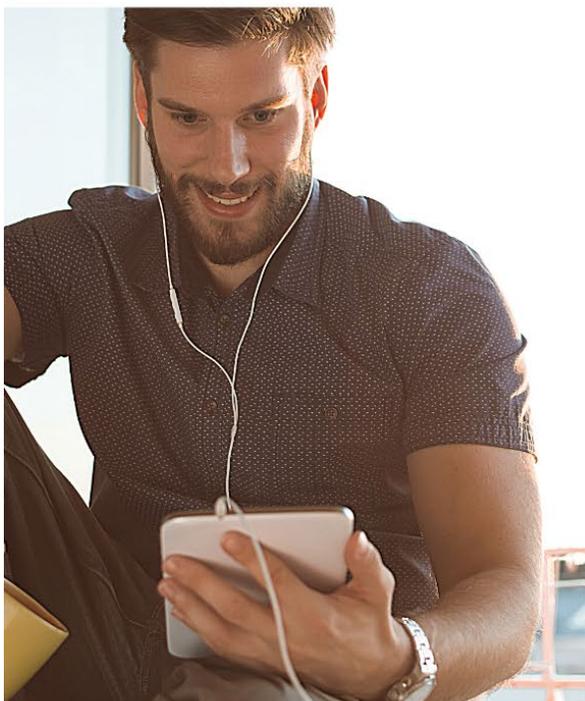




FALL 2020

GUIDE TO LIBRARY ADVOCACY & CONVERSATION WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

- The Basics
- Idea Sheet
- Talking Points & Crafting Your Message
- Approaching the Conversation
- Put It in Writing
- Internal Library Communications
- House & Senate Contact Information



The Basics

Purpose

We need legislators to talk about libraries and their importance to constituents, especially as our communities are in recovery mode from the COVID-19 crisis. **Your visit or phone call can fuel the conversation to gain necessary funds for library budgets.**

Goal

Contact your representative and/or senator to share information about your library and what a significant cut to state aid would mean for your library. In-person or scheduling a phone conversation is better, but talking with a staffer or writing an email is also great. Encourage others to share their positive, personalized library stories with legislators to increase the impact of the message.

The conversations don't have to be long. Just enough to get/maintain awareness of libraries and their current situations.

Who might make the contact? (In no particular order, because any contact with a positive take on libraries is awesome!):

- Trustees
- Friends of the Library
- Library staff
- Library volunteers
- Library patrons
- Library supporters

Things to Keep in Mind

- Within PA's Department of Education, K-12 has already received full funding, but the **Public Library Subsidy** has not received full funding yet.
- Library funding covers four lines within the Department of Education budget: State Library funding; **Public Library Subsidy**; Library services through LAMP (like Carnegie's Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped)
- Make your message clear, short, and relative to the legislators—what are their interests? Their committees? Their connections to your communities?
- Even if you can't talk to the legislator directly, their staffers are just as important!
- Always follow up! If you say in an email or phone call that you'll reach out soon, do so.
- If you reside in a different district than the location of your library, feel free to connect with legislators from both your residence's district and your library's district.
- Continue to connect with legislators and their staff throughout the fall--build those relationships for the long haul.
- **Always share/embed links when possible—legislator contact pages, legislator social media**

Ideas Sheet

Methods

There are quite a few examples and details presented in this document. If you're just looking for an idea or two that you want to personalize and run with, take it and run. If you're looking for a little more detail on the possible "how-to", check out the rest of this document.

Ways to Connect To Discuss Library Funding

Make the connection with legislative offices, either locally or through their Harrisburg offices. Check the listing found in this document if you're not sure who your legislators are or how to contact them. The more personal and direct you can have with a conversation, the more effective your message will be. Choose a method that is comfortable to you and that allows you to articulate your library's needs.

- Schedule a meeting at their local office or invite them to your library
- Schedule a video or phone chat
- Call the office and talk with a staff member
- Write a letter or email
- Fill out the contact form on their websites

Ways to Build Relationships Without Funding as a Focal Point

- Feel free to use any of the same approaches as above to share information about your library, programs, operating hours, etc. You can follow it up with "Please share this information with your constituents" as they may share it out through their channels.
- Offer to give a tour of your library (virtual or in-person)
- Ask legislators to read stories during storytime or, if they have a special interest unrelated to politics, to come and speak on that topic (virtual or in-person)
- Invite a legislator to attend a virtual program. Share the livestream link or Zoom information.
- After an election, write a note to each legislator thanking them for your service, introducing yourself and your library, and that you look forward to working with them in the near future.

