



Advocacy & Education Committee

Purpose

The IHLS Advocacy and Education Committee fosters communication between IHLS members, staff, and local, state, and national policymakers. In alignment with the IHLS Strategic Plan's goal to *Engage Members*, the committee ensures that libraries are recognized as essential drivers of literacy, equity, economic development, and community vitality. The committee provides members with clear opportunities to connect, communicate, and advocate through activities such as training, resource development, surveys, and legislative updates.

Membership Composition

The committee consists of 9 voting members. Meetings will be open to all IHLS members to observe, with opportunities for public comment as time allows.

Minimum Requirements

- At least two IHLS Board members
- At least one IHLS staff member (designated by the Executive Director; staff serve in an advisory, non-voting capacity)
- At least one IHLS member from a school library
- At least one IHLS member from a public library
- At least one public library trustee

Additional Considerations

- To avoid over-reliance on overlapping roles, distinct individuals should be recruited whenever possible.
- The committee will strive for balanced representation across public, school, academic, and special libraries, as well as geographic diversity across the IHLS service area.
- Membership terms will be for two years, renewable, to allow for both continuity and fresh perspective.

Leadership

- The committee will be chaired by an existing IHLS Board member, appointed annually by the IHLS Board President.
- The Chair will facilitate meetings, oversee the agenda, and coordinate closely with IHLS staff.
- A Vice Chair will be selected from the committee membership to assist the Chair and assume leadership duties in their absence.

Meeting Schedule

- Regular meetings will be held virtually every other month (on odd-numbered months) to maximize participation and accessibility.
- Special meetings may be called by the Chair in consultation with IHLS staff to respond to urgent advocacy needs (e.g., legislative deadlines, budget actions).

Committee Responsibilities

1. **Identify and Address Library Challenges:** Regularly assess issues affecting academic, public, school, and special libraries through surveys, listening sessions, and member feedback, and recommend coordinated advocacy responses.
2. **Collaborate with Partners:** Build alliances with library-focused organizations (e.g., AISLE, IACRL, ILA) as well as community, educational, and civic partners to amplify advocacy efforts.
3. **Promote Library Values and Funding:** Advance awareness of library values (resource sharing, net neutrality, intellectual freedom, equitable access) while supporting sustainable funding initiatives for all library types.
4. **Develop and Share Advocacy Resources:** Create and disseminate messaging, talking points, training opportunities, and tools to help library staff and trustees effectively engage with funders, legislators, and stakeholders.
5. **Build Advocacy Capacity:** Support and mentor members interested in developing advocacy skills or pursuing leadership opportunities in the statewide library community.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased member participation in advocacy training, events, and campaigns.
- Stronger relationships between IHLS members and policymakers at all levels, demonstrated through documented outreach and engagement.
- Regular communication channels established between IHLS and policymakers (e.g., annual legislative briefings, policy updates).
- Measurable growth in the number of libraries reporting successful advocacy outcomes (such as funding wins, partnerships, or policy support).
- Enhanced member confidence and capacity to advocate effectively for library needs and priorities.



Rollout & Implementation Procedures

IHLS Advocacy & Education Committee

1. Getting the Word Out

- **Announcement:** Launch an open call for committee members through multiple channels:
 - Direct email to all IHLS member libraries
 - IHLS newsletter feature
 - Posts on IHLS social media
 - IHLS website landing page with details & application form
- **Messaging:** Emphasize that this is a new initiative aligned with the IHLS Strategic Plan, highlighting opportunities for members to shape advocacy efforts and connect with policymakers.
- **Timeline:** Provide a clear application window (e.g., 3–4 weeks), with dates for application deadline, review, and notification of selection.
- **IHLS Staff will:** announce the opportunity to participate in the committee at the beginning of October. Promotion will be enhanced by our exhibits at the AISLE (Association of Illinois School Library Educators) and ILA (Illinois Library Association) conferences in early October.

2. Application Process

- **Application Form:** Create a simple online application (Google Form or survey tool) that asks for:
 - Contact information
 - Library affiliation and role
 - Library type (public, school, academic, special)
 - Geographic area
 - Brief statement of interest/experience with advocacy

- **Eligibility Reminder:** State the minimum membership requirements (Board members, staff, trustee, etc.), and note that diversity of library types and geography will be considered.
- **IHLS Staff will:** complete the online application before the announcement is made in October.

3. Selection of Members

- **Reviewing Body:** Applications will be reviewed by the IHLS Board's **Executive Committee**, with IHLS staff available to advise, utilizing a selection rubric created before candidate review.
- **Selection Priorities:**
 1. Ensure minimum requirements are filled.
 2. Strive for diversity of library type and geography.
 3. Aim for a mix of seasoned advocates and newer voices interested in building capacity.
- **Final Approval:** Selections will be formally approved by the IHLS Board and announced to the membership.
- **IHLS Staff will:** share the list of candidates with the Executive Committee in early November.

4. Terms of Service (Inaugural Members)

- **Staggered Start:** To establish staggered terms:
 - The five current members of the committee will serve **1-year terms**.
 - The four newly selected members will serve **2-year terms**.
- **Ongoing Terms:** After inaugural appointments, all new members will serve 2-year renewable terms.

5. Orientation & Onboarding

- **Kick-off Session:** Hold a virtual orientation meeting for inaugural members to:
 - Review the committee charge and responsibilities
 - Clarify roles of members vs. staff

- Share advocacy priorities and upcoming legislative timelines
- Introduce members to one another to build cohesion
- **Onboarding Materials:** Provide members with a starter packet (charge document, roster, strategic plan highlights, advocacy talking points).
- **IHLS Staff will:** notify all candidates following the November 25 Board meeting. Committee members will be provided with onboarding materials electronically.

6. Implementation & Ongoing Processes

- **Meeting Launch:** Schedule the first official meeting within 1–2 months of member selection.
- **Regular Reports:** The Committee Chair will provide regular reports to the IHLS Board summarizing activities, outcomes, and recommendations.
- **Evaluation:** Each year, the Executive Committee will review committee composition to ensure balance and effectiveness, filling vacancies as needed through an additional open call.
- **Visibility:** Regular updates on the committee's work should be shared in newsletters and at IHLS membership meetings to keep members engaged.