



# **Putting Your Advocacy Skills to Work Today**

## **Action Plan Workbook**

Use this workbook to build your advocacy message, plan and talking points.

### **Successful Advocacy Needs a Plan**

- ✓ Set your goals and key issues, what are you advocating for?
- ✓ Who is the audience you are advocating to?
- ✓ Develop your message and talking points
- ✓ Use stories that make your message come alive
- ✓ Communicate your message: newsletters, socials media, press releases, presentations
- ✓ Build your network: who are your key advocates to help you with your messaging?

# READY!

## 1.What are you advocating for? goals and key issues

List three Actions, Causes or Issues that your Library is facing right now:  
(public awareness of the value of the library, a referendum, a new building, need for more funding, more staff, an increase in hours open, censorship challenges)

1.

2.

3.

Why are these important, and which one is the most important?

# SET!

## 2. Build Your Message

What is most important thing you want others to know? What is your key message, one that you will repeat over and over again. This message should be something you can say in conversation, in interviews or presentations to groups. It should be easy to say and remember, no more than 15 words.

### Ask yourself:

What is unique and special about your library?

How is the library making a difference in your community?

What are your goals and plans?

How will those goals/plans make a difference in your library?

List the barriers to handling the problem right now with current staff/funding

List how the Library can handle the issue/problem right now:

Who, in the community, can help you overcome the barriers?

List some facts or statistics that illustrate issue/problem:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### **3. Use real stories that make your message come alive**

**It is the real story of a real person that will make the point most effectively.**

**Ask yourself:**

Give me a real person

Give me the problem

Give me a library “intervention”

Give me a happy ending

Give me one fact

Give me a “phrase that pays”

**How can I find those stories? There are dozens or hundreds every day.**

**Make it a Practice to:**

Have a place for library patrons to write their library experience

Learn how to capture stories yourself

Have someone take photos (with permission)

Post stories/photos on social media

# ADVOCATE!

## 4. Communicate your message

### Build Your Talking Points

What stories or examples support your key message? You will need at least three talking points, stories or examples that support your key message. Using descriptive local examples is an effective way to get the attention of decision makers. These may change based on the needs and interest of your audience.

**What 3 talking points, facts, stories or examples can support your library issues and goals?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### Build your network:

Who will communicate the message? Who are your key advocates to help you with your messaging?

Who INSIDE your Library can advocate for your issues and goals?

Who OUTSIDE your Library can advocate for your issues and goals?

## **Your Community and You**

1. Who are the community leaders?
2. Who are the movers and shakers?
3. What are the key businesses?
4. Are you at the community table? If so, how?
5. Can you describe your community in 5 sentences?
6. Are you a community leader?
7. Are you engaged in your community outside of your Library?
8. Are you serving in leadership roles in your community?
9. Are you attending meetings, events, coffees in your community?
10. Do you invite other organizations and businesses to come into your Library to promote themselves?
11. Are you serving as a “vehicle” for your community?

## **Local and State Elected Officials**

Our elected legislators are great men and women, get to know them and tell them what you are doing. If you don't, who will?

### **Things You Can Do Right Now:**

- o Make sure they are on your mailing lists/email lists/social media
- o Invite them for a tour and take photos to post.
- o Include them in your focus groups
- o Register them for Library Cards
- o Involve them in your programs
- o Give them space to hold a coffee, information table or town hall meeting
- o Attend community forums and City board meetings
- o Join your local service organizations, chamber of commerce, business networking groups
- o Be a problem solver in your community and host discussions with local officials and other leaders.

## **Remember, you are not alone!**

**American Library Association**

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/>

**Illinois Library Association**

[www.ila.org](http://www.ila.org)

**Illinois State Library**

[www.ilsos.gov](http://www.ilsos.gov)

**RAILS**

[www.railslibraries.info](http://www.railslibraries.info)

**IHLS**

[www.Illinoisheartland.org](http://www.Illinoisheartland.org)

