

YALSA Advocacy Benchmarks by Activity

Introduction

What is Advocacy?

According to AASL, advocacy is “the on-going process of building partnerships so that others will act for and with you, turning passive support into educated action for the library program. It begins with a vision and a plan for the library program that is then matched to the agenda and priorities of stakeholders.” It is important to note that all advocacy is not lobbying. Lobbying is specifically when you seek to influence legislation or the outcome of an election. All nonprofits are permitted to do limited lobbying; however, there is no restriction as to the amount of advocacy activities they can do.

Why Advocate?

While it's true that ALA and YALSA conduct advocacy activities on behalf of libraries, in order for advocacy to be effective, there also has to be grassroots action. You are best suited to connect with your local elected officials, policy makers and other stakeholders, because you have in-depth knowledge of your library, your community and the teens who live there.

YALSA's Advocacy Benchmarks are:

- Designed to help any staff member working with teens stand up for the value of library services to adolescents.
- Organized by experience level. Whether you are a beginning advocate or one with a lot of experience you'll find helpful information on how to stand up and speak out for teens in your community.
- Organized by type of activity:
 - **Preparing** helps you to build up information and knowledge needed for effective advocacy efforts.
 - **Doing** is all about the act of advocating.
 - **Measuring** focuses on collecting data about teens in your community to measure the impact of what the library does for teens.
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We know that advocacy can be intimidating to those with limited experience, and a challenge to sustain



Preparing: Build up information and knowledge for advocacy efforts.



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Benchmark: Collects and uses information about the community.

Collects & Uses Info



Doing: Get out and advocate.

Benchmark: Implements change by **working with administration and colleagues.**

Works with colleagues	Example
Level 1	Recognizes the increasingly social nature of teens' reading and learning, and works with administrators to create an "unquiet" reading room for teens, educ



Measuring: Collect data about teens in your community.

Benchmark: Collects data to aid in envisioning teen services.

Collects



Measuring: Collect data about teens in your community.

Benchmark: Observes policy makers in action and becomes familiar with current procedures and viewpoints and communication styles.

Observes policy makers	Example
Level 1	Attends library board meetings, school board meetings and other community policy making venues.
Level 2	Attends a local, state, regional, or national library legislative day.
Level 3	The Branches of Opportunity report, published in 2012 by the Center for an Urban Future, looks at areas of interest to legislators and funders such as workforce and community development and demonstrates through data how libraries have an impact on improving the lives of community members. Learn more at http://nycfuture.org/research/publications/branches-of-opportunity

Showing: Get out into the community and speak up for teens.

Benchmark: Speaks up about teen issues in formal and informal settings.

Speaks up for teens	Example
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