

# Nicolet Federated Library System

Trustee Training  
December 2021



# Advocacy

- An advocate is someone who:
  - Understands the value and importance of public library service, and
  - Can communicate that value and importance to the community, government leaders and other decision-makers.
- You can be an advocate by providing clear, accurate, and timely information on library issues so those in power can make sound decisions regarding the library.
- Trustees must understand how decisions are made in the community and who must be influenced. The more informed you are of library issues at the local, state, and federal levels , the more effective your advocacy will be.

# Who

- One of your major responsibilities as a trustee is to act as an advocate for the system and its member libraries.
- As a representative of the general public, you can make a more effective case on the importance of adequate funding for the library than the librarian who is not a neutral party.

# What

- Advocacy is NOT lobbying.
  - Advocacy is supporting a particular cause or policy.
  - Lobbying is an advocacy tactic to influence specific legislation.
- Advocacy is building support for your library through developing relationships with local officials, community members, schools, library lovers and local businesses.
- Advocacy is the long term process of creating and banking goodwill for your library among stakeholders.
  - It is vital to create these relationships BEFORE you need them.
  - Do not want to be seen as librarians who come to budget hearings every couple of years and complain about not having enough money.
- Advocacy can be done everyday through the interactions you have with those in your community.

# Why

- “Because public libraries have a unique place in local government, their needs may not be as readily understood by government officials as those of other units of government, and a greater effort is needed to tell the library story.” (Trustee Essential #13)
- Libraries are taken for granted and underfunded. As the pressures on local, county, and state budgets grow, it makes it harder than ever for libraries to obtain adequate funding because most stakeholders are unaware of the library’s value.

# Goals

- Shaping public opinion around general library services or specific programs.
- Shaping the local decision-making process either by informing decision-makers or by influencing a specific vote on a library issue.
- Creating a community of supporters that can be relied upon for support when you do need it.

# How

- Speak to civic groups about library needs and issues.
- Talk to friends about the library and its role in the community.
- Write letters to the editor of the local newspaper.
- Testify at local and state budget hearings.
- Invite new County board members, County Executives, or city leaders to a “welcome tour” of the library .
- Contribute to a library newsletter that is sent to decision-makers.
- Connect with your local Chamber of Commerce to share how library services are of value to small businesses and local employers.
- Sign up to support libraries: <http://action.everylibrary.org/>
- Attend Library Legislative Day!

# Library Legislative Day 2022



WISCONSIN  
LIBRARY  
ASSOCIATION

## *A Return to Madison!*

- **Tuesday, February 8, 2022**
- We will be back in Madison for Library Legislative Day in 2022! The day will start out with a morning session at the Madison Concourse Hotel, followed by appointments with state legislators in the Capitol building.



## Sources:

- Trustee Essentials 13: <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/trustee-essentials-handbook>
- WLA LD&L Webinar “Positioning the Library for a Post-Pandemic Future,” June 5, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9CyEWWwP2o>
- Wisconsin Trustee Training Week, “Effective Library Advocacy,” Kathy Pletcher & Connie Meyer, August 19, 2019, <https://www.wistrusteetraining.com/archive?page=2>