

## Strategies for Strong Support

Top tips for building relationships with key stakeholders

### Elected officials

- Know **who represents** your area and stop by their local office to say hello. Drop off **an infographic** to show how your library supports their constituents and adds to the quality of life in the neighborhoods they represent.
- Bring printed copies of your **summer reading program calendar** or **library “welcome” brochures** for officials to share with visitors. Bonus: This helps to keep the elected official updated, too.
- Consider creating a newsletter specifically for elected officials **like this one** from Bridges Library System in Wisconsin.
- Invite officials to tour your library and meet the staff and volunteers. Offer the officials the opportunity to hold “pop up” office hours on site.
- Ask them to read their favorite childhood book at storytime (and be sure to promote it). If you add a makerspace or new branch, include the official in a ribbon cutting. Invite the media and make it an event! Take pictures and include them in your monthly newsletter and share them with the official to share in their communications, too.

### Library Trustees

- Many of the ideas above are great for your board members, too. Invite them to any event attended by an elected official. It’s crucial that your director attends with as many senior leaders as possible.
- Provide board members with key library statistics and talking points about your services. Give them examples of how people have been helped by your library.

## Friends, Foundations, and Donors

- Ask your Friends or foundation to present an oversized check written from them to the library so you can make an event of it. Invite the media for a photo op, take your own photos to include in your newsletter, and ask your Friends or foundation to do the same.
- Invite donors back to see their contributions in action. Show them your busy computer lab or include them in a ribbon cutting and **publicly thank them**. Consider creating a public donor recognition wall. Send donors regular email newsletters to let them know the impact of their donations. Create a sense of community and ongoing appreciation.
- **Here's how** the Library of Virginia keeps their state's boards of trustees, Friends groups, and library foundations up to date.

## BONUS: Facing budget challenges

- As soon as your library is aware there could be budget cuts, contact your board of trustees, Friends of the Library, and Foundation board. Ask them to join you for meetings with any elected officials they know personally. Provide talking points about why your library needs adequate funding.
- After meeting with elected officials, send a timely note thanking them for their time. Be sure to respond promptly if they request additional information.
- Consider holding a town hall meeting in a supportive official's district to share your funding proposal with the community. Include time for Q&A. Give the official time on the agenda to speak. They'll appreciate the face time with constituents.
- Include information about your budget needs on your website and include the link on social media. Offer a way for the community to ask questions and make sure to respond. Consider sending regular updates via email. LibraryAware customers can create a **Subscriber Interest Group** so patrons can easily sign up. Share a link to your opt-in page on social media and in your monthly newsletter to build your list.