EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TIMBERLAND REGIONAL LIBRARY



Why Apply?

This is a unique opportunity for an experienced library professional to guide a multi-county library district through a transformative era. Supported by a successful November 2026 levy lid lift, the Executive Director will steer Timberland Regional Library through a vital period of financial stabilization, ensuring high-quality services across a diverse five-county region nearly the size of New Jersey. For an innovative, compassionate, and strategic leader, this is a compelling opportunity to reset the organization and strengthen communities throughout southwest Washington. If you are looking for a challenging and rewarding career step, this could be the opportunity for you.



THE COMMUNITY



Timberland Regional Library (TRL) serves an expansive region of southwest Washington encompassing Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston counties. Stretching from Pacific Ocean beaches to the shores of southern Puget Sound and the Cascade Mountains, the district connects diverse communities ranging from Washington's state capital and urban neighborhoods to coastal towns, Tribal communities, and rural areas.

The district is headquartered in the city of Tumwater, located roughly 60 miles southwest of Seattle and adjacent to Washington's state capital of Olympia. One of Washington's oldest cities, Tumwater offers the amenities of a larger metropolitan area with the character and accessibility of a smaller community. Its identity is closely tied to the Deschutes River and Tumwater Falls, where scenic waterways and the legacy of the Olympia Brewing Company connect the city's landscape with its industrial history.

With convenient access to Interstate 5 and Highway 101, Tumwater offers a well-connected home base for the library district, where the character of community life shifts with the landscape and local economy. Along the Pacific coast, Grays Harbor and Pacific counties are known for their ocean beaches, wildlife refuges, seafood, and maritime traditions. In northern Grays Harbor County, Lake Quinault and the surrounding temperate rainforest offer forested trails, lake recreation, and access to Olympic National Park.

Moving inland, Lewis County features farmland and working forests, with historic downtowns along the Interstate 5 corridor and access to mountain destinations such as Mount Rainier National Park. To the north, Thurston County is home to Olympia, where state government and an active arts scene anchor the region, while surrounding communities range from suburban neighborhoods to small towns and rural farmland. Further north, Mason County is known for its timber heritage and shellfish farming along Hood Canal, a scenic saltwater fjord at the foot of the Olympic Mountains.

Throughout this region, the district operates within the traditional territories of numerous Indigenous Tribes and provides library services to the Nisqually Indian Tribe, Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, Quinault Indian Nation, Skokomish Indian Tribe, and Squaxin Island Tribe.

TIMBERLAND REGIONAL LIBRARY

Timberland Regional Library (TRL) is an intercounty rural library district serving approximately 570,000 people across Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston counties. Its network of 29 libraries, mobile services, kiosks, and online resources connects communities across approximately 7,000 square miles. Headquartered in Tumwater, Washington, the district's mission is to connect its diverse community to ideas, experiences, and each other.

Established in 1968, Timberland Regional Library began as a cooperative effort to expand library services in response to community requests. Originally organized to serve unincorporated areas, the district grew as cities and towns joined the system. Today, 24 cities and towns are part of the library system. The district also provides library services to six Indigenous Tribes with federally recognized lands within its service area.

The district is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees appointed by the county commissioners of its five constituent counties. The Board includes one representative from each county and two at-large members from Lewis and Thurston counties. Trustees serve terms of seven years, or shorter terms if the trustee was appointed to fill a vacancy. The Board establishes policies, approves budgets, oversees district finances, and appoints and evaluates the Executive Director.

Local property taxes generate approximately 96% of TRL's operating revenue, with the remainder supported by timber revenue and other sources. The November 2026 voter-approved regular property tax levy lid lift will raise the rate from $0.22 to $0.35 per $1,000 of assessed value in 2027, providing additional resources to restore services and strengthen financial stability following a period of severe budget constraints. The district currently operates with 179.65 FTEs and anticipates a 2027 budget of approximately $44 million, up from $28 million in 2026, contingent on certification of the recent levy vote and adoption of the budget.

In 2025, the district recorded approximately 4.1 million physical and digital checkouts and served more than 340,000 active patrons. Its Anywhere Library extends services directly into communities, making nearly 1,200 stops and providing 471 storytimes and programs during the year. The district's Summer Library Program attracted more than 15,000 registrants, with total attendance exceeding 37,000 across more than 2,100 programs.











