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In the

WORDS

of 100<sup>TM</sup>

Public Library Directors

**Insights. Ideas. Inspiration.**

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*A **unique** glimpse into the real world of  
100 people who lead public libraries*

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# Introduction

## What's this all about?

“I wish someone understood my world.” Have you ever said that to yourself?

Connecting with others who genuinely understand your world can be very empowering. It can boost your confidence when you're feeling hesitant about the direction you should be setting, and it can offer you much needed support when you need it most. Wouldn't it be wonderful to feel like you weren't alone in your thinking...your excitement...your challenges...your vision...and especially your decisions?

Well, now you can! We bring you WORDS of 100™, a unique glimpse into the real world of 100 **Public Library Directors**. We interviewed 100 **Public Library Directors** around the country and asked for their opinions on a variety of topics that relate specifically to *you* in *your* position.

As a **Public Library Director**, we believe you may be doing a lot of head-nodding as you read this report. We also think you will breathe deep sighs of relief because decisions you have made, or are about to make, will be affirmed for you. Ultimately, we hope some of you will feel a sense of peace that you're not going crazy after all. Others in your position *really are* experiencing the same kinds of issues that you face on a daily basis. So, kick back, relax and enjoy this WORDS of 100™ report written just for you. It offers timely **Insights**, **Ideas** and **Inspiration** that can positively impact your world.

If you are a family member, friend, business associate or colleague of a **Public Library Director**, this is one report you *have* to read. You will gain an in-depth understanding of the ever-changing activities that need to be managed in our public libraries today. It should be quite eye-opening for you to read about the many important and far-reaching roles **Public Library Directors** play within our communities.

If you are aspiring to be a **Public Library Director**, this is the ultimate source to learn about what is waiting in your future; consider this report your crystal ball. You cannot find better advice organized in one spot from people who have experienced the path on which you are walking.

Finally, if you are a director who took part in this WORDS of 100™ effort, we would like to extend a special “thank you” for contributing your time and feedback for the greater good. The kindness and respect you extended to us was genuinely appreciated, and we hope you enjoyed your interview. The **Insights**, **Ideas** and **Inspiration** you shared will now have a prominent place within your profession and the library industry. One participant stated, “The opportunity you have given me to talk has been very satisfying, and I hope it will make a difference to those who read it.” We believe it will.

Welcome to *your* WORDS of 100™!  
Tweed-Weber, Inc.

## How was this WORDS of 100™ completed?

The list of potential contacts for this WORDS of 100™ report was developed from public use data files made available online. The data files contained a list of public libraries located across the country from which the interview calls were made at random. Interviews were conducted with **Public Library Directors** from all fifty U.S. states, and the interviews averaged approximately 30 to 45 minutes in length. Surveys were conducted via telephone by members of the Tweed-Weber, Inc. research staff, and all data management and analysis functions were performed by Tweed-Weber, Inc.

The survey included a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions addressing a variety of issues that typically exist within the world of a **Public Library Director**. We respected the confidentiality of individual participants in an effort to focus solely on the collective trends that emerged. Basically, we wanted to see if everyone was thinking about the same things and then present those issues and topics in a way that would be interesting, as well as easy to read and digest.

## What's in this WORDS of 100™ report?

When reading this report, you will find...

- ✓ a tabulation of responses from our 100 participants.
- ✓ noteworthy comments from participants that help shed light on the tabulated responses.
- ✓ highlighted comments we believe were “WELL SAID!”
- ✓ interesting tidbits we thought would be fun to put in the “Did you know?” category.

Participants of this WORDS of 100™ report certainly speak for themselves, and the whole purpose of this report was to *just let them* without getting too technical on you. Overall, our main goal was to chat with 100 **Public Library Directors** to better understand their world. We did just that, and we hope you enjoy the results.

### Important note

When developing this report, we wanted to be mindful of two types of readers as follows:

1. Those who want quick answers **without a lot of detail**.
  - ✓ The tabulated responses are provided after each question so you can “read and run” if you’re short on time.
2. Those who want answers **with all of the detail**.
  - ✓ Participant comments are provided after the tabulated responses so you can better understand the thinking and emotion behind their answers.

Whatever category you fall into, we hope this WORDS of 100™ report meets your preferred reading style.

