Your Public Vote

A Jumpstart Guide to Success

Kirstin Litwin
Josh Cohen

March 2007

About This Guide

Your Public Vote: A Jump-Start to Success is an introduction to the budget vote process for public libraries. This guide offers libraries a head start in planning for success. Some common reasons for library budget votes include:

- Creating a stable funding source.
- Improving the level of financial support contributed to the library by the community.
- Restructuring the library (For example, changing from an Association Library to a Special District Library.)
- Removing a layer of government and creating a more direct link to users.

While this guide serves as a strong introduction to the public vote process for libraries, a number of additional resources are available to assist member libraries with the particulars of their votes. These are fully described in Part 5 of this guide, *Additional Resources Available to Help You with Your Vote.*

Contents

Part 1
Facing Your Fears

What if our vote is defeated?

In cases where libraries were unsuccessful, they often went back another time, armed with knowledge and savvy from their first vote attempt, and emerged victorious. If your vote is unsuccessful, it will certainly be disappointing, but should not be viewed as a total failure. Consider this: if you try and win, you have improved your library's funding level and increased community awareness about the library's value. If you try and lose, you will still have gained knowledge about your community and the public vote process. In either case, there is a tangible gain for the library. While it's possible that your vote will go down, it's not probable. A recent study of library votes in the Hudson Valley and across the United States revealed that the majority of library votes are successful.

> *"Josh had told us, 'If it fails, just do it again.' That really stayed with me. I would tell other library directors and boards not to be afraid, it's doable."*
> —Gillian Thorpe, Director,
> Butterfield Library, Cold Spring, NY

What if there is a negative reaction in the community? What if people get angry about taxes?

While it is likely a few individuals will complain, it's doubtful that there will be an all out negative reaction toward the library. If you are concerned about the public's reaction, talk to a few well-connected people in your community whom you trust and respect regarding what the public response will be. They may also be able to tip you off about negative people and their expected criticisms. Keep in mind that the only way you can avoid criticism completely, as Elbert Hubbard said, "is to do nothing, say nothing, and be nothing". Although possible negativity is a common concern among library boards, it should not hold you captive if the majority of the board feels that a public vote is necessary. There are several methods of minimizing or managing negativity regarding a tax increase.

Here are a few strategies:

- Psychologically prepare yourself for potential negativity by remembering that your actions serve a greater good. Reflect on the words of Kim Klein, a fundraising expert, "*What you believe in has to be bigger than what you're afraid of."*
- Anticipate and deliberate potential negatives beforehand and create positive responses. Generate a response script that is utilized by the library director, trustees, and volunteers. This will ensure consistency of the message. Points to consider as you prepare responses to possible criticism:
  - Clearly outline the benefits the community will get as a result of their support. For example, increased hours, more DVD's, a greater selection of bestsellers, etc.
  - Remind the public that this is a good use of tax dollars, and unlike many of their other tax contributions, this one directly benefits *the entire community*.
  - Point out that libraries are transparent, and use money wisely. Explain to these groups that every time the library wants an increase, it goes back to the public. Make it clear that the public have controls library funding.
  - Use words such as investment, return on investment, asset, value, cost-effective, contribution, opportunity etc. to positively frame the library's proposition.
  - Talk in dollars and cents. Break down figures to the annual real dollar cost for the average homeowner, so that they see what a modest contribution they will be making over the course of a year.
  - Remind opponents that "their vote is their voice" and that they are welcome to participate in the upcoming vote.
- Ask key people in the community whom you know and respect to inform you if they hear anything negative, so you can be prepared and proactive.

- Consider speaking directly to the source of negativity in a non-confrontational tone. This strategy has worked effectively for many libraries in neutralizing opposition.

- Arrange for one or two respected people in the community to be on standby to speak up for the library if public negativity arises.

Points to Ponder:

"Don't be afraid of negativity. Think of possible negatives and spin them your way. Be proactive."
—Marilyn McIntosh, Director, Monroe Free Library, NY

"There are always some people who are going to be negative. You can't expect 100% support."
— Mark Fuerst, Former Trustee of the Starr Library, Rhinebeck, NY

"Don't try to win everyone to your side. In your community, about 1/3 of the people are already on your side, 1/3 are against you and 1/3 haven't decided yet. Those who are undecided need convincing, those already on your side need to be activated, and those opposed need to be ignored."
—Libby Post, CEO of Communication Services, Albany, NY

"We were prepared ahead of time. We picked a nice guy in the community with name recognition to be on stand-by to send a letter-to-the-editor should we need him to. He wasn't a political figure, just a well-known person in the community whom everyone respected. We also made sure all our communication about the 414 was scripted, so no one was shooting from the hip. Library staff were able to provide basic information about the vote, but if someone had a lot of questions, they were sent to the director."
—Patti Haar, Director, Patterson Library, NY

"If someone is negative, call them and offer to speak to them. These are your neighbors, they often give to charity, and they pay their taxes. They just want to make sure that money is being used wisely."
— Parry Teasdale, former President of the Mid-Hudson Library Board, Phoenicia Library Board, and New York State Association of Library Boards, NY

PART 2
Frequently Asked Questions

How do we know if we should hold a vote?
There is no clear-cut answer with regard to when a library should pursue a public vote. However, since the foremost responsibility of a library board is to maintain proper financing for the library, it is important that the future financial health of the library be a primary consideration. A library board should project ahead several years and see how long the current financing will be sufficient. MHLS recommends that libraries eligible for 414 votes hold one once at least every three years. This enables the library to keep pace with rising costs and increased patron demands, as well as reminds the community that the library depends upon their financial support. (Note: Chapter 414 public votes are available to association and municipal libraries. For more information about vote types see the online *Public Library Vote Toolbox*. [Visit www.midhudson.org/vote and refer to the Website Index.]

