**Beyond the Job Description: Ten Practical Tips for the New Rural Library Director - Learner Guide**

<http://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/beyond-the-job-description.html>

**Event Description**: On paper, your job description as a library director may not cover some of the unique challenges and opportunities that come with serving a small or rural community. Juggling the nuances of a new position can be overwhelming, but equipped with a tool belt of everyday skills ranging from assessment to communication and outreach to time-management, you can move through your new role with confidence. This session will be useful for anyone interested in strengthening their role in the library, even if you aren’t a director. Come learn from a successful new director, 10 fresh tips for working with staff, boards, and the community to create a strong and vibrant library. Join us and bring your tips and ideas to help new directors succeed!

Presented by:  **Jennifer Pearson**, Director, Marshall County Memorial Library (TN) and current board member, ARSL

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| **What are your goals for viewing this webinar?** | |
| **Personal Goals** |  |
| **Team Goals** |  |
| **Activity 1** | |
| The first of Jennifer’s 10 tips is to assess your community’s needs. One way to do this is to conduct interviews with community leaders. Explore WebJunction’s [Community Leader Interview Guide](http://www.webjunction.org/content/dam/WebJunction/Documents/webJunction/Community-Leader-Interview-Guide.doc) (doc) —created as a resource for Spanish-language outreach—to understand how to identify community members, how to set up the interview, and which questions to ask as a part of your community assessment efforts. Remember the focus of the interview is to **identify community needs and issues**. The focus is **not** to get the community leader’s perspective on what the library should be doing to serve the community. That will come later. At the interview, your role is to acknowledge and tap into the expertise of the community leader. To start, make a list of potential community leaders you’d like to interview, and which part of your community they represent:  1.  2.  3. | |
| **Discussion/Reflection Question 1** | |
| Tip # 4 encourages you to **figure out your staff** (and if you have a smaller team, include volunteers, board members, and other key supporters in this reflection)   * What are their strengths? * What skills could they develop further? * What are their passions? * What do they want to learn more about? | |
| **Activity 2** | |
| “Your most important job as the director of the library is to advocate for the library in the community. The best way to do this is by being visible in the community.” List 3 ways **you would like to be involved in your community**, listing either the organizations or institutions you might join. Don’t forget that you don’t have to do it all! Who else on your team could represent the library in this way?  1.  2.  3. | |
| **Discussion/Reflection Question 2** | |
| Many of the tips Jennifer shared touch on soft skills, or those that relate to more interpersonal skills such as trust building, communication, and compromise. Consider those skills you or your team need to further develop then explore webinar learning opportunities available on WebJunction related to [Personal Growth and Development](http://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/personal-growth-and-development/webinars.html). | |
| **Activity 3** | |
| Based on the input you gathered in your community leader interviews, or through other needs assessment efforts, now create your community-based priorities. Identify the services or programming below, along with those in the community who you might collaborate with to make it happen.  **Quick wins**  1.  2.  3.  **Medium term plans**  1.  2.  3.  **Long term plans**    1.  2.  3. | |
| **Action Plan:** (include next steps, who, when, etc.) | |
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