ABOUT THE GUIDE

How and why it was developed.

In 2013 the ALA Washington Office conducted a survey regarding advocacy engagement in the library community. There were 1026 respondents, although not all respondents completed the entire survey. The bulk of respondents (66%) were library staff / directors. The breakdown of types of libraries / affiliations included 47% from public libraries; 31% from school libraries; and, 14% from college research libraries with the remainder being state librarians and those associated with specialized libraries. The age range of respondents broke down as follows: 26-34 (15%), 35-44 (17%), 45-54 (21%) and 55-64 (30%).

The survey data revealed eight key challenges members of the library community face in efforts to advocate. Among those who said they do not advocate, when asked why, the primary responses were:

1. No one has asked me to advocate
2. I don’t have time to advocate
3. I don’t know what to say
4. I’m not sure what to do
5. I’m unfamiliar with the audience
6. I don’t think I’m supposed to lobby
7. I’m not sure how to get my decision-makers to listen
8. I don’t know how to engage others to advocate with me

This guide seeks to delve into these challenges and to provide members of the library community with the resources they need to make sure their voices get heard—and listened to—among decision-makers.

HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

The last section in this chapter outlines why advocacy is important, along with basic policy information. Resources for more detailed / timely information on a given issue are noted throughout the document.
After the overview, the guide is organized by eight major challenges we uncovered as part of the survey. These are:

1. No one has asked me to advocate
2. I don’t have time to advocate
3. I don’t know what to say
4. I’m not sure what to do
5. I’m unfamiliar with the audience
6. I don’t think I’m supposed to lobby
7. I’m not sure how to get my decision-makers to listen
8. I don’t know how to engage others to advocate with me

While the majority of the resources in this document can be used by all members of the library community, there are some materials that will be specifically helpful for certain types of libraries as well as certain groups (i.e. friends, trustees, board members, and patrons) in the library community. Those specific resources are distinguished according to the colors in the box on the right. If a box has no color, the resources listed in it can be applied advocacy efforts across all types of libraries.

THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD DO

If you don’t have time to read the whole guide, we hope you will consider these quick-and-easy things you can do to make sure you’re getting more involved in library advocacy:

1. Sign up for Federal Action Alerts in the Legislative Action Center.
2. Subscribe to District Dispatch, the Washington Office blog, for updates on current policy and legislation information.
3. Take action for your local library and sign up for action alerts with your local state library association.
4. Calculate the value of your library using the Library Value Calculator and tell people how much you’re worth.
WHAT IS ADVOCACY AND WHY DO IT?

To engage in advocacy means to plead or argue for a cause, without reference to the particular audience. In other words, anything you do to promote the interests of your library can be considered advocacy. This applies whether you’re working with elected officials, regulatory agencies or even the general public. In short, you likely already advocate on a daily basis.

The staff at ALA’s Office of Government Relations focuses on advocacy in the political arena, particularly the U.S. Congress, although issues can arise in regulatory agencies like the Federal Communications Commission or in the courts, as well. These staff people play an important role in monitoring legislation, working with legislators’ staff to change bills, propose legislative ideas, and engage in regulatory rulemakings. However, in order to be most effective, they need those who are directly impacted by the decisions to speak up. That’s where you come in.

Believe it or not, elected officials and their staff pay close attention to those they represent. According to recent studies, communications from constituents rank far above those of lobbyists in terms of their ability to influence a decision. Without your input, legislators and regulators have no idea if what they’re proposing is helpful or harmful. Part of your role is to be sure they know what you do in the community, why it’s important and what policy changes are necessary to help you further your goals. This guidebook will show you how.

CHALLENGE ONE: NO ONE HAS ASKED ME

Consider yourself asked! This chapter provides an overview of key resources and ways to start getting involved in advocacy efforts for your library. There are a wide range of free action alert services offered by the ALA and other library-associated organizations. When you register for these you will receive information regarding upcoming state and federal policy activities so you can quickly find out what’s going on and how you can make a difference. In this chapter, you’ll also get a quick overview of some helpful general resources as well as some resources specific to the type of library you’re interested in advocating for.
Advocacy Resources

**Legislative Action Center**: Provides alerts for taking immediate advocacy action (i.e. personalizing an email to send or making a phone call to your local legislator).