Ways to Engage Your Colleagues with Library Advocacy

- **Colleagues could be anyone internal who works or volunteers for your library, facilitates programs, manages library social media, sits on a board for your library, and so forth.**
- Feel free to use any of the same approaches as above to share information about your library, programs, operating hours, etc. You can follow it up with "Please share this information with your constituents" as they may share it out through their channels.
- Write an email, newsletter blurb, or blog post through your internal channels to your staff or co-workers highlighting the need to have them contact their legislators as well as encouraging them to encourage patrons to contact legislators with their awesome, personalized library stories.
- After an election, encourage board members to assess their knowledge and relationships with the new slate of government officials.
<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org/advocacy/files/content/tools/ALABoardSurvey2019.pdf>
- Encourage them to follow legislators on social media and sign-up for legislator emails.

Talking Points & Crafting Your Message

Examples

Make it personal to your library. Share stories and examples to demonstrate impact. Just pick a couple of items to focus on. These conversations provide opportunities for library supporters to:

- Express the value of your library in your community. Talk about how the library has evolved.
- Share what your library offers/supports during these times—virtual programs, Wi-Fi, eCards?
- Demonstrate how your library has/will help with the COVID-19 recovery in your communities.
- Convey the concern in maintaining the funding for your library’s budget next year.
- Address how the loss of library-generated revenue from fundraising and library operations will impact your library’s budget.
- Discuss your library’s efforts in workforce development, early education, technology instruction, Internet access, community space, or other key topics important to your legislators.
- Talk about if your library has used a lot of or all of your funding reserves due to the current situation. (Will your library have any funding reserves next year if another crisis occurs?)
- Paint the picture of how a library can have a positive impact on specific communities or neighborhoods—use the neighborhood names so the legislator can better imagine the location.
- Give an example of specific person and how the library helped them achieve success—did someone get a job because of receiving assistance at the library? Did someone go to college online because they used the library’s Internet daily?

Take a look at the following chart, prompts, and questions to help you prepare and personalize your conversation.

CUSTOMIZE YOUR TALKING POINTS

Instructions: Use this chart for talking points when developing your messages. Choose the ones that you think will resonate the most with your legislator, and keep the chart handy in case someone questions whether or not you were able to do these things in pandemic conditions.

CONDITION	Community Builders & Advocates	Gateway to Knowledge, Culture and Opportunity	Local Economy Boosters
All of the time - when buildings are closed	<p>Listen for and assess community needs</p> <p>Work with community partners to meet the needs of our patrons</p> <p>Create virtual spaces for community members to meet</p> <p>Are a catalyst for addressing social problems, like rural broadband access</p>	<p>Curate diverse collections with a variety of topics and viewpoints to connect us to worlds and experiences not our own (available remotely)</p> <p>Provide online courses, databases, and books to help patrons learn new skills</p> <p>Create video tutorials to help people use digital resources</p>	<p>Increase access to Wi-Fi</p> <p>Support local business network; providing meeting software & training on virtual platforms for businesses to utilize virtual meeting spaces</p> <p>Help disadvantaged access government and social safety nets</p>
Limited access provided via curbside or time constrained visits	<p>Create virtual programming to support connections</p> <p>Coordinate with nearby libraries to provide the fullest range of services possible within a region</p> <p>Develop procedures for safe handling of materials and safe interactions with patrons</p>	<p>Deliver programs and resources in print and analog formats as well as digital</p> <p>Access to computers in the library</p> <p>Have staff available to be information navigators - helping you find the best information the quickest way</p>	<p>Support business leaders in making wise business decisions with library resources and leadership</p> <p>Access to print, copy and fax services</p>
Full Access	<p>Provide a “Living Room” for the community, where people can just engage with their neighbors</p> <p>Make a safe place to hold civil discourse</p> <p>Collect and amplify the “inherent genius of every cultural community” (Alan Lomax)</p>	<p>Encourage learning in groups, from each other</p> <p>Hold in-person training on technology and resources</p> <p>Curate toys and materials for children to learn to explore their world and share their resources</p>	<p>Space for entrepreneurs to hold meetings</p> <p>Space for employees to hold training programs</p> <p>Create programs to help bridge the economic divide that impacts students’ academic performance.</p>

LIBRARIES ARE KEY TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Instructions: Think of the list below as prompts; pick two or three and write down a story to support each one. Contact your consultant if you need some support with statistics or data, or just someone to practice with.

