

Illinois Public Library Standards: Advocacy & Community Engagement

Advocacy and community engagement are vital for libraries to ensure continued support, relevance and sustainability. Advocacy helps secure necessary funding and public support by demonstrating the library's value to policymakers and stakeholders. Community engagement fosters deeper connections and ensures that programs and services address the evolving needs of the people it serves. By actively engaging with diverse populations, libraries promote the message that they provide learning opportunities, services, and programs that are free, inclusive and welcoming to all. Together, advocacy and community engagement ensure that libraries remain essential resources.

STANDARD	CORE	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
1	The director and board are knowledgeable of state-wide advocacy training tools.	Training in advocacy skills is offered to staff, the board, and/or other stakeholders, such as Friends of the Library and Foundation groups.	Library staff, board and community stakeholders have the skills and knowledge to be proactive advocates on behalf of the library and community.
2	The director and staff actively network with community organizations, businesses and institutions (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis).	The director and staff present at school, business and community meetings on library initiatives, programs, collections and services.	The director and staff invite community leaders, organizations, partners and stakeholders to the library for tours, coffees, and/or information meetings to showcase what the library offers.
3	The director and staff collect and analyze data to measure how community members use the library.	Using data collected and analyzed, the director and staff communicate the library's impact and advocate for programs, personnel, and spaces.	The library annually highlights data, stories and accomplishments from the year and disseminates it to external and internal stakeholders.

4	The director and board know their local, state and federal elected officials.	The library includes local, state and federal elected officials on mailing lists and invites them to events.	The library partners with elected officials to co-host events and informational sessions to promote civic engagement.
5	The director and board and/or staff are informed of Illinois Library Association (ILA) and American Library Association (ALA) legislative priorities and promote those priorities when needed.	The director, board and/or staff actively participate in the local, state, and national legislative campaigns and events organized by ILA and ALA.	The director, board and/or staff serve on forums, committees, and boards of ILA and ALA.
6	The director, staff and board are aware of current community projects and economic planning and seek opportunities for library engagement.	The director, staff and board use their community engagement to inform the library's strategic plan.	The library is a sought after partner in working with and developing community initiatives.