



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



Why Be a Library Advocate?

Library advocates speak out for libraries because:

- They value the mission of publicly funded libraries to serve everyone who lives, visits, or works in their communities
- If those who benefit from library services don't actively support such services who will?
- Communities that hire, elect, and support library workers, trustees, and facilities do so because they value libraries. Supporters in such communities expect that the people they hire and elect will be their voice in fighting for the best library service possible.
- Studies show that if a community has a library, it is a successful community. We also know that this could change with decreased funding and increased technology needs. It is the job of a library advocate to keep the importance of libraries at the forefront of all interested parties' minds.
- Libraries are the safeguard to intellectual freedom. We know that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and this right includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media.
- The message that libraries are unique and valuable must be communicated loud and clear. We know that libraries today are more than just books. We are social places for meetings, we are human services for those who have needs for survival, we are the first door to learning for young children, and we are the place for internet use and training for lifelong learning. We are, and do, so much and we need to shout it out loud in our communities.
- Many people, even some elected officials, have a stereotyped image of libraries based on interactions that took place generations ago. We must update the image of libraries, librarians, and all library staff for the citizenry of the twenty-first century. We have the responsibility to promote our professionalism and worth to everyone.
- Legislators routinely deal with issues like funding cuts, filters, censorship, legislative mandates, and so much more that impact library services. We need to provide a quick response to emerging issues so that their votes can be informed by professional, informed advice.
- We know that in today's world there is intense competition for dollars and we must continue to fight for all library funding.
- Libraries are for everyone, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital and/or familial status, mental and/or physical impairment and/or disability, military status, economic status, political affiliation, and other human distinguishing characteristics.