Resources for Specific Library Groups:
• **Frontline Advocacy Toolkit**: In-depth toolkit broken up by library type (school, public, academic, and special) on how to advocate while serving on the frontline of their communities
  
  • **Academic Libraries**
  • **Friend Groups and Trustees**
  • **Public Libraries**
  • **Rural Libraries**
  • **School Libraries**
  
  Special Needs and Underserved Populations

---

**CHALLENGE TWO: I DON’T HAVE TIME**

Life as a librarian is incredibly busy, but advocacy doesn’t need to take hours out of your schedule. In this section you’ll find some information and resources on how to get involved in effective advocacy activities that take an hour or less. After going through this chapter, you will be able to easily sign up for email action alerts and share some information with people in your community. Whether you have 5 minutes per week or 5 hours, anyone can get involved in library advocacy!

---

**QUICK AND EASY ADVOCACY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quick Advocacy Resources</th>
<th>Time Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Library Promotions and Events</strong>: This is a list of pre-established national promotional events and celebration weeks. The bulk of the planning is done by national committees, so local advocates just need to</td>
<td>Time varies by event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Click on the image or view online.
coordinate with these committees to participate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Legislative Action Center:</strong></th>
<th>Provides alerts for taking immediate advocacy action (i.e. personalizing an email to send or making a phone call to your local legislator).</th>
<th>15-45 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our Authors, Our Advocates:</strong></td>
<td>Well-known authors speak out on the benefits of libraries. Share this link with your neighbors, friends, community members, legislators, or whomever you choose!</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Advocacy Recycling”: Leveraging existing events and resources for lasting advocacy impact:</strong></td>
<td>This webinar provides 10 quick and easy ways to use something you’re already doing to impact the policy arena.</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHALLENGE THREE: I DON’T KNOW WHAT TO SAY**

Too often our decision makers have outdated ideas of libraries and librarians and don’t understand our stake in key policy issues like net neutrality, copyright and privacy. We need to amplify how all libraries are enablers and catalysts of opportunity and progress and advocate for the policies needed to support this mission. In this chapter, you’ll find numerous resources for learning more about the issues that matter most to libraries. Read up on hot topics including Net neutrality, copyright, and freedom of information. This will help you build up the knowledge base you need to discuss and answer questions about the important issues facing the library community.

**WHAT TO SAY**
**Advocacy Resources**

**District Dispatch**: The ALA Washington Office Blog covering federal legislation, information technology policy, and more. Checking this regularly is a good way to stay informed about legislative issues and advocacy-related information.

**The E’s of Libraries™**: Make it memorable! “The E’s of Libraries” is one way to capture the broad range of resources, services and opportunities enabled through 21st Century libraries.

**Library Value Calculator**: Calculate the monetary value of your library in minutes. This calculator provides advocates with a number to make their community value more tangible to community members and legislators.

**Take Action for Libraries**: A map linking to state library association pages outlining state/local issues and provide links to take direct action on the state/local level.

**Advocating in a tough economy talking points**: What to say to decision-makers to get them to listen to your budget requests in a tough economy.

**Transforming Libraries Webinar**: A conversation about harnessing the enveloping role of libraries and strengthening the librarian’s voice to help shape community perception.

**Libraries, the Place of Opportunity**: Outlines the ways in which libraries are vital.
to various aspects of community life in America

**Keeping Public Libraries Public:** Provides information on the community benefits of public libraries and a way of communicating these benefits to decision-makers considering privatization

**Libraries Matter:** Research detailing the economic, community development, and literacy/education benefits of libraries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summaries of Key Policy Issues for Libraries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Access to Information:** Libraries are major sources of information for society and they serve as guardians of the public’s access. The advent of the digital world has revolutionized how the public obtains its information and how libraries provide it. Libraries help ensure that Americans can access the information they need – regardless of age, education, ethnicity, language, income, physical limitations or geographic barriers – as the digital world evolves. Core values of the library community such as equal access to information, intellectual freedom, and the neutral stewardship and provision of information must be preserved and strengthened in the developing digital world.

**Broadband and E-Rate:** High-capacity broadband powers modern library services—from streaming media to videoconferencing to distance learning. All libraries – public, school and academic - need affordable “big pipe” connectivity to meet the ever-increasing needs of library users. Libraries also play a vital role in broadband adoption and successful use with digital literacy training and relevant digital content. The ALA advocates with the Federal Communications Commission to improve the efficiency and efficacy of Universal Service Fund (USF), including the E-Rate program. E-rate provides discounts to schools and public libraries on telecommunications services, Internet access, Wi-Fi and some closely related costs.
**Net Neutrality**: Libraries are fundamentally committed to the equitable free flow of information on the internet. ALA supports laws and regulations, like the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) 2015 Open Internet Order, that preclude internet service providers from manipulating, blocking, or charging additional fees for online information. Preserving an open internet is essential to our nation's freedom of speech, educational achievement, and economic growth. The library community opposes any legislation that would allow internet service providers (ISPs) to engage in paid prioritization or limit the FCC's ability to enforce its open internet principles. An Open Internet is critical to libraries’ ability to meet our mission of providing equal and unfettered access to online information and services for all patrons.

