



## Talking Points for Time with Politicians

**REMEMBER**, don't use jargon. When talking to politicians, community members or influencers, recall that they don't know library-speak. The term "ILS" doesn't mean anything to your state senator, but they might understand "the software the libraries use to keep track of and lend stuff to people."

1. **Know Your Audience** - Look up your [NYS Senators](#) and [NYS Assembly members](#). Familiarize yourself with the committees they sit on and the issues they feature on their website.
2. **Libraries Are Education** - Nine out of 10 New Yorkers says library service is an important part of their local education system (source: 2017 Siena Poll). The majority of New Yorkers feel state funding for libraries should increase in proportion to education funding. Through collaboration among partners in our communities we provide workforce development, early literacy programs, computer classes, lifetime learning opportunities, broadband access, especially in rural communities, and more. Using tools created by the NYLA Sustainability Initiative, library leaders learn to reframe their services to empower communities to thrive and bounce back from disruption.
3. **At Risk Infrastructure** - Public libraries across the state need \$1.7 billion to bring buildings into the 21st century. 48% of libraries are more than 60 years old. An additional 33% are more than 30 years old. Public libraries require immediate, significant state investment to accommodate advances in technological infrastructure, make investments in energy efficiency, and increase access to differently-abled patrons.
4. **High Return on Investment & Shared Services** - Libraries provide \$7 of services for every \$1 invested by NYS (source: NYSED). Governor Cuomo is vocal about how shared services reduce local tax burden. Libraries wrote the book on a shared economy!
5. **Community Community Community** - Talk about how your local community comes together at the library. It's the one place in a town where everyone is welcome, more so than houses of worship, ball fields or school meetings. How is your library responding to community needs? Do you provide summer lunches, host a farmers market, provide space

for dialogue? Have you formed community partnerships outside the library.? Now's the time to crow about those activities.

6. **Write an [Elevator Speech](#).** The Association for Library Service to Children has done [extensive work](#) on creating powerful, short statements designed to influence people.
  - a. Introduce yourself. Even if you've met before or you think the person won't remember you, quickly introduce yourself again. "Ms. Mayor, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ from the library."
  - b. Lead with information your audience might not know. Capture the listener's attention with an interesting fact, statistic, or comparison.
  - c. Share the positive value. What's the payoff for your listener's constituency? Articulate it. Example: "Our library programs give junior high kids in our community a safe place to learn, have fun, and develop social skills."
  - d. End with an ask. Now that you've tantalized your listener with interesting information, ask to follow up. Suggest a meeting or ask permission to send the person more information.
  - e. Use this [Infographic](#) on how to build a one-sentence speech, i.e. "I help parents and caregivers promote kindergarten readiness at the library so that their young children can start school ready to learn."
  
7. **Write a [Coffee Shop Speech](#)** for when you have a slightly longer exposure. Do some research on their latest initiatives and explain how your services dovetail with that.
  
8. **Reference your [Regional Economic Development Council](#)** plans to see how your library's services match up with the economic development initiatives in your area. Are jobs a focus for your region? Talk about how you help get people workforce-ready. Is tourism a big push? Show how your services benefit local businesses, draw people in or support tourists needs. The NYLA-SI [summarized the 2016 regional plans](#) for each of the 10 regions to assist you.
  
9. **Be loud and proud** that you're part of the New York library community!