



GUIDANCE STATEMENT 2012-4: PUBLIC LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION IN WEST VIRGINIA

The longest journey begins with the first step.

The history of public library buildings in West Virginia is long and varied. The earliest libraries in the state were located in homes, storefronts, schools and churches, courthouses and in other facilities. Andrew Carnegie provided funding for construction in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and some “Carnegie Libraries” were built in the state. With the advent of federal and state construction monies in the mid-20th century, purpose-built libraries were constructed. Beginning in 1973, the Commission built “Carousel” and “Outpost” libraries across the state, intending these structures to be temporary facilities until communities could do better. Most of these facilities are still in use today. Declining revenues in the 1980s and 1990s led to the curtailment of the state’s ambitious building program. To help West Virginia libraries build or expand in this new environment, the Library Commission provides planning assistance when possible. This guidance statement is part of that assistance. It is based on a checklist published in 2006 by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners and has been revised in accordance with West Virginia history and laws.

Once you have recognized the need to expand or improve your library facility, follow these guidelines:

DEVELOP A LONG-RANGE PLAN FOR THE LIBRARY IN GENERAL

- Create a Planning Team to include the library director and any key staff, the library board, a representative from the appointing authority and/or local governments and others that would have insight into the community.
- Use the WVLC’s books, development materials and consulting advice to assist in the planning process.
- Identify and review community needs for information and library services.
- Evaluate present library services, materials and facilities in relation to community needs. This may mean that existing services need to be changed or even curtailed and/or new services added.
- Compare your library services with those provided by similar communities using documents like WVLC’s annual *Statistical Report* and electronic statistical comparison tools made available by WVLC (Bibliostat Connect).

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- Compare your library to existing state and national guidelines and standards for service. Such materials are available in WVLC's Professional Collection.
 - Consider using a simple survey for users and non-users to identify "hidden" issues, or use focus groups to give you input. Community input in the planning process is essential.
 - Prepare a formal long-range planning document including a mission statement and service goals based on community needs. West Virginia Library Commission's Administrative Rule requires that such plans cover 3-5 years.

STUDY YOUR BUILDING AND YOUR NEEDS

- Establish a Library Facility Needs Committee. In some communities this committee is appointed by Library Trustees and serves as a subcommittee to that body. In other communities this committee might be appointed by the library's appointing authority, or appointed by both. And in others, a standing Building Committee deals with all public facility issues. Determine the appropriate path in your community.
- Compare the services identified in your long-range plan with your current facility; determine what works, what does not and what you need to change.
- Identify space, service, staff and program issues that need to be addressed.
- Compare your facility to (a) building codes; (b) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements; (c) library space standards, such as those contained in *Building Blocks for Planning Functional Library Space* by the American Library Association; and (d) other resources. WVLC staff will assist you with these tasks.
- Call upon the Library Commission to prepare a written *Space Needs Assessment*. Such a document will explain how much space is needed to provide excellent public services in your community based on the current and projected service population. This assessment, along with a collection analysis, will be incorporated into your Library Building Program.
- Identify, review and evaluate potential solutions. Include all possible solutions—not just preferred ones. This might include renovation of your existing facility, replacement of the facility onsite or at another location, renovation of another facility, or even downsizing if the population is projected to decline.

PLAN YOUR PROJECT

- Write, or hire a consultant to write, a Library Building Program Statement that incorporates the Space Needs Assessment and your other planning documents. If you need assistance, talk with WVLC and other library groups who have written it; WVLC can provide guidelines, workbooks, access to professionals and advice to help you write the statement. Note that the Library Building Program Statement will become the basis of the architect's design. The statement will also serve as a guide by which to judge project implementation.

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- Review your Library Building Program Statement to make sure it accommodates the needs of your community for at least 20 years. Populations can and will change, as will their service needs. WVLC staff can help determine population projections and service trends.
 - Set objectives that will move the library toward your goal. Divide the project, including fundraising, into discrete steps and develop a preliminary time frame for accomplishment. Determine a basis for evaluating progress toward goals and review it regularly.
 - Assign priorities and clarify responsibilities of staff, trustees, the Building Committee, friends, and town officials. Develop written charges for all committees and subcommittees. These charges should include areas of responsibility and authority. Be sure to identify the body that will have ultimate decision-making authority.

DEVELOP A FUNDRAISING STRATEGY

- Form a Fundraising Committee. Use your Friends Group as a base, but expand membership beyond the usual group of supporters. Appoint a chair who is well-known and a community leader.
- Identify all possible sources of funding. Check out possible state and federal grants, corporations or businesses in your region, private foundations, and wealthy individuals with links with your community. The Foundation Center collections within West Virginia have resources to help with this task.
- Remember that you will need to raise funds for the feasibility study and the preliminary architectural work early in the project if they cannot be covered within your library's existing budget.
- Write a draft fundraising plan with a timeline and a chart of responsibilities. Since total project costs will not yet be known, identify goals using percentages of total costs.
- Examine library "treasures" (property, endowments or trusts, valuable paintings or other artifacts) and consider whether these should (or could) be sold to fund expanded services to your community.