**Ebooks and Digital Content**: Since January 2012, the ALA Digital Content & Libraries Working Group has focused on e-book library lending – particularly regarding major publishers that refuse to offer their titles through our nation’s libraries, have dramatically raised prices, or have introduced new restrictions. And we have made some progress. As of April 2013, all of the “Big Six” publishers are now engaged in library e-lending pilots or provide some or all of their titles for purchase by libraries.

More information on E-books and digital content, including ways to advocate for it: [http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/ebooktoolkit](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/ebooktoolkit)

**First Amendment, Intellectual Freedom, and Civil Liberties**: The ALA actively advocates in defense of the rights of library users to read, seek information, and speak freely as guaranteed by the First Amendment. A publicly supported library provides free and equal access to information for all people of that community. We enjoy this basic right in our democratic society. It is a core value of the library profession.

The ALA has long championed the freedom of the press and the freedom to read. For instance, ALA’s Banned Books Week helps raise public awareness of the ongoing threats to intellectual freedom.

**Government Information**: No-fee public access to government information is the foundation of an informed citizenry. The ALA has long fought to ensure that the public continues to enjoy this access. Libraries have demonstrated their effectiveness in delivering government information to the public. From the
Federal Depository Library Program to a variety of e-government services—including emergency response and recovery services provided during natural disasters like Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy—libraries have continued to advocate for the public.

**International Issues**: The ALA promotes the exchange of professional information, techniques and knowledge, as well as personnel and literature between and among libraries and library supporters throughout the world. The Association also advocates for the recognition of the international aspects of the library profession and its priority within the ALA.

**Literacy**: Literacy is a fundamental value of the Association and its members, and one of ALA's eight Key Action Areas (the eight primary guiding principles for investment of ALA energies and resources). The ALA and its divisions promote and foster literacy, and ensure that training and resources are available to help libraries and librarians develop literacy programs and services.

**Privacy and Surveillance**: The ALA and our nation’s libraries have long been committed to the principles of free speech, protection of privacy, open government and access to government information. These democratic values have translated into education and advocacy within the library community and with the public at every level of government and in all kinds of libraries.

At the congressional level, following the revelations in 2013 that the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) have been obtaining and storing vast amounts of personal information, the ALA renewed its call for reforms that would improve oversight and accountability, declassify information necessary to promote public debate and assure true oversight and transparency in this whole arena.

**Copyright**: The Digital Age presents new challenges to fundamental copyright doctrines that are legal cornerstones of library services. Libraries are leaders in trying to maintain a balance of power between copyright holders and users, in keeping with the fundamental principles outlined in the Constitution and carefully crafted over the past 200 years. In this role, the ALA closely follows both federal and state legislation and makes librarians’ voices heard when these issues are moving. Libraries are
perceived as a voice for the public good and ALA’s participation is often sought in "friend of the court" briefs in important intellectual property cases. ALA’s involvement extends to the international copyright arena, following the treaties to which the U.S. is a signatory and that could influence the development of copyright changes at home.

Copyright issues are among the most hotly contested issues in the legal and legislative world; billions of dollars are at stake. Legal principles and technological capabilities are constantly challenging each other and every outcome can directly affect the future of libraries.

Everyday copyright law affects the way libraries provide information to their users. The first sale doctrine enables libraries to lend books and other resources. Fair use allows for the use of copyrighted works for purposes of criticism, comment, news reporting, scholarship, or research. Libraries are permitted to make reproductions of copyrighted works for preservation and replacement purposes. And under copyright law, libraries can aid in the transformation and reproduction of copyrighted works for users with disabilities. As libraries advocate for user rights and access to information, it's crucial to continue to address the emerging challenges posed at the intersection of technology, society, and law.

**Library Funding:** While the majority of funding for libraries comes from state and local sources, federal funding provides critical assistance, giving libraries across the country the financial support they need to serve their communities. Federal dollars also leverage local resources.

For the past several years, the federal budget has been hard on domestic programs. Libraries have seen cuts to the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), and many other beneficial programs have been severely cut or terminated. The ALA follows these other programs as well, because libraries are just one part of a much bigger picture that includes education, the humanities, the arts, and many other important social functions.

**Access to Federally Funded Research:** On their own, academic libraries cannot afford access to a wide range of research literature vital to faculty and student needs. Open access to federally funded research would substantially improve opportunities for research. For instance, 1.5 million articles are retrieved from PubMed each weekday by 700,000 unique users. 25% of these users are from universities.
The Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act (FASTR) increases opportunities for academicians to share search results across institutions and disciplines, collaborate widely, and reuse results. According to the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), the application of research will be accelerated resulting in greater innovation, new products and services, and long-term economic growth. In addition, articles available in a digital environment allow new fields of research and analysis to emerge through the use of computational analysis tools, which could revolutionize academic research.

