

# fact sheet #21

## for Friends and Foundations

### STATE FRIENDS

Statewide groups of library Friends are essential in creating a strong voice for libraries across the state. In 1978, a White House conference on libraries resulted in proclamations calling for Friends at the national and at the state levels. These proclamations resulted in the formation of Friends of Libraries U.S.A. (now United for Libraries) and new state Friends groups across the country. This Fact Sheet will help you to start a state Friends group or revitalize the one you have.

#### Starting a New State Friends Group

1. A Friend or librarian can start the process. If a Friend makes the first move, that Friend must be ready to call librarians around the state for information about local Friends. If a librarian makes the first move, that librarian must be willing to call fellow librarians to get information about local Friends group. Telephone and email contact is absolutely essential.
2. When the organizing meetings begin, the leaders of three groups must be involved: local Friends around the state, the state library association, and the state library.
3. Bring together an initial group to discuss the possibility of creating state Friends. This core group should be chosen carefully. It is this devoted, committed group that will bring a state Friends into being. The first meeting may have to be conducted remotely. In fact, after you have a statewide Friends group, you may discover that business can be conducted via listserv, or via conference call or video conference.
4. Plan a larger meeting to coincide with a statewide library event. It could be an annual meeting of the state library association or a conference sponsored by the state library. Plan a memorable event in a lovely venue to take place after the meeting.
5. Send out invitations for the statewide meeting to all local Friends, to library advocates who are not associated with Friends, to the membership of the state library association, to the staff of the state library, to all local public librarians, to school and academic librarians, and to special libraries.
6. Prepare a precise agenda for this initial meeting. At the end of the meeting, make a formal proclamation calling for the formation of a statewide Friends of Libraries group. As a part of the proclamation, state the role and the importance of statewide Friends.
7. Have the paperwork in place to apply for incorporation and tax-exempt status for the group you will be forming. When the first meeting is held after the proclamation, be ready to hit the ground running. (See the United for Libraries Toolkit “Incorporating and Tax Exempting Procedures for Friends.”)
8. Hold the first meeting called by the proclamation and elect officers. Begin the discussion about the group’s goals and how the group will have to organized to accomplish them.

*continued*

## **Revitalizing Your State Friends Group**

1. Bring together the remnants of your state Friends. This should be a small, select group containing only those who have been strong, working Friends in the past. Ideally this group includes both Friends and librarians. Plan the meeting to coincide with a social event to entice everyone to show up and to increase the energy of the group.
2. Before the initial event is over, get a commitment from the members of this core group to help with revitalization. Be sure to collect names, email addresses, and phone numbers of individuals and groups who express interest. Set a date for the second meeting, perhaps via conference call.
3. Plan the second meeting and set the agenda. Communicate with the core group at all stages of planning. Use telephone and email. Be certain that representatives from the essential library groups are now a part of the process: local Friends, state library association, and the state library. Call the members of this larger group individually to invite them to the second meeting. Let those you call know the substance of the agenda. Follow this phone invitation with a written invitation and written agenda.
4. The agenda should include discussion of former Friends projects, and discuss which to maintain and which to delete. Identify problem areas for your group and discuss possibilities for change. Some ideas for change might include holding the majority of your meetings via conference call or other digital networking platform, reaching out to new members for task force assignments, and brainstorming new projects and programs that might appeal to a new group of people. At the end of the second meeting elect officers.
5. The key to successful revitalization is the roster of officers. This executive committee must believe in the role of Friends in the maintenance of excellent libraries and be willing to focus on Friends until revitalization has begun.
6. Everyone involved in the process should search for committed library supporters, no matter where they are in the state. Contact public librarians, academic librarians, and special librarians to ask for the names of dedicated Friends.
7. Hold an executive meeting of the new officers as soon as possible to bring together all the information gathered during the process.
8. Plan the first revitalized annual meeting. Hold this meeting in conjunction with the state library association. Send the invitations to everyone on the membership list of the lapsed state Friends. Plan a social event such as a luncheon or reception as a part of this first statewide meeting. Send out a press release to all the state newspapers. Place information on the webpages of the state library association and the state library.
9. To join the electronic discussion group for state Friends of the Library, visit [www.ala.org/united/friends/states/electronic-discussion-group](http://www.ala.org/united/friends/states/electronic-discussion-group).

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