

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>).

The next step is *PLAN YOUR CAMPAIGN*.

What is it you want to achieve?

A cost of living increase? More staff? An expansion of programs to bring people into the library?

What is your goal?

Who can help you meet that goal? Make lists of names of people you will want to bring on board. Who are your MLA and MP? Who is on the community council? Who knows whom in the government?

How can you persuade these people to support you? What do you know of their interests? Who on your board has similar interests?

Where can you meet them? Is it better to call, write or email them?

What is your message?

The Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association message in 2015 is "*Libraries matter*" (<http://slta.ca/advocacy>). The Pakhisonon Nuyé/Éáh Library System message in 2015 is "*Keep information flowing through the library channels of the North!*"

(<http://pnls.pbworks.com/w/page/95796374/Campaign%202016%20Budget>).

What is your time line?

Remember that the provincial budget and federal and provincial legislation have a path through government and a set of guidelines (See attached Saskatchewan's Planning and Budgeting Cycle for its timeline.). There is no point in lobbying the Minister if the budget has already gone to the Cabinet.

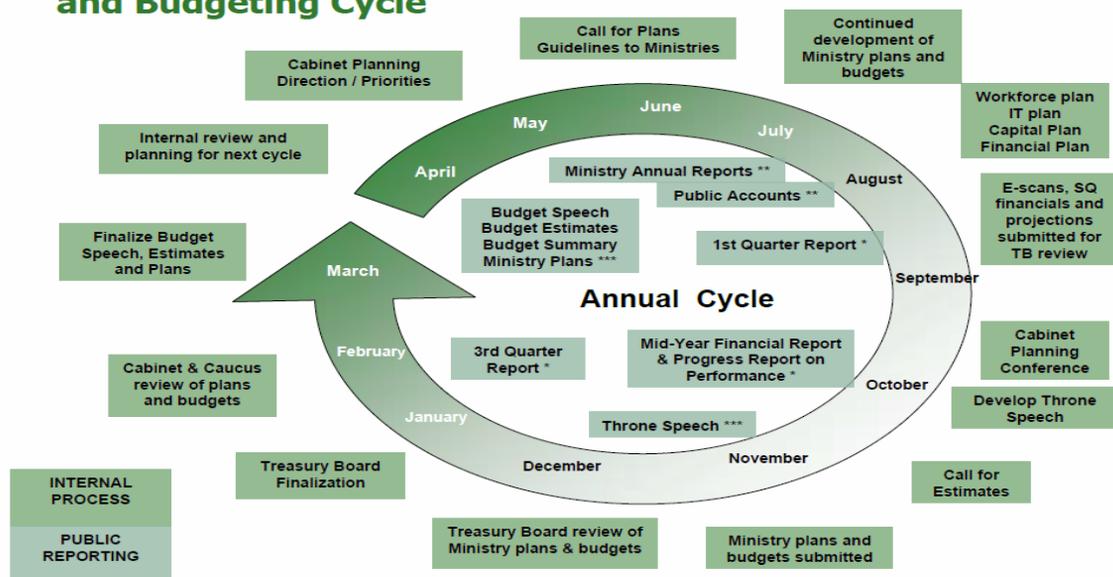
Once your plan is in place, the ensuing step is to *IMPLEMENT YOUR PLAN!*

- Set up a common calendar of meeting dates and who is assigned to do a presentation.
- Write your letters and keep copies of all letters written.
- Keep lists of who is contacting whom and their progress to the meeting.
- Have regular meetings of your campaign committee to chart your progress, look for gaps and check on your timing.

The final step is to *EVALUATE YOUR PLAN.*

- Did you achieve your goal?
- Did the Provincial Budget have the increase that you wanted?
- What parts worked best?
- What didn't work well?
- Did things change along the way? Why?
- Was it an improvement?
- What did we learn?

Saskatchewan's Planning and Budgeting Cycle



Note: this illustrates a typical cycle, variations in the timing may occur from year to year.
In any given year, public reports are provided for the current year (*) the year just completed (**) and the upcoming year (***)