

Advocacy Taskforce  
Memo to the OLA Board  
February 2014

Background: OLA identified advocacy as an association priority in 2012 at the OLA annual leadership retreat. The revised OLA Mission Statement prominently features advocacy as a role of the association. An advocacy taskforce was formed and charged with forwarding a recommendation to the board about how OLA might formally incorporate advocacy work beyond that being performed by the Library Development and Legislative Committee. As the OLA Library Development and Legislative Committee is robust and long standing, the Advocacy Taskforce focused on ideas for non-legislative work, as well as on suggestions for structures to support all kinds of advocacy work. At the OLA Board meeting in August 2013, the Board requested a definition of advocacy to go with the proposal brought forth by the Advocacy Taskforce.

Our goal in defining advocacy is to provide language that is lucid and useful for people seeking to understand OLA's mission and position, useful for people submitting advocacy project proposals, and useful for the OLA when evaluating advocacy proposals requesting the OLA's support.

The Advocacy Taskforce has developed the following definition for OLA advocacy:

Library advocacy is speaking out for libraries. It is an active and multipronged process that utilizes partnerships, networks of support, and marketing to raise a clear voice that advances the position of libraries. Successful library advocacy integrates the bedrock of library values into swiftly changing societal trends, highlighting the enduring importance of libraries for free and equitable access to information in a democratic society.

The Taskforce has also created a library advocacy continuum as a way to help visualize the types of activities that advocacy might encompass. The continuum is merely a framework to help one verbalize and form a project more capably. That's the intent of a framework – to give one verbiage and structure to not only help define a specific need but also to develop a strategy to address that need. The continuum is included as a supplemental document for the board to consider.

The Advocacy Task Force is recommending that the OLA board allocate funds for advocacy projects. OLA needs only to set aside a small fund for advocacy projects in the beginning to test how the fund will be used. Please see the draft proposal form (also in the board packet) for an example of a sample project.

The Task Force is bringing these materials to the OLA board for discussion and direction on next steps.

OLA Advocacy Taskforce

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