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THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director is responsible for the financial, ethical, strategic, and visionary oversight of the Timberland Regional Library district. The Executive Director fosters strong connections with community leaders and stakeholders to lead the charge on advocacy for support and funding. In the day-to-day, the Executive Director leads large initiatives that promote continuous improvement, reviews data and metrics, and explores new service models, trends, and ideas with the goal of keeping the organization fiscally solvent. In collaboration with the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Team, the Executive Director communicates big picture ideas, models, and upholds TRL's values, and advocates for the effective utilization of TRL resources.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP

1) **Provide Steady Leadership & Restore Trust**

The incoming Executive Director will step in at a pivotal time for Timberland Regional Library, following a 2026 budget shortfall that led to staff reductions, organizational disruption, and intense public concern. There is a need to bring stability and predictability to the organization. Rebuilding public confidence and staff morale will be central to the district's next chapter. The Executive Director will need to lead with genuine empathy and compassion while helping the organization heal and restore trust.

2) **Strategic & Transparent Financial Planning**

The voter-approved levy lid lift will expand available resources, creating a significant opportunity that will require disciplined execution. The district will need to establish a transparent, multi-year plan for using these resources sustainably. Strong financial forecasting and regular reporting will be essential to balancing community expectations with staffing needs, adequate reserves, and long-term operating costs. The Executive Director will benefit from a newly hired Finance Administrator and work already underway on multi-year forecasting models, public financial reporting procedures, and an independent external fiscal audit.

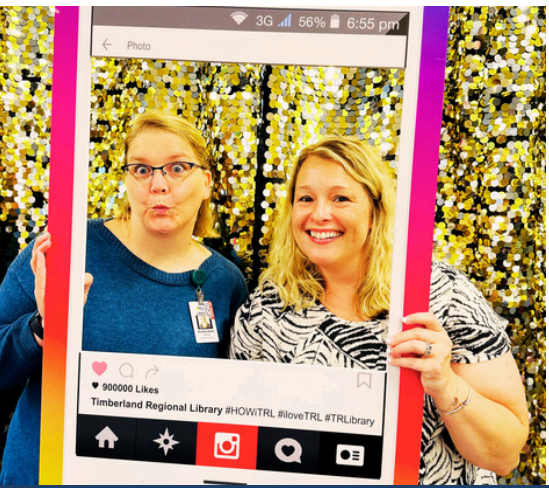
3) **Reengage & Energize the Organization**

The Executive Director will need to continue ongoing work with Trustees, senior staff, site librarians, volunteer groups, and administrative personnel to restore a shared sense of purpose and mission. The Executive Director must bring strategic focus, energy, and a renewed sense of possibility to unite the organization around a clear path forward. This work will require clarity, conviction, and passion.









THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

- **Clear Communication** – Articulates the district's mission and priorities to elected officials, staff, volunteers, and residents throughout its extensive service area.

- **Financial and Strategic Leadership** – Brings strong financial judgment to managing rising costs and additional revenue from the new property tax levy. Transforms community desires into strategic initiatives that balance the needs of constituents with realistic operational capabilities.

- **Respect and Integrity** – Leads with compassion, honesty, and transparency. Listens carefully and treats others with respect, including those with differing views.

- **Understanding of Local Communities** – Appreciates the political, social, and economic differences across the district's 7,000-square-mile service area. Balances local priorities with district-wide responsibilities and resources.

- **Building Common Ground** – Recognizes libraries as valued gathering places for people with different perspectives and expectations. Listens with respect and builds a shared sense of purpose around serving the community.

- **Responsive Library Leadership** – Understands the changing role of public libraries and supports technology, programming, and services that reflect each community's needs. Recognizes that effective service may look different from one branch to another.

- **Visible and Engaged Leadership** – Maintains an active presence throughout the district and builds relationships with Trustees, county and city officials, school personnel, Friends of the Library volunteers, and frontline staff.

- **Accountability and Openness to Feedback** – Remains calm under criticism and considers feedback from supporters and critics alike. Maintains a clear sense of purpose, sets clear expectations, provides staff with guidance and support, and welcomes and values input from others.

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

- Master's degree in library science.
- 10 years of library experience.
- 5 years of administrative management and/or direct supervisory experience in a multi-location public library system.
- An equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered.
- REQUIRED: State of Washington librarian certification.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Timberland Regional Library offers an annual salary range of $150,000 – $200,000 based on qualifications and experience, along with a comprehensive benefits package.

RESOURCES

About Timberland Regional Library

Org Chart

2027 Preliminary Annual Budget

2025 Annual Report

Levy Lid Lift Article - Nov. 10, 2026

Timberland Regional LIBRARY



TO APPLY

Apply Online: gmphr.com

First Review: January 4, 2027

More Info: Greg Young, GMP Consultants
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