- Access to stories and information (activated hope, increased empathy, reduced stress, inspired change, improved circumstances)
- Supplemental materials for educational institutions to increase literacy and learning for students
- Expanded online resources for 24/7 access - Workforce development assistance, online learning, and digital materials
- Tools to evaluate and response to current issues - pandemic, protests, election
- Makerspaces - Tools to support innovation and creativity
- Prioritized access to the resources our patrons need the most - especially computer access & business services (printing, scanning, faxing)
- One-on-one assistance with research needs and computer assistance
- Keep people on the job (skills training, access to job postings, application tools via WiFi)
- Keeping communities connecting virtually - increased broadband access, eased restrictions on use
- Peer-to-Peer social support - programs, interaction with staff, resources, hangout spaces

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Instructions: Think about the questions below that might directly impact your funding sources.

- How much state aid did your library receive in FY2020 (July 2019 – June 2020)? \$ _____
- What percent of your library budget did this fund? _____%
- How much is 5/12 of the state aid you received? How much would you lose if 7/12 is cut from your allotment? (These two numbers should add up to the amount in the first question.)
Received: \$ _____ / Lost: \$ _____
- What kinds of resources might you have to cut if your library doesn't receive level funding?

- What are the municipalities that your library service area covers that also align with the legislator's district? (Consider the populations of these municipalities and let your legislators know just how many of their constituents your library serves.)

Approaching the Conversation

In-person, Virtual, Phone, Email

Find the method that you feel comfortable with and go from there.

Have to Leave a Message?

It's a busy time for everyone, especially the legislators. If you reach a voicemail or are asked to leave a message, here is a sample script to get you started. Feel free to customize.

My name is ____ from ____ Library and I am calling on behalf of the Library Legislative efforts. We are asking you to support flat funding for the Public Library Subsidy to allow libraries to keep doing the amazing work they do. We have continued to serve your constituents throughout the COVID-19 closures and need your support to be a part of the recovery process. I am happy to set up a time to meet or talk more about the library and can be reached at _____. Thank you!

So You Scheduled a Meeting?

Whether it's in-person, by video, or by phone with the legislator or their staff, the meeting doesn't have to be extensive. Try this format (though go with the flow if the legislator/staff have questions).

- Introduce yourself, the name of your library, your role at the library, and if you've brought anyone with you to the meeting.
- Explain why you're contacting that person. Example: *We want to share with you some information about our library.*
- Share a couple of quick things about your library, especially if your library has been helpful in your community's recovery process of COVID-19. Example: *Our library offers Wi-Fi from our building to area residents who wouldn't have access otherwise due to the lack of broadband access in our municipalities.*
- Talk about why you need more than 5/12 funding, about why a 7/12 cut would be detrimental to your library. Example: *Our library needs to receive at least the same amount of funding we received last year in order to maintain the hours, staff, and programs that our community needs.*
- Ask them if they have any questions and thank them for their time.

Not Sure What to Say in a Phone Call?

Planning to call your legislator to ask for their support of Pennsylvania libraries? Here's a template to use as a starting point. Any questions or want some practice? Contact your District Consultant!

(DistrictConsultant@senecadistrictlibraries.org / 814-230-0022)

Tips before you call:

- Write down the main points you want to express. Gather all of your supporting details.
- Know your legislator! Tailor your talking points to them. Look at the committees they serve on and their special interests and highlight how your library supports those.
- Practice what you are going to say. Keep it short, try to keep it to 2 or 3 minutes.
- Be ready to answer questions or give more information if they ask for it.
- Have a voicemail script ready - know what you are going to say if you get the machine. This may be a good practice run, if you are nervous about calling your legislator.
- Be prepared to give your address or zip code so they can verify you are in their district.

During the call:

INFORMATION UPDATED JAN. 21, 2021

- Ask to speak to the legislator. If he or she is not available, leave a brief message and request a return call from the legislator or the legislator's staff; the staff are just as critical as the legislator as legislators depend heavily on their staff.
- Tell them who you are and identify yourself as someone who lives in the legislator's district.
- Tell them the problem and why you are concerned.
- Let them know that libraries need full level funding in November.

Remember:

- Always be polite.
- Keep it in your voice - give the core message and say it the way you would actually say it. It's not graded!
- If you don't know the answer to their question, it's okay. Tell them that you don't have the answer right now, but you will find out and get back to them. Make sure to follow-up if you say you will get back to them. Examples:
 - That's a good question and I want to get you the exact and accurate answer. Let me get back to you by (end of day/give date)."
 - "I can answer that in part, but would like to check with (library director/district consultant) and get back to you."
 - "Great question. I'm just not familiar enough with XYZ to hazard a guess. May I connect you with our district consultant who can address that for you?"
- Thank them for taking the time to talk with you.

Here's a sample script:

Hello, my name is [your name]. As a voter in your district, I'm calling to ask [Name of Legislator] to support full funding for libraries in the November budget decisions.

I am a [board member/staff member/a patron] of the [Name of Library]. [Share a story about how your library makes a difference in your life or your community. Use the charts for prompts!]

Libraries are at the center of community renewal and transformation. They support the educational and recreational needs of ALL community members; however, they need adequate funding to provide these services. With full level funding, libraries can continue to provide needed job resources, educational resources, and expertise in navigating through the abundant inaccurate and often incorrect information that community members find at their fingertips.

Please support full level funding for libraries in the November budget decisions to ensure your constituents are well served. Thank you for your time.

Put It in Writing

If an email or a letter is more your style, here is a template to consider. You can use this as a base for completing the contact forms on legislators' websites. Please note that regular mail can take more time to get to them. Copy/paste the following onto your own letterhead to start, but be sure to personalize it for your library.

Date

Senator [Full Name]

Home District Address Closest to You

City, State Zip

Dear Senator [Last Name Only],

As the [insert position] at [library name], I wanted to urge you to support the Public Library Subsidy for Pennsylvania public libraries.

When Pennsylvania's public libraries closed their buildings to help stop the spread of COVID-19, library staff quickly came up with ways to continue to serve their communities. Libraries across the Northwest region adapted their services rapidly by launching virtual programs, expanding digital collections and keeping Pennsylvanians connected with internet access. Our library was able, and continues, to serve your constituents by [talk about what your library is doing].

[Library name] is currently facing a cut of \$[7/12 of state aid]. This would mean our library would lose [describe what your library could lose if not level funded].

Within PA's Department of Education, K-12 has already received full funding for the current funding year, but libraries have not. We can continue to provide strong library services to your constituents when we have strong funding and support from our local officials. I encourage you to support libraries by voting to fully fund the Public Library Subsidy in November.

Thank you for your consideration on these matters. Libraries are valuable to their communities and part of the key to a strong future. Your continued support of libraries will help Northwestern Pennsylvanians help themselves. As always, we welcome you to visit our library when you are nearby or take a virtual tour. I may be reached at [Phone] or [Email] to arrange a visit.

Sincerely,

[signature]

[full name]

[position]

Internal Library Communications

Internal Newsletters

Write a blurb for internal staff, encouraging them to reach out to patrons about contacting legislators as well as reminding them that their voice is important, too.

Legislators revisit the remaining 2020-2021 budget in early November. At this time, our library has only received 5/12 of state aid from what it received last year. Whatever they decide could have an impact on the remaining state aid distributed to our library, county, and district, which could play a role in how our library operates in the new year. Let the legislators know how important it is that the **public library subsidy line** within the Department of Education receives **full, level funding**. Contact them, have friends and family contact them, but also try to encourage patrons with positive stories to contact them. Let's be heard that libraries are NECESSARY to economic recovery! (Add links to legislator info—whether a document to download or direct links to their contact pages—and templates to help)

Internal Blog Post

Use a blog post (or two) to share information about your library and what a cut to state aid could mean to library operations. Share with staff the importance of encouraging patrons to contact legislators. Patrons can show their support, advocate for library funding, and share their libraries stories.

