



Illinois Library Association

A large, stylized rainbow graphic composed of concentric, semi-circular bands in a gradient of colors from red to yellow to green. The rainbow is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page.

**READY SET
ADVOCATE**

Library Advocacy Tool Kit



Developing Your Advocacy Plan

An advocacy plan is defined as a plan that is:

1. A detailed proposal for doing or achieving something
2. An intention or decision about what we are going to do

The good news? You already have a plan: to be a more effective advocate. That's actually the most important step.

Your Library Advocacy Plan

A large library with many branches and staff may need to have a more complicated plan, but for most libraries a good advocacy plan does not need to be a multi-volume tome. In fact, the simpler it is, the more likely it is to be successful. The easiest way is to select areas of advocacy focus for the coming year, and for each area, identify one or two goals or activities. Here are some examples:



Focus Area	Goal or Activity
Building relationships	Reach out and meet with the heads of two new community groups this fall
Your library message	Develop a basic message about the library that can be shared in written communication, visits with community groups, and staff interactions with patrons
Library stories	Collect a new library story every week
Communicate the message	Share a new library story every week on social media
Developing relationships	Invite three new community groups to visit the library Invite your state rep to hold public office hours at your library



Developing Your Advocacy Plan

Having these goals and activities in writing will help keep you focused, and they can easily be shared and discussed with others. Everyone involved with the library—all your stakeholders—should know what the library advocacy goals are and how they can help move them forward.

Probably the simplest and most useful form of plan is a simple annual timeline and/or monthly checklist that outlines what activities need to occur, when they occur, and who does them.

In developing your plan, some of the things you'll need to think about are:

1. Set your goals and key issues: What are you advocating for (your message)?
2. Who is the audience you are advocating to?
3. Develop your talking points
4. Communicate your message: newsletters, social media, emailing, press releases, presentations
5. Who is going to deliver the message?
6. Build your network: Who are your key advocates to help you with your messaging?

Advocacy planning should be incorporated into the library's overall planning, and remember that a plan should always be fluid; it should be examined regularly and updated as circumstances change or as you evaluate the impact of specific activities.

Your Personal Advocacy Plan

Within the broader context of your library plan, each of us should think about our personal advocacy goals. No matter what role we play in the library, advocacy is a great opportunity to display our leadership skills while advancing the goals of the library and community. And for the many libraries that are one-person operations, your library plan is your personal advocacy plan.

Is my goal to learn how to share the library message, or to find those library stories that demonstrate the library's impact on people's lives? Is my goal to help build better relationships with community groups I am part of? Is my goal to learn more about how I can be part of the advocacy team?

How do you see yourself as a more effective advocate?

