



City of Hutto

Agenda

Special Meeting- Library Advisory Board

June 1, 2026, 6:00-8:00pm

Library Large Meeting Room

In accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act this meeting agenda is posted for public information, continuously, for at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled time of the meeting on the bulletin board located on the exterior wall of the City Hall building at 500 West Live Oak, Hutto, Texas. This meeting agenda is also accessible via the Internet at huttotx.gov

1. **CALL SESSION TO ORDER**
2. **ROLL CALL**
3. **HUTTO PUBLIC LIBRARY FRIENDS**
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Please fill out required registration form before meeting. Public comment is limited to 3 minutes. City Council can not talk about any items not on the agenda per state law. Written comments for this meeting may also be sent to comments@huttotx.gov PRIOR to 4:00 pm on June 1, 2026. The email must include name, address, phone # and email to be recognized properly. Written comments will be provided to Council.

5. **AGENDA ITEMS**

- 5.1. Approve minutes from April & May meetings
- 5.2. Presentation and signing of Memorandum of Understanding for HPL Friends, LAB, and Library
- 5.3. Recognize Tanya Ward for her service to LAB
- 5.4. Chair comments (Morgan Hubbard)
- 5.5. Presentation of Library Ecosystem training and supporting documents. (Kristin Phillips)
- 5.6. Strategic Planning Work Session with LAB, HPL Friends & Library Director
- 5.7. Discuss LAB involvement in fundraising for HPL (Veronica Maxey)

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

7. **CERTIFICATION**

I certify that this notice of the June 1, 2026 Hutto Library Advisory Board meeting was posted on the City of Hutto website and the City Hall bulletin board of the City of Hutto on DATE before 5:00 P.M.



Kristin Phillips

The City of Hutto is committed to comply with the Americans Disability Act. The Hutto City Council Chamber is wheelchair accessible. Request for reasonable special accommodations must be made 48 hours prior to the meeting. Please email the City Secretary's office at City.Secretary@huttox.gov or call (512) 759-4033 for assistance.

AGENDA ITEM REPORT

5.1.



To: Library Advisory Board
Subject: Approve minutes from April & May meetings
Meeting: Monday, June 1, 2026
Department: Library
Staff Contact:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

STAFF REVIEW:

FISCAL NOTES:

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

ATTACHMENTS:

None

AGENDA ITEM REPORT

5.2.



To: Library Advisory Board
Subject: Presentation and signing of Memorandum of Understanding for HPL Friends, LAB, and Library
Meeting: Monday, June 1, 2026
Department: Library
Staff Contact:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

STAFF REVIEW:

FISCAL NOTES:

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Final MOU for HPL Friends Library Advisory Board & Library



MEMORADUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN HUTTO PUBLIC LIBRARY FRIENDS, LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD & HUTTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

The following will constitute an operating agreement between the Hutto Public Library Friends (HPL Friends), the Library Advisory Board (LAB), and the Hutto Public Library (Library), heretofore collectively known as the 'Library Ecosystem'. It will stand until and unless it is modified by mutual agreement of the HPL Friends Executive Board, Library Advisory Board, and the Hutto Public Library Director or designee from Library Staff. The HPL Friends mission is to “support and collaborate with the Library to stimulate the use of the Library’s facilities, resources, and services by fundraising and volunteering for the benefit of the community.” As a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) organization, however, it is a legally distinct entity and is not a part of the Library.

The Library agrees to include the HPL Friends, and LAB in the long-term planning process to ensure all entities are aware of the goals and direction of the Library.

The Library agrees to supply the HPL Friends with an overall “budget wish list” each year during the annual October Budget Meeting. Additional budget requests may



be presented as they arise at the HPL Friends monthly meetings.

The Library agrees to provide support as requested from HPL Friends in marketing/promotional materials.

The Library agrees to provide public space for HPL Friends' membership brochures and promotional materials.

The Library agrees to provide the HPL Friends with space in the "Harry Potter Library Closet" for book storage and sorting, and book sales. The Library will notify HPL Friends Board when storage becomes full.

The HPL Friends Board agrees to include the Library Director (or Library Staff member appointed by Library Director) as a non-voting presence at all Friends' meetings and to allow room on the agenda for a library report.

The HPL Friends Board agrees to publicly support the library and its policies.

The HPL Friends agree that any and all monies raised will be spent exclusively for community benefit and other



Library-defined needs agreed to by both the Friends and the Library (excluding HPL Friends' operational costs).

The HPL Friends agree that the Library Director has the final say in accepting or declining any and all gifts made to the library.

The HPL Friends agree to engage in advocacy efforts on behalf of the Library, under the guidance of the Library Director and the Library Advisory Board.

The HPL Friends agree that if they cease to actively fundraise and promote the Library, they will disband, allowing for a new Friends group to be established in the future. On average, one fundraiser per quarter.

The Library Advisory Board agrees to host a work session with HPL Friends at least one per fiscal year.

The Library Advisory Board agrees to approve a standing agenda item for open public meeting for HPL Friends to provide a standing report.

The HPL Friends agrees to approve a standing agenda item for open public meeting for Library Advisory Board to provide a standing report.



All entities agree that, once written and finalized, the agreement shall be rededicated yearly and allow for revisions every five (5) years.

This agreement can be nullified if two or more entities of the 'Library Ecosystem' deem the agreement no longer mutually beneficial.

SIGNED:

Library Director

Date: _____

HPL Friends Board President

Date: _____

Library Advisory Board Chair

Date: _____

AGENDA ITEM REPORT

5.3.



To: Library Advisory Board
Subject: Recognize Tanya Ward for her service to LAB
Meeting: Monday, June 1, 2026
Department: Library
Staff Contact:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

STAFF REVIEW:

FISCAL NOTES:

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

ATTACHMENTS:

None

AGENDA ITEM REPORT

5.4.



To: Library Advisory Board
Subject: Chair comments (Morgan Hubbard)
Meeting: Monday, June 1, 2026
Department: Library
Staff Contact:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

STAFF REVIEW:

FISCAL NOTES:

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

ATTACHMENTS:

None

AGENDA ITEM REPORT

5.5.



To: Library Advisory Board
Subject: Presentation of Library Ecosystem training and supporting documents. (Kristin Phillips)
Meeting: Monday, June 1, 2026
Department: Library
Staff Contact:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

STAFF REVIEW:

FISCAL NOTES:

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

ATTACHMENTS:

1. ALA Library Ecosystem Toolkit
2. Library Ecosystem Public Libraries Field Guide

Welcome to the Implementation Guide for **Strong Library Ecosystems**

Definition

A library ecosystem is the interconnected network of all types of libraries, library workers, volunteers, trustees, friends, foundations, and associations that provide and facilitate library services—for communities; K–20 learners; college and university communities; local, state and federal legislatures and government offices; businesses; nonprofits; and other organizations with specific information needs.



A patron of one library is the potential patron of any other library at a different time of life or in a different location. No library exists independent of the library ecosystem and, when we stand together in mutual support using common messaging themes that demonstrate this interconnectedness, every library is stronger.

Statement of Purpose

The ecosystem toolkit is created to assist state associations in strengthening the library ecosystem within localities and states. At its most effective, the strong library ecosystem supports a diverse library community in speaking with a unified voice about issues that are important to all members of the ecosystem in order to most constructively advance the collective goals of the group. This may be accomplished by encouraging organizational leadership to effectively advocate in crisis situations, as well as proactively work to build a climate of support so that all libraries are best positioned to serve their communities.

Four strands serve as the pillars of a healthy ecosystem:



Leadership for building a state-wide library ecosystem is dependent upon an awareness of and active collaboration with various and diverse library partners. Leadership must facilitate connections across library types as the multiplicity of library types *is* the ecosystem.

Leadership refers to the expertise of representatives from participating groups, intentionality around building an inclusive model for participation, and the skills participants offer in communication and collaboration towards a sustainable ecosystem effort.

Communication requires clear, intentional sharing both internally and across participating organizations. It builds a unified voice and advances a shared advocacy and legislative agenda that reflects the goals of diverse stakeholders.



Collaboration towards a unified advocacy and legislative agenda and consistent messaging requires careful and consistent coordination among all participants that reflects the overlapping needs of all the contributing organizations.

Sustainability of the ecosystem requires equitable access to participation as well as ongoing attention to simple and essential aspects of teamwork.



START NOW!

The Continuum with its supporting resources is a powerful tool to help your state develop a more robust library ecosystem. Select, use, modify, and share the tools that work best for where you are now, and come back often for new ideas. Most importantly, start now.



