

## THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT FORMING A LIBRARY DISTRICT

### Build public support for a new taxing entity

- Build your patron database. Library cards translate to votes. Push for library cards.
- Assess your customer service effectiveness and reputation. A highly valued service standard, even if you don't have a lot of money, will take you a long way with your community.
- Hold public meetings and focus groups. Get people talking about this.
- Persuade the city or county to drop or lower the existing library tax. This will make it much easier to sell to the voters.
- Define the boundaries. Are there overlapping jurisdictions? Include everyone in the conversation and forge agreements ahead of time.

### Get on the ballot!

- Build support within existing city or county. Persuade them to establish the library district subject to the mill levy question passing.
- If this is not feasible, petition. Can this be done in a "friendly" way? Remember that you must write an agreement with the city or county when the voters approve the library district, and the city or county appoints the board! Forge agreements ahead of time.

### Plan for election costs

- If the election passes, the new district generally pays the election costs, unless the city or county has agreed to pay; except, the county must pay 50% of the election costs if the requisite number of signatures is obtain on the petition.
- If the election fails, the process is much more complicated. In the case of formation by petition, the county pays 50%. The best solution is to persuade the city/county beforehand to pay the cost of the election, even if it fails. Alternatives are to pay for a bond to cover the cost, or the city/county pays half and the present library and/or the petitioners pay the other half in the case of formation by resolution or ordinance.

### Plan for new costs after the district is formed

- Account for the cost of the formation election (see above) and annual treasurer's fees to collect your taxes.
- Address transfer costs such as **legal counsel, buildings, building and grounds maintenance, accounting, personnel administration, employee benefits** (accrued retirement!), **technology management, liability insurance, board insurance, public information, printing, purchasing, investments**, etc. These may be addressed in one of three ways: Do them yourself, outsource them, or make a formal agreement with your city/county to do them transitionally or permanently. Whichever, the cost is yours.
- Consider hiring consultants to help with the transition, e.g. personnel benefits, insurance, security, facilities.