Net Neutrality and Academic Libraries: Libraries and higher education institutions are “prolific providers of content, services and applications on the Open Internet.” At the same time, libraries and higher education institutions are dependent on outside sources, only available through the Open Internet, in order to develop content and applications in the public interest. Online learning—in particular Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)—and increasing numbers of digital library collections—including the Digital Public Library of America—are clear examples of great innovative and democratizing trends in academia only possible with an Open Internet.

CIPA and School Libraries: The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Neighborhood Internet Protection Act (NCIPA) went into effect on April 20, 2001. These laws place restrictions on the use of funding that is available through the Library Services and Technology Act, Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and on the Universal Service discount program known as the E-rate (Public Law 106-554). These restrictions take the form of requirements for Internet safety policies and technology which blocks or filters certain material from being accessed through the Internet. The deadline for complying with NCIPA was July 1, 2002 for those libraries receiving 2002 E-rate discounts for Internet access or internal connections. The deadline for compliance with CIPA was July 1, 2004, following the Supreme Court ruling in 2003.

ESEA Reauthorization: The ALA supports the inclusion of provisions in the reauthorization of ESEA to improve academic achievement by ensuring public schools across the United States have libraries staffed by state-licensed school librarians. The ALA believes School librarians must be named along with other highly effective teachers in the new ESEA legislation in order to ensure that
school librarians have an accountability role as Congress strikes a new path for education reform. 21st century school library programs provide students with more than just books selected to hone readers’ developing skills and to instill a love of reading. Today’s school libraries are sophisticated learning environments necessary in preparing students for 21st century workplaces.

Not surprisingly, research repeatedly shows that a well-funded and fully staffed school library with a state-licensed school librarian is an integral component of a student’s successful education. Because ESEA does not highlight the direct correlation between a school library (staffed by a state-licensed school librarian) and increased student academic achievement, library resource budgets have increasingly been used to mitigate the effects of budgetary shortfalls. Unfortunately, school libraries are currently some of the most underfunded classrooms in America and only 60 percent of our school libraries have a full-time, state-licensed school librarian on staff. Thus, the ALA believes that any ESEA reauthorization legislation must affirm the vital role school libraries play in the U.S. education system and work to ensure the inclusion of fully-certified school librarians in school libraries throughout the country.

**Common Core:** The ALA believes that all students should graduate from high school ready for college and a career, and that setting high expectations of students will improve student achievement to that end. Thus, the ALA and the American Association of School Libraries (AASL) generally support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) throughout the country. CCSS expects students to engage deeply in a wide variety of informational and literary texts in English language arts (ELA)/literacy and to be able to both know and do mathematics by solving a range of problems engaging in key mathematical practices. The ALA would like the final CCSS to stress the importance of school librarians in facilitating students and faculty learning in the areas of inquiry-based learning, information literacy, digital literacy, and exposure to literature and informational text.

**State of America’s Libraries Report 2015:** Report on how libraries and library staff continue to respond to the changing needs of communities around the US

**Using the Media for Library Advocacy: Webinar:** Conversation about options for building relationships with the media, as well as appropriate practices for the
Do you know you want to advocate, but aren’t sure how to get started? Check out the toolkits, webinars, and other resources in this chapter to find great ways to get started as a library advocate. Most of this information can be used by anyone in the library community, but some resources specific to certain types of libraries can be found here as well.

**WHAT TO DO**

*Academic Library Slogans:* Get Creative using ‘@ Your Library’

*Strong School Libraries Build Strong Students:* Share this engaging, easy-to-read, yet highly informative infographic with your decision-makers

*ACRL Speaks Out:* This page outlines the Association of College and Research Libraries’ stance on the key issues facing the academic library community

**CHALLENGE FOUR: I’M NOT SURE WHAT TO DO**
## Advocacy Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Library Legislative Day</strong></td>
<td>Find information on past national library legislative days and how to sign up for the next one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Library Snapshot Day</strong></td>
<td>Provides a way for all types of libraries to showcase what happens in a single day at a library. This resource includes a step-by-step guide on how to set up your own library snapshot day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wondering how to get started as a library advocate?</strong></td>
<td>Find the tools and resources you’ll need to begin advocating here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advocating for your budget?</strong></td>
<td>Find numerous useful resources on how to draft a budget, present it, and ask for the funding you need at this link.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webinar: Making strategic partnerships</strong></td>
<td>A discussion showcasing best practices in creating partnerships that help advance library agendas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AASL School Library Month (April)</strong></td>
<td>Plan activities and events that encourage students and the local community to celebrate school libraries and librarians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turning the page online</strong></td>
<td>A free, self-paced library advocacy training course developed and presented by the PLA. This is an ideal course for beginner advocates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Library Legislative Updates</strong></td>
<td>Sign up to receive email notifications about current news on public policy topics relevant to academic libraries and librarians, including information from the ALA Washington Office and a variety of library and higher education publications.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHALLENGE FIVE: I’M UNFAMILIAR WITH THE AUDIENCE