- Tools to Get Started
 - ◆ Self Assessment Checklist
 - ◆ Understanding the Ecosystem: Webs of Connection
 - Tools for Building Shared Agendas
 - ◆ Ecosystem Agenda Building: Information Gathering Template
 - Agenda Building: Legislative Issues (Worksheet)
 - Agenda Building: Public-Facing Advocacy Issues (Worksheet)
 - Agenda Building: Consolidating the Input (Worksheet)
 - ◆ Year Round Advocacy Checklist
 - Tools to Track Progress
 - ◆ Recording Progress Towards a Library Ecosystem Example
 - ◆ Recording Progress Towards a Library Ecosystem Template
 - Tools for Sustainability
 - ◆ Assessment of Ecosystem Progress
 - Ecosystem Visualization Tools (AKA Promotional Bits)
 - ◆ Strong Library Ecosystem Recipe
 - ◆ One Voice Magnifies the Message

Additionally, we offer you this toolkit of resources - pick and choose what best supports your efforts.

The Ecosystem Continuum is a rubric to help you assess the current strength of your ecosystem and see how you might improve collaboration across organizations. It can be explored as a whole or individual strands can be targeted for focus.

awareness of successes and challenges to state ecosystem efforts.

ongoing: the ALA Committee on Library Advocacy (COLA) Ecosystem Subcommittee will continue to promote there are many effective ways to connect to other ecosystem leaders across the country. This work is to support your efforts and will model ecosystem thinking in its advocacy initiatives. Within our association, The Toolkit is intended to support the ecosystem efforts of library leaders in all states. ALA will work with you

Self-Assessment for State Ecosystem Continuum

As you consider how to strengthen or launch a library ecosystem effort in your state, this checklist will help you see quickly the kinds of things to work on. The Continuum offers much more detail about how to grow from Beginning to Evolving to Highly Effective. Even if you already have a strong ecosystem, you might find ways to improve it. There is no one right way to do this - these are just prompts to support your thinking.



Leadership for building a state-wide library ecosystem is dependent upon an awareness of and active collaboration with various and diverse library partners. Leadership must facilitate connections across library types as the multiplicity of library types is the ecosystem. Leadership refers to the expertise of representatives from participating groups, intentionality around building an inclusive model for participation, and the skills participants offer in communication and collaboration towards a sustainable ecosystem effort.

- Our organization understands the goals/priorities/importance of a state ecosystem.
- We also understand the essential nature of an inclusive and diverse membership on the ecosystem team.
- We have begun to engage with related organizations to build an ecosystem.
- We are actively working to understand the perspective of other organizations within the ecosystem.
- We are working to build broader understanding within our individual organizations and generate broad support for participation.
- We consistently support opportunities to communicate/plan/work together in support of a strong state ecosystem (advocacy committees, etc.).

Communication requires clear, intentional sharing both internally and across participating organizations. It builds a unified voice and advances a shared advocacy and legislative agenda that reflects the goals of diverse stakeholders.

- We have reached out to representatives of other library organizations.
- We encourage ongoing communications between our association leadership and colleagues in other organizations.
- We hold regular meetings to move ecosystem agenda items forward.
- We report regularly (at least annually) to the boards of our organizations about ecosystem efforts.
- We have a current list of key contacts for all statewide library organizations to facilitate communication about the developing priorities of the ecosystem effort. We are working to maintain relationships among all participating organizations through these key contacts.
- We are building a current inclusive and diverse list of essential contacts in the legislature and similar policy and decision making bodies so that we know who to contact as issues arise and legislative or advocacy agendas are written. We are working cross-organizationally to build and maintain relationships with these people.
- We collaborate to develop a single, consistent message about our organizations' shared priorities.
- We speak publicly with one voice to our stakeholders; to legislators, decision and policy makers;

- and to the public.
- We work together to respond to any crises that arise, recognizing that we are stronger when we all stand together.

Collaboration towards a unified advocacy agenda and consistent messaging requires careful and consistent coordination among all participants that reflects the overlapping needs of all the contributing organizations.

- We understand our shared priorities as we develop shared agendas that interweave the priorities of all for a solid platform that reflects the diverse needs and goals across the ecosystem.
- We regularly share back to the leadership of participating organizations new collaborative understandings of ecosystem interrelationships and priorities.
- We encourage participating organizations to directly collaborate with one another.
- We work with ALA and ecosystem leaders in other states to discover and share ideas.
- We collaborate to build and maintain a current advocacy and legislative agenda that reflects shared priorities and a unified voice.
- As priorities and methods are refined, representatives check back with their own organizations for clarity and ongoing support of robust shared advocacy and legislative agendas.
- The ecosystem team supports creation and distribution of polished public-facing resources to explain the shared agenda in ways the public can easily support.

Sustainability of the ecosystem requires equitable access to participation as well as ongoing attention to simple and essential aspects of teamwork.

- Our ecosystem effort includes policies that support ongoing engagement of all participating organizations.
- We emphasize the benefits of consistent representation on the ecosystem team and encourage participating organizations to support, or even require, representation.
- We have established policies that team members hold regular terms and stagger rotation to ensure continuity of practices and knowledge.
- We work with the leadership of our organizations to ensure new representatives are appointed according to the agreed schedule.
- We mentor ecosystem awareness in organization leadership as an ongoing priority.
- We mentor new representatives to the ecosystem team as they gain an understanding of the whole ecosystem and all of its stakeholders and connections.
- We work together to establish this ecosystem team as an official point of collaboration between the interested organizations, with a constant focus on inclusivity to best benefit the member groups.
- We have and maintain an ecosystem calendar that reflects cyclic deadlines in order to plan for appropriate action. We update this calendar regularly, adding any useful information that supports the agenda-building process.
- Representatives review ecosystem efforts after any milestone date (final advocacy agenda item, legislative success, etc.), in order to seed new ideas for methods and/or content.

Ecosystem Agenda Building: Information Gathering

Template for Building a Collaborative Advocacy Agenda

This template offers one process for soliciting information regarding advocacy priorities from all library types in your ecosystem, consolidating that information to see overlaps, and developing collective priorities.



Issues that might inform advocacy priorities:

(There are many issues that libraries advocate for. Here are just a few to help you build a list that reflects your organization's priorities.)

Legislative	Public-Facing Advocacy
Funding	Diversity and inclusion
Staffing	Equity of access
Broadband and connectivity	Broadband and connectivity
Digital resources	Digital services
Access	In-person services
Standards	Resources

Ecosystem Agenda Template

Step 1 - Gather input from all organizations.

What type of agenda are you building? Legislative Public-Facing Advocacy

Organization: _____

Priority issues:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Potential overlap between above issues and priorities for other organizations:

-
-
-

Step 5 - Share results, conclusions and plans with stakeholders from all partner organizations.

Step 4 - Send for review and feedback to stakeholders who contributed the foundational information. Refine as needed.

- -
 -
 -
- agenda.

Step 3 - Develop the shared agenda. Look at the consolidated input to see how to consolidate these ideas into a prioritized, shared draft

Ecosystem Agenda Building			
Organization A	Organization B	Organization C	Organization D
Identify overlapping or related issues from information gathered above.			

Step 2 - Consolidate the input. Take your content above and compare to other organizations.



Ecosystem Agenda Building: Public-Facing Advocacy

For the complete template for building a shared agenda, please see Ecosystem Agenda Building: Information Gathering.



STEP 1 - Gather input from all organizations. (There are many issues that libraries advocate for. Here are just a few to help you build a list that reflects your organization's priorities.)

Issues that might inform advocacy priorities: Public-Facing Advocacy
Diversity and inclusion
Equity of access
Broadband and connectivity
Digital services
In-person services
Resources

Issue: Diversity and inclusion

Specify the needs of your organization around this issue:

-
-
-

List any overlap you see between your organization and other organizations around this one issue:

-
-
-

Issue: Equity of access

Specify the needs of your organization around this issue:

-
-
-

List any overlap you see between your organization and other organizations around this one issue:

-
-
-

Issue: Broadband and connectivity

Specify the needs of your organization around this issue:

-
-
-

Ecosystem Agenda Building: Legislative

For the complete template for building a shared agenda, please see Ecosystem Agenda Building: Information Gathering.



STEP 1 - Gather input from all organizations. *(There are many issues that libraries advocate for. Here are just a few to help you build a list that reflects your organization's priorities.)*

Issues that might inform advocacy priorities: Legislative
Funding
Staffing
Broadband and connectivity
Digital resources
Access
Standards

Issue: Funding

Specify the needs of your organization around this issue:

-
-
-

List any overlap you see between your organization and other organizations around this one issue:

-
-
-

Issue: Staffing

Specify the needs of your organization around this issue:

-
-
-

List any overlap you see between your organization and other organizations around this one issue:

-
-
-

Issue: Broadband and connectivity

Specify the needs of your organization around this issue:

-
-
-

Ecosystem Agenda Building: Consolidate the Input

Take the content from the bullets contributed on **STEP 1 - Gather input from all organizations: Legislative and/or Public-Facing Advocacy.**



(Identify repetition and commonalities as indicators of potential collaboration.)

