



Facilitator Page

LIBRARY ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Scenario

There is word that teen services at your local public library are going to be cut. This means there will be no librarian to run programs or do outreach to teens in town. The librarian who has been doing that job will still be employed, but the time she spent on teen-related services will be spent elsewhere.

The reason given for the elimination of teen services from the library administration is that teens are not coming in and using the dedicated teen space enough to justify keeping it. Program attendance for teens is low—the last teen program, a movie night with pizza, only had three people show up—and the number of teens who participate in the annual summer reading program has dropped every year for the last 10 years.

The information provided is light and does not explain much of the who, what, where, or when of the situation. That's purposeful. If you're asked questions as facilitator, some things you can share to give attendees more information:

- The administration did not make this decision. It came from the library board, but the administration has not said if they agree with the decision.
- Teen books would still be purchased for the library, though part of the materials budget could be shifted to another area of the library in the future. It is believed teens aren't reading as much as they used to, so that money might be better used to purchase more large print material.
- The information about this came from a flier in the teen services area that someone took a photo of with their phone and shared with their friends. The sign is still in the teen area and there is a link attached that asks for any feedback about the future of teen services. There has not been information posted elsewhere in the library, and it does not appear to be on the library's website or social media.
- There is no teen advisory board in the library, though prior to the current teen services librarian taking the job about 10 years ago, there was a very active group.
- Book challenges and other pushback to the library have not been an issue in this particular library.



Worksheet

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Activity

How would you develop an advocacy campaign to keep teen services a part of your public library? Work together to develop a single advocacy campaign that will raise awareness of the issue. Once the advocacy campaign is decided among each group, group members will outline how they would accomplish their campaign.

Questions to Consider

- What tasks are necessary to run the advocacy campaign? Think about the big picture stuff here—when things will happen, who needs to be contacted, and things like where/how verification of information about the change to teen services will happen. Where and how would word be spread that the campaign was happening?
- Who in the group will (hypothetically) take on what tasks and why? If there are tasks not assigned to a person, who will take them on? Are there skill sets or social connections that your group does not have but that the tasks would require? If so, how would you build those among your members? Where and who might you reach out to help you out?
- Where and how will work on the advocacy program take place? You work online through a digital tool or have in-person meetings at school, a coffee shop, or even the library itself?
- After the advocacy campaign is complete, where and how will success be measured?