When advocating for your library, it’s crucial to know who you’re talking to. Understanding who your decision-makers are will determine the course of your
discussion and how you address your issues. This chapter includes information on how to research your legislators and work with their staff to ensure your voice is heard.

RESEARCHING POLICYMAKERS

Advocacy Resources to Help You Get to Know Your Audience

**Legislative Action Schedule and Know Your Legislator Worksheet**: Determine your advocacy plan and get to know the people who represent you by filling out this worksheet.

**Top 10 Things Elected Officials and Their Staff Hate to Hear**: How to be mindful of the way you speak to legislators and their staff to ensure your message is most effectively internalized.

**Working with Legislators and Decision-Makers: Tips for Success**: This document explains how to communicate effectively with legislators and decision-makers.

**Legislative Scorecard**: Outlines votes, and support of legislation that is important to and has an impact on the library community.

**Webinar: The Legislative Process and You: How it Works and How to Make a Difference**: This webinar provides insider information on the legislative process and how library advocates can use it to their advantage.
The line between library advocacy and lobbying can seem blurry, but the restrictions surrounding lobbying do not necessarily apply to educating or advocating for the issues that matter to you. As a citizen, you have every right to make sure decision-makers in this country know your opinion. In this chapter, find out what’s allowed and what isn’t when it comes to library advocacy. A lot more is allowed than you might think.

LOBBying and ADVOCACY: THE RULES

Resources on the Rules of Advocacy and Lobbying

**Eleven Library Advocacy Myths...Debunked**: Think you know everything about library advocacy? Check out some of these commonly held beliefs and learn the truth.

**Webinar: Libraries and the Elections: How You Can be Involved and Make a Difference**: Outlines what library supporters can legally, ethically, and effectively do to get involved during election years to ensure that candidates understand the importance of libraries.

**Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest**: This organization is dedicated to explaining the rules around advocacy and lobbying in the context of non-profits advocating for the public interest. Check out their website to learn more about what is and is not allowed.

**NonprofitVote.org**: This website is dedicated to helping non-profits encourage their members to participate in the electoral process. It explains how non-profits can get involved to make sure their voices are heard in the political system.
CHALLENGE SEVEN: I’M NOT SURE HOW TO GET MY DECISION-MAKERS TO LISTEN

Decision-makers receive hundreds of policy requests each day. In this chapter, you’ll learn how to get your message heard among the tumult. Now that you know what your message is and who you’re speaking to, here you’ll learn how to be most influential in your communications.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR DECISION-MAKERS LISTEN

Resources to Help You Get Your Voice Heard

- **Answering Tough Questions Role Play**: Practice taking on the most challenging questions and figuring out what to say
- **Develop Your Campaign’s Message**: A step-by-step guide on how to build a message that resonates and effectively conveys what you want it to convey
- **Media Relations Handbook for Libraries**: Explains how to communicate with the media and work with them to help your library
- **In Case of Controversy—Basic Tips for Crisis Communications**: Outlines how to prepare
for and handle organized opposition and other issues that may arise when dealing with members of the community

**Speaking Out**: Instructions for adequately designating and training spokespeople for your library

**Telling the Library Story**: How to capture people’s attention, surprise them, impress them, and make them remember your story and act upon it

**Working with the Media—Staying in Control**: How to stay focused and in control of your message during an interview

**Working with the Media—Strategies and Tips for Success**: Identifies some opportunities in the media to get your message out, provides tips on how to deal with media calls and being effective on radio or TV

**CHALLENGE EIGHT: I DON’T KNOW HOW TO ENGAGE OTHERS**

It can be hard to travel the advocacy road alone, so it’s important to make sure others are joining you in your advocacy efforts. This chapter outlines how to build and maintain coalitions within the library community so you have a strong group of support for your advocacy efforts.