Seneca Library District: House & Senate Contact Information

All Counties in the Seneca District share the same congressman. Here's the contact information for future reference:

Glenn Thompson (R), Federal House District #15



Washington, DC Office: 400 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 /
Phone: (202)225-5121

Oil City Office: 217 Elm St., Suite B, Oil City, PA 16301 / Phone: (814) 670-0432

Ebensburg Office: 107 S. Center St., Ebensburg, PA 15931 / Phone: (814) 419-8583

Bellefonte Office: 3555 Benner Pike, Suite 101, Bellefonte, PA 16823 / Phone: (814) 353-0215

Website: <https://thompson.house.gov/>

Contact Page (Form): <https://thompson.house.gov/contact>

Schedule a Meeting (Form): <https://thompson.house.gov/contact/invite-me-to-speak> (Under Type of Request, select 'Meeting Request')

Committees:

House Agriculture Committee

General Farm Commodities and Risk Management (Ranking Member)

Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research

Livestock and Foreign Agriculture

House Education and Labor Committee

Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education

Civil Rights and Human Resources

In this scenario, we're talking about state funding. Check for the Pennsylvania representative and senator for your library and/or your personal residence, then find their contact information that follows. Please check their contact pages for the hours of each office. If no phone number is listed with an address here, no phone number was listed for that particular site on their contact page.

Public Library of Cameron County	PA House District	Name	PA Senate District	Name
Barbara Moscato Brown Memorial Library (Emporium)	67	Martin T. Causer (R)	25	Cris Dush (R)

Public Libraries of Elk County	PA House District	Name	PA Senate District	Name
Johnsonburg Public Library	75	Mike Armanini (R)	25	Cris Dush (R)
Ridgway Public Library	75	Mike Armanini (R)	25	Cris Dush (R)
St Marys Public Library	75	Mike Armanini (R)	25	Cris Dush (R)
Wilcox Public Library	75	Mike Armanini (R)	25	Cris Dush (R)

Public Libraries of Forest County	PA House District	Name	PA Senate District	Name
Marienville Area Public Library	63	Donna Oberlander (R)	21	Scott E. Hutchinson (R)
Sarah S. Bovard Memorial Library (Tionesta)	65	Kathy L. Rapp	21	Scott E. Hutchinson (R)

Public Libraries of McKean County	PA House District	Name	PA Senate District	Name
Bradford Area Public Library	67	Martin T. Causer (R)	25	Cris Dush (R)

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Friends Memorial Library (Kane)	67	Martin T. Causer	25	Cris Dush (R)
Hamlin Memorial Library	67	Martin T. Causer	25	Cris Dush (R)
Mt. Jewett Memorial	67	Martin T. Causer	25	Cris Dush (R)
S.W. Smith Memorial	67	Martin T. Causer	25	Cris Dush (R)

Public Libraries of Warren County	PA House District	Name	PA Senate District	Name
Sheffield Township Public Library	65	Kathy L. Rapp (R)	21	Scott Hutchinson (R)
Sugar Grove Free Library	65	Kathy L. Rapp (R)	21	Scott Hutchinson (R)
Tidioute Public Library	65	Kathy L. Rapp (R)	21	Scott Hutchinson (R)
Warren Public Library	65	Kathy L. Rapp (R)	21	Scott Hutchinson (R)
Youngsville Public Library	65	Kathy L. Rapp (R)	21	Scott Hutchinson (R)

