

ADVOCACY TOOLKIT – Davenport Public Library

INTRODUCTION

Davenport Public Library is proud to be supported by our vibrant and diverse community! The resources in this document are intended to make it easy for you to share information about the value of The Library with your friends and family and to advocate for The Library with your elected officials and other community stakeholders.

Why is Advocacy Important?

Advocacy is critical for public libraries! By telling others about The Library’s materials, programs, and services, you are:

- Showing how The Library positively impacts Davenport by connecting a diverse community to resources that educate, enrich, and entertain.
- Spreading awareness of free services that many in our community may not otherwise know about or have access to.
- Advocating for funding to meet our community’s needs through library resources.

Mission & Vision

Mission: The Library connects a diverse community to resources that educate, enrich, and entertain.

Vision: The Library aspires to create a community-wide culture of learning where everyone is empowered.

MORE ABOUT THE LIBRARY

FY2025 Statistics

331,425 Library Visits

526,507 Materials Circulated

227,441 Collection Size

190,186 Computer Uses & Wi-Fi Sessions

1,387 Programs

34,589 Program Attendees

4,412 New Cardholders

48,009 Total Cardholders

Did you know?

You can borrow eBooks for FREE! With your Davenport Public Library card you can check out eBooks, digital audiobooks, magazines, movies, and music online 24/7, all free of charge.

You can discover your family history! The Main Library houses the 1,700+ title collection of the Scott County Iowa Genealogical Society, and the Richardson-Sloane Genealogical Library.

You can learn a musical instrument! The Library offers ukuleles, keyboards, and electric drumsets for checkout from our Library of Things, plus songbooks and guides to learning how to play!

You can start your very own garden! The Seed Library located at the Main Library provides free seeds to residents to promote lifelong learning and encourage stewardship of natural resources.

Library Stories

“Thanks so much for bringing the library books to the Sisters of Humility @ the Humility of Mary Center each month. Many of the sisters cannot get out of the house anymore, so this is a lifeline and something they look forward to.” -Shelly (Library outreach patron)

“I want to thank the Davenport Library and staff for organizing the back-to-school event at Fairmount. We do not have transportation and most of the back to school events are downtown. So having this event at Fairmount library meant a lot to us as we could easily walk to the library. Our family was able to benefit from much needed school supplies and a shoe gift card. Thank you Davenport Public Library for all you do for our community.” -Carlotta, Library patron

“Several members of the Book-a-Librarian team helped a patron throughout multiple steps of his job search process, from applying online to providing equipment and space for him to do a virtual interview. Today the patron informed me that he has been hired at the new Amazon warehouse just north of Davenport! He is excited to start in a couple of weeks and expressed his gratitude for the employees who helped him.” -Library staff

“During Party in the Park, we were giving away books to children when one stopped. The young person picked up a few books and put them next to her face and said this girl looks like me! Her mom then said ‘This is why representation matters!’” -Library staff

ADVOCACY TIPS

Top Ten Quick Advocacy Tips

When library issues arise in public policy debates, library advocates should be ready to reach out to their public officials and persuade them to protect our libraries and rights!

1. Get to know your local elected officials. Do not wait until you need something to connect.
2. Do your homework. Reach out to Davenport Public Library, Iowa Library Association, or American Library Association for background on a specific issue and how best to frame the message.
3. Know your audience. Research positions of elected officials in advance. Understand what they care about and consider how your request aligns with these.
4. Contact elected officials personally. A meeting is better than a phone call, a phone call is better than an email, and an email is better than no contact.
5. Always start with a thank you. Find something the elected official has recently supported which has a positive community impact and thank them for that.
6. Keep it brief. Share the most important facts and the few best arguments.
7. Make it personal. Explain how the issue impacts you and your family / friends...and their constituents!
8. Make a clear request. Ask them specifically to SUPPORT or OPPOSE the legislation, or help to change the legislation.
9. Be polite, but direct, and try to get a commitment to support The Library position.
10. Follow up. Once the issue is resolved, make sure to thank those that supported The Library, and know that more work needs to be done with those that did not.

How to Talk with People Who Disagree with You

- Focus on the people, not the politics
- Build a relationship before talking politics
- Don't take comments personally
- Share your own relevant experiences
- Give a relatable hypothetical situation
- Find common ground
- Bond over less polarized issues
- Be open to listening and understanding
- Ask questions to understand a different viewpoint
- Focus on shared beliefs
- Stick to the facts and avoid confrontation
- Stick to information that can be verified
- Back up your opinions with evidence
- Limit emotion in discussion
- Avoid confrontational language
- Be an advocate rather than an opponent
- Adapt conversational style to audience
- Avoid words that might upset people
- Pick your battles
- Talk about local politics instead of national politics
- Focus on policy instead of party
- Avoid hot-button issues