## What did some of the 100 say about their interviews?

“You know, I normally don’t like doing surveys, but this one was different than the others. It’s nice to have someone ask me about *me* for a change!”

“I’m glad to see someone looking at our industry. This is great, and it will be helpful when we’re negotiating and talking with the board. There will definitely be information here we can use.”

“This was a very thorough survey. I really enjoyed our conversation, and I’m really looking forward to seeing what others had to say. The report will be a big help to me.”

“This was a very interesting survey. It’s nice to think and talk about day-to-day things that we normally don’t get a chance to think about in such detail. Thank you for choosing me to participate!”

“I really enjoyed talking with you. It’s so rare that I have a chance to talk at such length about what I think and feel about my profession.”

“This was such a refreshing conversation. It felt good to get all of that out of my system. I can’t wait to see the final report so I can see if others feel the same way.”

“What a fantastic survey! You really thought about what information we might need that would be useful. I’m really glad I was chosen to participate.”

“I’m glad you are undertaking this survey. I can’t wait to read the final report to see what others had to say.”

“Thank you for calling me. It was so interesting to talk about these issues.”

“That was a great survey! I’ll be thinking about these issues all day. I’m really glad you called.”

“This is one survey I have really enjoyed doing.”

“I can’t wait to see the results. This was fun to do!”

“This is great! I can’t wait to read it.”

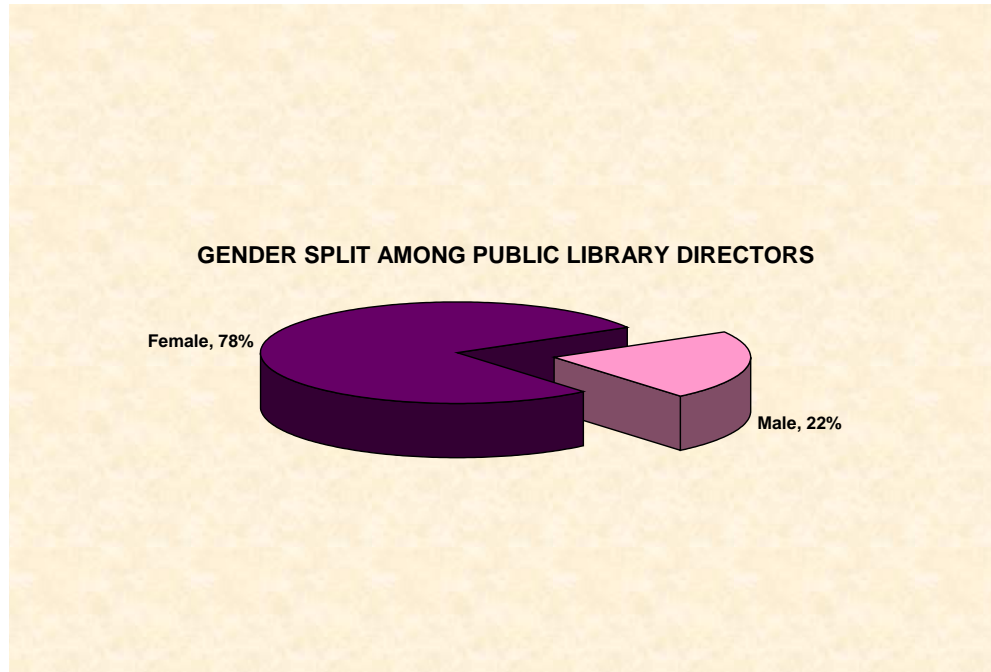
“I can’t wait to see this report. I am very interested in what my peers said.”

“I really enjoyed this survey. I feel so much lighter after talking with you. Thank you!”

