



# Benefits of Board Membership

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The Illinois Heartland Library System encourages all members who are eligible candidates to consider serving on the Board of Directors. Direct communication and involvement with the system will benefit and enhance your impact on your library patrons and community. Having an inside track to how IHLS works to support libraries can influence the practices of your library. Turn your passion for libraries into so much more by [nominating yourself](#) today.

## **Professional Development**

Serving on a nonprofit board is a fantastic learning opportunity for learning more about governance and leadership. Serving on the IHLS board will enhance your professional and personal life.

## **Networking**

Nonprofit board membership also offers you new opportunities to expand your network. By connecting with other library professionals, from all library types, board members gain a better understanding of the unique challenges faced by each library.

## **Improve Strategic Thinking**

By serving on a nonprofit board, you can gain or improve your ability to make decisions, think critically, and solve problems as part of a greater ability to plan strategically for future success. This is a definite benefit to you both professionally and personally.

## **Community Contributions**

Serving on the IHLS board of directors offers you an opportunity to contribute to your community and change lives in a significant way.

## **Improve Financial Management Skills**

Nonprofits run on very tight budgets, and serving as a board member, you will learn budgeting, budget evaluation, and gain the skills to evaluate, develop, and implement sound financial practices in your library more effectively.

## **Career Advancement**

Enhancing your resume with board membership is a personal benefit because many employers appreciate your efforts and the fact that you can apply the knowledge and skills that you acquired during your board service at your job.

Visit the [IHLS Nominations](#) page for testimonials and additional information about serving on the board of directors.



# Role of an IHLS Board Member

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## Responsibilities of Individual Board Members

Each individual board member is expected to:

- know the organization's mission, policies, programs, and needs as well as understand its collective purpose
- faithfully read and understand the organization's financial statements and board materials in advance of meetings
- serve as active advocates and ambassadors for the organization
- fully engage in identifying and securing the financial resources and partnerships necessary for the organization to advance its mission
- leverage connections, networks, and resources to develop collective action to achieve the organization's mission
- help identify personal connections that can benefit the organization's fundraising and reputational standing, and influence public policy
- prepare for, attend, and conscientiously participate in board meetings
- participate fully in one or more committees
- engage in learning opportunities to better understand the community we serve
- respect the experiences of all who bring their voices and lived experiences into the boardroom and the organization

## Responsibilities of the Board

The mission of the Illinois Heartland Library System is to support member libraries of all types in providing quality library services. IHLS facilitates access to shared resources, advocates for libraries, promotes innovation and develops community partnerships.

As the highest leadership body of the organization and to satisfy its fiduciary duties, the board is responsible for:

- determining the mission of the organization and understanding its collective purpose
- selecting, supporting, and evaluating the performance of the chief executive
- strategic and organizational planning
- ensuring strong fiduciary oversight and financial management
- fundraising and resource development
- approving and monitoring the organization's programs and services
- enhancing the organization's public image
- assessing its own performance as the governing body of the organization
- ensuring legal and ethical integrity

### Other responsibilities of nonprofit board members

- uphold the legal duties and laws regarding nonprofit governance
- follow the organization's bylaws, policies, and board resolutions
- sign an annual conflict-of-interest disclosure and update it during the year, if necessary, as well as disclose potential conflicts before meetings and actual conflicts during meetings
- maintain confidentiality about all internal matters of the organization



Illinois Heartland Library System

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MEMO TO: Board of Directors  
FROM: Sandy West  
DATE: September 20, 2017  
RE: IHLS Board Member Expectations

As elected library system board members, we have statutory and peer responsibilities. We also serve as volunteers who have obligations elsewhere.

The attached document was developed for two primary purposes:

- To provide current members an easy reference guide and be included in new board member binders
- To be shared with potential board members as we begin the board member nominations process and to be shared on the IHLS website

I hope you will find this a helpful guide. It is intended to serve us now and into the future.

Thank you.

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IMAGINING TOMORROW ~ DELIVERING POSSIBILITIES TODAY!

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# Board Member Expectations

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## Orientation & Training

Board members, both newly seated and veteran, are required to attend orientation and training. This is an all day event that usually takes place in July.

## Illinois State Library Requirements

Board members are required to complete the Open Meetings Act training and provide a copy of earned certificate to the executive assistant. Completion of training must be done within 90 days of being seated or re elected. Members are also required to complete and submit a Statement of Economic Interest. Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS) is required to provide this information to the Illinois State Library and auditors annually.

## Attendance

Board members must notify the System Executive Director if they are unable to attend a board meeting. When a Board member is absent from a meeting, the following actions will be taken. The President shall notify in writing any member missing his or her second meeting. Upon a member's third absence the topic will be included on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting. The System Board, by a majority vote may, with a quorum present, declare a Board position vacant if a Director fails to attend three (3) meetings during the fiscal year.

## Email

Board members are assigned an IHLS email address to be used for all board- related business. This includes communication with IHLS staff regarding board and committee schedules as well as correspondence from member library staff. We highly recommend you check your IHLS email frequently to avoid missing important announcements, information or meeting cancellations and time changes. Instructions will be provided for the option of forwarding IHLS emails to your phone or other devices if you choose. IT staff is available for technical questions or issues regarding IHLS email.

## Staff Communication

Board members are kindly requested to reply to communications from IHLS staff as soon as they are able. IHLS staff communicate with board members primarily via email. Timely communication allows IHLS staff to best support the goals and work of the board. Our staff goal is to provide board and committee meeting materials as far in advance as possible, beginning with various committee meetings held early each month. Completion of many board support responsibilities is contingent upon communication with board members.

You may be contacted by different staff members for various reasons. Each board committee is assigned an IHLS Department Director, and they will send meeting documents and attend the meeting to serve in an advisory role and to take minutes. The executive assistant supports both the executive director and board members by scheduling meetings and events, creating calendars and documents, polling members and ensuring legal compliance for the Open Meetings Act certification and Statement of Economic Interest filing, among other responsibilities.

A complete overview on the board of directors can be found on the IHLS website  
<http://illinoisheartland.org/sites/default/files/about/policies/Bylaws-Amended-April-2016.pdf>