

# Library Advocacy Activities

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Are you looking for more ideas to advocate for the library with municipal government candidates, and encourage your users to do the same? Here are some suggestions:

**1 Invite all of the candidates to come to the library for a tour.** Invite them for a time when the library is typically busy, so they appreciate how much it is used. On the tour, focus on the non-book items and services, such as programs, patrons using computers, or other activities. Try to tell candidates stories instead of just giving them numbers. This is a good time to ask them about how they plan to support the library if they are elected.

**2 Ask the chair of the Library Board to write a letter to each candidate.** Include versions of the questions that appear in the “Talk to your candidates about the library” section of this advocacy kit.

**3 Print and hand out the “Talk to your candidates about the library” handout from this kit, and use the social media graphics!** Encourage your users to ask candidates about their support for the public library. The advocacy kit includes some suggested questions to get them started.

**4 Encourage children in the library to draw a picture of what they like about the library and why it is important to them.** Display these pictures in the library with a header that says “The ---- Public Library is an important part of this community”

*AND/OR*, Encourage seniors who use the library to complete this sentence on a 3x5 card. “The library is important to me

because.....". Display these in the library in a way that is similar to the children's pictures.

Ask if they mind having their images shared on social media. Tag the posts with #voice4libraries to help spread your stories and to help connect our larger community together.

- 5** **If there is no election forum planned for your community, see if the library can host one.** (See the separate tip sheet in this advocacy toolkit for suggestions!)
  
- 6** **Reach out to local newsletters or newspapers, and share your questions and your handout.** Invite readers to see any of the displays in the library.
  
- 7** **Encourage your patrons to spread the word online by following your library on social media and sharing their posts and pictures.** They can tweet @ your library, tag your library on Facebook, post a library photo on Instagram, or write a Google or Yelp review. Encourage your patrons to share personal stories on your library's social media about the essential role that the library is playing in your community. Use the hashtag #voice4libraries.
  
- 8** **Ask your Friends of the Library group to help!** Although direct fundraising by Friends of the Libraries groups can be very effective and appreciated, if they can help advocate with municipal Councils, that can be even more effective when it results in budget increases! Friends of the Library groups can also have a much wider impact, beyond direct fundraising, by advocating for the library in the community. Many libraries across the country owe their new additions or new buildings to effective advocacy campaigns waged by their Friends to ensure community support.

9 Work with schools to set up a mini-election so patrons and the students can learn how our elections work.

10 Seek out stories about the library and its impacts and share them with your local newspaper or news outlet.