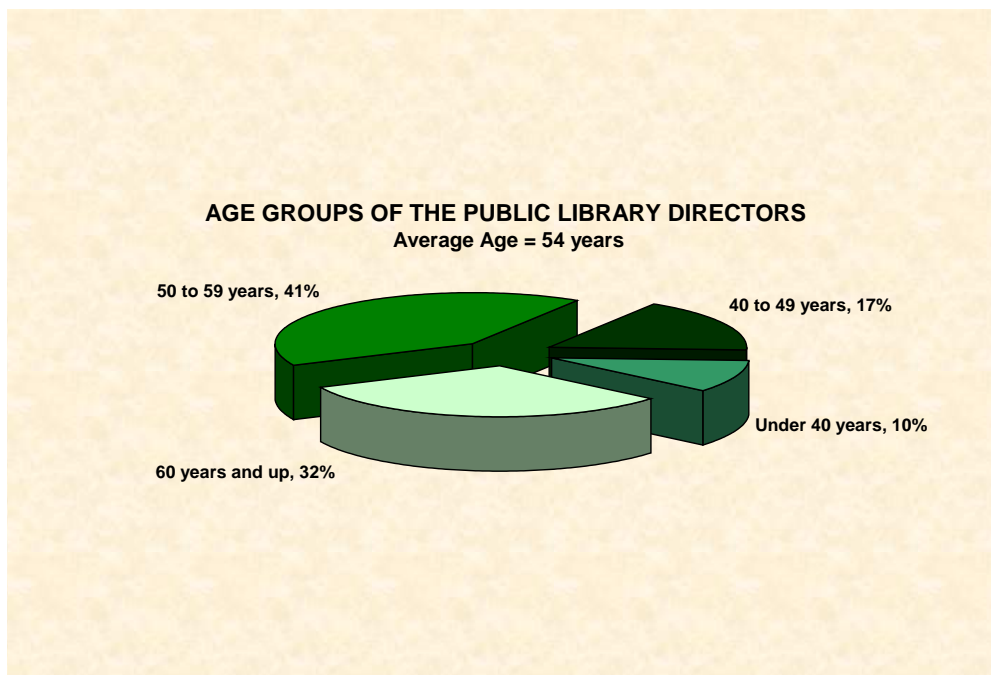
# The 100

## Who are the 100?

The following information highlights the attributes of this WORDS of 100™ group.

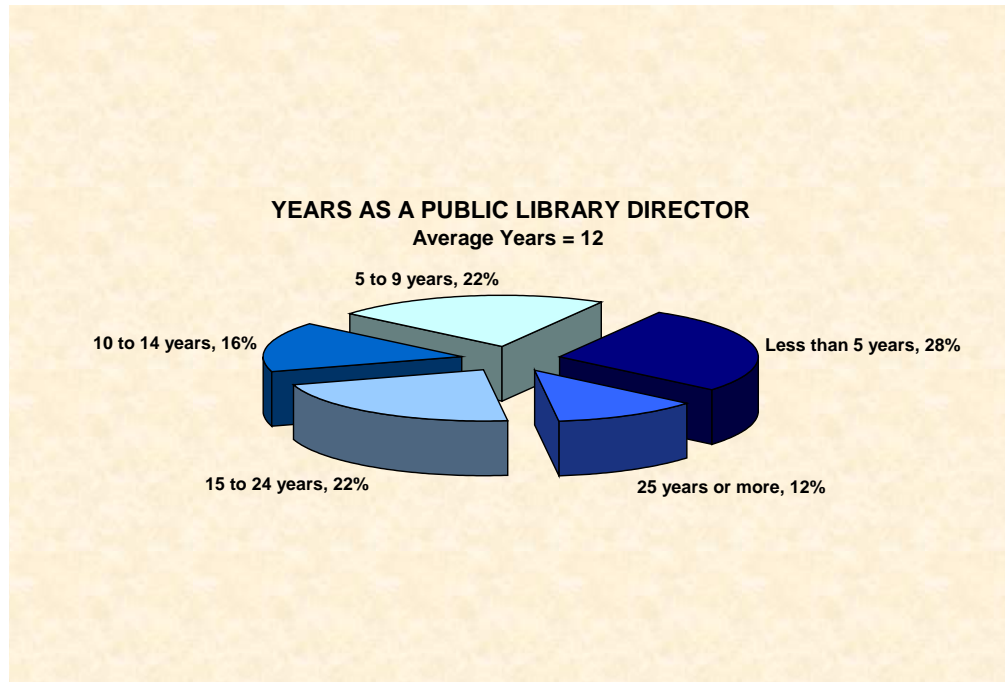


There is no denying the position of a Public Library Director continues to be dominated by women.

