



Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Community Engagement Strategy 2011-2012

Purpose of the Strategy:

Trust between the public and Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is critical to the success of our public library and our community. The Library's Board of Trustees is interested in an ongoing and meaningful dialogue with the public in order to understand and better respond to the public's concerns and suggestions about Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. The following strategy was created as a result of the successful community engagement practices the Library has implemented and employed over the past eighteen months, and is intended to expand public access to information about the Library and the Library's Board of Trustees. This strategy prioritizes two-way communication with the public by establishing formal and informal mechanisms to encourage ongoing and mutually accountable dialogue between the public and the Library.

Implementation and Ongoing Evaluation of the Strategy:

To the extent elements are not already in place, the Board will begin immediate implementation of this strategy upon its approval. After one year, the Board will evaluate feedback received from the community, funders and other stakeholders about the effectiveness of the strategy. Upon evaluation, changes or additions to the strategy will be considered for adoption and implementation. Thereafter, the strategy will be re-evaluated annually and amended as necessary.

Strategy Elements:

1. Trustee Responsibilities: All trustees are encouraged to remain active liaisons with community members, with public trustees having an especially significant role in representing the community.

- a. The ten Public Trustees who serve Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh serve as community representatives to the Board. Their attendance at Board and Board Committee Meetings is an essential link in the Library's relationship with the Pittsburgh community. They are encouraged to report regularly to their constituents about Library news, issues and business, and to share community input with the Board.
- b. Term Trustees, Life Trustees and Emeritus Trustees are expected to be active community members who both listen to the public and advocate to the public about Library issues.

2. Community Committee Members: Community members are invited by the Board to serve on committees and observe Board Meetings.

- a. Community Committee Members are appointed by the Board to serve one-year, renewable terms on Board Committees. Representing a cross-section of stakeholders served by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh system, including the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, these Committee Members will help the Board and Library Management better engage the community in the decision-making and work of the Library, enhance ongoing dialogue with the community and further increase the diversity of viewpoints represented on the Board's Committees.
- b. Potential Community Committee Members are nominated through various channels, including nominations by Board members, Library Staff, Friends of the Library groups and by the community at-large. Potential candidates are interviewed, selected and recommended for appointment by the Committee on Trusteeship and reviewed with the Board Chair and Committee Chairs. Up to twelve Community Committee Members may serve each year.
- c. When the Board establishes task forces for ad-hoc and special projects, additional community members may be invited to serve.
- d. Effective with the first Board Meeting following the adoption of this Strategy, Community Committee Members will be invited to attend and observe the general sessions of the Board of Trustee Meetings.

3. Website: The Library will provide an enhanced Board of Trustees section on its website and will continue to provide and increase the detailed information about Library operations on its website.

At a minimum, the enhanced website contents will include:

- a. A picture and profile of each Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Board Member and his/her respective role on the Board including the Board Committees and Task Forces, where applicable, on which each member serves;
- b. A picture and profile of each Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Community Committee member, and the Board Committees and Task Forces on which each member serves;
- c. An electronic communications form directly linked to a Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh email address created specifically for communications with the Board, and a centralized telephone number and mailing address to contact the Board;

- d. A brief summary of the themes, issues and topics expected to be addressed by the Board and its Committees during the upcoming year. The community may comment on these issues and topics, or may comment on any topic of their choosing by email, postal mail or other means;
- e. Board-approved minutes for previous Board Meetings;
- f. News releases related to Board Meetings;
- g. Information about who to contact and how to propose nominations for Term Trustees or Community Committee Members;
- h. The Library's Annual Report, Approved Budget, Budget Projections, Annual Audited Financial Statements and related information, IRS Form 990 and other reports that may be of interest to the community are currently available on the website and will continue to be provided.

4. Regular Community Meetings: The Board will host a series of meetings with the community each year.

- a. The Library will establish and publish in advance a schedule of regular Community Meetings that will rotate among the Library locations and in neighborhoods not currently served by a Branch location.
- b. These Community Meetings will be attended by a representative group of Board of Trustees and Library Management and will be conducted in an informal style, with a general agenda focused primarily on listening to the suggestions, issues, concerns or matters important to the community and library users. Central themes, considerations and issues raised in these meetings will be summarized and presented as an agenda item at the Board's External Relations Committee Meetings, and where appropriate, at subsequent Board of Trustee Meetings.

5. Annual Public Meeting: Once each year, the Library Board and Staff will invite the public and other stakeholders (County Executive, Mayor, State Legislators, Allegheny Regional Asset District (RAD), School Board and Staff, Foundations, etc.) to a Public Meeting.

- a. All Board of Trustee members will be expected to attend.
- b. The agenda for the meeting will include a financial summary for the year, a summary of other performance metrics, a brief "State of the Library" presentation and a time for open questions and answers from those in attendance.

Background:

Established as a public trust, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees. The Library must have between 30 to 38 Trustees, divided into three classes designated as Public Trustees, Life Trustees and Term Trustees. The Library may also have Emeritus Trustees.

There are ten Public Trustees consisting of the President of Pittsburgh City Council or his/her designee plus three members of City Council appointed by the President of City Council; the City of Pittsburgh Mayor or his/her designee; the Allegheny County Executive or his/her designee; one person appointed by the County Executive: the two at-large members of the Allegheny County Council; and the President of the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education or his/her designee. There may be up to 8 Life Trustees, who serve until age 75 and are self-perpetuating as a class as required by Andrew Carnegie. There are 12 to 20 Term Trustees, who may serve up to two three-year terms, and are broadly representative of the community.

Emeritus Trustees are former Trustees who have served with distinction for a significant period of time. They may attend Board of Trustee Meetings, participate in Committee and/or Board discussions, and provide historical perspective. They are non-voting members of the Board.

The Library's Board of Trustees is interested in an ongoing dialogue with the public in order to understand and better respond to the public's concerns and suggestions about Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. Since 2009, the Board has issued news releases about its meetings, posted detailed operating information on its website and held community meetings. In 2010, more than 1,400 people shared their thoughts and provided feedback during a series of twelve Community Workshops. In early 2011, an ad-hoc committee of the Board was established to suggest ways the Library Board, staff and community members could be even more engaged with each other.

This strategy was adopted on August 31, 2011.