Ecosystem Agenda Building			
Organization A	Organization B	Organization C	Organization D
Identify overlapping or related issues from information gathered above.			

Recording Progress Towards a Library Ecosystem: Example

This is an example of how a state team might keep track of progress towards building a stronger ecosystem. Note that it is not a linear process: it is possible to be at many levels in any one strand, or across strands. Building the ecosystem effort is necessarily an iterative endeavor that requires consistent attention and knowledgeable leadership to facilitate the required communication and collaboration both among the team and with internal and external stakeholders.



	Leadership	Communication	Collaboration	Sustainability
<p>Highly Effective</p> <p>Reflects a system and structures in place for a thriving and sustainable state-wide ecosystem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization leaders understand the infrastructures within the state and know their counterparts at other organizations 			
<p>Evolving</p> <p>Refers to a group establishing practices across organizations towards a state-wide ecosystem.</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecosystem representative roles added to organization's call for volunteers and appointment process - June
<p>Beginning</p> <p>Refers to one or two people initiating work towards a state-wide library ecosystem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed current landscape and possible methods for greater cooperation - April Discussed possible ecosystem goals - April 1st meeting - April 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed initial list of key contacts - May Met with organization leadership to discuss ecosystem effort - April Conducted outreach to potential ecosystem participants - April 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared organization's legislative priorities with two other groups - May Discussed possibility for shared legislative & advocacy agendas - April 	
<p>We are here</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interested in ecosystem model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasional emails between library leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing formal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustaining in our silos

Annual Assessment of Progress Towards Ecosystem Sustainability



Sustainability of the ecosystem requires equitable access to participation as well as ongoing attention to simple and essential aspects of teamwork.

This table offers one possible way to review ecosystem sustainability efforts, successes, and needs for improvement year by year. This information can easily become a report to participating organizations.

Goal	Indicators of Progress
The ecosystem team has established these policies to support ongoing engagement of all participating organizations.	1. 2.
Ecosystem team members hold regular terms and stagger rotation to ensure continuity of practices and knowledge.	Terms are for ____ years. ____% of ecosystem team members rotate off each year.
Reminders are sent to the leadership of organizations that new representatives will be needed to begin their terms in the month of ____.	Reminders sent on _____ (date) to (list organization & leaders by name): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Information is shared with the leadership board of each participating organization annually in order to maintain awareness of the ecosystem as an ongoing priority.	Information shared on _____ (date).
Training is provided to all new representatives to the ecosystem team to develop an understanding of the whole ecosystem and all of its supporters and connections.	Training was provided in _____ (month) to _____ (#) new representatives.
The ecosystem calendar is updated to reflect any changes in cyclic deadlines and any unusual deadlines in a given cycle in order to plan for appropriate action.	Updated ecosystem calendar is attached here. Calendar shared with participating organizations on _____ (date).
Committee reviews work after any milestone date (finalized agenda, legislative win, etc.) in order to understand successes and challenges, and to seed new ideas for methods and/or content.	Report written and shared with participating organizations. Report sent _____ (date).

STRONG LIBRARY ECOSYSTEM



RECIPE: AS SOURDOUGH BREAD

FROM THE KITCHEN OF: ALA'S STATE ECOSYSTEM TASK FORCE

SERVES: ALL LIBRARIES AND THEIR PARTNERS

* INGREDIENTS *

EQUAL PARTS:

LEADERSHIP

COMMUNICATION

COLLABORATION

SUSTAINABILITY

* NOTES *

OVEN TEMPERATURES MAY VARY AND ARE LIKELY TO RISE.

REMEMBER, THIS IS A PROCESS THAT DEVELOPS OVER

TIME. WE'RE AIMING FOR PROGRESS. PRACTICE HELPS!



ALA American Library Association

* INSTRUCTIONS *

STEP 1 - CULTIVATE THE CULTURE:

- COMBINE LIBRARY LEADER VOLUNTEERS AND IDEAS UNTIL IDEAS ARE WELL MIXED.
- REMEMBER COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION ADD TO GROWTH.
- LEAVE TO SIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING; FEED WITH NEW IDEAS.
- *NOTE: IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE MIXING LEADER IDEAS, CONSIDER IF ANOTHER PERSON/VIEWPOINT/FLAVOR MIGHT BE NEEDED.*

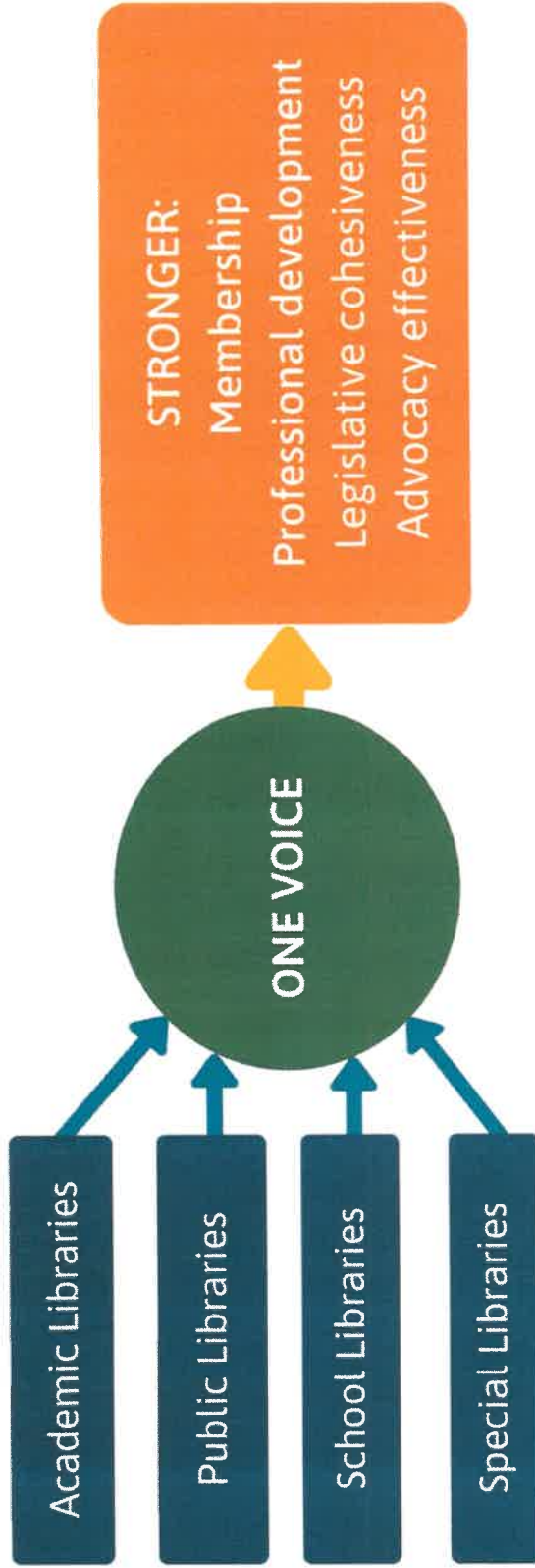
STEP 2 - MIX:

- ADD IDEAS TO PROMOTE ONGOING COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION.
- KNEAD FOR STRUCTURE TO ADVANCE TOWARDS A LEGISLATIVE AND/OR ADVOCACY AGENDA. KNEAD UNTIL THE DOUGH IS FIRM BUT STILL A BIT STICKY--NEW IDEAS WILL ALWAYS COME ALONG--AND LEAVE TO RISE AGAIN.
- COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY TO A STRONG RISE.

STEP 3 - PREPARE TO SHARE:

- BAKING TIMES WILL VARY. YOU'LL KNOW THE BREAD IS READY WHEN:
 - YOU SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE.
 - YOUR SHARED AGENDA YIELDS POSITIVE RESULTS FOR ALL LIBRARIES.
 - STAKEHOLDERS ADD TO THE CULTURE AND COME BACK FOR MORE.

Building a Strong Library Ecosystem
One Voice Magnifies the Message



View the State Ecosystem Toolkit:
www.ala.org/advocacy/state-ecosystem-initiative

Library Ecosystem Thinking in Public Libraries: A Field Guide



ALA American
Library
Association

 **PublicLibrary**
ASSOCIATION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This field guide is a project of the ALA Ecosystem Initiative. The Ecosystem for PLA Task Group developed this resource for public libraries as a complement to the work of the Library Ecosystem Initiative Subcommittee of the Committee on Library Advocacy (COLA) with support from the Public Library Association and Public Policy & Advocacy Office.

