



Idaho
Commission
for Libraries

Best Practices Section 5: Marketing and Advocacy

Toolkit

Last modified: 20200308

In this toolkit you will find value-added information that includes definitions, examples, and links to useful resources to help you respond to the questions in the corresponding Best Practices Checklist.

Core Level

- 5.1. My library's staff regularly promotes the library's collection, programs, and services using a variety of approaches to publicity. The American Library Association sponsors national events and provides resources on promoting libraries at <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/cmo>
- 5.2. My library's staff invites elected officials and other stakeholders to library events and programs. Relationship building is key to proactive advocacy. Inviting elected officials and stakeholders to events provides an opportunity to show how the library through services, programs, and staff benefits the community. Elected officials and stakeholders may not understand what a contemporary library offers to the community. See the BoardSource publication Stand for Your Mission for talking points <https://standforyourmission.org/>
- 5.3. My library's staff and board members advocate for improved library services at the local level.
 - 5.3.1. United for Libraries, the ALA division for trustees, friends, foundations, and advocates, offers a handy guide to library advocacy: <http://www.ala.org/united/powerguide>.
 - 5.3.2. Great stories are a proven method of telling a library's story. See <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2018/10/23/advocacy-bootcamp-power-of-narrative/> for examples.
 - 5.3.3. The American Library Association's Frontline Advocacy Toolkit shares five ideas to assist staff to become advocates for the library: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/frontline-advocacy-toolkit#how>.
- 5.4. My library's staff members receive information and training about the impact of marketing on the library's image and community relations. See PLA for information on marketing strategies <http://www.ala.org/pla/resources/tools/public-relations-marketing/marketing-strategies>.
- 5.5. My library maintains an up-to-date web presence (website and/or social media) with promotional messages, program and resource news, and easy access to print and digital collections. See <https://libraries.idaho.gov/continuing-education/library-communications/social-media/>
- 5.6. My library's staff responds to community feedback in accordance with the guidelines established in the library's Communications Policy.
- 5.7. My library responds to requests for public records in accordance with Idaho's Public Records Act: chapter 1, title 74, Idaho Code: <https://legislature.idaho.gov/statutesrules/idstat/Title74/T74CH1/>.

- 5.7.1. A public library must either grant or deny a person's request to examine or copy public records within three (3) working days of the date of the receipt of the request for examination or copying.
 - 5.7.2. If it is determined by the library's staff that a longer period of time is needed to locate or retrieve the public records, the library must so notify in writing the person requesting to examine or copy the records and must provide the public records to the person no later than ten (10) working days following the person's request.
 - 5.7.3. If the library fails to respond, the request shall be deemed to be denied within ten (10) working days following the request.
 - 5.7.4. The notice of denial or partial denial must state that the attorney for the library has reviewed the request or must state that the library has had an opportunity to consult with an attorney regarding the request for examination or copying of a record and has chosen not to do so.
 - 5.7.5. See <https://legislature.idaho.gov/statutesrules/idstat/Title74/T74CH1/> for full details.
- 5.8. My library partners with community organizations.
- 5.8.1. Other organizations in the community may have aspects of their missions that are similar to the library's and a relationship can be mutually beneficial.
 - 5.8.2. Partnerships can be project-based or ongoing.
 - 5.8.3. Partners may be found in the local school, historical foundation, United Way, 4-H, senior center, workforce development, and scouting, to name just a few possibilities.
 - 5.8.4. Service organizations, *e.g.*, Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions Clubs are often willing to partner with other organizations on special projects.
 - 5.8.5. *The Power of Possibility: Exploring Greater Impact through Strategic Partnerships* cites the following handbook from Community Wealth Partners for boards for considering a strategic alliance of partnership: <http://communitywealth.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Partnership-Strategy-Field-Guide.pdf>.
 - 5.8.6. See Model Guidelines for Nonprofits Evaluating Proposed Relationships with Other Organizations for more information <http://tobaccopolicycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/177.pdf>
- 5.9. My library's communications and marketing materials are made available in languages other than English when appropriate. It is advisable to use caution when relying on

machine translations, such as Google Translate. These translations are often incorrect, confusing, and sometimes even offensive.

Enhanced Level

- 5.10. My library has a professional, recognizable brand and logo.
- 5.11. My library's staff participates in statewide campaigns that seek to raise awareness of libraries.
- 5.12. My library maintains a positive relationship between the library and the Friends of the Library and/or library foundation which is fostered by a mutually agreed upon Memorandum of Understanding/MOU. Positive relationships can be fostered by an awareness of the role and responsibilities of each organization. Appointing a liaison from the library board can help to keep the lines of communication open. See the United for Libraries sample *Memorandum of Understanding Between Friends and Libraries*:
<http://www.ala.org/united/altaff/files/friends/orgtools/sample-operating-agreement.doc>
- 5.13. My library's staff cultivates relationships with elected officials at all levels of government. Cultivating relationships helps government officials understand the importance of library services and the positive effects the library can have on the community. Ideally, local library staff are the go-to people when elected officials have library or information-related questions. According to *The Citizens Handbook to Influencing Elected Officials*, three steps to building long-term relationships with legislators are:
- 5.13.1. Learn about your lawmaker. See <https://justfacts.votesmart.org/> for information about elected officials including education, profession, personal life, voting records, and issues statements.
- 5.13.2. Establish yourself as a helpful expert.
- 5.13.3. Communicate frequently. According to a survey cited in *The Citizen's Handbook*, legislators consider the following methods of communication the most effective: 1) Constituent visits, 2) Representation for constituents, 3) Individualized letters, 4) Individualized e-mails, 5) Lobbyist visits, 6) Individualized faxes, 7) Phone calls.
- 5.13.4. Fitch, Bradford. *Citizen's Handbook to Influencing Elected Officials: Citizen Advocacy in State Legislatures and Congress*. Alexandria, Virginia: TheCapitol.Net, 2010.
<https://www.thecapitol.net/Publications/CitizenAdvocacy.html>.
- 5.14. My library's individual staff members are embedded in community boards, groups, and organizations.
- 5.14.1. An embedded librarian is a librarian focused "on the needs of one or more specific groups, building relationships with these groups, developing a deep understanding

