

MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD MANUAL





THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD (MCLB) MANUAL

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1. INTRODUCTION & HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) is the public library system for residents of Montgomery County, Maryland. MCPL currently comprises 21 local libraries, a library in the county's correctional facility, and a virtual services branch. The Montgomery County Library Board (The Board) was established on May 31, 1950, and is authorized by Montgomery County Code 2-46. Establishment of public libraries in Maryland is subject to the terms of Maryland State Code 23-301.

- (a) Establishment and Support: the governing body of each county may establish and appropriate an amount to support a county public library system free from political influence.
- (b) Board of Library Trustees: each county public library system shall be governed by a board of trustees. However, a charter county may establish a county library agency and grant it some or all of the powers of a board of trustees; or have a board of library trustees, provide for the Board's selection, and determine its powers. (An. Code 1957, art. 77, && 171, 172; 1978, ch. 22, & 2.)

According to Montgomery County Code 2025, Section 2-46 et seq., the Board is established as an advisory board with authority on its own motion or on reference from the County Executive to inquire into matters affecting the county's public library system and to provide guidance and advice on a wide range of library matters.

The Board was established to assist and advise the County Executive and the MCPL Library Director on matters pertaining to the organization and management of libraries. The Board is to serve as the voice of the community on library issues in the county and as an advocacy group for public libraries at the local, state, and national levels. The Board reports its findings and recommendations to the County Executive through the MCPL Director. In 1953, the Board adopted the Library Bill of Rights¹ recommended by the American Library Association and continues to be guided by its principles.

The Board originally consisted of ten members serving for three years. In 1985, Board membership was expanded to 12 members with staggered terms of service to avoid all members' terms ending simultaneously. Two additional ex officio members represent the Montgomery County Public Schools and Montgomery College.

The bylaws under which the Board operate and upon which this Library Board Manual are based can be found at https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library/board/bylaws.html.

2. MISSION, GOALS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MCLB

The mission of the Board is to advise the Montgomery County Executive and MCPL

¹ https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill

Director on matters related to library policies, services, and facilities. To fulfill this mission, the Board is authorized to:

- Liaise with the Board's Library Advisory Committees (LACs) at each Library Branch to maintain effective communications between the Board and its LACs by attending LAC meetings and other relevant LAC activities. Each Board member serves as liaison to two or more LACs.
- Provide the MCPL Director with feedback from LACs and other interested groups, as well as facilitate communication among MCPL administration, the County Executive's Office, the LACs, library patrons, and the Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, Maryland Inc. (FOLMC).
- Take a lead role in library advocacy activities including testifying before various government bodies (e.g., the Montgomery County Council, the Maryland Legislature, and the US Congress) and at public hearings and meetings, and to otherwise support public libraries in Montgomery County as a voice of the community on library issues and policies.
- According to Section 2-54 of the County Code, the Board is also authorized to approve all library fine structures and other administrative rules as appropriate to the conduct of library services in Montgomery County.²
- Recruit and involve volunteers from the community to advocate for MCPL.

3. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF THE BOARD

The Board comprises twelve members representing the Montgomery County community at large, and two additional ex-officio non-voting members, representing Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and Montgomery College. The 12 volunteer members of the Board do not receive compensation. The Board's activities are managed by a chair and a vice-chair. Section 6 below, "OFFICERS OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD," describes their responsibilities. To assist it in the execution of its duties, the Board has established local advisory committees at each of MCPL's 21 branch libraries. These local advisory committees are called Library Advisory Committees (LACs) and are composed of local area library users whose primary function is to assist the Board and the Regional and local Branch Managers to enhance the provision of services at local libraries. There is also an Accessibility Advisory Committee, that provides the Board with information related to issues involving the county's vision, hearing, and mobility communities. Finally, the Board has several internal workgroups to which Board members are assigned to advance the mission of the Board and MCPL. Section 7 below, "MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND MCLB WORKGROUPS," further describes these groups and their responsibilities. All Board members sit on at least one Board workgroup. Information on

 $^{^2\} https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/montgomerycounty/latest/montgomeryco_md/0-0-0-117628$

current Board members and their terms of service can be found at MCPL's website at https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library/board/index.html.