Project Leads

Dorcas Hand
Amanda Sand

Contributing Members

Dorinda Darden
Naphtali Faris
Matthew Tessmer

Committee Members

Nanette Donohue
Mary Ellen Icaza
Michael Lambert
Erica Richardson

Design and Layout

Jazzy Celindro

Introduction

Why Cross-Library Relationships Matter

“A library ecosystem is the interconnected network of all types of libraries, library workers, volunteers, and associations that provide and facilitate library services for community members; families; K-20 learners; college and university communities; local, state and federal legislatures and government offices; businesses; nonprofits; and other organizations with specific information needs. A patron of one library is the potential patron of any other library at a different time of life or location. **No library exists independent of the library ecosystem.** When we stand together in mutual support using common messaging themes that demonstrate this interconnectedness, **every library is stronger.**”

– The [ALA Ecosystem Initiative](#)¹

Through persistent efforts from all directions to limit what we do and how we do it, the world around us is demonstrating why library workers across all library types need to stand together. Understanding how what we do across library types is the same is as important as understanding how what we do, how we do it, and how the challenges we face differ.

Through this workbook, public libraries will actively join the Library Ecosystem, connecting with libraries of all types, as well as community leaders and organizations, to build strength and solidarity in service of their communities. Partners in the Ecosystem will speak with ONE VOICE, working together to support one another.

In order for anyone to speak on behalf of a library type they do not work in, they need to understand the challenges facing those libraries.

- What do public librarians/libraries need others to know in order to speak on their behalf at public meetings, with legislators, at community events?
- What do public librarians not understand about school, academic, special, tribal, or correctional libraries that keep them from advocating for the highest priorities of those libraries?

The Ecosystem focuses on advocacy rather than sharing resources, but groups that share resources can be one example of an advocacy effort that demonstrates to users and constituents how libraries collaborate for their benefit.

Ecosystem thinking does not replace all the excellent advocacy already being done by ALA, PLA, state associations and others; it augments that work with new voices and shared vocabulary. We hope that the ecosystem relationships you develop at the local level help you to better advocate for libraries of all types. These relationships will also support existing Ecosystem initiatives that already exist across your state and region.

Advocacy Threats

As threats to libraries proliferate, everyone should remember that threats to libraries of one type are likely coming to yours, both directly and indirectly. Powerful voices are working to undermine the very idea of a community resource that supports the freedom to learn throughout one's life.

- Threats to funding are increasing. We have seen how federal cuts to the IMLS agency affect funding for individual institutions. State legislatures and local entities are facing tighter budgets and libraries can be an easy target for reductions.
- Hiring qualified staff is challenging as well, due to deprofessionalization of job descriptions, shrinking availability of library degree programs, salary competition, etc. While there are students graduating from library schools, there are not enough of them to fill gaps as they appear. Low wages and burnout affect public library workers who may pivot to other fields in a desire for less volatility in their workplace and/or higher compensation.
- States and local library governance bodies are restricting the kinds of materials, displays, programs and other resources offered to users who desire access to the breadth of information they are being denied. Libraries should not only fight for access, but educate users and stakeholders about the value of that access.
- Underlying all of these are misperceptions about why libraries matter.

MISPERCEPTIONS	
<i>Libraries are quiet spaces.</i>	While libraries continue to offer some quiet spaces, they also offer areas with a constant low buzz of energy as patrons collaborate on projects, discuss books and other topics, and engage with displays and public programs. ²
<i>Library crafts and activities are boring and bland.</i>	Library makerspaces are extremely popular, along with a wide variety of other hands-on offerings and educational programs. ³
<i>Libraries are only books. Or, libraries are low tech.</i>	Libraries offer equipment for loan, and access to many digital tools and resources. They are places where interest groups can gather regularly to plan projects - whether teens gaming or adults with common business interests. Trained library staff are available to teach users how to use these tools and resources. ⁴

<p><i>Librarians get to read all day long.</i></p>	<p>Library workers are often on their feet assisting patrons, making collection materials available, or presenting programs all day long. Time spent sitting at a desk is limited and scheduled; librarians have many duties besides front line desk interactions. Despite the benefits of automated circulation and online catalogs, the work behind the scenes is neverending: to keep books circulating well, to catch damaged or dated resources, to order new titles in a timely fashion and get them onto the shelves. Programs for all ages take planning; displays need organizing.</p> <p><i>“Our staff often spends extended periods of time with customers to help them with something as small as making a photocopy, to something as big as navigating Social Security’s website or applying for a job,” says Parks. “I never imagined that I would be helping people with so many technical difficulties.” In short, Librarians are lucky if they have time to grab lunch, much less sit around and read a book on the job.⁵</i></p>
<p><i>Libraries are only for kids.</i></p>	<p>This is absolutely untrue. Children’s areas certainly teach kids that libraries are, for them, important. As these kids grow to adulthood, they discover all the other areas, materials, and services of the library that support their school assignments, personal interests, and career aspirations.⁵</p> <p><i>e.g. English to Speakers of Other Languages classes, Genealogy research department.</i></p>
<p><i>There’s nothing “special” about libraries.</i></p>	<p>Public libraries are for people of all ages, and offer broad collections that reflect their communities. Public libraries also rely on strong collaborations with PK-12 school libraries, local community colleges and universities, and special libraries with a focus on law, medicine, genealogy, local history, and more to meet their community’s needs.⁵</p> <p>e.g. Colorado Talking Book Library (CTBL)</p>

*Libraries are becoming obsolete.*⁶

Libraries offer access to digital resources that users may not be able to discover independently.

E.g. [eBranch](#)⁵

Libraries also support users to wade through potential information overload as they seek just the few perfect resources to answer their needs today.⁷

Librarians also teach information literacy skills that support understanding the news, whether local or international, by teaching users how to identify misinformation spread through unreliable sources.⁸

Libraries continue to evolve to offer new technologies and resources as community needs change or expand.⁹

Value of a United Voice in Public and Legislative Arenas

When libraries remain siloed, separate entities divided by type, they are limited in their reach and impact. When libraries of all types speak together with ONE VOICE, they speak with and for each other, to rally patrons, employees, and trustees of all library types to the broader cause. This has never been more true than now, when many voices remind everyone of the good that libraries do for the entire community. It may be a minority who distrust libraries and voice this complaint loudly, but their volume is easily magnified. Our job in library advocacy is to teach our existing majority to speak up.

To effectively advocate for one another, we need to understand what libraries do across library types. Public, school, academic, and special libraries each have distinct missions and audiences, but their work complements and expands the work of all libraries. No library can meet every user's needs, so we need to maximize our collaborations in resource and program sharing, continuing our long-term successes in these areas. Ecosystem thinking allows us to broaden our collaboration into advocacy. We can speak for colleagues in libraries of other types when they need knowledgeable voices but are constrained by institutional rules or broader politics. And they can speak for us.

Case Study: City and County of San Francisco Government

On January 8, 2025, Mayor Daniel Lurie was sworn in as San Francisco's 46th Mayor. During Mayor Lurie's first 100 days in office, he reorganized the governance structure for municipal government, creating four new policy chief positions aimed at improving interdepartmental collaboration and streamlining the city's slow and complex bureaucracy. For the San Francisco Public Library (SFPL), the net result was aligning the department with the new Housing & Economic Development (HED) focus area of government.

Included among the HED departments were logical choices like the Office of Economic & Workforce Development, the Office of Small Business, and the Planning Department, but also the city's cultural institutions including the San Francisco Arts Commission, the fine arts museums, the Asian Art Museum, and the California Academy of Sciences. This inclusion of the city's cultural institutions with the public library was a nod to the role arts & culture would play in the city's economic recovery. Notably the San Francisco Law Library was also included in the new HED structure.

In recent years, the San Francisco Public Library and the San Francisco Law Library have been neighbors at the confluence of the city's Civic Center and mid-Market neighborhood. Though close in geographic proximity, the public library and the law library have not had as much crossover as one might expect. Two distinct library organizations with different missions were now regular participants in monthly HED meetings and an emergent "Arts & Culture Pod" grouping that also holds monthly meetings.

The Law Library's longtime deputy director, Diane Rodriguez, was appointed director in May 2025. By now crossing paths more regularly at joint meetings, SFPL's City Librarian, Michael Lambert, and Diane quickly developed a strong rapport and interest in increased collaboration. Diane invited Michael to the Law Library in June for a tour of the law library. This engagement led to increased awareness of the Law Library's service delivery to justice-involved residents and their holdings of one of the most significant legal reference collections in the country.

