



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

PARTNER FOR IMPACT

In order to fully engage the community, you need support. Partnering with local schools, businesses, organizations and institutions to spread the word will help garner broader interest in your campaign and learning about local public library funding issues. There is no need to stick to the usual suspects with this—use your awareness campaign as an opportunity to approach new and diverse partners throughout your community.

Examples of community partners:

- Schools
- Businesses (large and small)
- Museums
- Membership organizations (Lions Club, chamber of commerce, Rotary, etc.)
- Galleries
- Public utilities and other public services organizations
- Colleges, universities, and tech schools
- Local government

Introduce:

Introduce potential partners to the awareness campaign with an e-mail, or stop by with printed material, such as a press release, posters and a handout, and enough time to chat. If your focus is on passions or the use of “geek” as a verb, make sure they understand the emphasis on promoting the overall value of the library, as well as the campaign’s ultimate goal of educating the community about funding. Explain how this is a community campaign that needs public participation to spread the word and start important local conversations about funding.

Activate:

Ask partners to hang up posters and other signage, and give out educational materials. Explain the importance of using the materials to start conversations about public library funding. (Initiating and expanding the local conversation about library funding is the backbone of your campaign!)

Localize:

Get their attention and give the campaign local appeal. Create custom images (for use as e-mail signatures, in literature, advertising, online, etc.) that make sense for them. For example, do you partner with a local grocery store? How about e-mailing them some ‘I love healthy eating’ images? Remember to be creative!

If you have the time, take photos of your partners and create custom posters that include an image and what the person really is passionate about or geeks. Suggest that they hang them up for the public to see.

Engage:

Come up with creative ways to help your partners engage the public. For example, assist schools in developing fun contests, decoration ideas, ways to get children's parents involved, etc.

Ask for donations of services, time and, when appropriate, funds for promotions, including advertising

It is vital that as a community campaign, the library's message not just come from the library. When community partners use the campaign theme in their own promotions, it brings attention to the organization, but also helps the community come together. As you approach potential community partners, think about creative ways you can promote their organization in the library and at events to integrate the campaign. It's important to present a mutually beneficial proposal.

You could:

- Ask a local printer if they would be willing to donate printing services to help the campaign. You get quality posters, they get exposure. (You can suggest having someone from the company pose for a poster.)
- Ask a local photographer if they would be willing to donate their professional services to take photos of local influential members of the community for custom posters, billboards or ads. You get great photos, they get exposure. (You can commit to mentioning their name when talking to the media about the campaign.)

Also, it never hurts to ask if the community partner would be willing to contribute any money toward advertising the campaign. Suggest sponsoring a billboard, custom print ad or a large hanging banner with a photo of someone from their organization with what they are passionate about. (You can find examples of what other participating libraries have done on Flickr.)

- Explain that you can include their organization's name in the endorsement at the bottom of the advertisement.
- Suggest that library staff can create posters of the ad/billboard, etc., and feature in the library and at events, and that they can do the same!
- Volunteer to contact the media outlet to negotiate rates and handle any administration.
- Explain that similar initiatives in other communities have garnered media attention – even national media attention—and a local buzz.
- Be sure to follow your library's guidelines for soliciting donations from the community.