



Wegeeklibraries

We've tested the campaign, we've created the materials and now we've made Geek the Library available to all U.S. public libraries. Interested public libraries can go to get.geekthelibrary.org for detailed information about how the campaign works, staff and budget commitments, and the benefits for participating libraries and local communities. Libraries that decide to implement the campaign receive initial training and full access to all campaign material, including art templates and supplementary guides. This chapter provides insight about how to get involved and how the campaign can benefit your community.

Open to all U.S. public libraries

Libraries have the opportunity to localize this effective community awareness campaign to help their communities better understand the value of libraries and every individual's role in library funding. The campaign has the potential to affect positive consumer behavior relating to library support—including increasing the likelihood to vote for a library levy or referendum.

get.geekthelibrary.org

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Geek the Library

An Awareness Campaign for U.S. Public Libraries

Fill out our short form and someone will contact you.

[Interested?](#)

Already participating? [Login](#)

What is Geek the Library?

Geek the Library is a community-based public awareness campaign designed to highlight the vital role of public libraries and educate the public about the critical funding issues they face. Materials, resources and support are available to libraries willing to do what it takes to adopt this awareness campaign.

[Learn more](#)

Why this Campaign?

Geek the Library can help you tell your library's story, while engaging the public to join the local public library funding discussion. Over time, this campaign can help significantly increase community awareness about the value of the library and how the library is funded—leading to the support your library needs when it counts!

[Learn more](#)

What You Need to Know

Before you commit, make sure you understand exactly what's involved in launching a successful campaign. Remember, Geek the Library is designed to work seamlessly within and alongside your current initiatives, but it needs dedicated resources to launch and to maintain momentum.

[Learn more](#)

Detailed information about Geek the Library and how local implementation can provide many benefits is available on get.geekthelibrary.org. Libraries can submit a short online form, and a member of the Geek the Library team will personally call to answer any questions and discuss specific concerns. Libraries receive a kit with helpful materials, including a PowerPoint presentation to assist in introducing Geek the Library to key library stakeholders, such as library boards. A sample goody bag with various Geek the Library campaign materials, such as stickers and postcards, is also included.

A simple, online participation agreement must be 'agreed to' in order to launch the campaign.

Support and free materials

Each library and library system is unique. Geek the Library field managers provide important advice about how the campaign may unfold locally based on specific circumstances of each library and library system. Often, field managers can suggest collaborations between libraries within close proximity or provide marketing advice to help encourage key library stakeholder approval.

Libraries that decide to implement the campaign receive initial training and full access to all campaign material, including art templates and supplementary guides. A comprehensive online Campaign Management Center is a one-stop resource for implementing Geek the Library. This password-protected Web site includes detailed guidance for every stage of the campaign, downloadable files, news updates and opportunities for participating libraries to share ideas and collaborate.

Participating libraries also receive free printed materials to get started, such as stickers, bookmarks and posters. Full-color campaign handouts that provide the complete Geek the Library story are also included. Additional materials may be ordered for special events and activities.

Free field support is available for each local campaign with the focus on initial assistance with marketing strategies and launch. Beyond this point, field managers evaluate support needs on a case-by-case basis, and assistance may include phone calls, online conferences and on-site visits.

The screenshot shows the Campaign Management Center website. At the top, there's a red header with the text "Campaign Management Center". Below this, the main content area is titled "Geek the Library in Your Community" with the subtitle "You've made the commitment—now it's time to plan your local campaign!".

On the left side, there's a sidebar with several sections:

- Campaign Phases:** A list of phases: "Before Launch", "Phase 1: Create Awareness", "Phase 2: Generate Engagement" (highlighted in blue), and "Phase 3: Encourage Action".
- Additional Tools:** A list of tools: "Campaign FAQ", "Campaign Materials", "Campaign Blog", and "Participating Library Forum".
- Search:** A search bar with a blue search button.
- Recent News:** A list of recent news items: "Updated Material Guidelines", "Pilot Campaign Results Presentation", and "Many Ad Sizes Available".

The main content area contains:

- A paragraph explaining the purpose of the Campaign Management Center: "The Campaign Management Center is designed to help you execute a successful Geek the Library campaign. Please take the time to review the content carefully and familiarize yourself with all of the available supplementary material and art files. As you move through the Web site, note featured material listed in the sidebar on the right-hand side of the page—all items are downloadable."
- A paragraph explaining the three campaign phases: "This Web site takes you through three campaign phases—Create Awareness, Generate Engagement and Encourage Action. Each phase plays a unique role and has a distinct focus. In order for the campaign to gain momentum and make an impact, it's important to implement each phase sequentially. Please start with the Before Launch section and continue through each phase."
- A row of three images: a group of people at an event, a hand holding a sticker, and a building with a poster.
- A row of four blue buttons: "Forum (Share Ideas)", "Blog (Stay up-to-date)", "FAQ (Get answers)", and "Materials (Download files)".
- Below each button is a short paragraph of text:
 - Forum:** "As your local awareness campaign gets underway, we encourage you to take part in the online forum and join other libraries also implementing Geek the Library to share successes, discuss challenges and ask questions."
 - Blog:** "Stay in the loop about what's happening with Geek the Library. The blog covers news, general updates, success stories, tips and any other information we think all participating libraries should know."
 - FAQ:** "If you have questions, be sure to search our comprehensive FAQ. From material concerns to advertising issues, it's all here. If you still need help, please [contact us](#) any time."
 - Materials:** "Find all of the art files and supplementary material (e.g., kits, presentations and informative guides) that you need to launch and execute the awareness campaign."