The increased engagement has highlighted new opportunities for partnership to shared constituencies and the potential for leveraging resources for improved service delivery and efficiencies. Law Library Director Rodriguez attended the American Library Association's annual conference in Philadelphia, where San Francisco Public Library – Jail & Reentry Services (JARS) staff were presenting a full-day "Expanding Information Access for Incarcerated People" convening. SFPL and the law library are now collaborating to link the Law Library's holdings in SFPL's online catalog.

Furthermore, the Law Library's Head of Tech Services connected with the SFPL Preservation Unit to discuss their work and learn about resources to conserve the Law Library's rare book collection. The increased collaboration is also opening up opportunities for joint programming with one of the Law Library's reference librarians teaching legal research classes at the Main Library. There is also a developing partnership with the SFPL Small Business Center to exchange information to better serve small business patrons between both institutions through their respective staff and collections.

As San Francisco continues a post-pandemic economic recovery, the growing partnership of the public library and the law library provides a unique opportunity to demonstrate the value of robust library services in service to the community. As the City of San Francisco navigates a structural budget deficit for upcoming budget cycles, the increased collaboration between the public library and the law library will only position both organizations for better prospects in upcoming budget deliberations and support the shared goals of the Housing & Economic Development and Arts & Culture Pod structure.

THE LIBRARY ECOSYSTEM: KEY SERVICES PROVIDED BY PATRON TYPE

Public Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storytimes • Sensory play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional resources/reading materials • After-school programs • Summer reading programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional resources/reading materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet community-wide needs • Community programs • Business resources • Reading materials
Academic Library			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources to support research and coursework • Teach information literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide college/university staff with resources and support
School Library		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support curriculum with resources and through co-teaching • Lead dynamic school-wide reading culture • Build diverse collection • Teach all forms of literacy and digital citizenship; prepare for career & college • Teach & support technology integration 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate & co-teach with other teachers • Provide specific resources to teachers • Provide professional development • Provide resources to parents
Special Library			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources on specific topics to support research and coursework 	
Tribal Library		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support curriculum of tribal schools and community members 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain tribal culture, traditions, language, and scholarship
Correctional Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect prisoners with family through reading programs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support diploma and vocational studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide educational, legal, recreational, and other resources
PATRON TYPE	Infant/preschool	K-12 School	College	Adult

A patron of one library is the potential patron of any other library at a different time of life or location.

Check out the *“Comparison of Public, School, and Academic Libraries: Vital to Our Communities”* chart on pages 10 and 11.¹⁰

The Ecosystem Initiative reminds us all that there are two faces to advocacy. Many librarians hear the word “advocacy” and immediately think they must visit their legislator, but that is only one type of advocacy. Equally important is building an informed citizenry who will keep those legislators aware of why libraries matter to them and their communities. These community members can support library programs, speak up at local forums to combat the negative news cycle, and engage with neighbors and family about how the library supports lifelong learning. Not everyone feels confident visiting their state capitol, but everyone can be a local advocate.

All libraries have different strengths, different political realities, and different communities of advocates and stakeholders. We all have the same need for broad support. We can bring our overlapping communities together with one message: Libraries are essential to our communities.



ALA COLA
Ecosystem
Subcommittee

A Comparison of Public, School, and Academic Libraries: Vital to Our Communities

In neighborhoods, schools, and higher education across the United States, libraries are serving learners of all ages as they pursue both their academic and personal information needs. These institutions, which offer complementary services in the common pursuit of providing top-quality information, access to technology, and safe spaces, often stand aligned in their desire to meet shared goals. These goals include:

- Achieving equity of access to information and resources
- Building a culture of reading
- Supporting lifelong learning
- Creating an engaged, informed citizenry

The library Ecosystem is an integral source of information for all communities. While many libraries pursue the goals listed above in similar ways, it is important to understand the fundamental differences between these institutions that make each a unique and crucial part of the communities they serve. A user of any one of these types of libraries today will become a user of another in the future.

Public Library	School Library	Academic Libraries
<p>Mission To provide the tools and free access to support lifelong learning and engagement for all ages and all representations of the wider community.</p>	<p>Mission To empower K-12 students to be enthusiastic readers, critical thinkers, skillful researchers, responsible digital global citizens, and ethical users of information.</p>	<p>Mission To facilitate all research, scholarship, pedagogy, and learning while upholding tenets of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.</p>
<p>Users Any and all members of the public.</p>	<p>Users The specific members of a K-12 school community, typically limited to enrolled students and employed faculty and staff.</p>	<p>Users Currently enrolled students, faculty, alumni, international scholars, administrators, and local community members.</p>
<p>Staffing Degreed librarians with a Master's level education from an accredited program serve as their library's Information Professionals, alongside non-degreed support staff. Staffing should reflect the diverse communities served by the institution where possible.</p>	<p>Staffing Degreed librarians with a Master's level education and specialized education certifications manage effective school library programs with support from non-certified staff. Staffing should reflect the diverse communities served by the institution where possible.</p>	<p>Staffing Degreed librarians with specialized certifications and appropriately credentialed staff which reflects the diverse communities served by the institution where possible.</p>
<p>Collections are extensive and typically cover all possible age ranges and reading levels, with a wide selection of topics and material types. Though curated for quality and diversity, the focus of the collection is on providing unhindered access to a wide range of materials for enjoyment and information.</p>	<p>Collections are highly curated to include diverse materials almost exclusively published for the designated age range, reading level, and interest of the enrolled students, as well as materials at those levels that also support curricular and classroom activities. Some school library collections may also focus on professional development materials for faculty and staff.</p>	<p>Collections facilitate the curation of resources in various formats that support the institution's research goals, including academic and community-oriented activities. Collections will reflect all of our communities, including authors from and experiences of global BIPOC and/or traditionally underrepresented communities. Special Collections may provide exclusive materials and specific focus on rare or uncommon topics.</p>

Public Library	School Library	Academic Libraries
<p>Primary Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing free access to materials that support enrichment and learning for all ages ● Providing materials for entertainment for all ages ● Offering programming that supports community engagement, both educational and recreational ● Facilitating community engagement throughout the library's community 	<p>Primary Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teaching information literacy and digital citizenship skills ● Providing other structured lessons that align with school curriculum ● Supporting classroom and school-wide objectives ● Collaborating with classroom teachers, school staff, and administrators ● Providing access to reading material, technology, and information resources ● Offering safe spaces within the school, with a focus on Social Emotional Learning 	<p>Primary Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teaching information literacy and digital citizenship skills in alignment with broader curriculum, programmatic goals of the institution, and professional standards. ● Develop programs in alignment with the library's mission and that of the institution. ● Offering different modalities of interaction, including asynchronous, synchronous, and live in-person. ● Sensitize users to the nuances of diversity and inclusion in scholarship. (e.g. Citation Justice). ● Support Scholarly Communications initiatives including Open Access ● Provide versatile spaces that support community, collaborative, and individual needs ● Facilitate community engagement
<p>Scope Addresses the interests and needs of the community at large, with a focus on serving the public in all ages and stages of life. May include events, outreach initiatives, information and awareness campaigns, and community partnerships.</p>	<p>Scope Highly structured and designed to meet specific academic goals, curricular requirements, state or national standards, and student needs. Includes carefully crafted lessons, assignments, and assessments, and a focus on skill building, preparation for next academic steps, and college and career readiness.</p>	<p>Scope Adaptable and flexible programs designed to meet academic goals, curricular requirements, and student and community needs.</p> <p>These activities include events, outreach initiatives, information and awareness campaigns, and community partnerships.</p>
<p>Hours Often extensive and typically include daytime, evening, and weekend hours.</p>	<p>Hours Typically limited to school hours, with some limited additional before and after school availability. Typically not open when schools are closed.</p>	<p>Hours Flexible to reflect the needs of the community and the academic calendar.</p>

As the chart above demonstrates, while public, school, and academic libraries are institutions with complementary goals, none could reasonably be expected to stand in the place of the others. Rather, these institutions build upon each other's work by leveraging their unique strengths to address issues of access, equity, and lifelong learning in ways that are neither duplicated nor equaled by any other available resource. **All** libraries remain vital pieces of their respective communities.

The [original version of this comparison](#) was written by the New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) and New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) which stand united in the conviction that ALL types of libraries are essential. ALA's Committee on Library Advocacy (COLA) Ecosystem Subcommittee has adapted the original document for broader application.



Guide to Building Relationships

"Think about developing new allies, new relationships, new coalitions [and] partnerships."