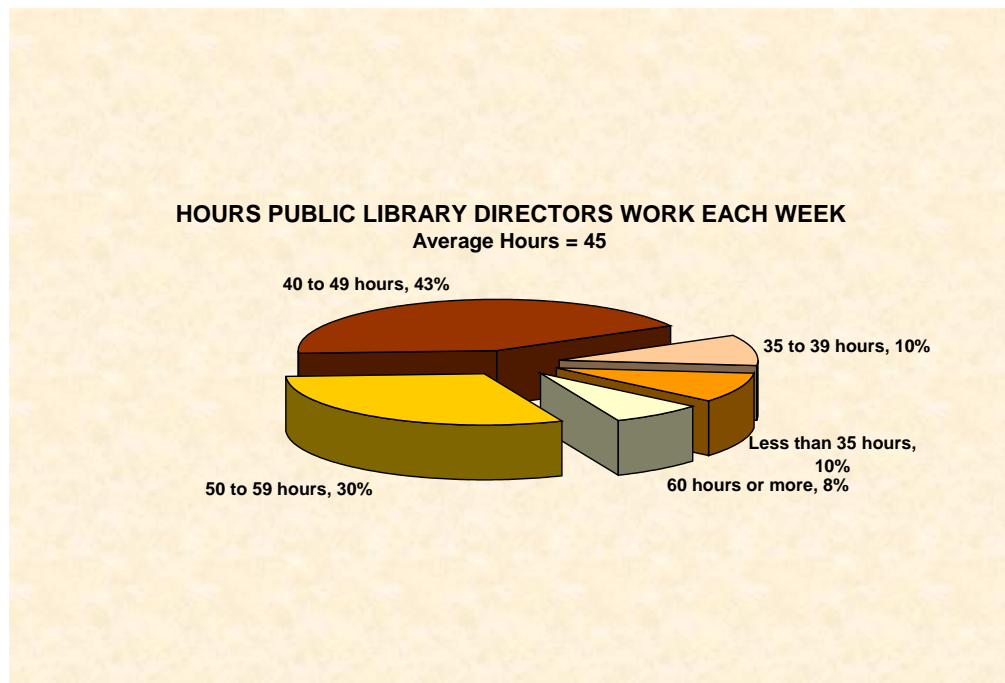


A huge trend is apparent with the age groups. There is an obvious “graying of the profession” as evidenced by 73% of participants being 50 years old or greater. This trend will be highlighted later in this report.

## Who are the 100?

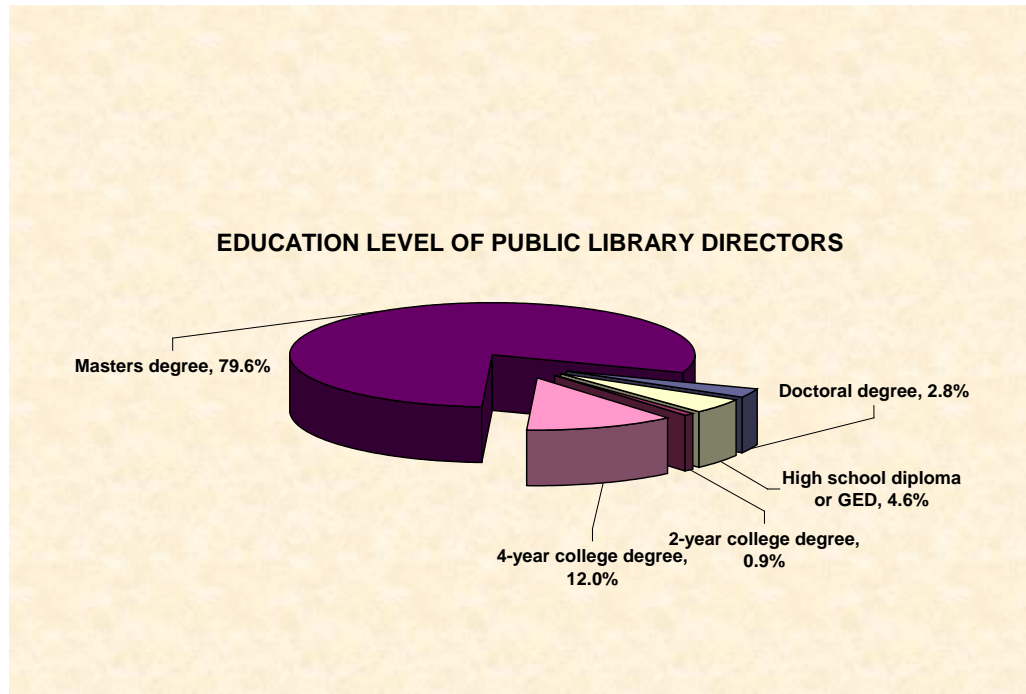


There is a mixed split among average years, with an average of 12 years rounding out the results.



A typical work week includes anywhere between 40 and 60 hours for the majority of directors.

## Who are the 100?



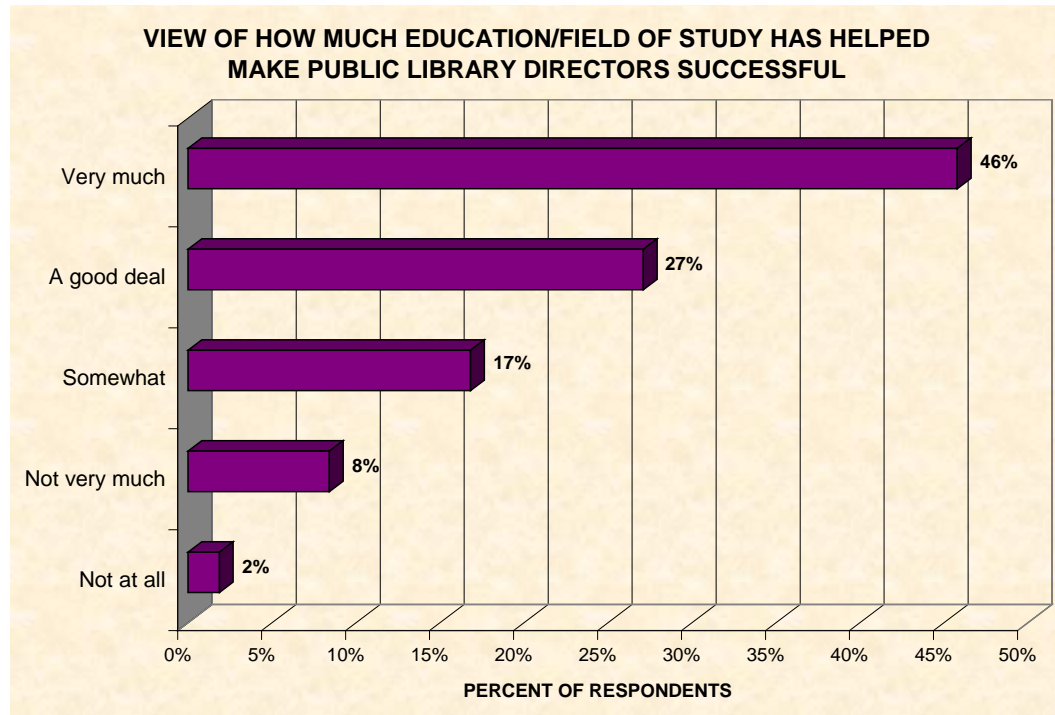
### Field of study (Some have double degrees)

- Library Science: 80 respondents
- Education: 10 respondents
- English: 4 respondents
- Arts: 2 respondents
- English Literature: 2 respondents
- Liberal Arts: 2 respondents
- Music: 2 respondents
- Social Work: 2 respondents

### One response each

- |                     |                                    |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Applied Science   | • Psychology                       |
| • Botany            | • Public Administration            |
| • Divinity          | • Public History                   |
| • European History  | • Public Policy                    |
| • Family Therapy    | • Spanish                          |
| • French Literature | • Speech Therapy                   |
| • History           | • Information Technology           |
| • Law               | • Certified Public Library Manager |
| • Management        |                                    |