Duchovnay, Marley, Moore, Casey, and Masullo, Gina M. (2020, July). *How to Talk to People Who Disagree with You Politically*. Center for Media Engagement. <https://mediaengagement.org/research/divided-communities>.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

US Senate

Joni Ernst
(202) 224-3254
(563) 322-0677
www.ernst.senate.gov

Charles Grassley

(202) 224-3744
(563) 322-4331
www.grassley.senate.gov

US House of Representatives

Mariannette Miller-Meeks
(202) 225-6576
(563) 232-0930
www.millermeeks.house.gov

State Senators

Kerry Gruenhagen
Iowa Senate District 41
(515) 281-3371
kerry.gruenhagen@legis.iowa.gov

Scott Webster
Iowa Senate District 47
(515) 281-3371
scott.webster@legis.iowa.gov

Cindy Winckler
Iowa Senate District 49
(515) 281-3371
cindy.winckler@legis.iowa.gov

State House Representatives

Ken Croken
Iowa House District 97
(515) 281-3221
ken.croken@legis.iowa.gov

Daniel Gosa
Iowa House District 81
(515) 281-3221
daniel.gosa@legis.iowa.gov

Monica Kurth
Iowa House District 98
(515) 281-3221
monica.kurth@legis.iowa.gov

Mike Vondran
Iowa House District 94
(515) 281-3221
mike.vondran@legis.iowa.gov

Scott County Board of Supervisors

Ken Beck
(563) 355-3469
ken.beck@scottcountyiowa.com

Maria Bribriesco
563-326-8749
maria.bribriesco@scottcountyiowa.gov
Jean Dickson
(563) 326-8749
jean.dickson@scottcountyiowa.gov

John D. Maxwell
(563) 505-1652
john.maxwell@scottcountyiowa.com

Ross Paustian
(563) 284-6783
ross.paustian@scottcountyiowa.gov

Davenport City Council

Mayor Jason Gordon
(563) 326-7701
jason.gordon@davenportiowa.com

1st Ward: Rick Dunn
(563) 888-2066
rick.dunn@davenportiowa.com

2nd Ward: Tim Dunn
(563) 888-2066
tim.dunn@davenportiowa.com

3rd Ward: Paul Vasquez
(563) 888-2066
paul.vasquez@davenportiowa.com

4th Ward: Jade Burkholder
(563) 888-2066
jade.burkholder@davenportiowa.com

5th Ward: John Blunk
(563) 888-2066
john.blunk@davenportiowa.com

6th Ward: Ben Jobgen
(563) 888-2066
ben.jobgen@davenportiowa.com

7th Ward: Mark Holloway
(563) 888-2066
mark.holloway@davenportiowa.com

8th Ward: Matt Lienen
(563) 888-2066
matt.lienen@davenportiowa.com

At Large: Jazmin Newton
(563) 888-2066
jazmin.newton@davenportiowa.com

At Large: Kyle Gripp
(563) 888-2066
kyle.gripp@davenportiowa.co

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

From humble beginnings as a reading room in the LeClaire Hotel in 1839, to three locations strategically placed around Davenport today, your public library has evolved over time to meet the needs of the community. Here are some of the ways The Library adapted throughout the years to serve the community in new and exciting ways!

- 1900: The citizens of Davenport voted in favor of a public library tax to support Davenport Public Library - the first election held in Iowa in which women were allowed to vote!
- 1904: Needing more space to house the many items of interest in our community, The Library moved out of the reading room and Davenport became home to the first Carnegie library west of the Mississippi River.
- 1969: Ready to expand yet again, the historic Main Library was designed by world-famous architect Edward Durell Stone; over 50 years later it was listed as a local historic landmark and a contributing property to the National Register of Historic Places for the Downtown Davenport Historic District.
- 1983: The FRIENDS of the Davenport Public Library form to provide financial support to The Library; their name is later changed to Davenport Public Library Foundation.
- 2005-2010: To better serve people living on the west and east sides of Davenport, the Branching Out campaign culminated with the opening of two libraries — Fairmount Branch and Eastern Branch.
- 2010: Due to The Library's commitment to building a sustainable and efficient building, the Eastern Branch was designated a LEED-silver certified building.
- 2011: In order to meet the needs of small business owners and entrepreneurs, the Main Library became the first Patent and Trademark Resource Centers (PTRC) in Iowa, and the first all-electronic PTRC in the United States.
- 2021: To provide better connection to critical local resources to underserved community members, Davenport Public Library became the first public library in Iowa to hire a social worker.
- 2021: A substantial renovation of the Main Library added several new amenities for the community, including study rooms, ADA-accessible restrooms, an enclosed children's area perfect for educational play, and a Makerspace complete with a 3D printer, sewing machines, and more!
- 2023: To promote early literacy, The Library partnered with The Surgeon Group to enhance the children's areas at all three libraries adding new interactive art installations with lots of hands-on opportunities for children to talk, sing, read, write, and play.