



Defining the Relationship between Friends & Library Staff

The relationship between Friends and library staff should be defined by collaboration, communication, and cooperation. Each party should respect the responsibilities and needs of the others when setting their priorities and developing policies and procedures.

Friends of the Library support the library and receive guidance from the Library Board and management.

Accountability: Friends operate with a self-elected board of directors, but may provide the Library Board with regular updates and annual financial reports. Minutes of regular meetings of the Friends are sent to the library's liaison person and/or the Library CEO.

The Library Board provides guidance to the Friends of the Library because of shared areas of interest, including advocacy and fundraising. Trustees may attend meetings of the Friends and may volunteer at the Friends' events.

Accountability: The Library Board is governed by provincial legislation and reports to the municipal council in terms of financial management and providing the library services needed by the community.

Chief Executive Officer/Chief Librarian provides guidance and key information and/or resources to the Friends of the Library. The librarian informs the Library Board and staff on Friends' activities.

Accountability: The Chief Executive Officer is employed by the Library Board and reports directly to them at regular meetings.

Library staff should be aware of the Friends' activities and the value of what they do, and are often willing to provide support, as approved by the CEO. This could include providing meeting room space, use of a photocopier, or storage space for book sales.

The library liaison is a staff member, such as the CEO or a Trustee, who may attend the Friends' meetings on a regular basis and may play the role of liaison with the Friends to assist with meetings, promotion, and activities.

Library volunteers may be involved at the library for specific tasks, such as a homebound service or homework club. They may or may not belong to the Friends group. The library will have a volunteer management policy, or else offer a training program for library volunteers and Friends volunteers. This is governed by the library's policies relating to privacy and code of conduct.

Municipal Council members may serve on the Library Board or may be library supporters in the community.

Should a member of the Library Board also serve as a member of the Friends of the Library Board?

It is important to avoid overlap between members of the Library Board and members of the Friends of the Library Board, as having one person serving on both boards could lead to:

1. A member having more power and authority than their peers on either of the boards.
2. A perceived conflict if a member with a policy-making role on the Library Board is also in a decision-making role on the Friends Board.
3. A potential conflict of interest when a policy that the Library Board is proposing might not be considered to be in the best interest of the Friends.

If the Library Board and the Friends Board are separate, how can they keep each other informed and work towards the same goals?

1. A library staff member on the Friends Board should be appointed as a liaison to the library's Board of Trustees. This liaison should attend the Trustee meetings in order to report the Friends' activities to the Trustees, and to report the Trustees' activities back to the Friends.
2. Friends should be kept informed of the library's plans, progress, and challenges by the Library Director. They should support the policies set by the Library Board of Trustees.
3. Friends can serve as "connecting links" between the library and the community, analyzing the needs of the community and communicating them to the library staff.

4. All fundraising by the Friends should be done with the approval of the Trustees and with the coordination of the Library Director.
5. The funds raised by Friends supplement the library's operating budget to provide materials and programs that enhance the library's service. These funds should not replace the money that is provided by the city or institution and should only be spent after conferring with the Library Director and Trustees.

Content taken from the *Working Relationships Toolkit*. OLA Super Conference 2014; and Nawalinski, Beth. *Fact Sheet #10: The Role of the Friends*. United for Libraries: Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations.