

Congratulations, You're a Rural Librarian!

Let me show you how take care of the garbage.

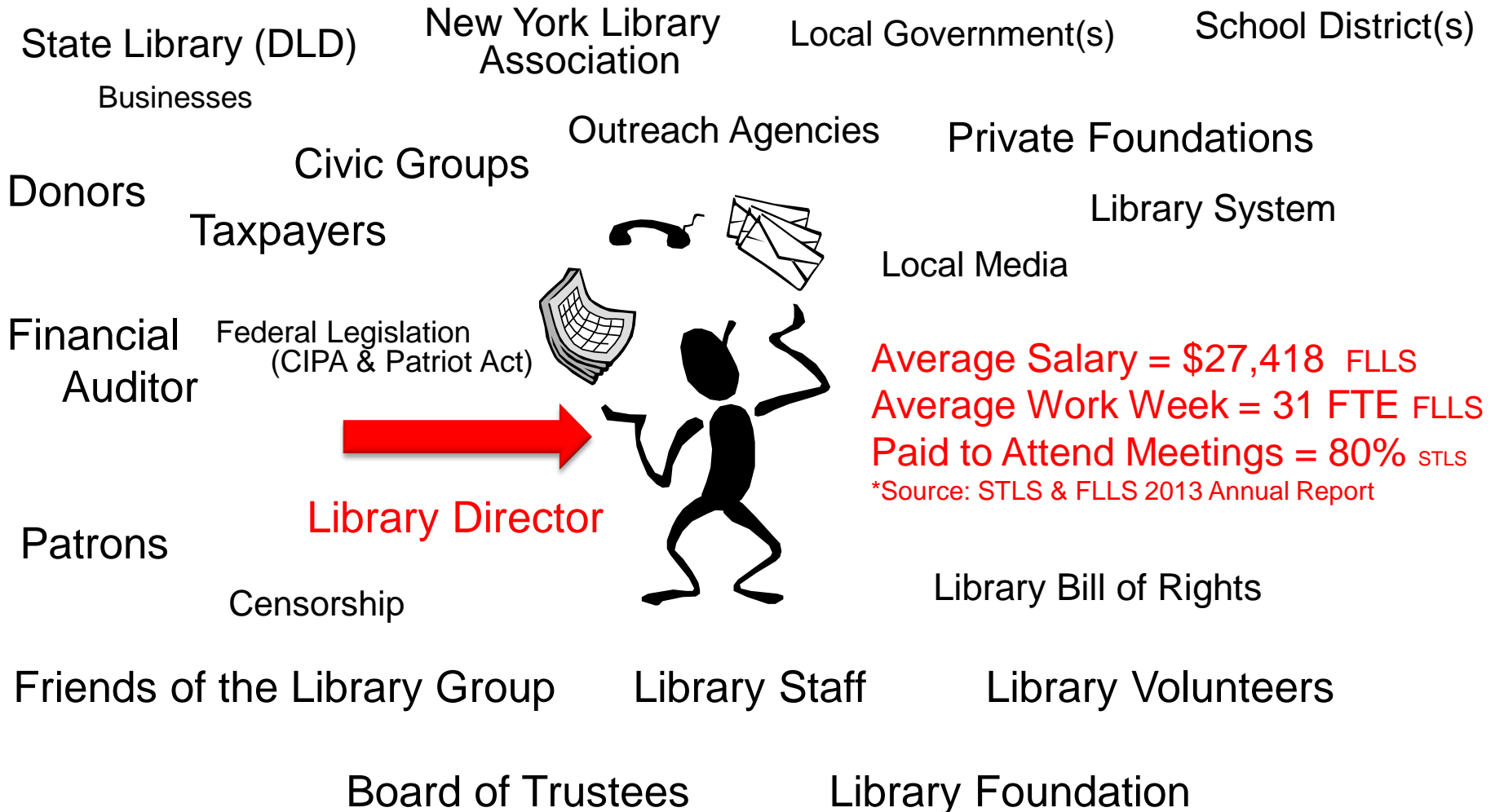
A Case Study and Step-By-Step Approach to Successful Rural Librarianship

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U.S. Rural Libraries At a Glance

- 78% of United States Libraries are Rural
(FLLS = 87% based on populations serving communities of 10,000 or less)
- 30% of U.S. Rural Libraries Operating Budget = \$21,000
(Average local funds in FLLS \$38,276 when omitting 9 largest libraries)
- Family of four with an income of \$22,350 is considered below poverty level. (U.S. 2010 Census)
- 20 % of our nations' population is placed at a disadvantage when it comes to public library services

The Rural Library Director: NY State's Greatest & Most Cost Effective Balancing Act



Step 1: all libraries must have:

Cohesive Library Board

- ✓ Shared vision and focus
- ✓ Open communication
- ✓ Willingness to advocate
- ✓ Fearless
- ✓ Excellent Relationship with Library Director

Motivated Library Director

- ✓ Passionate about library services
- ✓ Excellent people skills
- ✓ Willingness to learn
- ✓ Fearless
- ✓ Excellent Relationship with Library Board

Step 2: build human capital:

Form a Friends Group

- ✓ Fundraising
- ✓ Public Relations
- ✓ Program and Outreach Support
- ✓ Grassroots Campaigns

Recruit Working Volunteers

- ✓ In-house Volunteers
- ✓ Outreach Volunteers
- ✓ Advocacy Coalition
- ✓ Capital Campaign Committee

Step 3: form strategic partnerships.

