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Trustee Tale

Trustee Tale is a joint project of the Manitowoc Calumet Library System, Nicolet Federated Library System, Outagamie Waupaca Library System, Winnefox Library System and Wisconsin Valley Library System.

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions for future articles, contact your system director.



A Beginner's Guide to Library Legislative Day

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Every year on a Tuesday in February, the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) hosts Library Legislative Day. Library supporters from across the state gather in Madison to meet with state legislators and share the value of libraries in our communities. In 2025, the event will be held on Tuesday, February 11.

While many library directors and staff attend Library Legislative Day, the participation of Library Trustees, Friends of the Library, and library patrons has the greatest impact. The most important goal of every Legislative Day is to build relationships with our elected officials that will translate into strong library support for many years to come. Legislators want to hear from you!

In a budget year like 2025, Library Legislative Day attendees thank legislators for their support in prior budget cycles and ask them to again lend their support to the funding priorities outlined by WLA. It's also important to tell them how we're using state library aids to provide services that enrich communities.



If you have never been to the capitol in an advocacy role, this may seem daunting, but it's actually a lot of fun! Here's how it works.

Plan to register online by January 10th. When registering, you will be asked to list your Senator and Representative. If you're not sure, you can look that up under "Who are my legislators?" on this site after the new legislators are sworn in on January 6th: <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/>.

Many people arrive the evening before Legislative Day and enjoy dinner in Madison with library colleagues and friends. Legislative Day begins with registration and a continental breakfast. WLA will schedule the appointments with legislators, and you will receive your schedule at the registration Table.

<https://new.owlsweb.org/trustee-tale/>

At 9:00 am, all Legislative Day participants gather for a briefing session where you will learn about advocacy efforts and priorities from WLA leaders and our lobbyist. Other speakers may include officials from the Department of Public Instruction and legislators who are already library champions. In 2024, Governor Evers was a speaker!

After the briefing session, you will go to your first appointment with a legislator with a group of other library advocates from your district. Often your meeting will be with the legislator's aides. Don't be discouraged! These staffers have the trust of their employers, and your messages will be shared.

You will be well prepared with talking points shared at the briefing session, and you are strongly encouraged to share personal stories of how your library positively impacts you and your community.

Meet up with friends or colleagues at any of the great restaurants within walking distance of the capitol building for lunch. If you traveled to Madison alone, form an impromptu lunch group and make some new friends!

You will have another appointment scheduled for the afternoon. All appointments are finished by 3:30pm, and your day is done, but there is one important step left. Be sure to send a note to your legislators and/or their staff thanking them for their time and support. Handwritten thank-you notes have become a hallmark of WLA advocacy, and it's a great thing for which to be known.

Please consider making Library Legislative Day part of your library board service!

Details and registration: <https://www.wisconsinlibraries.org/library-legislative-day-2>