**HOW TO ENGAGE OTHERS**

Click on the image or view online.
# Resources on Building Coalitions and Engaging Your Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Getting Started: A Step-by-Step Guide</strong></th>
<th>How to create and maintain a strong and effective coalition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What NOT to do: Coalitions Behaving Badly</strong></td>
<td>Check out these tips to make sure you don’t make these mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultivating Your Local Notables</strong></td>
<td>A toolkit on how to get the people you want advocating for what you want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Template Handout for Advocates (Staff, Friends, Trustees, Patrons, Students, and Other Library Supporters)</strong></td>
<td>This template provides an example of a handout you can provide advocates to when asking them to get more involved in advocacy. It outlines some examples of ways they can take action to support their local library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advocate Intake Form</strong></td>
<td>Use this form to sign up interested advocates and ensure you get the information you’ll need to put their service to good use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coalition Intake Form</strong></td>
<td>Use this form for organizations interested in joining a coalition so you can gather all the information necessary to make sure you effectively build your coalition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>One-Pager Template</strong></td>
<td>Customize this template to tell policymakers and supporters about the benefits of your library in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample Publicity Materials for Academic Libraries (doc)</strong></td>
<td>Templates for press releases, op-eds, and public service announcements that can be easily customized to fit the needs and interests of your library and institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>100 Ways to Reach and Engage your Faculty</strong></td>
<td>Tips on how to build your faculty into an effective coalition on your library’s behalf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Library Campaigns that Make a Difference</strong></td>
<td>Looking for some inspiration on how to create a campaign for your library that inspires your community’s support? Check out some of the case studies in this online issue of Emerging Leaders 2013!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**The Power Guide for Successful Advocacy:** A toolkit on how to organize, advocate, and get your voice heard for your libraries

**Engaging Your Community to Advocate for Library Services for Children:** the Association for Library Service to Children provides useful resources on effective coalition-building in the school community and how to get your voice heard
2013 Minnesota Library Legislative Day: A Case Study

**General Objective**

The primary objective of this legislative day in Minnesota was to secure funding for several library programs across the state. Certain programs were already included in the Governor’s proposed budget and advocates were simply asking legislators to approve these programs. In other cases, advocates were asking for specific amounts of funding for specific programs to be included in the appropriations process.

**Action: Legislative Day**

The Minnesota Library Association (MLA) and the Minnesota Educational Media Organization (MEMO) co-hosted their 2013 Minnesota Library Legislative Day on March 6th. They scheduled 35 different meetings with state representatives’ offices for 24 advocates.

On the day of the event, MLA/MEMO provided an hour and a half of orientation, including a briefing for advocates on key library policy issues. Advocates were then given two folders with materials for the day—one for them to use, and one for them to leave behind with constituents—and sent out to begin their meetings (please see the attachment below for a list of suggested items to include in each folder). Each meeting had at least one leader, who either had past experience advocating or was more familiar with the policy issues at hand.

On the day of the event, MLA/MEMO provided advocates with two folders. One contained information for the advocates themselves, and one contained information for the legislators that advocates were meant to leave after their meetings.

During their meetings, advocates discussed key issues with legislators. The materials they presented were clear, informative, and visually pleasing. They also ensured that they made each request in such a way that it illustrated how libraries and their programs were directly benefiting Minnesota constituents. This is a vital element of effective advocacy. Representatives are concerned with the betterment of their constituencies, and therefore if they can be shown that specific programs will directly impact the people they represent in a positive way, they are far more likely to take measures to effect the requested change.

**What to Take Away**

1. **Be concise and keep content relevant** – Legislators are always busy. They skim documents and have little time for meetings. In both your meetings and the papers you leave behind, get right to the point and don’t get sidetracked.
2. **Use specifics** – Any survey data or information highlighting specific programs is much more effective than talking in generals. Requests should also be specific—know how much money you’re asking for and what programs you’re looking to advance.
3. **Link requests to constituents** – Legislators are concerned with their constituents. Demonstrating how constituents use libraries and their programs to make their lives better and easier will make legislators more likely to remember and act upon your request.
4. **Be confident and passionate!** – Legislators need to see that you care about the issues you’re advocating for. Confidence comes from a combination of pre-meeting preparation, experience in your field, and passion for what you’re asking for.
What MLA/MEMO included in folders for legislators

- **One-Page (Double Sided) Overview of MLA/MEMO**: MLA/MEMO created a double-sided cover page. The front was headed by a simple picture of an open book and the simple, eye-catching slogan: *Minnesota Libraries. So much more than you expect.* This was followed by three brief informative paragraphs that explained how school, public, and academic libraries were all critical for community development and education in Minnesota. In a column on the side of the page, they also included highly relevant statistics from a recent University of Minnesota survey conducted on the role of libraries in Minnesota communities.

On the back, they outlined in bullet points of the key policy issues and programs for which they were advocating, explaining how these directly correspond to the interests of the State of Minnesota and its constituents.