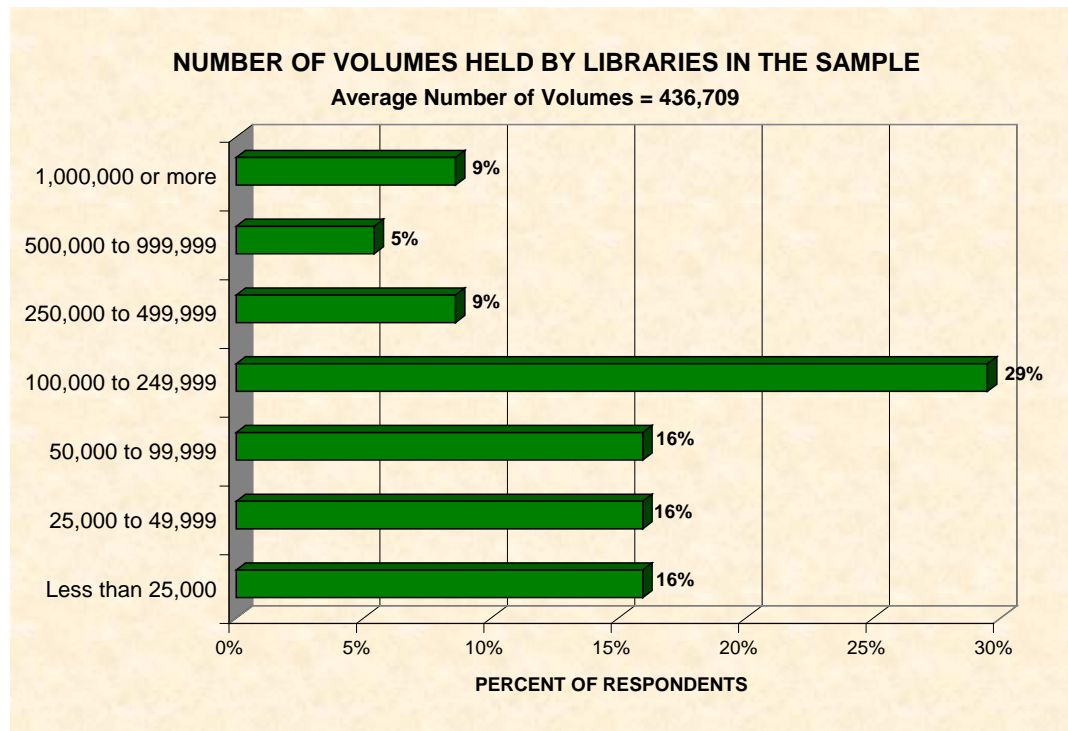
## Who are the 100?



### In their WORDS....

- I was a librarian, and then I went to law school. I was a lawyer, and then came back as a director. My law degree gave me the ability to analyze, and the MLS gave me the ability to practice.
- I am motivated to always learn. It puts things in perspective. I always had a big picture of what was going on. My masters put the finishing touches on it for me.
- Having a background in the Arts makes creative thinking easier for me.
- I couldn't limit it to just library education. It was valuable, but I worked in libraries long before I got my MLS. As a history major, I developed an ability to communicate clearly, write clearly and think logically.
- I worked in the library system for 32 years. I would say 22 of those years I spent learning about the operations of the library as assistant director was a bigger help. The formal education helped me to a degree.
- It helped quite a bit, but what really helped was some of the experience I had while in school, like student government, which helped to some extent with the politics of the position.
- My masters program was pretty good in giving a management theory foundation, which I rely on. Also, I received a good foundation in technology.
- The majority of my education comes from working in the different areas and fields of librarianship. Every position builds you for management. The education was somewhat helpful, but a lot of it is on-the-job learning.
- The MLS helped, but the Public Administration Masters helped me more.

## Who are the 100?



The average number of volumes may appear rather high in relation to the overall bar chart. This is because the number of volumes in the “1,000,000 or more” category stretch between 1,000,000 and 10,000,000, which pulls up the overall average. In reality, about half the libraries in the sample have 100,000 volumes or less.



**Did you know?**

**LIBRARY:** From the Latin word, Liber – with a long i – meaning, “to peel,” which would refer to the inner bark of a tree. Early manuscripts were written on bark, and from this bark we get the modern word “Library.”