Representatives

Martin T. Causer



78 Main Street, 1st Floor · Bradford, PA 16701

Phone: (814) 362-4400 · Fax: (814) 362-4405

107 South Main Street, Room 1 · Coudersport, PA 16915

Phone: (814) 274-9769 · Fax: (814) 274-8159

55 Fraley Street · Kane, PA 16735

Phone: (814) 837-0880 · Fax: (814) 837-2257

147 Main Capitol Building, PO Box 202067 · Harrisburg, PA 17120-2067

Phone: (717) 787-5075 · Fax: (717) 705-7021

Website: <http://www.repcauser.com/>

Contact Page (Form): <http://www.repcauser.com/contact>

Leadership: Majority Policy Chairman

Hon. Mike Armanini



DuBois Area Plaza, Suite 10 · 1221 East DuBois Ave. · DuBois, PA 15801

Phone: (814) 375-4688 · Fax: (814) 375-5955

53 South St. Marys St., Suite 2 · St. Marys, PA 15857

Phone: (814) 781-6301 · Fax: (814) 781-7213

315 East Market St., Suite 100 · Clearfield, PA 16830

Phone: (814) 765-0593 · Fax: (814) 765-0592

160B East Wing, P.O. Box 202075 · Harrisburg, PA 17120-2067

Phone: (717) 260-6142 · Fax: (717) 782-2906

Website: <http://www.repmikearmanini.com/>

Contact Page (Form):

<https://www.pahouseformcenter.com/429/RepMikeArmanini/SecureContact>

Committee Assignments:

Commerce, Environmental Resources & Energy, Human Services, Veteran Affairs
& Emergency

Donna Oberlander



160 South Second Avenue, Suite C · Clarion, PA 16214

Phone: (814) 226-9000 · Fax: (814) 226-1614

309 East Saltwork Street · Elderton, PA 15736

Phone: (724) 354-3500 · Fax: (724) 354-2896

121 Main Capitol Building, PO Box 202063 · Harrisburg, PA 17120-2063

Phone:(717) 772-9908 · Fax: (717) 782-2912

Website: <http://reoberlander.com/>

Contact Page (Form): <http://www.reoberlander.com/contact>

Leadership: Majority Whip

Committees:Committee on Committees; Rules

Kathy Rapp



109 South Washington St., Park Building · Titusville, PA 16354

Phone: (814) 827-6054 · Fax: (814) 878-5778

404 Market St · Warren, PA · 16365

Phone: (814) 723-5203 · Fax: (814) 728-3564

213 Ryan Office Building, PO Box 202065 · Harrisburg, PA 17120-2065

Phone: (717) 787-1367 · TTY: 1-855-282-0614 · Fax: (717) 787-5854

Website: <http://www.reprapp.com/>

Contact Page (Form): <http://www.reprapp.com/contact>

Committees: Environmental Resources & Energy; Health, Chair

Senators

Michele Brooks



100 Hadley Rd, Suite 9 · Greenville, PA 16125

Phone: (724) 588-8911 · Fax: (724) 588-5464

16678 McMath Ave. · Meadville, PA 16335

Phone: (814) 337-8132 · Fax: (814) 337-5055

99 Erie St. Suite 1 · Edinboro, PA 16412

Phone: (814) 734-2783 · Fax: (814) 734-2789

Website: <https://www.senatorbrooks.com/>

Contact Page (Form): <https://www.senatorbrooks.com/contact/>

Committees: Aging & Youth , Vice Chair

Agriculture & Rural Affairs

Health & Human Services , Chair

Local Government

Rules & Executive Nominations

Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness

Scott E. Hutchinson



229 Elm Street · Oil City, PA 16301

Phone: (814) 677-6345 · FAX: (814) 677-6331

22045 Route 6 · Warren, PA 16365

Phone: (814) 728-2100 · Fax: (814) 728-2102

170 Main Capitol · Harrisburg, PA 17120

Phone: (717) 787-6088 · TTY: 1-800-364-1581

Website: <https://www.senatorscotthutchinson.com/>

Contact Page (Form): <https://www.senatorscotthutchinson.com/contact-me/>

Committees: Communications & Technology, Vice Chair

Environmental Resources & Energy

Finance, Chair

Health & Human Services

Local Government

Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness

Cris Dush



Five Main Street, Wellsboro, PA 16901

Phone: (570) 724-5231 · Fax: (570) 723-5119

16 East Wing, Senate Box 203025, Harrisburg, PA 17120-3025

Phone: (717) 787-7084 · FAX: (717) 787-7084

Website: <https://senatorcrisdushpa.com/>

Contact Page (Form): <https://senatorcrisdushpa.com/contact-me/>

Leadership: Local Government, Chair