



Illinois Library Association

A large, stylized rainbow graphic composed of concentric, semi-circular bands in a gradient of colors: red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. The bands are separated by white spaces, creating a vibrant, multi-layered effect.

READY SET ADVOCATE

Library Advocacy Tool Kit



The Public Library Trustee as an Advocate

The following was taken from Urban Libraries Council; Leadership Brief, *Leadership Roles for Library Trustees*.

The trustee's advocacy role is broad and overarching. It includes raising the library's profile among decision makers and community stakeholders, showing how the library supports community priorities, supporting specific library and program needs and keeping the library and its work visible in the community. Successful advocacy grows out of broad knowledge about the library mission, goals and programs combined with a deep passion for the library as an essential anchor institution and a champion of equity, inclusion and democracy.

Examples of ways trustees carry out their advocacy role include:

1. Communicating with confidence and passion about the important role the library plays in the community in diverse settings rather than only in library-specific meetings
2. Becoming familiar with the range of library programs and services to be able to answer questions and speak with authority
3. Interpreting the library for local leaders to demonstrate how libraries support leadership and community priorities
4. Interacting with local leadership individually and as a group to strengthen connections and address specific issues
5. Wearing a library hat at all times to become known as someone who is connected to, knowledgeable about, and committed to supporting the library
6. Building public awareness of the library particularly among audiences who tend to fall out of the library's natural reach
7. Participating in meetings where library programs and priorities are being discussed and bringing the library into key conversations
8. Writing letters and communicating with decision makers in support of specific library priorities and needs in partnership with the library CEO to ensure consistent messages
9. Embracing advocacy for the library as an ongoing, front-line trustee responsibility