# Insights

## Important Qualities Needed to be a Public Library Director

- Be knowledgeable: *47 responses*
  - ✓ ... of the community: *10 responses*
  - ✓ ... of the industry: *8 responses*
  - ✓ ... of government legislation/politics: *8 responses*
  - ✓ ... of library operations in general: *7 responses*
  - ✓ ... of technology: *5 responses*
  - ✓ ... of financial management: *5 responses*
  - ✓ ... of literature: *4 responses*
- Have good management/organizational skills: *40 responses*
- Be a people person: *36 responses*
- Be a good communicator/speaker: *20 responses*
- Be flexible: *20 responses*
- Be a strategic thinker/have vision: *19 responses*
- Be a good listener: *14 responses*
- Have patience: *14 responses*
- Demonstrate a customer service attitude: *11 responses*
- Have good leadership skills: *10 responses*
- Have a sense of humor: *9 responses*
- Be passionate about your work: *8 responses*
- Be open-minded: *8 responses*
- Be a team player: *6 responses*
- Be intelligent: *6 responses*
- Be friendly: *5 responses*
- Have a positive attitude: *5 responses*

### **Four responses each**

Be a fundraiser  
Be a risk-taker  
Be compassionate  
Be creative

### **Two responses each**

Be a negotiator  
Be approachable  
Be courageous  
Be diplomatic  
Be energetic  
Be honest  
Demonstrate good  
time management  
Show integrity  
Trust your staff

### **One response each**

Be competent  
Be confident  
Be curious  
Be determined  
Be disciplined  
Be persistent  
Show maturity  
Take initiative

## In their WORDS.....

### WELL SAID!

"You have to love what you're doing and build skills to do it. This job can be complicated, and you can be called upon to deal with anything from the most tedious technical details to very broad policy questions. A lot of it is on-the-job training; so you have to like to ask questions and take an interest in the tasks at hand."

#### Qualities – Knowledge of the community

- Have knowledge of the community. It helps to determine what to have in the collection. I don't want to provide materials and technology people won't use; it is a waste of taxpayer money.

#### Qualities – Knowledge of government legislation/politics

- Have some political skills. School doesn't prepare you for the political nature of the job.
- Librarians need to work well with people and be politically savvy. We get most of our budget from the taxpayers, and of course, there are government officials between us and the taxpayers; so, we need to work well with them in order to secure the funding we need.
- You need to have a good sense of politics, both with a capital "P" and a small "p."
- Be a political player. Libraries are a very political place.

#### Qualities – Knowledge of library operations in general

- Have knowledge of what the library is. Know the technical pieces, like the Dewey Decimal Classification System and how to find books.
- Be willing to maintain a balanced and unbiased collection. I order what people suggest we should have in the library.

#### Qualities – Knowledge of financial management

- Have the ability to understand that management of the dollars is not tertiary or nice. It is critical to the life of the library. If you are not a good manager of money, you will be a failure.

#### Qualities – Be a people person

- You need to make a great library experience for people, so you have to be a people person.
- Have the ability to deal with people, both public and staff.
- Be able to relate to all types of people (all ages, races, ethnicities and personalities).

#### Qualities – Have good management/organizational skills

- You're always making decisions that involve people and the press. You need to think through consequences and make right decisions.

- You have to be able to multitask and juggle. There are always about ten balls in the air at one time.
- Have the ability to multitask without losing your balance.

**Qualities** –Be a good communicator/speaker

- Be able to communicate the library’s services and needs to the trustees and the public.
- Be able to communicate with diverse groups so that you can build bridges within the community.
- You need communication skills, both written and verbal.
- Use all of your senses to be a good communicator.
- I think communication and public speaking skills are very important in this job. Many librarians don’t do as good a job as their community deserves. You can learn public speaking and overcome your weaknesses. Some library schools don’t prepare people as well as they could with this. You can better represent your community if you are a good public speaker.

### Much more to follow!

**We hope you enjoyed this small preview of the WORDS of 100 for Public Library Directors. There is so much more information packed into the full book as outlined in the Table of Contents. The book is easy and enjoyable to read and is written using the words of our 100 survey respondents.**

**This book is perfect for three groups of people for different reasons...**

- 1. Veteran directors – You will hear insights, ideas and inspiration from others that can help you increase membership/support, especially in today’s economy.**
- 2. New directors – You will not have to reinvent the wheel, and the path to your success can be faster and easier using the advice of those who have been there.**
- 3. Aspiring directors – You cannot find better information or advice that will help you understand the realities of being a community leader and operating a library today. This is a must read book if you are considering this profession.**

**To read more, simply click on the link below to purchase the book for just \$24.95. Thank you for your interest in the WORDS of 100!**

**<http://www.wordsof100.com/reports/public-library-directors/>**