4. SELECTION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD MEMBERS

a. Montgomery County Library Board Vacancy Announcements

The County Executive's Office periodically announces vacancies on the Montgomery County Library Board and calls for applications from county residents interested in serving on the Board. Any resident of Montgomery County with an interest in libraries is eligible to serve on the Board. The County Executive's Office distributes announcements to county government offices, public libraries, and on county websites. The announcements include the number of vacancies available, the deadline for applying, and where to submit a resume and cover letter.

Montgomery Country Library Board's Nominating Committee

The Board Chair selects members of the Board to serve on the Board's Nominating Committee to review applications and select prospective Board candidates to interview. The Board Chair serves as Chair of the Nominating Committee. The MCPL Director is also a member of the Board Nominating Committee. Members in the final year of their term who are seeking reappointment to MCLB cannot serve on the Board Nominating Committee.

The County Executive's Office sends copies of all applications received to the Board's Nominating Committee. The MCPL Director's office will contact the candidates and set up appointments for interviews by the Board's Nominating Committee and the MCPL Director. the Board's Nominating Committee ranks all eligible candidates and reports the Committee's recommendations to the County Executive for final decision. The committee may recommend more candidates than available Board slots to ensure the County Executive has a sufficient pool from which to select a wide range of residents in terms of age, gender, ethnic background, and geographic location. Upon reaching a final decision, the County Executive will submit a final list of selected candidates to the County Council for concurrence. Upon confirmation by the County Council, the County Executive's Office will notify the successful candidates of his/her appointments and terms of service.

b. Terms of Service of Montgomery Country Library Board Members

A Board member's term of service will depend upon whether he/she is initially appointed to a full three-year term or appointed to complete an unexpired term of a former Board member who was unable to finish a full three-year term. Prior to the end of an initial three-year term, a Board member may apply for a second three-year term. Any Board member initially appointed to fill an unexpired (i.e., less than three-year) term may apply for two subsequent full three-

year terms. No Board member may serve more than a total of eight years.

The terms of service of members of the Board are optimally staggered so that each year only four members retire to ensure a cadre of experienced members remain on the Board at all times.

A member is deemed to have resigned from the Board if he/she misses 25 percent or more of scheduled meetings during any six-month period unless excused by the Board chair, the Board vice chair, or the County Executive's Office. Voluntary resignations, in writing, must be directed to the County Executive at 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, MD, 20850 or countyexecutive.boards@montgomerycountymd.gov.

c. Orientation of New Members

The MCPL Director and/or other senior members of the Board will provide an orientation to new members. The orientation will focus on the operations and responsibilities of the Board and its relationship with MCPL and the county government. In addition, there are two online training courses that all new members are required to take: Maryland Open Meetings Act and Parliamentary Procedures.

d. Ethical requirements

Board members are subject to the provisions of the Montgomery County Public Ethics Law, Chapter 19A of the Montgomery County Code, as amended periodically, the latest effective April 1, 2010. The details of the law can be obtained from MCPL staff.³

5. MCLB MEETINGS

Board meetings, including workgroup meetings, are open to the public and subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Act. Observers do not ordinarily participate in the Board's monthly board meetings. However, if time permits, they may be permitted to make a brief statement at the conclusion of the meeting.

The Board holds monthly board meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month except when the Board is in recess, such as during summer break, or for a holiday, or weather-related emergency. Hybrid meetings generally begin at 7:00 p.m., end at 9:00 p.m., and are held in the Library Board Room of the Montgomery County Public Libraries Administrative Offices on the 3rd floor of the Rockville Memorial Library with remote access via an online platform. Board members are to be notified in a timely fashion of any changes in the time and place of meetings. The Board Chair may change the time, place, and duration of the meetings in consultation with other Board members and the MCPL Director. A quorum for transacting Board business is a simple majority of the appointed Board members.

