

Advocacy Background Series Article #6: Preparing for the Advocacy Training Session at the 2017 Conference Getting Started & Action Planning

Getting started with advocacy seems a daunting task, and there's no denying that you will face struggles and challenges in getting any advocacy work out of your head and into action. Luckily, there are numerous helpful resources available to get you started; resources made by fellow library advocates and activists who are facing or have faced similar issues affecting libraries around the world. This article will provide some basic information as to how to start your advocacy, and provide an example of an action planning document that can be used as a template for your own initiatives regardless of the aims or goals.

(This article is heavily based on the ALA Advocacy Action Plan Workbook.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/advleg/advocacyuniversity/advclearinghouse/Advocacy%20Action%20Plan%20-%20revised%2001-09.pdf>)

Step One: Set Your Goals

Prior to taking any action and making significant investments in your advocacy project, it is important to have clear, understandable, and relatable goals. The first step of your advocacy should be determining what those goals are, and writing them down as to be clear for all involved. Begin by consider listing at least 3 key issues that are facing your library. Some popular key issues include:

- Building a new library or addition
- Maintaining or increasing funding
- Fundraising campaigns
- Legislation matters

Once you have listed key issues, you should then infer some tangible and actionable goals to suit your issues individually or as a whole. After listing any goals, you should then determine from the list what could be considered the most important goal. (Consider using the S.M.A.R.T. approach to goal-planning).

Step Two: Develop Your Message

Once you have outlined the objectives and purpose of your advocacy, the next step is to craft a campaign to raise awareness. Begin by considering the audience of your message: what groups, individuals, and other key stakeholders are important to your cause? Why are the issues important? Consider what the **most important thing you want others to know** is - this is your *key message*. Your key message should be something simple and easily memorized. Consider the following examples from the ALA Advocacy Workbook:

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

“There is no such thing as a good education without libraries.”

Use your key message in news releases, letters-to-the-editor, and any other communications. Consider a shortened version as campaign slogan. From your key message, you should infer additional talking points to support that message. Use examples, evidence, or stories to support it.

Step Three: Get the Message Out

Simply put, this stage involves using whatever means necessary and available to get your key message and other details out to the community. Here's a simple list from the ALA Advocacy Workbook:

- Library newsletters
- Websites & social media
- Letters to the editor, Op-Ed pieces
- Radio & Television
- Presentations to civic organizations & clubs
- Promotional materials (bookmarks, mail flyers, posters, signs, bookbags)

In deciding on strategies, always consider the following:

- WHO is your audience?
- WHAT is the best way to convey the information to the target audience?
- WHEN is the deadline?
- HOW much will it cost?
- WHY is this the best strategy for this audience?

Action Plan Template

There are additional steps and resources available in the ALA Advocacy Workbook that aren't covered here. For more information please follow the link to the PDF document here:

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/advleg/advocacyuniversity/advclearinghouse/Advocacy%20Action%20Plan%20-%20revised%2001-09.pdf>

Here is a blank Action Plan Template (4 pgs.) that should help you get your advocacy started. The template contains additional information not covered in this article but detailed further in the ALA Advocacy Workbook.

*Lukas Miller
April 22 2017*

ADVOCACY ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE		
GOALS & KEY ISSUES		
Key Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	What library issues are important? What brings you here today?
Goals (by priority)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 	Set SMART goals, and prioritize. Have a most important goal
MESSAGE		
Key audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	What groups or individuals are supportive? Who do you want on your side?
Key Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	What is the most important thing you want people to know?
Talking Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	What are stories or examples to support your key message? Use descriptive, relatable examples.
COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES		
WHO? WHAT? WHEN? HOW?		WHO is your audience? WHAT is the best way to convey the information? WHEN is the deadline? HOW much will it cost? WHY is this the best strategy for this audience?

WHY?		
Strategies Checklist	<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletters <input type="checkbox"/> Websites <input type="checkbox"/> Social media <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional materials <input type="checkbox"/> Letters to the editor/Op-Ed pieces <input type="checkbox"/> Radio <input type="checkbox"/> Television <input type="checkbox"/> Print news <input type="checkbox"/> Public presentations <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	What avenues will you use in getting your message out?
TEAM BUILDING		
Name Your Network	<p>Library Friends:</p> <p>Trustees:</p> <p>Community Leaders:</p> <p>Library Staff/Colleagues:</p> <p>Other:</p>	
<p>Staying Connected</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>Write down 3 things you'll do when you get home to strengthen relationships with members of your network noted above</p>		

	3.	
Create a Coordinating Committee	<p>Who will serve as chair?</p> <p>Who might serve on this committee?</p> <p>Who will contact and recruit members?</p> <p>When should the committee begin meeting?</p>	

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 YOUR IMPLEMENT?	
WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE?	