— Alan Inouye, Interim Associate Executive Director, Public Policy and Advocacy,
American Library Association

Considering Allies for Library Advocacy

Ecosystem thinking asks us to look beyond our colleagues in libraries, to other groups and individuals with whom we share values. The more connected libraries are to their communities, the more value they add through partnerships and events, the broader the impact and the more ingrained and essential the library becomes. Many people do not realize how powerful their voices can be or know how they can be the most impactful. Libraries should engage and educate them, and even train them for the work of advocacy.

We have many allies within and outside of the library field to connect with and rely on.

Library Organizations

- ALA and its divisions
- Regional Library Consortia
- State library associations of all types and all their divisions
- Other associations, e.g., American Indian Library Association, Association of Rural and Small Libraries, Association for Library and Information Science Education, Medical Library Association, National Association of Librarians of Color, etc.

Allies in Government - Make friends. Find common ground.

- State Library - Every state is different. Not all support every library in the state, some only support public libraries. They are still a valuable partner as you build your ONE VOICE.
- Secretary of State - again every state is different. Washington State has had some success working directly with their Secretary on some legislative efforts. Determine the scope of your Secretary of State's role, their connection to library services, and priorities you may be able to connect or assist with. Or consider who in your state has an equivalent broad role that could lend additional support.
- All levels of elected officials and their staff - Libraries have local governance, but are also affected by state laws. Legislators should come to rely on you to help them understand the implications of potential legislation on their constituents. The staff members of legislators, county supervisors, city councils, etc. are important; develop relationships with all of them.
- All candidates for election - don't wait until a winner is announced or takes office. Every candidate is already a community leader, and they will remain a community leader whether they are elected or not. You want their voice to understand and reflect the value of libraries to their constituents.

Civic Allies - Use common ground to build mutual support.

- Community organizations like the Rotary and Chamber of Commerce want businesses to grow and to build a community that will draw qualified employees. They should understand that a strong library is a key to a desirable community.
- Business community - Small businesses use library resources, technology and meeting spaces. While larger businesses may not use libraries as directly, their employees can benefit from libraries for ongoing continuing education or entrepreneurial side projects.
- Youth Service organizations - The YMCA or YWCA, Girl Scouts, after school care sites, any organization that supports kids in out-of-school hours understands the value of libraries and their role as a partner organization.
- Homeowner associations and neighborhood groups - take your message to people where they live. Every interaction with the public is a moment of advocacy. Reminding your neighbors of all that libraries bring to the community builds their ability to speak on the library's behalf. They must learn that they can no longer assume that libraries will just be there; libraries need active support.



Community Allies - Energize neighbors.

- Trustees and Friends - Trustees may be a governing body, or more of a funding support group. Most public libraries have a Friends group that fundraises through book sales and other activities. Members of these groups are voices waiting to be activated. Some Friends and Trustee groups hesitate to step into the role of advocate; it is your job to help them see how important it is that they take their support from a quiet behind-the-scenes role to a voice reminding their friends why they participate in these groups and the value their knowledge brings to their voice.
- Library and other volunteers - Many libraries also have a strong volunteer cohort who perform a variety of concrete functions in the library. Volunteers have an inside view of all that the library offers the community that they can carry beyond its walls.
- Teacher organizations and unions - Teachers are educators, as are librarians. Join forces on your common goals and priorities. They can speak about the value and educational impacts of libraries on students both inside and outside the school environment.
- Retired librarians and their friends - Retired librarians no longer feel the constraints that may limit current library employees from advocacy. Retirees can speak freely with neighbors and from podiums. Share your needs with them, and tell them how they can best advocate for your library.
- Vendors - Shopping local can be a great way to demonstrate tangible economic value of the library in the community. Where do you buy your office supplies, get your IT service, and shop for summer reading prizes? Local businesses want your business and would benefit from your organization having a strong budget to support your services and programs.

- Local authors and publishers - Local authors support strong libraries. Tap them to speak directly.
- Neighboring Community Libraries and their supporters - Especially in rural areas, library staff from one town might be able to support the libraries in neighboring communities, and vice versa.
- Online community - Most libraries are active on social media, and you manage how your community interacts there. Activate them with content that excites them enough to speak for you, informally or formally.

Library Adjacent Organizations and Allies

Many communities and states have organizations that exist to support the freedom to read. Connect with the groups in your area and see how you can be of assistance to one another. Even knowing that these groups are in your area in case you need them and making a connection in advance, can make a call to action more likely to draw support. Examples of groups include:

- Unite Against Book Bans and state-level versions of it, like Texans for the Right to Read
- UABB partners and their state chapters
- Authors Against Book Bans and state chapters
- National publishers and library vendors
- Literacy organizations - national and state
- Annie's Foundation - non-profit that distributes banned books in Iowa
- #FReadomFighters and similar groups in other states
- Houston Community Voices for Public Education - While they are mostly active in the school concept, they have welcomed the issue of school libraries as an essential element in strong education. That cry has brought other voices who understand how important library access is to building strong literacy skills and love of learning.
- Texas Freedom to Read Project - a parent-led group active in many communities across the state. Other states have similar groups.

WORKSHEET - Allies for Advocacy

Start with sympathetic people and organizations with whom you already have an established relationship. Then, repeat this exercise to build a list of names you don't yet have a relationship with and would like to begin to work with.

	Organization/ Office Names	Individual name/Contact Information	What are their priorities that might relate to yours? How might you establish Mutual Priorities?	One action that you can do this month to strengthen their voice as they talk about your library.	Conversation Planning and Follow up Notes
State Elected and Appointed Officials					
Local Elected and Appointed Officials					
Local Government Departments					
Local Community Organizations					
Local Businesses and Business Groups					
Youth Organizations					
Homeowner's Associations					
Library Trustees					
Friends Group					

	Organization/ Office Names	Individual name/Contact Information	What are their priorities that might relate to yours? How might you establish Mutual Priorities?	One action that you can do this month to strengthen their voice as they talk about your library.	Conversation Planning and Follow up Notes
Foundation					
Volunteers					
Local Educators					
School Board					
Neighboring Community Libraries (esp. In rural areas)					
Retired Librarians					
Local Authors and Publishers					
Social Media Accounts/ Followers					
Library Adjacent Groups					
Local Citizen Groups					
Library-Friendly Retirees					

Getting Started

Now that you have developed a list of potential partners, the real work of building your ecosystem can begin. Joining existing advocacy initiatives employing ecosystem thinking and bringing ecosystem thinking into your current collaborations and partnerships are both great on ramps to being more involved in the library ecosystem. The Allies for Advocacy activity asked you to brainstorm the full range of potential allies for advocacy in the library ecosystem. Before attempting to develop new relationships, take a look at your library's existing partnerships as a starting point. Your current collaborations for mutual benefit lay the groundwork to establish a shared advocacy agenda - whether focus on legislation or public awareness. Which organizations or individuals do you already have a good working relationship with? Which have the greatest potential for mutual advocacy? Is the relationship productive, and are they easy to work with? In the long run, you'll likely want to work on both public-facing and legislative initiatives in parallel, always aware that your local advocates are building your legislators' awareness of the importance of strong libraries to your community.

Identify Existing Partners Exercise

List all individuals and organizations your library has an active relationship with. Identify your current contacts, projects, and the desired outcomes from these activities.



Record existing partners across library types:			
Library/Type	Contact Info	Current Projects	Desired Outcomes or Mutual Priorities

Assess Advocacy Priorities - Think through your advocacy goals and priorities and those of your current and potential partners. How can you add to your current relationships to become each others' best advocates? What actions from partners would assist in those efforts? What are you willing to do to assist with their efforts? [Keep in mind the similarities and differences among library types](#)¹⁰ (refer to the “Comparison of Public, School, and Academic Libraries” chart on pages 10 and 11).

Brainstorm your priorities and those of your potential partners in the areas of Funding, Legislation, Community Awareness and Support, and Freedom to Read/Censorship. See where your priorities overlap. See the example table below.

Advocacy Priorities with examples:				
Your priorities (with notes)		What you think their priorities are		
Loss of levy, property tax reform	Funding			Aging facilities
Harmful to minors legislation	Legislation	Deprofessionalization, loosening professional requirements		Closure of state-wide research center
	Community Awareness and Support			
	Freedom to Read/Censorship		Loss of faculty status for librarians	

Actions Examples:

Ways you are willing to help other libraries and library workers		Ways you would like other libraries and library workers to help you
	Attend OR speak at public meetings	
	Serve on a board or committee	
	Write a letter to the editor	
	Do research and data analysis for shared issues	
	Join a library support group	
	Donate to a library initiative (friends, foundation, capital campaigns, prizes/giveaways)	
	Write a letter of appreciation/concern to the board or municipality	
	Leave online reviews	
	Share social media posts	
	Speak to a legislator as a constituent/user in their service area	
	Be a listening ear	
	Other	

Reach Out - Now that you have identified existing partners and thought about shared advocacy efforts, it is time to reach out.