  - **Why include this?**: The front of this page provides concise, informative information on the types of libraries in Minnesota, what they offer, and direct statistics showing that the programs they offer matter to Minnesota constituents. The back provides a summary of their legislative agenda for legislators to refer to after the meeting, as well as a web link if the legislator or staffer is interested in finding more information.

- **A Few Visually Appealing and Informative One-Pagers**: MLA/MEMO also provided legislators with four pieces of paper that further highlighted the importance of library programs to Minnesotans and their extensive nature. The first described MiniTex, an information and resource sharing program of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and the University of Minnesota Libraries. This page provides more data from the survey conducted by the University of Minnesota on the role of libraries in communities, but it does so in a way that is easy to read, and it includes relevant color pictures.

The second page is a colorful flow-chart detailing the ways in which specific types of libraries (school, public, and academic) directly impact the lives of Minnesotans of all ages. Again, it is easy to follow and concise, yet informative.

The last two sheets of paper were colorful maps of Minnesota. One map depicted the Minnesota Regional Public Library Systems, while the other showed the Minnesota Multitype Library Cooperation Systems. These maps demonstrate that the Minnesota library network extends throughout the state and is accessible to all Minnesotans. Both maps also include contact information for each library or cooperation system, as well as links where legislators can find more information following the meeting.

  - **Why include this?**: A few informative one-pagers are helpful for legislators and their staff to refer to after meetings to remind them of information shared during the meetings. These documents should be polished, easy to read/skim, and informative. Only a few should be included—provide legislators with information, but don’t overwhelm them—and all the information should be directly related to the issues and requests.

- **Assortment of Pamphlets, Flyers, Bookmarks, and Business Cards**: MLA/MEMO included a handful of polished, informative resources on various programs and events hosted by Minnesota libraries. These included information on a state-wide homework help program for students, job search assistance, small business advancement resources, the Minnesota Book Awards, and the Electronic Library for Minnesota. These pamphlets specifically highlight all of the resources libraries provide to assist Minnesotans in their day-to-day lives.

  - **Why include this?**: These provide quick resources that legislators can glance through, and they illustrate the depth of resources libraries can provide to help constituents. They show that the libraries are constantly active and looking for ways to make a true difference in people’s lives.
The Lake Agassiz Regional Library (LARL) in Minnesota created a useful brochure entitled ‘Quick Facts’ that provided patrons with some basic but important information on the LARL system and how they could take advantage of it. Throughout the pamphlet, they used concise bullet points and bolded important words and phrases in these bullets to make this brochure informative and easy to skim.

On the front cover of the brochure, they include a map of the region LARL serves with points on the map for branch locations and what LARL calls LINK Sites (areas within already-established community spaces, such as community centers or retirement homes, where small collections of popular items are housed). This makes it easy for patrons to find the sites closest to them. They also include the LARL mission below this map to outline the objective of LARL.

The panels inside the brochure are split into different categories. The first, titled ‘General Information,’ provides information on how LARL fits into the greater Minnesota library network, its funding and governing structures, the logistics of materials loans among LARL libraries, and the counties and cities it serves. It gives patrons a brief overview of what the system is and how it works in a way that is easy to read.

Another panel, labeled ‘LARL Statistics,’ provides numbers to demonstrate the regional library’s value to the community and its successes. This includes facts such as the number of patrons it serves and the number of square miles its services cover, the size of its staff, the number of reference questions its staff answered in the last year, and the number of resources available through the system. Hard statistics like these indicate the library system’s success in accomplishing its mission of linking people and communities to enriching resources that foster lifelong learning. They are helpful both to patrons who want to know more about what their library offers, as well as to legislators who may be interested in the breadth and past success of the system when considering funding requests.

A third panel outlines some LARL projects. These range from a self-service checkout process and new non-Internet computers for children with educational games to wireless availability in all branches and LINK Sites and progress on their Strategic Plan. This panel also specifically explains LINK Sites, a unique and integral aspect of LARL, in more detail. This information shows that LARL is actively working on improving the services and programs they offer by outlining specific projects that are underway. It also highlights the LINK Sites project, which is an innovative way of making high-demand materials more readily available to patrons in the community.

The fourth panel, titled ‘Closing Thoughts,’ summarizes the value LARL brings to Minnesota communities through its programs and services in the community. By explaining how community members can directly benefit from educational programming, various formats of library materials, and research assistance, LARL is making patrons aware of just how important libraries are in their community and is thereby advocating for the system’s continued presence and growth within the community.