INFORM THE COMMUNITY AND GAIN SUPPORT

- Present planning information and documents to local officials and the entire community.
- Publicize Needs Assessment Committee meetings and actively encourage community participation.

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- Have a copy of the planning documents on reserve in your library and publicize this fact.
 - Develop a good working relationship with local newspaper staff and other media. Be informative, friendly, and very careful in what you say. Consider appointing one person the media liaison—maybe the director or an involved trustee.
 - Be proactive in getting your message out to your community. Local meetings will often decide the fate of your project; make sure the community and its leaders understand your project fully.

IF NECESSARY, CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY TO DECIDE THE BEST OPTION

- Determine the goals of the Architectural Feasibility Study.
- Work with local officials to prepare a request for quotation (RFQ) using your appointing authority's written procedures; follow any applicable state and federal guidelines.
- Advertise in local papers and in other resources designed to attract as many bidders as possible. If you are expanding an existing library and there is a chance you may want to continue with the original architect, your ad and RFQ must include this option.
- Hold a briefing session about the library and invite all potential applicants. Describe your Library Building Program needs and answer questions. Avoid private sessions with individual applicants and make sure that all applicants have equal access to project information.
- Talk with library directors about their experiences with project management and architectural firms. Visit libraries designed by the architects who apply for the contract.
- Retain an AIA-certified, West Virginia-registered architect.
- Conduct an Architectural Feasibility Study on the present building and any alternative library sites; include schematic drawings, cost estimates and conformity to service needs as outlined in the Library Building Program statement.
- Carefully review the feasibility study in relation to the library's Long-Range Plan, Space Needs Analysis and Library Building Program. Have an architect revise the study if it is not satisfactory.
- If the main plan falls through, decide which alternative is best. If a land purchase or property transfer is necessary, complete this before moving to the next step.
- Gather members for a Construction Committee to oversee the next phase of project. Sometimes the Assessment Committee (plus or minus a few members) serves this function.

WORK WITH YOUR ARCHITECT BEFORE GROUNDBREAKING

- Select the project architect using the same selection procedures used in the feasibility study.
- Develop the library design and final cost estimates. Meet with the architect and project manager during development to clarify any issues. Review the completed plans to see if they fulfill the requirements of your library's Building Program statement. Review them with WVLC staff to determine if the plans (a) indicate appropriate spatial and functional relationships and (b) comply with ADA guidelines and other regulations.
- Estimate the total cost. Include an inflationary escalation figure and contingency funding. Secure local appropriations. Notify the Fundraising Committee of the total dollar amount needed to be raised.
- Develop working drawings and bid/contract documents.
- Implement the public bidding process and select contractors.
- Check with the West Virginia Division of Labor to insure that all applicable labor-related laws are followed in construction (prevailing wages, safety guidelines, etc.).
- Complete pre-construction conferences and negotiations. Sign contracts.
- Hold a well-publicized groundbreaking ceremony that celebrates reaching this important milestone in your project.

WORK WITH YOUR ARCHITECT: AFTER THE GROUNDBREAKING

- Appoint a construction liaison; possible candidates include the library director, trustees, the chair of the Building Committee, etc. Make sure the construction liaison is an active, equal partner with the architect and contractors. Involve library staff and trustees as construction moves forward.
- Establish procedures for handling communications, change orders, reporting, and payments between the construction liaison, project manager, architect, contractors, appointing authority, etc. Consult with the West Virginia State Auditor's Office to insure that laws related to finance, auditing, etc. are followed. If necessary, consult with WVLC's Library Development group or Administrative Services.

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- Obtain a commitment from the architect that he/she will provide adequate architectural and technical assistance throughout the term of the project.
 - Carefully assess how any changes suggested by the architect or contractor will alter the building program, provision of services, or general library functioning. Identify the aspects of the project that cannot be altered and remain firm on these.
 - When the project is nearing completion, make a “punch-list” that targets problem areas needing resolution; address those issues with the architect/contractors.
 - Accept the completed facility after inspections, commissioning of the major systems and the granting of an occupancy permit (if necessary).

WHEN IT'S ALL DONE

- Establish a building maintenance schedule.
- Hold a grand opening to celebrate project completion. Make sure to invite everyone who has helped your project in any way; be gracious to all those who want to participate in your celebration. Mail the invitations in a timely manner.
- Take a long vacation very far away and give no one your phone number.