“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 administrators and at their own comfort level, every staff member can be their library’s connection to the people they know best—students, faculty, other friends and colleagues.”

—Dr. Camila Alire, 2009-2010 President, American Library Association

Join the movement! Frontline Advocacy initiative provides online resources to fit the needs of every type of library—academic, school, public and special. For more information, visit www.ala.org/frontlineadvocacy

Most of us who work in libraries—public, school, academic or special—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 become! Here are some basic tips to get you started.

1. Know your library’s message. It’s important that all staff speak with one voice.
2. Look for opportunities to deliver the message in and outside the library.
3. Be prepared to respond to any negative comments with a positive, factual statement.
4. Don’t wait until the crisis comes. Make speaking up for the library part of your life.
6. 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.
7. 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 for their users to fill out.
8. 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!
9. Keep it going. Ask others to tell their friends, neighbors, council representatives and/or legislators.
10. Go for ownership. Your goal should be not just to tell people about the library but to remind them that it is their library.
There are many situations in our daily lives that lend themselves to advocacy. Here are a few examples to help you anticipate and develop your own responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breaking the ice</th>
<th>Situation: You’re introducing yourself at a meeting or party.</th>
<th>Message: Hi, I’m —– and I work for every student and department on this campus—the library.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivering your key message</td>
<td>Situation: You’re at a Department meeting when a faculty member observes that the library is becoming antiquated.</td>
<td>Message: Yes, we’d like to be doing more. Did you know we have the highest number of visitors of campus? And that’s not including our online users! Our hands are pretty much tied under our current budget. We have a renovation plan but we’ll need a lot of support. I’d be glad to get you a copy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responding to a complaint</td>
<td>Situation: A student or faculty member complains about the library’s hours.</td>
<td>Message: We wish we could be open more hours too, but our operating budget doesn’t allow it. It’s a shame because so many faculty and students count on us. It would be great if you could write a letter to the provost and get your colleagues/friends to write too.</td>
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<td>Asking for the testimonial</td>
<td>Situation: A student or faculty member voices a compliment or appreciation.</td>
<td>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.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building a sense of ownership</td>
<td>Situation: You run into a faculty member you know after a budget cut is announced.</td>
<td>Message: Hi there! Did you hear the latest? It’s a shame, especially when faculty and students are already complaining about our hours. We’re putting together a task force to try to come up with some solutions. Would you be interested?</td>
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