A Board and LAC calendar of meetings, as well as other relevant information such as

³ https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Ethics/law.html

Board and LAC meeting minutes, are posted on the Board website at https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library/board/index.html.

Seated at the Board monthly meeting table, or attending via an online platform, are the 14 members of the Board, the MCPL Director, and an MCPL staff member who records the proceedings and serves in a secretarial capacity. Other MCPL staff or invited guests may be invited to the table for presentations or the clarification of issues.

Montgomery County requires that each department keep a running account of the time volunteers donate. These figures are collected semiannually and are reported to the community. To facilitate this endeavor, Board members are asked to keep track of their time spent on Board activities and report the time totals on the volunteer time sheets distributed at Board meetings or an electronic version provided by the Chair of Vice Chair. Totals are compiled and submitted to the MCPL staff at the end of July each year.

I. Agenda

Prior to the Board's monthly board meetings, an agenda prepared by the Chair with input from the MCPL Director is sent to Board members. The agenda includes, but is not limited to, announcements, approval of the previous meeting's minutes, the MCPL Director's Report, LAC updates, an occasional presentation by an invited guest speaker, committee reports, and new or old business.

Board agendas are disseminated to LAC Chairs, Department executives, and MCPL Managers. An agenda is also posted in all branch libraries and the MCPL website.

II. Montgomery County Library Board Minutes

MCPL's executive staff is responsible for preparing the Board's minutes. Board minutes include the date and place of the meeting, and the time the meeting convened and adjourned, whether a quorum was present, the names of Board members in attendance, those members absent, MCPL staff, and guests. The minutes also record whether the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

The minutes summarize all discussions, including committee, workgroup reports, LAC liaison reports, and presentations by invited guests. A brief summary of comments by any observers is also included. For any motions made, the minutes record the wording of the motion, the members making and seconding the motion, whether the motion passed, and the vote count.

The MCPL Director and the Board Chair review a typed draft of the Board minutes before presenting them to MCLB for approval. A majority vote of Board is needed to approve the minutes. A vote to approve is usually taken at the meeting immediately following the one in which the minutes were taken. Minutes approved by the Board are distributed to Board members at each meeting. In addition, a copy is posted on the MCPL website within 30 days of the

Board's approval of the minutes. Copies are also sent by email to the three County Council representatives on the Health and Human Services committee, the County Council President, and the Office of the County Executive. The County Code requires that a copy of approved Board minutes be filed with the Office of Public Information. These copies are stored online for approximately 15 to 20 years. Copies of older approved Board minutes are archived and can be reviewed by making a request to the Office of Public Information. Recordings of Board meetings are kept for six months.

6. OFFICERS OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD

The Board has two officers, the Chair and the Vice-Chair, who lead Board meetings. The election of officers is normally conducted no later than the July Board meeting of the appropriate year. In case of officer resignations, interim elections will be held before the officer(s) resign or at the next Board meeting. Interested Board members state their intentions to serve as either Chair or Vice-Chair at a Board meeting and are elected by simple majority vote for a term of two years. The Chair and Vice-Chair may be elected to serve an additional one-year term. It is expected that the Vice-Chair, presuming acceptable performance of duties, will succeed the Chair at the end of either the two-year or three-year term.

a. Duties and Responsibilities of the Montgomery County Library Board Chair

The Board Chair presides at Board meetings and other activities or events sponsored or organized by the Board and will:

- Serve as the official spokesperson for the Board. The Chair may designate another Board member to speak on specific issues. When the Chair or other so designated Board member speaks on Board business, he/she presents the position of Board, not his/her personal opinion
- Prepare the agenda with input from the Board Director for each Board monthly board meeting.
- Review and edit draft minutes prepared by MCPL staff for review and approval by the Board.
- Maintain regular contact with Board members and the MCPL Director and keep the Board members informed on issues and activities affecting the Board.
- Assign Board members to LACs as liaisons, Board workgroups, and special "ad hoc" committees or other projects.
- Maintain communication with library officials statewide.
- Represent the Board at County Council budget hearings, before the State Legislature, and at other forums.
- Oversee maintenance of the Board's calendar.