While any U.S. public library is encouraged to implement the campaign locally, it is important to consider the budget and staff resource commitment. Money for advertising, especially newspaper and magazine, is critical in building necessary campaign awareness. There are many opportunities available for discounted or inexpensive advertising—including partnering with other libraries in your area that are also adopting the program. Field managers can assist in developing an appropriate budget and getting the most out of every dollar.

The pilot findings demonstrate that advertising was a key element in building awareness in central Iowa and southern Georgia, but even libraries with small advertising budgets can be successful. The second group of pilot libraries, added after the initial launch in June 2009, had limited funds and found many creative ways to generate comparative awareness in their communities with unique combinations of marketing efforts (e.g., street lamp banners and taking part in local parades) that put less emphasis on paid advertising.

Campaign Management Center

Campaign Phases

Before Launch

Phase 1: Create Awareness

Target Audience
Campaign Launch Advice
Include the Library
Advertising
Public Relations
Ideas that Work

Phase 2: Generate Engagement

Phase 3: Encourage Action

Additional Tools

- Campaign FAQ
- Campaign Materials
- Campaign Blog
- Participating Library Forum

Search

Recent News

- [Updated Material Guidelines](#)
- [Pilot Campaign Results Presentation](#)
- [Many Ad Sizes Available](#)

Launch Geek the Library

You've completed the planning, now it's time to bring your local awareness campaign to life.

Geek the Library is designed to create awareness and educate the community about the immense importance of public libraries and the critical funding challenges many face. With this in mind, your goal is to promote community engagement and inspire a community-wide discussion about the value of the library and the need for adequate funding. Research shows that the most important demographic to target are not necessarily frequent library users, so it's critical to promote the campaign out in the community.

Priority number one: [get the public's attention](#). It's also important that the public receives more than one touchpoint, so they not only recognize the campaign, but learn something about it. Focus on ensuring people understand the use of 'geek' and the message that 'no matter what you geek, the library supports you.'

For maximum impact, implement strategic online and print [advertising](#) and public relations initiatives—including the use of traditional media, such as local newspaper ads and radio.

Additionally, you should:

- Take time to understand the [target audience](#) and goals for Phase 1 of the campaign.
- [Organize an official launch event](#) or activity—outside of the library, if possible.
- Leverage the media relationships you already have to [publicize the launch](#) and report on your local campaign. Write and distribute a [launch press release](#).
- Use existing library communication vehicles (e.g., library Web site, social networking Web sites, newsletters, e-mail updates, weekly newspaper column, etc.) to:

Useful Materials

- Phase 1 and 2 Ads
- Phase 1 and 2 Posters
- How to Use Materials
- 5 Things to Say Cards
- Program Overview
- Factsheet
- Talking Points
- Press Release Example
- Marketing Ideas
- Videos
- Photo Release Sign
- Photo Release Form
- Flickr Directions
- School Handout

[All materials >](#)

How Geek the Library works for your library ... top 10 list

- 1.** It positions your library as vital to individuals and the community at large.
- 2.** It serves as a reminder to the community that public library funding should not be taken for granted, and that the library is a critical public resource that helps people reeducate themselves, find jobs and transform their lives.
- 3.** It helps debunk public library funding myths and reminds the public that the largest chunk of public library funding usually comes from local dollars.
- 4.** It provides a lighthearted approach to encouraging critical conversations about your library's need for support and funding.
- 5.** It creates opportunities to build important relationships with influential members of the community, and partner with community organizations, local businesses and schools, which will have value in long-term funding efforts.
- 6.** It makes a full-scale and professionally designed awareness campaign simple to localize and execute.
- 7.** It provides the materials and advice needed to cut through the marketing clutter and speak directly to the people who can provide the kind of support you need when it counts.
- 8.** It provides an opportunity to be part of the events and activities where the public library may not be expected.
- 9.** It builds advocacy and marketing skills that benefit the library well beyond the campaign.
- 10.** It provides new and exciting ways to connect with your community and have fun.

Dedicated staff is key. Geek the Library is a community-based campaign—meaning the majority of promotional efforts should take place outside of the library. Having a consistent presence at local events, and developing media and community partnerships (with local businesses and schools, etc.) is necessary to effectively help the community learn about and make the connection between the campaign, the library and funding.

Geek the Library: A Community Awareness Campaign

The most important commitment is the ability to demonstrate enthusiasm, embrace the bold look and feel of the campaign, and to have fun! This campaign is an opportunity to connect with your community like never before. Take advantage of it!

The need to successfully educate people about the library's important position within the community infrastructure and its transformational resources is at an all-time high, and will continue to be critical for many years to come. By doing so, this campaign has the potential to affect whether or not local communities increase library support now and in the future.

Geek the Library is a great opportunity for any public library to get its community talking about the library and start important local funding conversations.

Visit get.geekthelibrary.org for more information.