

Ready, Set, Advocate: Frontline Remix!

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A quick question...

**What comes to mind when you think of
library advocacy?**

Another quick question...

Who at your library does advocacy work?

Why are YOU an important advocate?

- **You** know your community and what it needs
- **You** know what your library is doing to serve your community
- **You** have connections to people in your community
- **You** know how your library fits into your community

YOU are the best
storytellers in the
library.

(you also have some of the best stories)

Ready, Set, Advocate & The Advocacy Tool Kit

- RSA is a three-part program to train library advocates, including staff, administrators, trustees, and community supporters
- Recorded versions of the RSA training modules are available at the ILA web site: <https://www.ila.org/advocacy/ready-set-advocate>
- The toolkit provides further information and support

Part 1: Ready

What is advocacy?

- Taking action
- Engagement
- Supporting a cause
- Defining specific issues or concerns
- Sharing a positive message
- Leading

Advocacy is not...

- Selling
- Marketing
- Pressuring
- Begging

The Four Stages of Advocacy

Stage 1: Laying the Groundwork

- Community engagement
- Relationship building
- Measuring our impact
- Sharing personal stories

Stage 2: Turning Support into Action

- Build support networks with decision-makers and library users
- Get the message out about the library
- Find and share resources with advocates
- Attend advocacy training

Stage 3: Advocate for Specific Goals

- Be aware of local initiatives and community concerns
- Reach out to elected officials to ask for support
- Tell your library's story
- Stay informed about local, state, national, and international initiatives

Stage 4: Respond to Opportunities and Threats

- Maintain awareness of potential threats to funding/library budget
- Read the ILA Alert to learn about upcoming legislation related to libraries
- Know how the pieces fit together at all levels—local, state, and national

Why do we need library advocacy?

- To remind our community that libraries are vital
- To share the ways that we meet community needs
- To demonstrate how we narrow the information literacy divide and provide equitable access to all

Know Your Library

- Mission statement
 - Strategic plan & goals
 - Current awareness
 - Library board information
 - User data
 - Library services
-

Community Questions

- Who are the community leaders?
- How do you keep track of what's happening in your area?
- What are your service organizations?
- What are the anchor businesses in your area?
- What's the school curriculum?
- How would you describe your community?
- What issues and events are key in your community?

Community Engagement

- What groups are you active in?
- Do you or your family participate in sports/rec leagues?
- What local shops do you frequent?
- Do you have activities that you participate in regularly?

- **You** know your community's needs
- **You** know how your library can meet those needs
- **You** have connections within your community
- **You** know how the library impacts people's lives—and that's a story worth telling!

Part 2: Set

Formal Messaging

clear, concise,
and consistent

Informal Messaging

authentic,
enthusiastic,
motivating

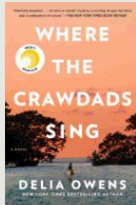
My personal issue: the cost of e-content

Digital Services: Popular & Expensive

In general, ebooks and e-audiobooks (still) cost

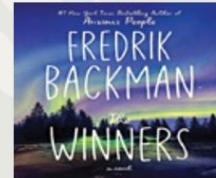
three times

more for libraries than for consumers
(and it's getting worse)



Ebook cost for consumers: \$9.99 (was 14.99 in July 2019) (Amazon)
Ebook cost for libraries: \$55.00 (Overdrive, 24-month metered access)
Print book cost for libraries: \$14.69 hardcover, \$10.80 paperback (Ingram)

Eaudio cost for consumers: \$33.07 (Audible)
Eaudio cost for libraries: **\$129.99** (Overdrive, 24-month metered access)
CD audio cost for libraries: \$64.99 (Midwest Tape)



Motivator for action: Excitement!



Motivator for action: Annoyance!



Focusing on 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

Incorporating Your Local Message

- What is unique and special about your library?
- What are your local library's issues?
- How does the library make a difference in your community?
- How does the library make a difference in people's lives?

