



A Dozen Ways to Use the Giant “Smartest Card” During Library Card Sign Up Month

Create a giant media photo opportunity, give big thanks to a library supporter or super-size your Library Card Sign-up events using the oversized “Smartest Card.” The card is the perfect addition to your Library Card Sign-up Month activities—in and outside of the library. Download the free template for the card at www.ala.org/librarycardsignup and get ready for a great month.

Below are some ideas on how to use the Smartest Card @ your library:

1. Present the card to a local celebrity (author, sports figure, business person) at an open house during the month of September.
2. Personally congratulate kids on getting their first library card by taking a picture of them holding the big library card next to their librarians. Display on an easel with the phrase “September is Library Card Sign Up Month. Do you have the smartest card?”. Also be sure to send the photo to your local newspaper.
3. Ask your mayor, governor, Congressional representative or other elected official to proclaim September as National Library Card Sign-up Month & present him/her with the card at the proclamation. Invite media to attend the event.
4. Invite well-known people in your community to submit a 2-3 sentence statement about the value of their library card. Ask them to pose with a photo of the big library card and design a series of ads. Ask the local newspaper to donate ad space throughout the month of September.
5. Encourage rival schools to have a month-long contest to see how many new library card applicants each school can sign up. Rotate the giant card on a weekly basis between the two schools depending on the number of students who sign-up for a library card. Ask a local business or community service group to provide prizes to the school that “wins.”
6. Provide classrooms with 100% card sign-up with an oversized library card that the entire class can sign and display to showcase their efforts.

7. Sponsor a “Why the library card is the smartest card” contest. Have students write about what their library card means to them. Present the winners of the contest with prizes and get their photos taken with the oversized library card. Invite media to cover event or take photos and distribute to media.
8. Team up with school libraries in your community. Display the card in school libraries during back-to-school open houses with representatives from the library there ready with library card applications. This is a good way to target kids and their parents who attend the open houses.
9. Host a “First Library Card” event for babies. Invite new parents and their babies into the library for a new parent workshop with representatives from a local hospital or pediatrician’s office. Issue library cards to all of the babies, and take a photo of the parents and babies with the giant card. Send the photos to local newspapers and to parents.
10. Display the card outside of your library. Bring the card to any event in which the library participates—parades, town fairs, lectures, presentations at the YMCA, Rotary, PTA meetings etc.
11. Ask local businesses to offer 5-10% discounts on a customer’s bill for the month of September if the customer shows a library card. Provide local businesses with an oversized card to show that they are a sponsor of the program and encourage them to display the card in their front windows.
12. Have local businesses that cater to kids display the oversized card and randomly ask kids if they have a library card. For those that do, provide the store-owner with prizes to give away, like the Smartest Card bookmarks. For those that don’t, ask the store owners to give out a library card application.