



www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/advocacy.html • LOCAL LIBRARY AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

INTRODUCE THE CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORTERS

As a courtesy, present the awareness campaign to your board of directors/trustees, as well as key library supporters and community leaders.

If possible, set up a meeting, but—at the very least—send a letter or an e-mail. Provide some background and marketing and educational materials. Be sure to inform them about what to expect, and encourage them to get involved and spread the word to other influential members of the community through business and social contacts, as well as any online social networks.

Clarify how the campaign can help your library or library system educate the community about public library funding for the long term. Use the Advocacy in Action resources as a starting point.

If you don't have a distribution list (mail and/or e-mail) already, this is the time to start. Include your board and key supporters, and don't forget other influential members of the community (e.g., local celebrities, government officials and local business owners). Continue to build this list in the library and at events throughout the campaign.

Get Outside Advice

Your local awareness campaign can be a springboard to finding and building new partnerships and collaborations, and making many new one-on-one connections. As you reach out to community members from local schools, businesses and organizations to be part of your campaign (to provide a testimonial, be featured in ads or perhaps poster, speak on your behalf, distribute materials, etc.), consider also inviting a handful to join your campaign planning committee. The appropriate people can provide meaningful insight and expertise, and the experience will set the stage for working together in the future.

In considering who to invite to be part of your committee, try to approach people you haven't worked with in the past. Of course marketing and communications knowledge is helpful, but make an effort to include a diverse group of people with distinct skill sets and networks.

Be sure to make the process simple for your committee members—from beginning to end. Set clear expectations, provide ample background information and access to resources, keep them informed, plan meetings well in advance and create organized agendas for each meeting to ensure you get the most out of your time together.

More tips:

- Thank them for their help with the campaign when appropriate—especially when you talk to the media. (Be sure to get permission to make their name and association with the library public!)
- Make requests sparingly outside of attending meetings and other expectations you've set.
- Invite them to bigger events and include them on all team communication regarding your campaign.
- Actively solicit their feedback.

Activate Volunteers

As you start thinking about plans for engaging your community, remember to solicit and include volunteers. It is important that all volunteers understand your campaign, are well-versed in the key messages, and are consistently updated about events and activities. Be sure to invite them to planning meetings, add them to your campaign distribution lists, and engage them in various ways. Your volunteers, much like your staff, are library advocates. Give them the tools to build awareness in your community. One idea is to empower an individual on your team to work as a liaison with volunteers specifically for your campaign—this strategy allows that person to improve planning and communication skills while educating and motivating volunteers.