- Prepare and oversee distribution of the Board correspondence.
- Ensure that incoming Board members' orientation is conducted shortly after their appointments.
- Prepare and submit the Board's annual report to the County Executive.
- Prepare and mentor the Vice Chair for the assumption of Chair duties at the end of the Chair's term.
- The chair will schedule and develop activities and deliverables according to Table 1 in Appendix 3.

b. Duties and Responsibilities of the Vice Chair

The Vice Chair will:

- In the absence or at the request of the Chair, preside at Board meetings and other activities and events organized and sponsored by the Board.
- Represent the Board at County Council budget hearings, before the State Legislature, and other forums.
- Carry out special assignments and projects.
- Collecting volunteer hours from Board members and submitting them to MCPL staff
- Carry out any other duties normally assigned to the Chair when the Chair is unavailable.

7. BOARD WORKGROUPS AND BOARD LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Montgomery County Library Board Workgroups

As set forth in Section 3 above, the Board has several internal workgroups to which the Board members are assigned to advance the mission of the Board and MCPL. Board workgroups provide useful input on specified areas of concern to the Board.

The Chair selects and assigns Board Members to one of the Board's workgroups at the beginning of his/her appointment to the Board based on input from the Board member and the Board's needs. Board members may serve on one or more workgroup. Each workgroup is headed by a workgroup leader.

Each workgroup will develop an annual workplan at the start of each fiscal year (September) which specifies its goals for the year, the activities it will take part in, and what will be produced as a result. These workplans will be presented to the full Library Board for approval. Additions or modifications to a workplan can be submitted for approval at any time after the initial approval. Workgroups will report on workplan progress at Board meetings throughout the year.

Workgroup meetings are convened when needed to pursue matters that concern the workgroup. Board members who do not belong to a particular workgroup may nevertheless attend meetings and participate in discussions of that workgroup. Outside observers may also attend the workgroup meetings, but may not participate in discussions. Board workgroups may meet in conjunction with the Board's monthly board meetings or separately. Currently there are three internal Board workgroups, as set forth below. The number of workgroups can be increased or decreased as needed to serve the interests of the Board.

I. LAC Activities Workgroup

The LAC Activities Workgroup monitors the Board's relationship with the LACs and recommends policy and procedural changes to enhance the smooth and meaningful operation of LACs countywide. This workgroup is responsible for:

- Planning and coordinating joint activities and events by and between the Board and the LACs, such as ALA Day and Legislative Day in Annapolis.
- Preparing materials useful for orienting new LAC members.
- Revising the LAC Handbooks each year.

II. Legislative and Public Affairs Workgroup

The Legislative and Public Affairs Workgroup plans activities, events, and campaigns, to include:

- Legislative advocacy efforts, such as coordinating the Board and LAC testimony at public hearings on the county's capital and operating budget and coordinating meetings with elected officials.
- Making recommendations on county and state library legislation.
- Representing Montgomery County on the Maryland Library Association legislative panels.
- Coordinating with other advocacy groups relative to these activities.

III. Library Policy and Practices Workgroup

The Library Policy and Practices Workgroup is responsible for reviewing and advising the Board on library policies and practices and reviewing the long-range Facilities Plan of MCPL. The primary functions of this workgroup are to:

 Make recommendations on the creation of, or changes to, policies, programs, delivery of services that significantly impact library users, such as proposed changes in hours of operation, loan periods and overdue fines, basic and feebased services, holds/reserves, public awareness campaigns, and press relations.

- Conduct an annual revision of the Library Board Manual.
- Make recommendations to the Board and MCPL on Program of Requirements (POR) concerning plans for new facilities or library renovations.
- Advise on County Capital Improvement Programs (CIP).
- Advise on specific problem areas such as parking, lighting, disabled access.

