



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.