PRSSA 2025 Bateman Case Study Competition Project Brief
EveryLibrary and the EveryLibrary Institute

ABOUT THE CLIENT
EveryLibrary and the EveryLibrary Institute engage the political and policy contexts for public libraries and school libraries at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

EveryLibrary is the only national 504(c)4 political action committee for libraries. Our mission is to support public libraries on Election Days, stabilize school library budgets, guard against book bans, and engage with state legislatures alongside partner organizations. **We do not align with or oppose any specific party, ideology, or candidate**. As a pro-library organization, we value the principles of fair taxation, free expression, and access to libraries without the threat of censorship or discrimination. Since 2012, EveryLibrary has provided pro-bono support to 135 libraries on local Election Days, winning over $2 billion in operating referenda and bonds to build new libraries. Our SaveSchoolLibrarians.org initiative has pushed back against cuts to school librarian jobs and restored positions. State legislative campaigns include strident opposition to bills that would criminalize librarianship, limit access to books and materials, and legislate against books about race, gender, and sexual identity. Everylibrary fields the Libraries2024.org voter-facing campaign to talk about our issues.

The EveryLibrary Institute is a 501(c)3 non-profit focused on public policy, tax policy, and education policy affecting libraries and the future of library work. We conduct research into public opinions about libraries and librarianship, analyze public policy and legislative proposals for their impact on communities and schools, and develop positions for the sector on issues like economic development, health, and access. In 2024, we were proud to write the Libraries for All Act, model legislation focusing on civil rights and the right to read in libraries, which has advanced in several states. The EveryLibrary Institute supports the fundraising goals and programmatic objectives of several fiscally sponsored projects, including library Alliances, statewide initiatives, and individual projects through our FundLibraries.org crowdfunding platform. One key goal in 2024-2026 is to support the infrastructure of elections through VoteLibraries.org, our election administration and voter registration portal.

Since 2022, we have been actively engaged across both organizations to oppose unconstitutional censorship in public libraries and schools. We have launched FightForTheFirst.org, a digital campaign platform to oppose censorship at the local level, and organized the National Library Alliance, a community for pro-library activists. We have fought against book bans in over 100 local communities and helped restore books to the shelves in dozens of towns and schools.

COMPETITION DETAILS
We need your help positioning us as the leading national organization for library activists, donors, and users to be involved with and support concerning issues like reading and censorship. EveryLibrary and the EveryLibrary Institute should be seen alongside issue organizations like

Greenpeace, Common Sense Media, and MoveOn as brands that are identified by supporters and opposition alike as effective advocates and thought leaders about their issues. We would like the Bateman participants to set us on a path to grow our list of supporters in America as quickly as possible.

BACKGROUND

We believe that by investing in our organizational growth and capacity, we can directly support public and school funding and oppose policies and censorship that harm users.

Public libraries and school libraries in the United States support individual and civic outcomes for diverse populations of every age in nearly every zip code and census tract. The funding for public libraries comes largely from local taxes. In most places, 90% or more of operating revenue is from property taxes or sales taxes. Less than 10% is from state, federal, or philanthropic aid. This reliance on local taxes means that funding for public libraries is subject to local political and civic considerations. Funding has been stagnant since COVID, and staffing levels are falling.

On the school side, funding for school library programs and positions is entirely subject to local education agency funding priorities. The same "Zip Code Lottery" which determines funding for health, economic, and social projects drives funding for education and lifelong success. Since the implementation of No Child Left Behind, the school library sector has lost over 40% of the workforce to budget cuts and layoffs. Student achievement, information literacy skills, and reading scores have suffered. Censorship in K-12 has the potential to silence or erase diverse stories for children of all backgrounds and identities.

EveryLibrary and the EveryLibrary Institute are dedicated to stabilizing funding for libraries and returning to a civic environment free from censorship. Our portfolio of programs and activities supports librarians who, in turn, serve patrons, users, and students from all walks of life in every community across America. When we have the right organizational resources and public support to engage the issues, we win campaigns, overturn bad legislation, and preserve the right to read.

WHY IT MATTERS

Whether in an urban core or an isolated rural community, public libraries are trusted service providers. Public library patrons tend to be younger and more racially diverse than the general population of their towns, cities, and counties. Libraries are trusted by low-income families, individuals with language or literacy barriers, and new immigrants. Across the country, there are over 17,000 public library locations and 3,000 bookmobiles. Libraries across the country deliver programs and services inside their buildings and out in the community alongside trusted partners.