Data + Stories =
Magic!

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.

Build Your Library Story

- Start with a problem
- Follow with a library intervention
- End on a positive note
- Include at least one fact or statistic
- Use a real person (or a combination of real people)
- Wrap up with a “phrase that pays”

Example: Milner Library at Illinois State University



Example: Champaign Public Library Teen Lounge




Collecting Library Stories

- Have a place for library patrons to write, text, or e-mail their library experience
- Learn to capture stories yourself—and don't be afraid to ask!
- Ask people to share photos and use them (with permission)
- Post stories and photos on social media

An example: Champaign Public Library's [Library Love video series](#)

Share your stories!

 My Library Is...

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Sharing Showcase



How Are Libraries Telling Their Stories?

How has your library improved someone's life? Is there a plan for getting the message out about your library? Do you have stories boiled down to a good elevator speech or set of talking points? What media are you using to tell your library's story - bookmarks, posters, and other printables; online videos; press releases; social media?

This **Sharing Showcase** is a place for sharing examples and templates of all these storytelling resources. Please add items and information that have been successful for your library, and get ideas from others.

- [Add Marketing Plans](#)
- [Add Style Guides](#)
- [Add Library Displays](#)
- [Add Talking Points](#)
- [Add Printable Media](#)
- [Add Videos](#)
- [Add Press Releases](#)
- [Add Social Media Posts](#)

Browse the Showcase

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RAILS: [My Library Is...](#)



**DID YOU KNOW THAT WE VISIT
IN-HOME DAYCARES?**



**"THANKS FOR THE GREAT STORIES
AND SONGS! WE MADE THE
BRACELETS ALREADY!"
-JANE**



My daughters and sons love the activities available at this library! We have moved (5x) so many times since my eldest was born and having a library with friendly consistent staff really makes the difference in feeling welcomed. We enjoy having 2 days to choose from for kids' circle time with a craft and toys to play with and meet and interact with new friends!



Develop Your Advocacy Plan

- Set your goals and key issues
- Consider your audience
- Develop your talking points
- Communicate your message
- Reach out at all levels
- Build your network

Your Personal Advocacy Plan

- Determine your key issues/initiatives
- Set your goals
- Just do it!

Part 3: Advocate!

Effective Advocates...

- Understand their library and their community
- Know the mission and goals of the library
- Know what services the library offers
- Understand what is happening throughout the library
- Are able to effectively communicate the library's message
- Get engaged when they are offered advocacy training opportunities

Advocacy Action Tips

- Promote Your Library
- Be Social
- Make the Library a Destination
- Know Your Elected Officials
- Get Involved

Frontline Advocacy

- Mission/goals/services/events
- Know your library
- Stay informed
- Speak up
- Spread the word

Build Your Network

- Library Board trustees
- Friends of the Library groups
- Teachers
- Parents
- School organizations (e.g., PTA)
- Students
- Service organizations
- Community leaders
- Business leaders

Spread the Word

- Is your messaging targeted to a specific group or is it general?
- Use a variety of channels for the widest reach
- Engage your community in unique ways

Building Relationships with Elected Officials

- Know your library board, your city council, and your state and federal legislators. What are their priorities?
- Work with your library director to organize outreach to your elected officials to share the library's story
- Invite your elected officials to visit the library for a tour
- Make your voice heard as a constituent

Get Involved!

- Give a presentation about advocacy to library staff
- Give a presentation to a local organization to share information about the library and how it benefits your community
- Join a committee or forum of the Illinois Library Association
- Help ILA reach the goal of providing every Illinois library support with the techniques and skills they need to be powerful library advocates

Next Steps

- Visit ILA's [Ready, Set, Advocate](#) web page for additional resources
- Develop your personal advocacy plan
- Spread the word about advocacy to your co-workers
- Collect library success stories
- Build your network
- Get to know your elected officials

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.

Questions?