

HOSTING A VIRTUAL LEGISLATIVE EVENT

The basic principles of advocacy still apply.

Impactful, sustainable advocacy is built on strong relationships, unified messaging, and a compelling library story.



While a single, large gathering at the state capitol may not be possible, legislators are making decisions that will impact libraries and the communities we serve, and library advocates need to make their voices heard. Here are some steps you can take to make sure that your message rises above the virtual chatter.

PREPARE

- Determine the scope of your event and convene a working group that can support it.
- Plan a training for all advocates, with breakout groups for advocates participating in different forms of engagement.
- Prepare scripts and runs-of-show for virtual meetings; rehearse with advocates.
- Develop a toolkit with branding, talking points, and templates for each form of engagement.

FOCUS

- Prioritize meetings with key committee members, leadership, and legislative champions.
- Activate other channels to amplify messages and reach a broader group of legislators.
- Align your ask to pandemic response and recovery, and describe how libraries are providing critical resources and services for their communities.

ENGAGE

- Identify the most strategic forms of engagement; include at least one social media channel.
- Make your interactions memorable using compelling stories from advocates and patrons that demonstrate libraries' impact on the legislator's constituents.
- Integrate recorded stories or short, virtual site visits into meetings or social media posts.
- Provide opportunities for new advocates to learn and participate.

CONTINUE

- Create a one-page "leave behind" that affirms the value proposition of your ask. Include key advocate contact information.
- Send a thank-you note and follow up with any promised information to legislators and their staff.
- Collect advocate notes on visits and responses to engagements.
- Debrief on virtual events and uses successes to mobilize ongoing engagement with elected officials.