



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, positioned in the upper left quadrant of the slide.

**READY SET  
ADVOCATE**

**Advocacy “Mini Boot-camp”**

and Introducing ILA’s New  
Advocacy Training Package

# Introductions

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# READY, SET, ADVOCATE!

- Part of the Illinois Library Association's sustained program of advocacy training for library staff, trustees, friends, and other supporters.
- A three-module program that provides the skills you need to become a successful advocate for your library.
- Package includes toolkit and three training modules.
- Each online module corresponds to a section in the ILA Library Advocacy Tool Kit, which contains additional tip sheets and links for libraries of all types and all kinds of library supporters.
- Based on the best practices of other successful training programs such as the ALA "Advocacy Boot Camp," other state association programs, and best practices from other groups.



# What's Going on Today

- Introducing the ILA new and upcoming **Ready, Set, Advocate** package
- Provide a step-by-step training on how to become a powerful and effective advocate for your public, academic, school or special library





**READY**



# What Is Advocacy?

## Advocacy IS:

- Action
- Engagement
- Supporting a cause
- Defining specific issues
- A positive message
- Leading

## Advocacy is NOT:

- Selling
- Marketing
- Begging
- Whining
- Letting someone else do it





# The Advocacy Continuum

## Laying the Groundwork

- Community engagement
- Building relationships
- Impact measures
- Personal stories

## Turning Support into Action

- Building support networks
- Getting the message out
- Resources for advocates
- Advocacy training

## Advocating for Specific Goals

- Local initiatives
- State funding
- Federal legislation
- International initiatives

## Responding to Opportunities and Threats

- Budget threats
- Legislative challenges
- Censorship challenges



# Advocacy Is Important NOW More Than Ever

Libraries of all types need to clearly communicate their critical role in the economy, in education, and in the quality of individual and community life.

- Library advocates need to remind leaders that libraries are vital.
- Showcase how libraries provided virtual, curbside, and limited grab-and-go services to serve all patrons throughout the pandemic.
- Explain that libraries are “first responders” for those who need internet access, help with accessing government programs, and educational materials.
- Explain that as schools continue to navigate hybrid learning models, libraries will be vital in narrowing the information literacy divide and provide equitable access.
- Showcase how libraries are crucial for local businesses trying to recover.





# Why are YOU an Important Advocate?

- **YOU** are the person who knows what your community needs.
- **YOU** know what your library can do right now.
- Both **YOU** and your library exist within a larger community or organization such as your city, faith community, school, or business community
- **YOU** know how your library can fit within that larger community or organization, right now.





# Know Your Library

- Does your library have a mission statement?
- Are your library's strategic goals up to date? Do you know what they are?
- Are you subscribed to local, state and national library system, state, and association e-lists? (ALA, ILA, RAILS, IHLS, ISL)
- Do you know when your library board meets? Are there board packets you can read to learn what the library is doing?
- Do you know where to get the basic data that explains who is using your library?
- Do you know what services your library offers?



# Know Your Community

- Who are the community leaders/movers and shakers?
- Subscribe to e-lists that your community has available: city, school, park district, chamber, etc.
- Does the community have service organizations?
- What are the key businesses?
- Do you know the school curriculum?
- Can you describe your community?
- What are the key community issues?





# Know How You Are Going to Advocate

- Are you engaged in your community outside of your library?
- Are you serving in leadership roles in your community?
- Are you attending meetings, events, coffees in your community?
- Do you invite other organizations and businesses to come into your library to promote themselves?
- Are you at the community “table”?
- Is your library serving as a “vehicle” for your community?





**SET**



# Your Library Message: The “Big Picture”

- Libraries transform lives
- Libraries transform communities
- Libraries are essential to lifelong learning
- Libraries are a smart investment—and an incredible value for your tax dollar
- Libraries are first responders—for those needing information and assistance
- Libraries are vital to a robust recovery
- Libraries are “bigger than a building”



# Your Local Library Message

- What is unique and special about your library?
- What are your local library's issues?
- How is the library making a difference in your community?
- How has the library served your community during the pandemic?
- How will your library help drive the recovery?
- What are your goals and plans?
- Are you looking to add services, hours?
- Are you looking to expand or renovate?
- How will these plans make a difference in your community?

# **Data is important**

**but data—and stories—are even more powerful!**





# Using Real Stories to Show Your Library's Impact – and Value

## Remember...

The best advocates for change are those people who can tell a story that moves people to action...and you are the one who knows those stories best.





# Building Your Library Story

Build your story—ask yourself:

- Give me the problem
- Give me a library intervention
- Give me a happy ending
- Give me one fact
- Give me a real person
- Give me a “phrase that pays”





# Capturing those stories

- Have a place for library patrons to write, text or email their library experience
- Learn how to capture stories yourself
- Encourage people to share photos (with permission of course!)
- Post stories and photos on social media
- Listen to your users





# Remember...

The best advocates for change are those people who can tell a story that moves people to action...and you are the one who knows those stories best.





# Successful Advocacy Needs a Plan

- 1** Set your goals and key issues:  
What are you advocating for?
- 2** Who is the audience you are advocating to?
- 3** Develop your talking points
- 4** Communicate your message:  
newsletters, social media, emailing,  
press releases, presentations
- 5** Who is going to deliver  
the message?
- 6** Build your network: Who are  
your key advocates to help  
you with your messaging?



**ADVOCATE**



# Putting Your Advocacy Plan into Action

- Promote your library—sharing your message
- Network—build your advocacy network
- Be social
- Make the library a destination
- Know your elected officials
- Get involved in the library association and system





# Library Advocacy Is for ALL Types of Libraries

Each individual library—whether public, academic, school, or special— serves a unique community.







