

ADVOCACY AND POSITION STATEMENT POLICY

INTENT

The Library Association of Alberta (LAA) is the voice of Alberta library workers and libraries. It believes that libraries are strengthened by a united voice linking those working within the library community with members, government, other organizations, and library users. As such, LAA comments on local and provincial matters relating to libraries and where the LAA board agrees that a provincial voice is valuable. As such, LAA engages in regular advocacy activity on issues that are of concern to Alberta libraries and library workers.

The advocacy efforts undertaken by the LAA are intended to further the goals of members and the evolving values of library work in Alberta. LAA acknowledges that not all individual members will agree with the statements or stances taken by the LAA, and recognizes that making a public position on an issue may create some controversy. LAA encourages dialogue around these issues in a mutually respectful manner.

LAA's advocacy efforts are both proactive and reactive in that the organization provides leadership in promoting libraries and library workers, and provides position statements in reaction to ongoing issues affecting libraries or library workers.

POLICY

The board shall:

1. Focus its advocacy activities on issues that matter to libraries and library workers from all sectors within the Alberta library community.
2. Engage in advocacy with the provincial government and its representatives.
3. Engage in dialogue with association members to understand emerging library issues and develop statements on issues that are provincial in scope and or may have a provincial impact.
4. Where possible and appropriate, coordinate advocacy efforts with other provincial library associations on topics of shared interest.
5. Where possible and appropriate, issue statements of support for other regional, provincial and national library associations who have written position statements on important and topical issues of national significance.
6. Develop tools and programs to support members in their own advocacy efforts.

LAA may be called upon to respond to issues arising at a local or provincial level. This can include advocacy on regulatory or legislative processes or on matters of interest to libraries or library workers in all sectors. LAA will pursue such advocacy efforts after considering the following factors:

1. A member has approached the LAA to assist in advocacy efforts on the issue;

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2. The issue at hand has, or may have, an effect on multiple library sectors and or libraries province-wide;
3. The issue is in line with LAA's strategic initiatives, principles and policies;
4. The issue at hand has garnered a large amount of public attention, and the Board has agreed to comment on the issue.

PROCEDURE

1. Any board member, member of the Advocacy Committee, or association member should initiate the advocacy process with a clear statement or briefing note regarding the issue and a brief explanation of why the issue needs to be advocated for.
2. Advocacy initiatives and position statements are subject to a board vote prior to publication and distribution.
3. Following a successful board motion, LAA may undertake any of the the following activities to promote their advocacy initiatives:
 - a. Issuing media releases
 - b. Communicating with other library associations on matters of mutual interest
 - c. Connecting with grassroots movements as required to be informed of the activities going on throughout the province
 - d. Encourage the library community to embark on letter-writing campaigns to MLAs, the Premier, and the Leader of the Opposition when matters of a serious and urgent nature arise
 - e. Encouraging participation to gather signatures on petitions being gathered
 - f. Providing templates for letter-writing campaigns and petitions
 - g. Fact-checking of government information and determining the context for that information
 - h. Writing official letters to the government, other affected organizations and stakeholders

RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Advocacy Committee will review this policy every two years.

REVIEW HISTORY