
INTRODUCTION

It has been six years since the *Virginia Public Library Trustee Handbook* was published. During this period there have been many changes in the commonwealth's community of public libraries: new and revised legislation, the establishment of libraries in unserved areas, intensified focus on networking and cooperation among libraries of all types, the issue of finding a balance between new information sources and traditional services, changes in library personnel, and, of course, many new trustees.

There has also been a perceptible and encouraging recognition that members of library boards of trustees want to gain a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Even the smallest library will often have complex issues to deal with, and trustees must have the knowledge and skills necessary to govern the library.

This handbook is designed to give boards of trustees basic information on the structure of library service in Virginia, with emphasis on their major areas of responsibility. It is intended to serve as a resource and guide to helping all trustees carry out their duties responsibly. Although it is written primarily for governing boards, it may be useful for advisory boards, Friends of the Library, elected officials, and library staffs as well.

We hope that the *Handbook* will answer questions for both new and experienced trustees and that it will stimulate discussion, further inquiry, and a renewed enthusiasm for the rewarding task of public library trusteeship.