of their work, and providing information services that are highly customized and targeted to their greatest needs.” Schumaker, D. (2009). Who Let the Librarians Out? Embedded librarianship and the library manager.” *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 48(3), 239-242, 257.

- 5.14.2. Examples of embedding include: 1) Providing reference support at local community organizations such as those that support small businesses, veterans, immigrants, or the homeless; 2) Supporting municipal planning and local government with research; 3) Providing library services at community events; 4) Participating on state and local advisory boards, councils, and committees; 5) The collaborative staffing approach: librarians and local liaisons working together with the community to draw on the expertise of each.
- 5.15. My library’s staff and board members advocate at the state level for improved library services. BoardSource’s *Stand for Your Mission* has identified four different ways to engage in advocacy: 1) Inform and activate your network; 2) research impact of policy decisions; 3) Educate policy makers and the public; 4) Join forces to create a louder voice. See <https://standforyourmission.org/resources/> for more information.

Stretch Level

- 5.16. My library has written cooperative agreements with its community partners. Written agreements clarify the roles of each community partner, thereby lessening the potential for miscommunications. An operating agreement, sometimes called a memorandum of understanding (MOU), between the Friends and the library is useful when defining the role of the Friends, how the library director and staff will work with the Friends, and what type of support the library will provide the Friends. United for Libraries has created an example for libraries to edit for their specific needs: <http://www.ala.org/altaff/files/friends/orgtools/sample-operating-agreement.doc>. See also <http://anschutzfamilyfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/MOU-toolkit-MAIN.pdf> for in depth consideration of Memoranda of Understanding.
- 5.17. My library has a person on staff who is responsible for marketing and community engagement.
- 5.18. My library’s staff creates an active, ongoing communications and/or marketing plan. The Idaho Commission for Libraries provides communications resources at <https://libraries.idaho.gov/continuing-education/library-communications>. The Social Media Toolkit, in particular, is a valuable resource with lots of examples and ideas. See <https://libraries.idaho.gov/continuing-education/library-communications/social-media/>.
- 5.19. My library’s staff participates in national campaigns that seek to raise awareness of libraries. ALA’s current national campaign is Libraries Transform:

<http://www.ilovelibraries.org/librariestransform/>. Campaign information, materials, and a toolkit may be accessed from the website at no cost. Registration is required.

- 5.20. My library's staff and board members advocate at the federal level for improved library services. The local library may be directly or indirectly affected by federal legislation and library boards and staff will want to be aware of pending legislation.
 - 5.20.1. Monitoring the American Library Association's page on advocacy, <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/>, is a good way to stay informed about issues at the federal level.
 - 5.20.2. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS): ALA works to preserve and enhance the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which distributes funds through state grants and the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) per a national formula with a state match. Many of the grants available to libraries through the Idaho Commission for Libraries are supported by funding from LSTA. For more information, see <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/library-funding>.
 - 5.20.3. E-rate: The Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) Schools and Libraries Program makes telecommunications and information services more affordable for schools and libraries. With funding from the Universal Service Fund, E-rate provides discounts for telecommunications, Internet access, and internal connections to eligible schools and libraries. "Universal service" refers to the principle that all people in the United States should have access to advanced communications services. At one time, that meant having access to telephone services. As the Internet has become central to the way we live and work, this principle now includes access to Internet services. For more information, see <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/erate>.
 - 5.20.4. Net Neutrality: Network Neutrality is the principle that Internet service providers (ISPs) should treat all data equally and should not discriminate or give preference to any data regardless of its source, content, or destination. Net neutrality is essential for libraries to meet our public mission and is an expression of our professional values. America's libraries collect, create, and disseminate essential information to the public over the Internet. The open Internet is a vital platform for free speech and intellectual expression. Libraries also ensure that users can access the Internet and create and distribute their own digital content and applications. Without strong net neutrality protections in place, there is nothing to stop ISPs from blocking or throttling legal Internet traffic or setting up commercial arrangements where certain traffic is prioritized over other traffic. In practice, this will make it harder for people to have equitable access to the Internet and for libraries to serve their patrons. For more information, see <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/net-neutrality>.
 - 5.20.5. Affordable, high-capacity broadband Internet access is critical to the mission and operation of every modern library. Broadband in library facilities is used by patrons

to access digital collections, e-government services and legal information, distance learning, telemedicine, and many other essential community services. Libraries not only offer public access to the Internet, devices, and digital collections, but library workers themselves are continuously developing new digital content, e-learning services, and other tools that depend on unfettered access to the Internet. Library staff also help users to access the Internet as a way to create and distribute their own digital content. For more information, see <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/broadband>.