

Saskatchewan Public Library Governance

ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC TRUST MODULE

The basis for trusteeship is Public Trust.

“Public trust is the obligation placed on trustees to maintain, preserve, further develop and expand cultural resources and to ensure that cultural activity remains in the public domain to the benefit of this and future generations.”

Paquet, Marion A., Rory Ralston and Donna Cardinal. *A Handbook for cultural trustees: a guide to the role, responsibilities and functions of boards of trustees of cultural organizations in Canada*. Waterloo: University of Waterloo Press, 1987.

How do we accomplish this? Through **ADVOCACY**.

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is active support, especially for a cause. It includes several levels of activities:

- **Public Relations** – building awareness of your services with everyone, particularly in your community;
- **Promotion** – encourages people to attend an event at the library;
- **Marketing** – focused on a particular target group such as family and adult literacy services; and
- **Lobbying** – is a political activity that focuses on funding and legislative issues. (*Telling the Library Story – Advocating to Gain Support*, Karen Labuik, Marigold Library System, 2008.)

Of these four, the main focus for trustees is **LOBBYING**.

“Public libraries must be viewed as important infrastructure of social and intellectual capital. Public libraries are an integral component to developing human capital and ensuring our cities prosper. To provide young children and families access to a public library should be viewed as a cornerstone of civic progress and responsibility.”

The first step is **DEFINING YOUR LIBRARY'S VALUE**.

- Describe what your library does for your community.
- Look at your own documentation: Annual reports and audits show your investment in the community. Newspaper clippings of library events show audience participation and reactions. Reports for grants received show many accomplishments.
- Estimate the library's value: Use a tool such as the online Library Value Calculator found at <http://www.ilovelibraries.org/getinformed/getinvolved/calculator>.
- Talk to people in the community:
 - Do a survey.
 - Chat with groups.
 - Talk to individuals.



Maurizio Bevilacqua, Mayor, City of Vaughan, Ontario, former Member of Parliament, Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Minister, and Chairman of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance (National Statistical and Values Profile of Canadian Libraries: Report to CLA Executive Council / Alvin M. Schrader and Michael R. Brundin. November 30, 2012).

REMEMBER, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS ALONE!

The Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association and your library system have resources to help you, including themes and support documents. Check out the SLTA Advocacy page on their website: (<http://slta.ca/advocacy>).