

Advocacy Etiquette 101

1. Preparing for the visit.
 - a. Appoint a **library leader**. This may be your library or system director. It is best to be someone familiar with the library/system needs.
 - b. Go with a **group**: Good: librarians; Better: trustees, friends; Best: **library users**.
 - c. Make an **appointment**. Your library leader can do this for you.
 - d. Try to meet with **legislator** not aide, especially in the home office. This is sometimes more difficult to do in Albany. (But aides are important and legislators rely on them, so don't be offended if you meet with an aide.)
 - e. **Do some homework. VERY IMPORTANT**. Find out something about the legislator. What **matters most** to him/her? What committees is she/he on? What's important to the community?
 - f. The FOURTH KEY to effective advocacy – **ACTION: know what you want – get a commitment**.
 - i. Have written **"talking points."** A one page summary of what you are asking for and why it is important. **What difference will it make?** (Avoid jargon, be specific, but brief.)
 - ii. Your library leader should be the **"detail" person**, and needs to be familiar with what you are asking for. You need to supply the **psychology** – the **stories**, the **impact**.
 - g. Dress appropriately. (We're not kidding.)
2. At the Visit:
 - a. Be on time.
 - b. Assign a **spokesperson** who will lead the conversation. Does NOT need to be the library leader, but it can be.
 - c. Spokesperson should **introduce** everyone.
 - d. Start the conversation: **Thank him/her** for being a library supporter.
 - e. **Stay on topic**. Talk may stray from libraries. Bring it back.
 - f. **Say what you want** him or her to do and try to get a commitment.
 - g. Remember Enthusiasm, Emotion, Psychology – **Tell a story**.
 - h. If you don't know something, say you'll find out.
 - i. **Don't be intimidated**. The legislator is an important person, but he/she works for you and your community.
 - j. **Don't get angry**. You can express frustration and disappointment, but don't get mad.
 - k. **Leave on a positive note**. Thank him/her for their time. Repeat what it is you are asking for.
 - l. Bring a camera!
3. After the Visit:
 - a. Send a **thank you**. A handwritten note is good.
 - b. Library leader: Send a thank you to those that accompanied you on the visit.
 - c. **Evaluate** the visit. What went well. What didn't. If you promised to do something, be sure you do it. Refine your presentation for the next time.