Liaison Outposts

- ✓ Local Government
- ✓ School District
- ✓ Businesses (Chamber of Commerce)
- ✓ Service Groups (Lions, Rotary, Exchange)

How many liaisons does your library have? Liaisons have insider information.

Key Relationships

- ✓ Community Groups (Homeschoolers)
- ✓ Trades Associations (Local Arts Association)
- ✓ Service Agencies (Literacy Volunteers)
- ✓ Organizations (American Legion)

Is it possible to be in too many relationships? Never

Step 4: evaluate & determine community needs

Survey the Community

- ✓ Objective Surveys
- ✓ Subjective Interviews (Knock on doors.)
- ✓ Focus Group
- ✓ Meet with Your Human Capital

Start a community conversation.

Step 5: prioritize and develop services based on community needs

What are our core services?

- ✓ Collections (2)
- ✓ Technology (4)
- ✓ Programs (3)
- ✓ Outreach (5)
- ✓ Customer Service (1)

Build a Strategic Plan – Is 5 Years Realistic?

2 – 3 Year Plan Accomplishes Real Goals!

Step 6: implement your plan & market it

Cost Effective Outlets

- ✓ Newspaper
- ✓ Radio
- ✓ Internet
- ✓ Chamber of Commerce
- ✓ County Tourism
- ✓ Public Speaking Engagements

Library Marketing Tools

- ✓ Social Media
(Most Cost Effective)
- ✓ E-mail Blasts
- ✓ Newsletter
(School District Resident Mailings)
- ✓ Annual Report to the Public
- ✓ In-house Electronic Bulletin Board

Step 7: establish a sustainable budget & lobby for it

Funding Options

- ✓ Present to municipality (least desirable and not sustainable)
- ✓ Advocate for School District Funding – 259 Referendum (most desirable and easy to explain - sustainable)
- ✓ Advocate for Special Legislative District and Funding (desirable, but depends on situation – sustainable)
- ✓ Establish and Grow an Endowment (desirable, supplemental funds, not sustainable)

Step 8: never forget your library system

FLLS State Support Per Capita = \$5.11

Purpose of State Government = Health Care and Education

68% of New York households possess a library card.

Average cost of a fast food value meal = \$6.25

FLLS Library System Services Value Per Capita = \$91.39

(Delivery, Technology Infrastructure & Support, Integrated Library System, Continuing Education, Construction Grants, etc.)

Library Systems Garner 1/10 of 1% of Total State Funding

Local Libraries Leverage Less Than 1% of Total Local Property Taxes

Who is in better off?

Case Study Timeline - Success

Morrisville Public Library (school district), Mid-York Library System

- 1992 Operating Budget = \$30,000 (50% Town / 50% Village)
- 1992 School District Proposition – Failed Twice – Request \$60,000
- 2002 School District Proposition – Passed – Request \$60,000
- 2006 Funding Increase – Passed – Request \$30,000
- 2009 Funding Increase – Passed – Request \$30,000
- 2011 Total Operating Budget = \$133,738 and a new building
- 2011 Building Project Completion: \$572,000 (\$200,000 grant funded)
Increased building size 3,000 square feet.

Case Study Timeline - Success

Dundee Library (Association), Southern Tier Library System

- 2000 Operating Budget = \$42,000 (School District 259 & Town/Village support)
- 2000 – 2011: Built outreach programs and asked for marginal increases in school district aid. Town & Village continued to reduce aid despite library successes.
- 2012: Trustees acknowledge local funding has been stagnant despite school district tax support.
- 2013: Trustees plan to launch PR campaign to override tax cap and request 150% increase in school district support.
- 2014: School district residents approve funding despite tax freeze implications with 85% approval.
- 2015: Operating budget is now \$172,000.

Case Study Timeline - Disconnect

Savona Library (Association), Southern Tier Library System

1997: Obtained \$10,000 through school district 259. (Receives marginal town support.

2010: Began asking for larger increases each year with new director, \$8,000 annually.

2011: Library purchased new building through large monetary gift, and renovates.

2012: Library can't open new building to public due to funding constraints.

2013 – 2014: Three failed consecutive votes due to poor public perception. Local support remains at \$45,500.

Library Taxes

- How do we garner support?
- Take risks, and state your case!
- Local library taxes represent roughly 1% or less of property taxes in Upstate NY.
- Ignore the tax cap and tax freeze.