Meeting Room Terms of Use
9. Proctoring *NEW*
10. Volunteer
11. Sex Offender
12. Personnel Policy Statement *NEW*
13. Art Display Policy *NEW*

City (County) Government's Role in Policy

- City employees
- Overarching vision and goals
- Personnel
- Holidays
- Inclement Weather

Board's Role

- Understand big picture implications
- Ensure legal and ethical compliance
- Approve policy statement and regulations

Director's Role

- Bring policy review to board and act as technical advisor
- Draft new policies and address new issues
- Share with staff and ensure policies are upheld.

What about staff?

- Suggest improvements, changes

- Understand process

- Ask questions and seek clarification

- Explain and implement policies for public

- Include frontline staff in policy development and

   training

Where to Find Sample Policies

- [ALA Guidelines to Policy Development](#)

- [WebJunction](#)

  (Topic Areas > Management)

- [Your State Library](#) (and other states)

- Other like libraries/libraries in your state

Resources

Creating Policies for Results: From Chaos to Clarity. Nelson, Sandra and June Garcia (2003).

Images - freedigitalphotos.net

North Liberty Community Library Policy Manual

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