Montgomery County Library Board Library Advisory Committees (LACs)

As set forth in Section 3 above, the Board has established local advisory committees at each of MCPL's 21 branch libraries to assist the Board in the execution of its duties. These local advisory committees are called Library Advisory Committees (LACs) and are composed of local area library users whose primary function is to aid the Board and the Regional and local Branch Managers to enhance the provision of services at each local library. LACs function as the voice of the community surrounding the particular library to which that particular LAC is assigned. The LACs recruit additional members to ensure the LAC fairly represents the demographic of the respective local community. Working with an MCLB Liaison, the LACs advise the Board of its activities and any issues, problems, or concerns at that LAC's particular library. Each Board member serves as a Board Liaison to two or more LACs. Liaison assignments are made by the Board Chair on an as needed basis. Liaisons are responsible for ensuring LAC adherence to mandated procedures as well as the requirements of the LAC Handbook.

Board Liaisons are to send their assigned LACs copies of relevant MCPL and Board documentation such as Board meeting minutes, materials presented at Board meetings, public announcements, and reminders of any deadlines for actions requested of the LACs. Board Liaisons also encourage the fulfillment of mandated administrative responsibilities by LACs, including:

- Assisting the LAC in its efforts to acquire a membership that adequately reflects the diversity of the community being served.
- Reminding each LAC to submit its updated LAC membership list to the MCPL Director's Office by September for submission to the Board in October.
- Reminding the LAC to hold elections for officers and communicate the election results to the MCPL Director's Office before June 1 annually.
- Encouraging the LAC to send representatives to joint meetings held each year by and between the Board, FOLMC, and the LACs.
- Ensuring the approved LAC agenda template is being used for all meetings.

As noted in the LAC Handbook, LACs must schedule a minimum of five (5) meetings and hold at least three (3) meetings a year between September and August. Liaisons are expected to attend all meetings of their assigned LACs. If liaison absence is unavoidable another Board member can act as a substitute or a documented report can be submitted ahead of the meeting. LAC meetings can be held in-person or online (e.g., Zoom) to comply with the Maryland State Open Meetings Act. At the LAC meetings, the Board Liaisons report on the minutes of the last Board monthly board meeting and

other actions taken or planned by Board or MCPL of interest to the LAC, as well as elicit input from the LAC on matters of concern.

Other Montgomery County Library Board Committees

The Board Chair may establish a Board Nominating Committee (see Section 4 above) or other ad hoc committees as needed for the conduct of Board business.

8. SPECIAL ACTIVITIES OF THE MCLB

During the year, the Board may participate in and/or host special activities and events, to include:

a. Joint Meeting with the LACs and the FOLMC

The Board hosts at least one joint meeting each year with the LACs and FOLMC. Members of the LACs and FOLMC are encouraged to give presentations. Programming is generally informational and educational.

b. Maryland Library Trustee's Meeting

Each year, the Maryland State Library Agency holds a one-day meeting to which all library trustees in the State of Maryland are invited. The purpose of the meeting is to provide the trustees with updates on issues of interest to libraries across the State. The meeting serves a developmental purpose as session topics and presentations may cover a wide variety of issues important to developing advocacy skills in library trustees. The meeting also provides a forum for networking by library trustees.

c. Annual Meeting with the County Executive

Selected members of the Board and the MCPL Director meet with the County Executive for the annual Boards, Committees and Commissions meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to update the County Executive on the Board 's activities and provide a briefing on issues the Board would like the County Executive to consider. The date of the meeting, usually in the fall or winter, varies depending on the County Executive's schedule.

d. Legislative Day in Annapolis

During the General Assembly's winter legislative session in Annapolis, the MCPL Director works with the Board's Legislative and Public Affairs Workgroup to organize a delegation that includes Board members to visit Montgomery County's elected representatives in Annapolis and make a brief presentation.

