

Training Outline for Mission Statements

Definition:

A mission statement is a broad, philosophical statement of the purpose of the library, specifying the fundamental reasons for its existence. The mission statement gives direction to the library by establishing the scope of the library's activities, providing overall direction, and giving a framework and justification for the library's goals and objectives. The mission statement should include the library's support of intellectual freedom.

Exercise:

Review the library's mission statement in small groups. Consider the following questions:

Questions for managers:

- Do we have a mission statement?
 - If so, when was the last review?
 - If not, what would you want it to say?
- Were community members (including elected board members) involved in its creation?
- Does it refer to external documents (e.g., ALA statements)?
 - If so, are they available?

Questions for staff:

- Have you read the mission statement?
- Do you know where to find it?
- What does it mean for your job?

Group discussion:

1. How is the mission statement important to promoting and protecting intellectual freedom?
 - affirms values through the adoption of external documents (e.g., Freedom to Read Statement)
 - defines services for all users
 - educational and information access goals usually stated here
2. What if I don't agree with the mission statement?
 - discuss personal vs. professional views

Supporting documents:

- local library mission statement (or examples of mission statements from other libraries)
- external documents referred to in mission statement