EveryLibrary | 501(c)4 Political Action Committee
• Election Days and Negotiations
• Support for Legislative Agendas
• Outreach and Activism to the Public

EveryLibrary Institute - 501(c)3 Research and Policy Think Tank
• Research Agenda
• Training Programs
• Programmatic Partnerships and Coalitions
Taking Inventory

What Inspired or Moved You at VLA 2021?
While I am not on the committee....

• How do we want to treat people?
• What kind of place do we want to live in?
• What are library-shaped solutions to problems?
• How can our libraries and our association anticipate and create the new / next normal?
Understanding Your Own Agenda

What are your (personal and professional) hopes?
- Put Our Ethical Principles into Action
- Create More Interesting Libraries
- Help People Thrive
- Support Prosperous Places
- Stop Duplicative Services
- Make Something New and Wonderful
What Funders Want Now

• Coming through COVID, policymakers, elected officials, voters, and philanthropic funders want to see their money go to effective programs and competent staffing in ways that deliver results.

• They want to support programs and projects that can be measured and justified through data as well as stories.

• They are looking for the right way to apply funding and resources - whether taxes or philanthropy or grants - to solve problems.
Disrupted Budgets and Noisy Political Processes

- Austerity mindsets lag economic growth
- Highly volatile budget situations lead to conservative spending plans
- The “One Time Money” excuse
- Town and campus budgeting was never rational before COVID....
What do you want to change?
What do you want to create?
And how do you pay for it?

*Inspired to Act*
Inspired to Act
What Do You Want to Get Funded?

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Advocacy or Activism

A Theory of Change model for library leaders

- Most library trainings and seminars conflate advocacy and activism - to the detriment of both.
- Advocacy is a long game.
- Activism is quick.
- Understanding what you want to accomplish should drive your approach.
Theory of Advocacy

If your advocacy framework assumes an adversarial situation then you have a real problem.

- Education
  - What are libraries capable of today?
- Orientation
  - Who are librarians and library workers today?
- Ideation
  - What could a shared solution look like?
- Identification
  - What resources do we need in place to authentically collaborate?
- Activation
  - When will we both commit to a collaboration?
Advocacy is a long-game.
It is focused on building relationships through an understanding a shared-values framework, purposefully aligning missions, and finding ways to realize a common vision for either people or a place.
**Theory of Activism**

If you are not willing to be focused on your own self interest or use an active voice, all you are is hopeful.

- Based in Shared Values
  - It affirms or offends a belief
- Focused on Shared Identity
  - It builds community
- Has Integrity
  - It is honest in its motivation and authentic in its goals
- Directs Activity
  - It uses verbs and speaks in the first person
- Organizes Supporters
  - It identifies, cultivates, and empowers
Activism is quick.

It is intended to move people who are otherwise inactive or unaware about an issue or idea into action by eliciting a personal response based on a shared values-system, an ideology, or a shared identity.
Political Frames

What Do You Want to Get Funded?
Funding for libraries is a political decision.

Directly or indirectly, how we choose to tax ourselves and what values are expressed in our budgets, policies, and programs are fundamentally political in nature.
Three Political Narratives

• Progressives
• Conservatives
• Libertarians

“Three Languages of Politics” by Arnold Kling
My heroes are people who have stood up for the *underprivileged*.

The people I cannot stand are the people who are *indifferent* to the oppression of women, minorities, and the poor.
My heroes are people who have stood up for *Western values*.

The people I cannot stand are the people who are *indifferent* to the assault on the moral virtues and traditions that are the foundation for our civilization.
My heroes are people who have stood up for *individual rights*.

The people I cannot stand are the people who are *indifferent* to government taking away people’s ability to make their own choices.
What happens when you are variant from or at odds with your audience, your funding partner, or your decision-maker?
Supporters and Partners

What Do You Want to Get Funded?
How people listen

Four ways that people are wired to care about... anything.

• Compassionately Engaged
  • Populations and people

• Pride of Place
  • Interesting, thriving, and prosperous

• The Data Shows It
  • Data about outcomes as lens

• Concerned or Fearful
  • Focused on filling gaps
Why people listen

Four factors that build parties and movements

“The Political Brain” by Drew Westin (2008)

• Shared Values
  • Does the campaign or candidate align with my deeply-held belief(s)?

• Shared Identity
  • Does the campaign or candidate represent me in some way?

• Personal Characteristics
  • Do I like the candidate or admire the campaign?

• Specific Policies
  • Will the candidate or campaign do what it says when I am not looking?
Who are the Allies of Activists?

Why someone is motivated to act on behalf of an ideal

- Relational Supporters
  - “Knows” libraries and librarians
- Ideological Supporters
  - Aligned with what librarians and library workers do
- Aversion Supporters
  - Would like to avoid bad outcomes based on principals or ideals
- Access Supporters
  - Motivated by feedback, praise, or gratitude
Stories that Resonate

Four potential approaches to root your campaign

• Stories of Success demonstrate your competency
  • Scale or replicate
• Stories of Failure demonstrate your integrity
  • Avert or fix
• Stories about people you care about
  • Find a common concern
• Stories about why you do what you do
  • Find a common cause
The Activist’s Playbook

What Do You Want to Get Funded?

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Users are not necessarily supporters and supporters don’t need to be users.

Activist’s Guiding Principles

• Must focus on identifying, cultivating, and empowering supporters
• Must not focus on building users
• Must ask for and allow actions
• Must allow people to participate as donors, volunteers, and do-ers
Advocacy Principles

What Do You Want to Get Funded?
Advocacy Principles

• “Marketing Tomorrow” builds use; “Marketing Yesterday” builds support

• Programmatic Partners are unactivated allies. They already share a mission.

• Coalitions are core to advocacy campaigns. Who else cares?

• You are the only expert on libraries and librarianship and you must define the negative

• No one will solve your budget or policy issue for you
Funding-Focused Partnerships and Coalitions are based on:

- Shared Values
- Common Mission
- Aligned Vision

Coalitions are Focused on Funding or Policy Not Programming or Services
Who Else Cares?

- Economic Development
- Workforce and Re-tooling
- Early Childhood and Grade Level Reading
- COVID-Slide
- Housing and Food Security
- Safety and Violence
- Well-being
Your “Book” Carries Your Values, Vision, Mission:

- Strategic Plan
- Building Plan
- Technology Plan
- Budget
- Annual Report
Empowering Staff to Carry the Message:

• Your own values about libraries?
• Your own vision for your community?
• Why you do this work?
• What happens if you don’t?
Talk about Plan B and Plan A

- Plan A = what happens if we are properly funded or empowered
- Plan B = what happens if we are under-funded or disempowered

Then please stick to it.
New Money only comes from four places: Reallocations, Outside Aid, New Taxes, or Cuts.

New Policy or Legislation is introduced by an elected official but written by engaged stakeholders.
From Advocacy to Activist

Vermont Library Association | June 2, 2021

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