

Date: January 11, 2023

To: Trustees
Member Libraries

From: Thomas C. Bindeman
Executive Director

Re: Continuing Education Requirement for Library Trustees

Background

Public library trustees in New York State oversee an estimated \$1.6 billion of the public's money—a responsibility that must be undertaken by informed, thoughtful, prudent, and trustworthy library boards. Requiring trustee education will foster an understanding of complex governance processes so that this responsibility is met.

Furthermore, to provide effective oversight, board members must appreciate their mandated duties and responsibilities. An effective way of providing this appreciation is to offer the training necessary to be good financial stewards.

The *Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State* states that “trustees must learn and grow during their entire tenure on the board, developing an ever-deepening awareness of the affairs of their own library and an appreciation and understanding of other libraries and library organizations. The public library is a multifaceted organization functioning in a complex world.”

New York State Education Law Section 260-D which requires members of library boards of trustees (beginning January 1, 2023) to complete a minimum of two

hours of trustee education annually from a provider approved by the Commissioner of Education that addresses the financial oversight, accountability, fiduciary responsibilities and the general powers and duties of library trustees.

Administration

As stated above, each year Trustees are required to complete two hours of continuing education during their term on the System Board.

According to Section 260-D, each Trustee shall demonstrate compliance with the requirements by filing with the President of the Board of Trustees evidence of completion of Trustee Education from an approved provider. Such evidence shall include one of the following:

1. certificates of completion issued by one or more approved providers;
or
 - a. a signed self-assurance of completion (included at the end of this memo).
 - b. Such assurance shall identify the approved trustee education provider, a description of the format and content of the completed instruction activities, the date and time such member began and completed each instruction activity and an explanation of why a certificate of completion was not available from approved providers.
 - c. The library is required to track trustee education compliance. A sample form is included at the end of this memo. This form can assist library boards in maintaining a record of trustee education activities. Evidence of completion shall be submitted to the Library Board President and to Nioga's Executive Director by December 31st of each year.
 - d. Compliance is tracked by the State Library through questions on the *Annual Report for Public and Association Libraries*.
2. Should a Trustee fail to submit evidence of completion by the above date, the Trustee will be suspended from duty until evidence of completion is filed. Should a Trustee in suspension fail to provide evidence of completion within 90 days, they will be assumed to have resigned from the board.

Approved Providers

At the state level, trustee education providers and activities (topics and formats) are approved by the New York State Library acting on behalf of the Commissioner of Education.

In addition to pre-approving public library systems as trustee education providers, the State Library has delegated authority to public library systems to approve additional trustee education providers and activities (topics and formats) for their member libraries.

Pre-approved providers:

- New York State Library/Division of Library Development
- Public Library Systems
- Web Junction
- New York Library Association (including the Library Trustees Section and other Sections/Roundtables)
- Reference and Research Library Resources Councils
- Empire State Library Network (formerly New York 3Rs Association)
- PULISDO (Public Library System Directors Organization)
- ALA (American Library Association) including United for Libraries and other Divisions

Allowable Formats:

Trustee education may be delivered online or in person. The format of this education may include any of the following:

- Lectures
- Workshops
- Webinars
- Online courses
- State or national library association conferences

Continuing Education Workshops:

In order to help member libraries comply with the trustee education requirements, the Nioga Library System has contracted with Attorney, Stephanie Adams to conduct four, two hour workshops. The workshops will be conducted live via *Zoom* technology and will be interactive, lively and engaging. *Zoom* software download is needed to access workshops. **Each session is two credit hours.**

The dates for these workshops are:

- ***Library Trustee Responsibilities:***

Topic: Financial Oversight, Accountability, Fiduciary Responsibilities, Enacting Policies and other powers and duties.

Dates and Times: **March 22, 2023, 6:00 – 8:00 pm**
March 29, 2023, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

- ***Legal Documents and Relationships for Library Trustees:***

Topic: Governing documents, policies, insurance and agreements with their town/village/municipality.

Dates and Times: **October 18, 2023, 6:00 – 8:00 pm**
October 25, 2023, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Training Certificates will be provided for each attendee. Registration and *Zoom contact information will be sent out via email two to three weeks before each scheduled event.*

Trustee Handbook Book Club

The Trustee Handbook Club is back. The 2023 schedule and registration instructions were recently sent via email to all Trustees.

- **Open Meetings Law** - February 21, 2023, 5:00 – 6:30 pm
- **The Board-Director Relationship** – April 18, 2023, 5:00 – 6:30 pm
- **Financial Planning & Budgeting** – June 20, 2023, 5:00 – 6:30 pm
- **Strategic Planning** – August 15, 2023, 5:00 – 6:30 pm
- **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access & Justice** – October 17, 2023, 5:00 – 6:30 pm
- **Financing & Managing Construction Projects** – December 19, 2023, 5:00 – 6:30 pm

All those who attend a live session will receive a certificate for 1.5 credit hours. Trustee will also receive a message with a recording of the session. No certificate will be issued for independent viewing of a session.

If you have any questions in regards to registering please contact Laura Jeffery at (716) 434-6167, ext. 12 or ljeffery@nioga.org

Sexual Harassment Prevention Training

Nioga will also provide two Sexual Harassment Workshops this year. The training will meet the minimum standards outlined in 201-g of the NY Labor Law:

- For Staff: **April 5, 2023, 10 – 11 am**
- For Directors/Trustees: **April 12 2023, 5:30 – 6:30 pm**

Certificates will be provided for each attendee. (Sexual Harassment Training is not considered Trustee Training as defined by Education Law 260-d.) Registration and Zoom contact information will be sent out three weeks before each scheduled event.

Trustees will be informed of additional workshops via email. Please keep Nioga Staff informed of changes with your Board, both additions and removals. Send TRUSTEE NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, EMAIL AND OFFICE to ljeffery@nioga.org

Additional trustee information can be found at this address:
<https://niogatrustees.org/>

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you.

CC: Member Library Directors

Attached: Self-Assurance Completion Form
Trustee Education Tracking Form