

LIBRARY ADVOCACY RESOURCES

Advocacy Fact Sheets (American Library Association)

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/advleg/advocacyuniversity/advclearinghouse/factsheets>

[Become a Better Advocate](#) [Build Your Advocacy Campaign](#) [Making Your Case](#)
[Lobbying](#) [Working with the Media](#)

Advocacy University (American Library Association)

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/advleg/advocacyuniversity/advclearinghouse>

Information, courses and tools to help library advocates make the case at the local level.

Resources by Topic

- [Budgets, funding & fundraising](#)
- [Challenges to library materials](#)
- [Coalition building](#)
- [Getting started as a library advocate](#)
- [Working with elected officials](#)
- [Internet safety](#)
- [Outsourcing & privatization](#)
- [Public relations & dealing with the media](#)
- [Salaries & pay equity](#)
- [Value of libraries](#)

Resources for Specific Groups

- [Academic libraries](#)
- [Friends groups & trustees](#)
- [Public libraries](#)
- [Rural libraries](#)
- [School libraries](#)
- [Special needs & underserved populations](#)
- [Young adult advocacy](#)

Campaign for America's Libraries @ your library and Ilovelibraries.org

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/advleg/publicawareness/campaign@yourlibrary>

The Campaign for America's Libraries is ALA's public awareness campaign that promotes the value of libraries and librarians. See also <http://www.ilovelibraries.org/> ALA's website for the public, designed to keep America informed about what's happening in today's libraries whether public, school, academic, or corporate and institutional settings.

Geek the Library <http://geekthelibrary.org/> Sponsored by OCLC, the Geek the Library project is a community public awareness campaign aimed at spreading the word about the vital and growing role of your public library, and to raise awareness about the critical funding issues many U.S. public libraries face.

Wisconsin Library Association Legislative Advocacy Resources "How to" advocacy tips for scheduling listening sessions, meeting and working with elected officials, building a common agenda, ten easy political campaign activities and links to other advocacy sites. Click on "LEGISLATIVE" off the navigation bar for more drop-down menu choices. <http://wla.wisconsinlibraries.org/legislative/advocacy/advocacy-resources>

Wisconsin Vote <http://wisconsinvote.org/> Created by Wisconsin Public Television and Wisconsin Public Radio, this comprehensive website features breaking legislative and political news and includes links to candidates and races, political news, fact checking and more. FAQ page <http://wisconsinvote.org/resources> contains a wealth of voter registration information.

Wisconsin Government website <http://www.wisconsin.gov/state/core/government.html> Links to information about members of the executive branch, legislature, the state Blue Book online archive, state budget documents, local government associations and indexes, and federal sites. State senate, assembly and congressional maps are here <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/gis/> Enhance legislative advocacy and visibility!

Wisconsin Government Accountability Board <http://gab.wi.gov/> Wisconsin election information. Includes **My Vote Wisconsin** <https://myvote.wi.gov/> Look up voter registration and polling place location, find information on absentee voting and forms. **Access a sample ballot** for your voting district in upcoming elections by entering your address here <https://myvote.wi.gov/Address/AddressSearchScreen.aspx>

EVERY VOICE MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

A sample from the American Library Association Advocacy University toolkit

“Frontline librarians and library staff should be engaged and empowered to articulate the value of their respective libraries and their value as library employees. By working with their library administrators and at their own comfort level, they can be their library’s connection to the people they know best – users, friends, relatives, and neighbors.”

-- Dr. Camila Alire, 2009-2010 ALA President

Most of us who work in libraries – public, school, academic or special [or who support libraries by service as a library trustee or member of a library friends/foundation group] – believe in what we do. Advocacy is simply a way to share that with others. And it’s not just about talking. It’s also about listening and building a sense of ownership. We encourage everyone who works with libraries to put these tips and examples to work. The more you practice, the easier and more natural it will be come! Here are some basic tips to help you get started:

- Know your library’s message. It’s important that all library staff speak with one voice.
- Look for opportunities to deliver the message in and outside the library.
- Be prepared to respond to any negative comments with a positive, factual statement.
- Don’t wait until the crisis comes. Make speaking up for the library part of your life.
- Listen. Gather and report what you hear.
- Have your own message about your work – a message that’s comfortable for you to deliver and can be used to spark conversations outside the library.
- Collect testimonials. Ask people if you can quote them. Use these personal, positive comments to tell the library’s story to policymakers and others. Some libraries have sheets ready for their users to fill out.
- Be spontaneous. Avoid the canned messages you hear at many checkout counters, e.g., “Did you find what you’re looking for today?” Make it personal and let your enthusiasm show!
- Keep it going. Ask others to tell their friends, neighbors, council representatives, legislators.
- Go for ownership. Your goal should be to not just tell people about the library but to remind them that it is **their** library.

Here are a few examples to help you anticipate daily advocacy opportunities and prepare your responses.

Breaking the Ice

Situation: You’re introducing yourself at a meeting or party.

Message: Hi, I’m ---- and I work for you. I work at the Public Library. Do you have a library card?

Delivering your key message

Situation: You’re working in a public area when someone observes that it is getting way too crowded.

Message: Yes, business is booming these days. Our community deserves a bigger, better library. We have a renovation plan, but we’ll need a lot of support. Would you like to know how you can help the library?

Responding to a complaint

Situation: Someone complains about the library’s hours – either a library user or a neighbor.

Message: We wish our hours could be longer too. The economy has hurt our budget and we’ve had to cut back. It’s a shame because a lot of people out there are counting on us. Let me give you one of these brochures. It gives some ways that you might support the library.

Asking for a testimonial

Situation: A customer voices a compliment or appreciation.

Message: Thank you so much. Would you mind writing that down so we could quote you? It really helps to have good stories to share – especially at budget time.

Building a sense of ownership

Situation: You are making casual conversation with a library user

Message: How’s it going? Have you heard about our proposed budget cut? Let me give you one of these brochures. It tells how the cuts might affect you/your family and how you can support the library.