This doesn't have to be an email from out of the blue. Leverage existing opportunities to broaden your relationship. Example: You are a children's librarian who meets with local school librarians to plan summer reading promotion as the school year ends. Funding for the school library and your summer reading program is under threat. This meeting is a natural opportunity to discuss joint advocacy actions to prevent funding decreases or increase funding based on the shared value of developing literacy and encouraging reading. You can attend school board meetings, and they can attend library board meetings and city council meetings to advocate and show support. Find a way to offer your support for their priorities, and request their support for yours. The easiest place to start may be shared priorities, but don't let a lack of clearly overlapping priorities keep you from connecting. You may have one priority in mind, and they may want another. Work together to determine how you can best support one another.

Developing a Collaborative Mindset for Ecosystem Success

Successfully building your ecosystem depends as much on the mindset you maintain as the actions you take. Take a moment to pause and reflect: do your actions stem from a mindset of competition or of collaboration? While it may appear natural to view resources like time and money through a lens of scarcity, ecosystem thinking asks us to take on a more generous mindset of abundance and reciprocity as we work with our partners. We have spoken about how a competitive mindset at the institutional level keeps libraries siloed, limiting the reach and impact of their advocacy efforts. This also holds true when individual library workers maintain a competitive mindset while trying to build their library ecosystem. A competitive mindset may make you think there's not enough funds to go around for you and similar organizations to get enough. But by flipping to a collaborative mindset, you can incorporate those organizations into your ecosystem, advocate together for the impact you have on your community, and result in the overall pot of funding increasing and resulting in more for all involved. As you build your ecosystem, remember: we are not competitors; we are all seeking the same goal of strong libraries of all types for every community.

Building the Relationship

Building a strong relationship with different types of libraries that include academic, public, school, special, state, and other libraries can foster collaboration, resource sharing, community enrichment, and advocacy efforts. Understanding the mission of each library type is a start to help explore shared objectives and help create mutually beneficial partnerships.

Regular meetings (on-site, virtual, conference call, etc.) should be held and each library type should send a representative to help foster communication. At initial meetings, make introductions, and give an overview of each library and library type. You may also want to include representatives of other local groups interested in supporting your Ecosystem, such as a representative from the Friends, volunteer, or from the groups you have reached out to.

Reach a consensus on meeting frequency and agendas, locations, whether they will be held in-person, virtually, or hybrid. Ideally, meetings should be held at least quarterly.

Check out the **Ecosystem Agenda Building template** on page 22 and 23.¹¹

Each participating library should take turns hosting and facilitating meetings, if possible; this also allows everyone to see the different libraries in action and have a deeper appreciation of their strengths and overlaps. During these meetings, representatives should feel comfortable sharing news, issues, and advocacy needs with other attendees. If the group takes minutes of these meetings, this portion of the meeting may be run as unminuted updates to ensure privacy and encourage candid conversations.

Ecosystem Agenda Building: Information Gathering

Template for Building a Collaborative Advocacy Agenda

This template offers one process for soliciting information regarding advocacy priorities from all library types in your ecosystem, consolidating that information to see overlaps, and developing collective priorities.



Issues that might inform advocacy priorities:

(There are many issues that libraries advocate for. Here are just a few to help you build a list that reflects your organization's priorities.)

Legislative Advocacy	Advocacy for Community Awareness
Funding	Diversity and inclusion
Staffing	Equity of access
Broadband and connectivity	Broadband and connectivity
Digital resources	Digital services
Access	In-person services
Standards	Resources

Ecosystem Agenda Template

Step 1 - Gather input from all organizations.

What type of agenda are you building? Legislative Public-Facing Advocacy

Organization: _____

Priority issues:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Potential overlap between above issues and priorities for other organizations:

-
-
-

Step 2 - Consolidate the input.

Take your content above and compare to other organizations.

Ecosystem Agenda Building			
Organization A	Organization B	Organization C	Organization D
Identify overlapping or related issues from information gathered above.			

Step 3 - Develop the shared agenda.

Look at the consolidated input to see how to consolidate these ideas into a prioritized, shared draft agenda.

-
-
-
-

Step 4 - Send for review and feedback to stakeholders who contributed the foundational information. Refine as needed.

Step 5 - Share results, conclusions and plans with stakeholders from all partner organizations.

CASE STUDY: The Dubuque Area Library Information

Consortium (DALINC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that brings together libraries from Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Originally formed to support collective purchasing of automation software, DALINC has grown into a dynamic network of six public libraries, seven academic libraries, and one school district.



While DALINC has long provided cost-saving and collaborative opportunities—such as shared purchasing, organizing a regional interlibrary loan conference, coordinating affordable group travel to national conferences, and supporting community-wide projects—its greatest impact lies in the relationships built among its members.

The consortium meets semi-monthly to conduct business, but the defining feature of these gatherings is the open, unstructured time where representatives share updates from their organizations. This candid exchange fosters a supportive environment where members celebrate successes, discuss challenges, and learn from one another's experiences. Topics range from budgets and staffing to vendor contracts, organizational restructuring, and the effects of proposed or newly enacted legislation.

By including public, school, and academic libraries, DALINC creates opportunities for collaboration across library types. Members gain insight into how issues play out across different library settings and are exposed to perspectives that might otherwise remain siloed. These relationships and information sharing strengthen advocacy efforts: when legislative issues arise, DALINC participants are better equipped to articulate the broad impact on libraries of every type, not just their own. For example, one DALINC member may live in the service area of one public library, be an employee of another public library, and have children attending both a public school and community college, all of which are members of the consortium. In conversations with legislators, that individual can speak not only as a parent and library user, but also as a professional representing the needs of their patrons—drawing on the perspectives shared by colleagues across the consortium. Though not every library in the region belongs to DALINC, its diverse membership ensures that discussions cover the range of library types and issues, and that members can craft the strongest possible case for the profession as a whole.

Through its combination of practical collaboration and personal connection, DALINC has become much more than a purchasing consortium. It is a trusted circle of peers who serve as each other's strongest advocates—improving not only their individual institutions, but also the library community as a whole.

Libraries should be encouraged to show their support of one another by cross-promoting and, if possible, attending each other's programs and events. Collaborating on public programs such as author talks, cultural festivals, and digital literacy as well as sharing resources such as collections, databases, and staff training is also encouraged. Other opportunities for collaboration may include joint community reading programs, grant applications and administration, archives collection and maintenance.

Work together to keep everyone engaged in your mutual initiative in order to keep the group moving forward. Each member's immediate advocacy priorities may change over time, and the group must remain sensitive to those changes while also keeping the group strategy in focus. Regular assessment of your purpose and effectiveness will support any necessary adjustments to meet evolving needs. It is better for a group to evolve in its purpose over time than to dissolve due to lack of interest or clear intent. In order to be sustainable the relationship must be built on trust, credibility, and respect of each library type, and a mutual effort to support one another.

By building a strong relationship among different library types, libraries can create a network of support and innovation that will enrich the diverse communities they serve and strengthen their collective impact.

SAMPLE OUTREACH EMAIL from One Library to Another Library Regarding:
Building Relationships with Different Library Types



Subject: Libraries Working Together to Build Relationships

Hello [**Representative Name**]:

My name is [**Your Name**] and I'm the [**Your Title**] at [**Your Library**]. I am reaching out because I have been following the work of [**Their Library**] and am particularly impressed with [**mention a specific program or service, or area they are involved in e.g. "your recent initiative on digital literacy" or "your extensive genealogical resources"**].

At [**Your Library**], we are focused on [**mention a relevant goal or service of your library, e.g. "expanding our lending of Chromebooks and Hotspots" or "expanding our family history program"**]. I see a great opportunity for our institutions to collaborate, especially in areas like [**suggest a specific area of collaboration, e.g. "enhancing access to information for all ages"**].

Please let me know if you are interested in collaborating with [**Your Library**]. My contact information is below and you can learn more about my library through our website at: [**link to your website**]

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

[**Your Name**]

[**Your Title**]

[**Your Contact Information**]

Formalize the Connection

There are many ways in which partner organizations may formalize their work together, including the advocacy work done on behalf of one or all of the participating partners. Partnerships can be formalized through one-time or long-term contracts, a Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement, or even by establishing a nonprofit focused specifically on joint initiatives, including advocacy efforts. Such a formal venture requires incorporation and all the associated paperwork and reporting requirements in your state.