e. County Council Hearings on Budget

The County Executive's Budget Hearings are held in February. The Operating Budget hearings with Council Members are held in April. The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) hearings before the County Council are scheduled during even-numbered years in February. the Board coordinates the selection and briefing of individuals from the LACs who will testify at these hearings along with the Board representative

f. National Library Legislative Day

During April or May of each year, MCPL may organize a delegation of library advocates, including Board members, to join with other delegations for an event hosted by the American Library Association's Washington Office. The event allows delegates to meet with their respective representatives and senators.

g. Meeting with the Montgomery County Council Members

The Board meets with the County Council each year. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an opportunity for the Board and Council members to talk informally and for the Board to advocate for the County Council's approval of library priorities in the Operating Budget.

h. Public Forums

Occasionally the Board may organize, coordinate, and host one or more public forums or activities to solicit comments from residents on specific library issues. MCLB members are also encouraged to attend meetings of the American Library Association (ALA), Public Library Association (PLA), United for Libraries (formerly American Libraries Trustees Association), the Maryland Library Association (MLA), and the Urban Libraries Council (ULC).

9. Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, Maryland, Inc. (FOLMC)

The Board and FOLMC are separate entities that hold two joint meetings each year to discuss advocacy and other issues. FOLMC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit authorized to raise money to support the Montgomery County Library System. Please see the FOLMC Website for more information: https://www.folmc.org/.

APPENDICES

1) Appendix 1 - Volunteer hour log blank template

PLEASE TOTAL YOUR HOURS HERE MCPL LIBRARY BOARD - INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY LOG Total Hours By Activity Code Year Last Name (please do not combine different years on the same log)

VOLUNTEER HOURS LOG

Please note all hours you have contributed in carrying out your duties as a Library Board member. Include travel time, if applicable. This record of your hours is included in an annual count of volunteers and volunteer hours which is reported to the State and County. Thank you!

Date	Activity Code #	Hours Worked	Brief Description of Volunteer Activity	Miles Traveled (optional)

CODES:

- 1.
- 2.
- Board Meetings: hours spent in attendance at library board or joint meetings
 Board Workgroup/Committees: hours spent in committee meetings or conducting committee work
 Library Advisory Committees: hours spent in attendance at LAC meetings or other liaison activities. Please include the number of LAC 3. members in attendance in the activity description
- MCPL Special Events: hours in attendance at events (e.g., library reopenings, MoComCon)
- County Council Meetings: hours spent meeting with council members, attending/testifying at budget forums or hearings, etc.
- 6. Administrative Activities: hours spent coordinating board activities, mostly for board chair, vice-char use (e.g., meetings with director, FOLMC)
- Other Activities not Covered: please describe as needed

2) Appendix 2 - Workgroup workplan template

FY25 Purpose and Draft Workplan for the insert name Workgroup

Purpose: cut/paste the purpose from the MCPL Board manual

FY25 Draft Workplan (as of insert date)

- 1. Goal: insert goal
 - Activity: insert activity
 (Lead insert assigned board member)
 - Add info that describes what will take place
 - Activity: insert activity
 (Lead insert assigned board member)
 - Add info that describes what will take place
- 2. Goal: insert goal
 - Activity: insert activity (Lead – insert assigned board member)
 - Add info that describes what will take place
- 3. Goal: insert goal
 - Activity: insert activity (Lead – insert assigned board member)
 - · Add info that describes what will take place

Tentative timeline for activities:

· Insert general times of the year that activities will take place

3) Appendix 3 - Annual schedule for Chair and Vice Chair

Date Task

January Joint Meeting II

February Library Lovers Month w/ FOLMC

February Legislative Day

February ID who will testify at budget hearings
April Testify at Council budget hearings
April/May National Library Legislative Day

June LAC elections complete

June Revise Library Board Manual

July Annual report
July Officer elections
September (fiscal year) Assign workgroups

September Workgroup workplans submitted/approved

October LB manual update

October LAC membership to Director's office

October Joint Meeting I

Fall Revise LAC Handbook

Fall/Winter Meet with County Executive's Office

As needed Meeting with Council