The final panel is an area where patrons can write branch-specific information such as the address, contact information, hours, and unique features of the branch nearest them. Including this panel makes it more likely that patrons will keep this brochure and continue to refer to it. Thus, not only will they always have their branch-specific information easily on hand, but they will have also keep the information on what their branch provides and why it’s important.
Case Study: Massachusetts Library Association
Hosting a Legislative Breakfast

**OBJECTIVE**
A legislative breakfast provides an effective forum in which librarians can advocate for legislative priorities. The Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) suggests hosting a breakfast prior to a library legislative day. This is effective as it allows legislators to travel to local libraries and see first-hand the services and programs these libraries provide to benefit constituents. A subsequent legislative lobby day is then likely to be more effective because legislators have first-hand experience with the library and will have already listened to the requests in a lighter, more informal setting.

**PROCESS**

*Planning the Breakfast (August-October)*: In order to begin planning legislative breakfasts, the MLA has formed a standing committee to oversee and coordinate the process by assisting the host libraries. The standing committee typically begins meeting sometime between August and October (about four to six months in advance of the planned breakfast). In Massachusetts, the state legislature begins discussions on the following year’s budget in March or April. MLA members, therefore, generally work to plan their breakfasts for some time between the end of January and early March. A breakfast followed by a legislative lobby day around this time of the year ensures library requests are in the minds of legislators early in the process. The MLA has also found 8-9am on Friday mornings the best time to host a legislative breakfast. In Massachusetts, legislators tend to be in their districts on Fridays, and 8-9am does not generally interfere with the rest of their schedule for the day.

*Preparing for the Breakfast (November-January)*: After a date and time has been set, the MLA standing committee meets with the host librarians to begin planning the event itself. They set a budget, decide on a menu, and discuss logistics, as well as potential speakers and programming. In conjunction, they send out fundraising letters to trustees and friends of the library to raise funds for the event. Once the programming and speakers have been decided upon and confirmed, the host librarians and the standing committee begin to draft formal invitations and a list of invitees for the event, with the intent to send them out one or two months prior to the event.

*Hosting the Breakfast (January-March)*: The MLA has found that it is important to keep track of the people that attend so the host library can get a sense of who is interested in their library’s issues and who they may be able to reach out to for future events. Therefore, host libraries generally create a sign-in sheet for the event that includes a space for the participant to leave a phone number and email address. It is also important to make sure host librarians are familiar with the legislative issues and requests, have clear talking points, and are comfortable discussing them with legislators.

*After the Breakfast*: After hosting a successful legislative breakfast, the MLA standing committee asks the host librarians and administrators to send thank-you notes to the legislators that attended the event. The standing committee also sends thank-you notes to the host librarians. These serve to demonstrate that the library and the MLA are grateful for the time and energy it took librarians to put the breakfast together and for the willingness of legislators to attend and listen to the MLA’s requests. Finally, it is important to continue to maintain contact between legislators, event attendees, and the host library to make sure the legislative objective of the breakfast is realized.

Check out some more information including sample invitations, programs, thank you notes, and fundraising letters here:  http://www.masslib.org/ToolkitBreakfasts.

---

**THE BREAKFAST MENU**
MLA Legislative Breakfast menus can vary widely. They can consist of a continental breakfast, a full sit-down meal, or something in between. The extent of the menu generally depends on the library’s budget for the event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE BREAKFAST MENU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLA Legislative Breakfast menus can vary widely. They can consist of a continental breakfast, a full sit-down meal, or something in between. The extent of the menu generally depends on the library’s budget for the event.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FOLLOWING UP WITH LEGISLATORS, DONORS, AND SPEAKERS**
Receiving a confirmation of attendance from the legislator’s office is important. It is therefore necessary to follow up on invitations when you haven’t heard anything back from the office. It is also important to follow up on fundraising requests to ensure you meet your budget goals for the event and to stay in touch with your speakers to ensure they are prepared for the event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOLLOWING UP WITH LEGISLATORS, DONORS, AND SPEAKERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receiving a confirmation of attendance from the legislator’s office is important. It is therefore necessary to follow up on invitations when you haven’t heard anything back from the office. It is also important to follow up on fundraising requests to ensure you meet your budget goals for the event and to stay in touch with your speakers to ensure they are prepared for the event.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONTINUE THE ACTION!**
Legislative breakfasts have proven a wonderful way to get the MLA’s requests heard. However, legislative requests are likely to be far more successful if breakfasts are accompanied by subsequent days of action.

Many libraries choose to also participate in a legislative lobby day, where they send advocates to the legislators’ offices to meet with staff and directly discuss their requests.

Some also choose to hold follow-up breakfasts September, around the time the state budget is actually in formation, to ensure that their requests have not been forgotten about in the month after budget discussions began.