



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



Using Data—and Stories—to Show Your Library's Impact and Value

Data has always been—and will continue to be—important in advocating for your library. The fact that your library circulates a million items each year, or that thousands of children attend library story hours is as important as ever. In most communities, the library is the most widely used public service, and provides great monetary value for the tax support it receives. Most people have no idea just how much the library is used.

But the combination of data and the real stories you have now collected can be an incredibly powerful advocacy tool. Whether talking with community members, community leaders, or state and local officials, stories based on real people's experiences provide the emotional connection that numbers alone cannot.

Knowing that 2,000 children participated in the library summer reading program is valuable information, but knowing that James, a five-year-old with reading problems ended up becoming an avid reader over the course of the summer and is now “doing just great in school” this fall makes a much more dramatic point: “Kids who read succeed.” Knowing that Jane's homebound elderly mother finds her library books a “life saver” during months of isolation brings dry circulation statistics to life much more than any chart or graph.

Stories can be used in presentations to local community groups, to illustrate talking points, and to support local, state, and even federal initiatives. The story you share can have as great an impact on a Senator in Washington, D.C., as it does on a neighbor next door.

With the messages you have developed—and the stories you can now tell—you are ready to put your advocacy plan into action.