Once established, with a clear purpose determined by members, the group should assess whether a formal partnership is appropriate, and how the partnership should be formalized. A non-profit, with individual organizations as members, is a formal way to establish the group and its purpose. If such an undertaking is beyond the means of the partners, less formal agreements such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) are helpful alternatives. An MOU or an MOA are not generally legally binding documents but they do help build clarity between all signing partners. An MOA tends to be task focused. It provides partners with specific actions and responsibilities for which everyone is responsible. An MOU on the other hand, provides the broader strokes of the work or project.

This is what makes an MOU particularly well suited to joint advocacy work. An MOU becomes a foundational document for partners to create mutual goals and a commitment statement. Much in the way that a mission statement and bylaws are foundational to starting a nonprofit.

CASE STUDY: MOU

While working for a small, rural branch of a large suburban library system, our statistical analyst noticed that the branch's community third-grade reading scores had a clear and steady downward trajectory. The community did not have a lot of resources. Aside from the post office, the library was the only other entity with connections outside of the town.

It became evident to the branch manager and the statistical analyst that this might be an opportunity, not only to do active literacy work within the school district, but to also begin the work of promoting and advocating for literacy and libraries to the whole community.

We began a project that would provide each third grade student their own copy of ten books. We chose the books on the state award list for the appropriate age group. In addition to providing the books, library staff would pay ten weekly classroom visits to hand out the books and the school district would promote library programs and initiatives in the school newsletter, at parent teacher conferences, and on curriculum nights.

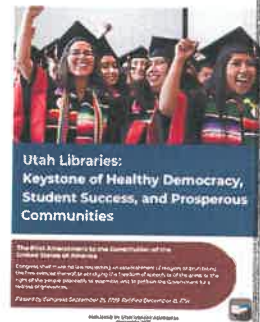
Collaborating on Advocacy

At a time when access to information is being restricted and libraries are under attack, collaborating with others to advocate for libraries has become increasingly important and can be very impactful. It can help build the case for funding support from our elected officials, which in the long run supports the diverse communities we so proudly serve. It is never too late to start a library advocacy campaign. However, advocacy should be a continuous effort. The community of supporters and decision makers need to hear from library advocates who include library employees, trustees, Friends of the Library groups, library patrons, neighbors, businesses, and community partners.

Library advocates should work together to set a list of goals such as improving public awareness about the value of libraries, seeking an increase in funding, or changing legislation in support of the freedom to read, or other such legislation. Goals may change or remain constant over the years. Once agreed on, a number of “action items” should occur such as creating an overall public statement or elevator speech, mapping out a plan that may include writing letters to newspaper editors, posting to social media, producing flyers, buttons, or signs educating library patrons about the issues.

Co-authoring a public statement or letter to an editor should have a core message for the set goals, and have an intended impact that reflects a unified voice. Before drafting the public statement or a letter to the editor, roles should be defined and a lead representative or spokesperson chosen who will be responsible for drafting sections, gathering feedback, and making final edits. Communication protocols and writing style should be established and followed. When drafting the public statement or letter to the editor, quotes from each organization or library leadership should be incorporated to show credibility and unified support of the message. Speaking together as a formal group, for example, a non-profit or formal committee, can lend outside validation to this work, even when speaking for the benefit of a member organization. At the end of the public statement or letter, contact information and a brief summary about each organization and, if appropriate, the formal group, should be provided.

Library advocates should consider speaking at school board meetings, community council meetings, churches and neighborhood groups, and chamber of commerce/business group meetings because these types of events can have a profound impact on promoting libraries, addressing issues, or advocating for increased funding.



Example: *Utah Libraries: Keystone of Healthy Democracy, Student Success, and Prosperous Communities* eBook.¹²



The Unite Against Book Bans' Guide to Attending Library and School Board Meetings can be used as a credible starting point because it offers tips for presenting.¹³



Prior to planning and holding events to raise library awareness, all advocates should be versed on their local, state, and federal legislative information. This includes but is not limited to local, state, and federal governments, American Library Association (ALA), State Associations and Libraries, and Regional Councils, etc. Libraries can find information from their local Board of Elections and/or on their local League of Women Voters website (LWV.org)¹⁴ where information on elected officials is usually provided.



Participating collectively in local and statewide advocacy, including local legislative visits or events such as Library Advocacy Days at the state level, does require some advance planning, and is much less intimidating when done as a group. Develop a coordinated message that includes the value of libraries, budget requests and legislative priorities. During the visits, elected officials should be provided with a package/folder with this information as well as flyers, brochures, Annual Reports, etc. about each library represented. Talking points that are clear and concise should be prepared for each participating library advocate. Legislators are also more likely to be responsive to a single meeting with a group of libraries, rather than individual meetings with each. Be sure to cover a variety of priorities, rather than each organization repeating the same talking points.

Inviting other library advocates to attend or speak at board meetings provides a strong voice for advocacy to the community. However, it is important to script out the presentation. If you have a limited time to speak, confirm who will be speaking and what issue/concern they are addressing. Libraries of different types can also help support each other by offering grant support letters or endorsing in writing initiatives that are mutually beneficial.

With a bit of planning and effective collaboration, different types of libraries can enhance their advocacy efforts and support their diverse communities.

Letters to the Editor can be effective tools for building community awareness and support for library issues. Letters can be written by individuals, libraries, or representatives of other groups on their own or others behalf. Determine the message of the letter and who the most effective author would be according to the message.

Before composing the letter, contact the newspaper to confirm their submission guidelines for length, and publication deadlines.

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR on Libraries Impact Everyone



[Date]
[Editor's Name]
[Publication Name]
[Office Address]
[City, State Zip Code]

Dear [Editor's Name]:

Hello, please consider this letter for your "Letters to the Editor" section of the [newspaper name]. Thank you in advance. If you need more information, I can be reached at: [contact phone # and email address].

At a time when access to information is being restricted and the U.S. economy is facing many challenges, communities rely more on the free programs and services provided by their libraries.

Academic, Public, School, Special, and State Libraries **Impact Everyone**. [Describe how each library type has an impact on addressing literacy, lifelong learning, workforce development, health access, civic engagement, etc.]

The expertise of library employees helps to provide programs and services that are vital to the diverse communities served here in [list your town or county]. [Share personal stories from library users – such as someone finding a job at a job fair, a family learning about healthcare initiatives through online resources, a student getting an A on a thesis paper because they used library resources, etc.].

For over a century, libraries have been trusted institutions and the community, with members from all walks of life, supports our efforts. Last year, [list your circulation or visits statistics] used the libraries!

We encourage the community to take advantage of their libraries today, especially if you haven't been to one in a long time. Libraries have changed! Libraries add value to your life and support lifelong learning efforts for everyone of any age who lives here.

For more information or to get involved in library advocacy, call or visit [phone number and website].

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

[Your Contact Information] [Letter should be co-signed if it is from multiple people.]

It's Your Time!

Now that you have identified your existing partnerships, mapped potential future partners, clarified your priorities, and gathered tools to support this work, the next step is to begin intentionally developing your library ecosystem. Every Ecosystem looks a bit different as it responds to local needs and goals; use the tools above to build exactly what you need. While many of these sections are focused on the relationships among libraries of all types, these exercises and tools are just as effective in building relationships with government partners, community organizations and other allied groups and individuals. These relationships require ongoing attention and care. By prioritizing regular communication and mutual support, you position your library to both offer help when others need it and to receive support when it matters most.

Remember that:

A library ecosystem is the interconnected network of all types of libraries, library workers, volunteers, and associations that provide and facilitate library services for community members; families; K-20 learners; college and university communities; local, state and federal legislatures and government offices; businesses; nonprofits; and other organizations with specific information needs.

*A patron of one library is the potential patron of any other library at a different time of life or location. No library exists independent of the library ecosystem. When we stand together in mutual support using common messaging themes that demonstrate this interconnectedness, **every library is stronger.***



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AGENDA ITEM REPORT

5.6.



To: Library Advisory Board
Subject: Strategic Planning Work Session with LAB, HPL Friends & Library Director
Meeting: Monday, June 1, 2026
Department: Library
Staff Contact:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

STAFF REVIEW:

FISCAL NOTES:

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

ATTACHMENTS:

None

AGENDA ITEM REPORT

5.7.



To: Library Advisory Board
Subject: Discuss LAB involvement in fundraising for HPL (Veronica Maxey)
Meeting: Monday, June 1, 2026
Department: Library
Staff Contact:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

STAFF REVIEW:

FISCAL NOTES:

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

ATTACHMENTS:

None