



The Advocacy Action Plan Workbook

ALA Advocacy Institute

American Library Association
50 E. Huron St.
Chicago, IL 60611

Preface



I am pleased to present this action-planning guide, developed in collaboration with the ALA Advocacy Institute Task Force of the ALA Public Awareness Committee.

I firmly believe that grassroots advocacy is the key to the success of our libraries. In an increasingly complex world, with strong competition for funding, the library community *must* stand up and speak out for America's libraries.

Our voices can be made stronger if we stand up and speak out in a unified voice. Critical to the Advocacy Institute is the idea that library staff, trustees and Friends must work together to make our voices heard. Once we convince community leaders and to citizens at large about the importance and necessity of libraries, they can begin to speak out for libraries at the state and national levels.

Therefore, thank you for your interest in library advocacy. Together, we can do it. ¡Si, si puede!

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol A. Brey-Casiano". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol A. Brey-Casiano
Chair, Advocacy Institute Task Force
2004–2005 ALA President

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Permission is granted to libraries, other groups and individuals to reproduce this toolkit for nonprofit use.

Much of the content and concept for this workbook comes from *Making Our Voices Heard: Citizens Speak Out for Libraries* published by Friends of Libraries U.S.A., 2004. For more information on this publication, please call 1-800-936-5872.

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American Library Association
50 E. Huron St.
Chicago, IL 60611
Telephone: 1-800-545-2433, ext. 2431
Fax: (312) 280-5274
E-mail: advocacy@ala.org

Before You Begin



This guide is designed to help you create an action plan for library advocacy. It will help you focus on what you need to do, how you intend to get it done, and how to ensure that the timing is maximized for the best results. The types of activities and task forces listed below are only suggestions. Depending on the type of campaign you design and what you believe will work best in your community, you might create other types of task forces with other types of activities.

Do not worry that you'll need more volunteers than you think you can get. First of all, the Coordinating Committee will include those already involved—the library administration, the library trustees, and the Friends' executive committee. The task forces will require recruitment but not all the task forces need a lot of volunteers. In some cases just two or three “worker bees” will be plenty. On the other hand, the more people you engage to be active in this campaign, the better your chances of success!

If you are presenting this program to a group, plan for a half-day or longer meeting to accommodate the full presentation and discussion. Consider reviewing each file in advance to estimate the time needed to present to your Friends group.



2. Determine your key messages.

What is the most important thing you want others to know? That is your key message, one that you will repeat over and over again. This message should be something you can say in conversation, in interviews or presentations to groups. It should be easy to say and remember—no more than 15 words. It may be simple as:

“Millions of people pass through the library each year, but without adequate support, these resources may not be there when you need them.”

Or, *“There is no such thing as good education without good libraries.”*

Your key message should be used consistently in news releases, letters-to-the editor and other communications. It may also be distilled into a pithy campaign slogan.

In developing your message, think first about your audience. What do you want them to think? Feel? Do? Feelings are what motivate people to act. That feeling may be compassion, concern, anger or joy. One of your goals in delivering your message should be to spark a feeling, whether it’s pride, frustration or outrage.

ACTION STEP #4: What are your key messages?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



3. Develop your talking points.

What stories or examples support your key message? You will need at three talking points, stories or examples that support your key message. Using descriptive, local examples is an effective way to get the attention of decision-makers. These may change based on the needs and interests of your audience. Examples include the following:

"A 2002 ALA study confirmed that when the economy is down, library use is up. Unfortunately, at the same time, tight city and state budgets are closing library doors and reducing access when it's needed most."

"Libraries and librarians provide free and equal access to information for people of all ages and backgrounds—in schools, on college and university campuses and in communities large and small."

"Libraries return substantially more benefits to its users for each \$1 of annual local taxes."

Tips for Telling an Effective Story*

Effective stories:

- ✓ are simple, brief and personal;
- ✓ have a beginning, middle and end;
- ✓ have a "punch line";
- ✓ do not use real names unless you have been given permission;
- ✓ have a message;
- ✓ are appropriate;
- ✓ are specific;
- ✓ are personal;
- ✓ show the library/librarian clearly solving a problem or filling a need; and
- ✓ illustrate to a potential funder what giving you the funds will mean in real-life terms.