School libraries have an outside impact on student achievement and success. More than 60 state-level library studies conducted in 26 states over the past two decades show that the benefits are most pronounced for at-risk students, including students of color, students from low-income households, and students with disabilities. Students with access to full-time librarians were almost three times more likely than those without librarians to have improved writing scores. The presence of a certified school librarian was also a predictor of higher elementary and middle school math

scores. But staffing is only part of the equation, the school library collection must be up to date and diverse, support the curriculum, and individual student reading.

EVERYLIBRARY'S TARGET AUDIENCE

Our network of 375,000 supporters is comprised of people who have taken at least one action that is either affirmative (e.g., pledging to vote, thanking an elected official, donating to underwrite our work) or corrective (e.g., signing a petition, protesting a policy, donating in response to a crisis). Only 42,000 people in the current list self-identify as librarians or library workers. The remainder of our list is comprised of everyday Americans who care about the issues and our institutions. The average person on our list takes one action every six to nine months, with 35% of the list only taking one action and 12% taking four or more actions.

Our list of activists and donors is overwhelmingly based in the United States, and we need to continue that focus on the US throughout this Competition. According to our social media analytics and internal demographic overlays, our current audience is 80% women, largely 55 and older, and from all walks of life. While we are a non-partisan organization, our networked supporters skew Democrat and Independent. Our donors tend to donate to political causes and social causes rather than to charities that foster education or focus on children. Our best look-alike audiences of new activists are usually sourced from political and civil society lists rather than charitable or social causes. Notably, a sizeable portion of our 375,000 activists and donors seem to be unique to our organization; they do not appear in third-party data sources.

CAMPAIGN DESIGN and GOALS

Your campaign should focus on identifying, cultivating, and empowering new supporters of libraries who will express and operationalize that support through an EveryLibrary campaign, channel, or platform. We are interested in campaigns informed by data about audience interests, beliefs, and perceptions and campaigns that would improve the effectiveness of our contact points with potential supporters.

We hope to see teams that develop and execute a public relations campaign that includes research, planning, execution, and evaluation. We want to see campaigns that use a variety of communication channels and formats and think beyond traditional public relations tactics.

Campaigns should address at least two of the GOALS listed below:

- To inform and inspire new audiences about EveryLibrary and/or the EveryLibrary Institute.
- To diversify our audience of engaged library activists.
- To identify, interest, and motivate new donors.
- To deepen earned media interest and engagement in our work and identity.
- To demonstrate new channels and pathways for audience engagement.

JUDGING AND ASSESSMENT

The judges for this Competition will assess each campaign's impact and the promise it holds to advance more sustained and positive organization outcomes. Campaigns will be judged on:

- Achieving any two of the campaign Goals, above.
- The ability to creatively express and share messaging through digital, social, mail, environmental, ad networks, and/or emerging channels.
- The ability to demonstrate that consistent application of the campaign plan over time and within a reasonable budget will achieve campaign objectives.
- The ability to forecast the budget for campaign elements over time.
- The ability to evaluate the impact of the campaign against its objectives.

RESOURCES

- EveryLibrary's 501c4 Annual Reports.
- EveryLibrary Institute's 501c3 Annual Reports.
- Bolder Advocacy's 501c4 vs 501c3 Allowable Activities Memo.
- OCLC's "From Awareness to Funding" studies in 2008 and 2018 on voter attitudes toward libraries.
- PEW Charitable Trust's Libraries 2016 report on public attitudes toward libraries.
- EveryLibrary Institute's reports and policy briefs: https://www.everylibraryinstitute.org/research_and_reports
- Aspen Institute on the Future of Libraries 2017: https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/future-libraries-2017-review-2018-preview/
- Lib SLIDE Project reports on the decline of school librarianship: https://libslide.org/

EL and ELI Projects, Platforms, and Channels:

EveryLibrary.org - Main site for c4
action.everylibrary.org - Petition platform for c4 activities
SaveSchoolLibrarians.org - Petition platform for c4 school-focused activities
FightForTheFirst.org - Free speech activism platform (both c4 and c3)
www.Libraries2024.org - Voter facing issue activation (c4)
www.everylibraryinstitute.org - Main site for c3
www.FundLibraries.org - Crowdfunding for library projects (c3)
www.VoteLibraries.org - Library facing election administration site (c3)
Medium.com/EveryLibrary - Magazine for the public about libraries and librarians

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