# Building Your Advocacy Network: Library Staff and Volunteers

Include directors, managers, frontline, full-time and part-time staff, and volunteers. Effective staff and volunteer advocates:

- Understand their library and their community
- Know the mission of the library and its goals
- Know what services the library is offering
- Know what is happening in the library and in other departments
- Get engaged when they are offered advocacy training opportunities
- Understand and can communicate the library's issues and message
- Understand the difference between advocacy and lobbying



# Frontline Staff: Key Advocates!

They know their patrons.

They know their communities.

## Remember...

The best advocates for change are those people who can tell a story that moves people to action...and you as a frontline staff member are the one who knows those stories best.





# Building Your Advocacy Network: Remember... You Are Not Alone!

Let your community members,  
library trustees, and library friends  
take action with you!



## And don't forget...

- Teachers
- Faculty
- Parent Groups
- Students
- Service Organizations
- Community Leaders
- Chamber of Commerce Members
- Who Else???



# Building Your Advocacy Network: Community

- Defining your “community:” Each individual library—whether public, academic, school, or special—serves a unique community
- Share your library’s message and stories
  - In person
  - Through mailings and newsletters
  - Through local media
  - Through social media
  - At the front desk
- Engage your community
  - Open forums
  - Invite them to coffees to talk about library programs, ideas, and issues
- Include library message and updates at all virtual and in person programs



# Building Your Advocacy Network: Library Trustees

Library trustees are powerful advocates for libraries. Their voice, presence, and actions can raise the library's profile among decision makers and community stakeholders.

Effective library trustees:

- Are confident and know the mission and vision of the library they are serving
- Work with library leadership to understand key library issues and concerns
- Know what their library is doing and planning
- Attend community and library functions
- Are strong voices for the library, all the time
- Embrace library advocacy as a key duty in their trustee role



# Do Your Elected Officials Know You? Do They Know Your Library?

- Know who they are and what they are doing
- Don't assume they have a library card and are library users
- Share your library message and stories with them
- Send them mailings and invite them to sign up for the library's e-news
- Attend the ILA Library Legislative Meet-ups
- Invite them to your library for a tour or to host an informational coffee
- Visit their office and get to know their key staff members and invite them to hold visiting hours for their constituents at your library
- Attend their events
- Get together with your neighboring libraries and host a Legislative Meet-up



# Advocacy Resources: Advocacy Is for Everyone Involved with the Library!

- **Library trustees**  
**Advocacy for Trustees**  
<https://www.ala.org/united/advocacy>
- **Library directors**  
**Eight Steps to Getting Started**  
[https://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org/advocacy/files/content/advleg/advocacyuniversity/frontline\\_advocacy/INTRO.Eightstepstogettingstarted.pdf](https://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org/advocacy/files/content/advleg/advocacyuniversity/frontline_advocacy/INTRO.Eightstepstogettingstarted.pdf)
- **Frontline library staff**  
**23 Advocacy Tips for Frontline Employees**  
[https://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org/advocacy/files/content/advleg/advocacyuniversity/frontline\\_advocacy/frontline\\_public/23things.pdf](https://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org/advocacy/files/content/advleg/advocacyuniversity/frontline_advocacy/frontline_public/23things.pdf)
- **Library Friends groups**  
**United for Libraries Resources**  
<https://www.ala.org/united/friends>
- **Library supporters**  
**I Love Libraries**  
<http://www.ilovelibraries.org/get-involved>



# Advocacy Resources: Advocacy Is for All Types of Libraries!

- **Public libraries**

- **Public library advocacy**

- <https://www.ala.org/pla/advocacy>

- **My Public Library Is...**

- <https://www.mylibraryis.org/get-started/public>

- **College and university libraries**

- **Academic library advocacy**

- <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/frontline-advocacy-academic-libraries>

- **My Academic Library Is...**

- <https://www.mylibraryis.org/get-started/academic>

- **School libraries**

- **School library advocacy**

- <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/frontline-advocacy-school-libraries-toolkit>

- **My School Library is...**

- <https://www.mylibraryis.org/get-started/school>

- **Special libraries**

- **Special library advocacy**

- <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/frontline-advocacy-corporate-government-and-other-libraries>

- **My Special Library Is...**

- <https://www.mylibraryis.org/get-started/special>





# Remember... You Are Not Alone!

- Illinois Library Association,  
**[www.ila.org/advocacy](http://www.ila.org/advocacy)**
- American Library Association,  
**[www.ala.org/advocacy](http://www.ala.org/advocacy)**
- Reaching Across Illinois Library System,  
**[www.railslibraries.info](http://www.railslibraries.info)**
- Illinois Heartland Library System,  
**[www.illinoisheartland.org](http://www.illinoisheartland.org)**
- Illinois State Library,  
**[www.cyberdriveillinois.com/  
departments/library/](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/)**
- Illinois Association of School  
Library Educators (AISLE),  
**[www.aisled.org](http://www.aisled.org)**
- Consortium of Academic and  
Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI),  
**[www.carli.illinois.edu](http://www.carli.illinois.edu)**





# So How Can You Get Involved?

- Make a plan.
- Get some stories.
- Do a presentation for your library – or do one for another library!
- ILA's goal is to provide every Illinois library supporter with the techniques and skills they need to be powerful library advocates.
- Be interested in getting more involved in the Illinois Library Association at [www.ila.org](http://www.ila.org)



**Thank you!**

Questions? Answers?