*Tips for Telling an Effective Story used courtesy of Patricia Glass Schuman.

Section 3: Team Building



ACTION STEP #5: Name Your Network

Library Friends

Faculty Members

Community or Campus Leaders

Trustees

Library Staff

Other



ACTION STEP #6: Staying Connected

Write down three things you'll do when you get home to strengthen relationships with the members of your network named above.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



Tactics for Success: Creating a Coordinating Committee

The purpose of the Coordinating Committee is to ensure that your advocacy efforts become a reality. The Coordinating Committee can keep track of the many facets of your project, assign deadlines to specific tasks, or delegate specific tasks to others. This group can create an overarching timeline for your entire project and help ensure that your deadlines are met. When creating a Coordinating Committee, think about these questions:

- Who will serve as Chair?
- Who might serve on the committee?
- Who will contact and recruit members?
- When should the committee begin meeting?

In projects large in scope or long-term, you may want to create task forces or subcommittees to help complete specific tasks. If this is the case, ask yourself these questions in planning your subcommittees:

- Will you need other task forces to help achieve your goal?
- How many volunteers per task force are necessary?
- Who might be recruited?
- When should their work begin and be completed?



Types of Task Forces

There are many types of task forces, covering specific projects. Some of these are listed here:

Oversight Task Force: Essentially, the Coordinating Committee becomes the Oversight Task Force to keep the campaign going smoothly. This task force develops talking points for the campaign (with the help of library administration), sets up task forces, and calls regular meetings of the task force chairs to ensure steady progress.

Publications and Design Task Force: Creates a design for the campaign so all materials developed will have a consistent look and be readily identified with your campaign. The task force will also develop the materials you'll need for distribution and will coordinate distribution. *For downloadable artwork, visit www.ala.org/@yourlibrary*

Media Task Force: will use local media to get the word out about the campaign. To ensure a consistent message, use the talking points already developed. When developing print advertisements, use the same "look" that the Publications and Design Task Force is using. *For more information see ALA Communications Handbook, www.ala.org/ala/pio/availablepiomat/online_comm_handbook.pdf*

Presentations Task Force: will determine the various venues in your town/city that will give campaign volunteers an opportunity to share information about the campaign. This task force will also recruit and schedule a group of volunteers who are willing to go out and speak to identified civic organizations while using the talking points developed by the Media Task Force.

Finance Task Force: works with the Oversight Task Force and other task force chairs to determine what kind of funding will be needed to accomplish the campaign goals and to identify possible funding resources. Keeps track of the campaign budget.

Evaluation Task Force: works with the Oversight Task Force to monitor the campaign as it moves along and makes recommendations for modifications. This task force will also ensure that acknowledgements are sent out to volunteers, including those who provide professional services, financing or in-kind support. This group will schedule the final meeting following the outcome of the campaign to celebrate or to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign, especially if the campaign needs to be continued for another year.

Section 4: Strategies to Get the Message Out



Consider the following when deciding which strategies to use:

WHO is your audience?

WHAT is the best way to convey the information to the target audience—radio, TV, direct mail, other? What kind of image do you want to project? Will it be an effective part of your total communication effort?

WHEN is the deadline? Will your message be distributed in time to be effective?

HOW much will it cost? Is this the most effective use of available funds?

WHY is this the best strategy for this audience?

Strategies Checklist

How will you deliver your message? What public relations tools (brochures, fact sheets, etc.) will you need to help build your case?

ACTION STEP #7: Strategies

Postcard Campaigns

Work with radio station to develop Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Develop ad(s) for local paper and determine best time to run the ad(s)

Mobilize a “Letter to the Editor Campaign”

Find local television and radio stations that will interview campaign volunteers on talk shows

Write an op-ed piece

Other ways (List here) _____

Other ways (List here) _____

Section 5: Putting It All Together



What are your goals?

Who is your audience?

What are your key messages?

Who comprises your team?

What committees and task forces will have to be created?

What strategies will you implement?

Create a timeline.

Activity	Volunteers Involved	Start date	End Date

Notes



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Advocacy
Now!
@your library