



EPISODE 11 – August 12, 2020

Planning for Advocacy Success in the COVID Era

What every library advocate needs to know now to be effective in the future

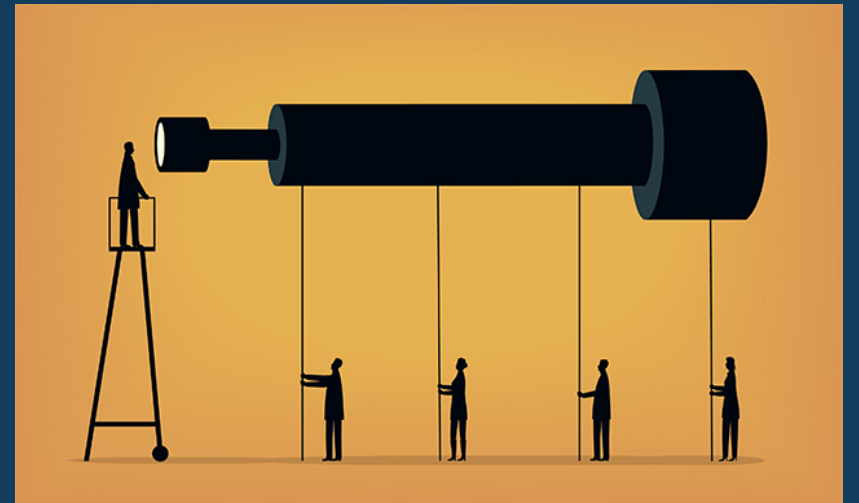


John Chrastka, Executive Director

EveryLibrary

Revenue Projections

States and Municipalities



NASBO Projections

National Association of State
Budget Officials

- Projecting a 20% decline in state tax revenue during COVID.
- States experienced an 11.6% decline during the Great Recession.

“States rely on personal income taxes and sales taxes combined for roughly 75 percent of their general fund revenue. These revenue sources have been hit hard in light of stay-at-home orders, business closures, and rising unemployment claims.”

<http://budgetblog.nasbo.org/budgetblogs/blogs/kathryn-white/2020/06/25/state-fiscal-outlook-pre-post-covid-19>

NACO Survey

National Association of Counties

- Counties expect about a \$30 billion increase in expenditures from the pandemic through FY 2021.
- Many counties have spent more than 50% of their budgets on COVID-19 costs.

U.S. Conference of Mayors / NLC

Projections of COVID Impact on
Budgets

- 9 out of 10 cities face budget shortfalls this year.
- 43% of all cities reporting unanticipated spending increases this year on top of declining revenues.

Impact on Your Library Budget

Your library's funding mix makes
a difference

- What role does state aid play in your budget?
- Local tax receipts matter for library departments and contract libraries.
- S&P Global is projecting that property taxes will be stable for the near term.

Austerity Budgets

How to position yourself for the coming revenue crisis



- Austerity budgets are all about scarcity.
- Austerity creates a framework where the solution to scarcity is *cuts* rather than *new revenue*.
- In an austerity budget, there is not a lot of room to fund the number two or number three agency.

Austerity Budget Framework

“In times of austerity, the *advocacy that works* is rooted in the **measurement** of your activities to **demonstrate** their impacts, not simply the stories of how people feel about your library or their librarians.”

- EveryLibrary

Owning the Framework

What This Isn't

Measuring activity and demonstrating outcomes



- Every other agency in town has a great story to tell about Pivoting during COVID.
- You don't get any bonus points for being there.
- Your internal difficulties will be lost in the noise.

*It's Not About
Your Pivot*

- Any “Third-place” narratives are very difficult during COVID.
- Virtual, Digital, and Online measures of impact are needed.
- There will be few if any ‘nice to have’ features or services for a while.
- New revenue is needed.

Disrupted Frames

- During the ongoing COVID crisis, policymakers, elected officials, voters, and philanthropic funders want to see their money go to effective programs and competent staffing in ways that deliver results.
- They want to support programs and projects that can be measured and justified through data as well as stories.
- They are looking for the right way to apply limited funding resources - whether taxes or philanthropy or grants - to solve problems.

What Funders Want Now

What a Successful Advocacy Frame Looks Like

A new narrative for the austerity era



How people listen

Understanding your audiences

- Compassionately Engaged
 - Populations and people
- Pride of Place
 - Interesting, thriving, and prosperous
- Data-Driven
 - Data as lens into impacts
- Concerned or Fearful
 - Focused on filling gaps

Two Possible Frames for Any Audience

Honestly representing your
successes or your failures

- Stories of Success that demonstrate your competencies.
- Stories of Failure that demonstrate your integrity.

Success Stories

Scaleable or replicable

Stories of Success that demonstrate your competencies.

- Show that you are a good candidate for funding that scales or replicates a project, program, service, or approach.
- Measures of activity and impact that show a potential return on funding invested.

Fixing Failure

New inputs that avert or address a crisis or gap

Stories of Failure that demonstrate your integrity.

- You are the only expert in libraries in your community. What are the “library-shaped solutions” to problems that partners and policymakers need to hear?
- What will new funding inputs do to measurably address the gaps?

Whichever Story is True

Who else cares that you are effective?

- During austerity, stories of competency and measures of success are budget justifications that should make your library eligible for funding.
- During austerity, it is very important to root a true story of failure in your mission, vision, and values because folks who share those values want to see failures corrected.

Who Else Cares?

If you are not involved as a coalition partner already, now is the time.

- Economic Development
- Workforce and re-tooling
- Early Childhood
- Grade Level Reading and COVID-Slide
- Housing and Food Security
- Safety and Violence

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Thank You!

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