How much should we ask for?
There isn't a precise formula for determining the amount of money a library should request when going for a public vote. Libraries have relied on different methods for devising a number.
- Many project their future needs and then add in a modest amount of extra funds.
- Some libraries make a budgetary jump when they do their first 414, seeing it as a one-time opportunity to do so because they don't have a prior 414 fund comparison.
- Selected libraries base their decision primarily on how much their community will likely approve. It is always good practice to determine what new services people want and verify the overall cost for these services and the projected cost per taxpayer. The best recommendation for deciding upon a budget figure is to select a reasonable number, one that you can justify asking for, and then go with it.

> "You have to indicate that you are being responsible and not being frivolous. You have to show the community that you take your fiduciary responsibility seriously."
> —Sue Hartshorn, Former Board President, Starr Library, Rhinebeck, NY

How long does a library's public vote campaign take?
A successful campaign typically requires 6-9 months of work, with the last few months requiring the most concentrated effort. The campaign is broken down into several phases, which make it more structured and manageable. You can review the *Five Phases of the Campaign* online in the *Public Library Vote Toolbox*. [Visit www.midhudson.org/vote and refer to the Website Index.]

Creating a written campaign outline or plan early on, once you have decided to go for a vote, will streamline the vote process and save you time later on. Taking time upfront to develop an actual strategy for winning will increase your likelihood of victory considerably. For help in creating a campaign plan, use the suggested steps and template provided online in the *Campaign Planning Guide* available in the *Public Library Vote Toolbox*. [Visit www.midhudson.org/vote and refer to the Website Index.]

PART 3
Determine if you are Ready for a Vote

Step 1: Are We Ready?

As a library board, consider if the time is appropriate for your library to initiate the public vote process. Consider the internal condition of your library and the current dynamics in your community. Here are some questions to help you decide if the time is right:

1. **Why are you going for a vote?**
   Having a clear justification for why a vote is necessary will provide clarity and purpose, which is necessary for convincing the public. Identifying clear, concise reasons for your vote is an important starting place.

2. **Do you have the full board's support for this vote and at least one board member who is willing to take the lead?**
   A successful vote requires the contribution of several people, with at least one person taking the leadership role in overseeing the library's campaign. Make sure you can identify one person who is able to do this.

3. **Do you have a working relationship with your town officials?**
   Lack of support from town leaders, with their clout and influence in the community, can be detrimental to a library's vote. Early in the process, find out how supportive your town officials are. Before publicly announcing your vote plans, sit down with them and explain what you are doing. Remind them that a public vote takes the onus of a tax increase off them and gives it to the community. If they aren't supportive, ask that they remain publicly neutral. If they are blatantly opposed, you need to carefully consider your strategy.

4. **Can you get the number of votes needed to win?**
   Chances are good that you can get enough votes to win if you work from your built-in group of supporters: your users. Use the strategy suggested in Appendix A: *The Magic Quadrant*, which directs you to determine how many votes can be gleaned from your high-volume users.

Libraries tend to have a real advantage when it comes to public votes for several reasons:
- They have a built in constituency of supporters made up of library cardholders.
- They can register unregistered cardholders to garner more votes.
- Historically, public libraries have had a low percentage of library users turn out to support their votes. If you can activate the majority of your library users, it is almost certain that you will win. (Keep in mind that turnout is greatly influenced by the time that your vote is held. Votes held on General Election days will automatically have a higher turnout.)

In short, connecting with and mobilizing users is your best strategy for success.

5. **Have you involved library staff and enlisted their support?**
   Staff members are the image emissaries of the library and therefore, have a significant impact on the success of your vote. Although they cannot actively promote the vote, their personal buy-in, input, and user interactions can be critical to the vote's success. Be sure to involve them early on in the process.

6. **Can you identify allies in the community who will likely support your cause?**
   It is essential to be able to identify a variety of groups, such as business/community leaders, town board members, members of community organizations, etc. and a list of respected individuals within your community who are likely to support your vote. This will provide the grassroots support and credibility needed for success. Do you have groups that will support you?

7. **What is the political landscape in your community? What other issues are percolating in the community that could impact your success?**
    o Did your town just do a reassessment? If so, the community might be less likely to support you because of their recent increase in taxes.
    o What other votes/referendums are taking place at the same time as your vote? Are they likely to threaten the success of yours? (Ex. school district vote)
    o What town agencies or organizations compete for similar funding?

> "There is not necessarily such a thing as a bad year to do a vote. There are always advantages and disadvantages whenever you decide to do it."
> —Steven Cook, Director, Starr Library, Rhinebeck, NY

Step 2: We're Ready: How to Get Started.

There are several steps you can take internally and externally to ready your library and your community for the upcoming vote. This preparation will poise your library for success.

1. **Create a matrix to examine voter groups in your community.**
   The matrix will allow you to assess: A) How much support you already have and 2) How much additional support you will need to win. [See Appendix for *The Magic Quadrant*, a sample matrix with the steps for creating your own.] This activity will form the basis of your campaign strategy.

2. **Consider doing a community survey through the library.**
   You can gather some valuable information and use the results later in favorable ways to support your vote campaign. For example, as a result of the survey, the community may request "more meeting space" or "more children's programs." As part of your campaign messages, you can reiterate the community's request for these items and that additional money is required to meet these demands.

3. **Identify internal supporters for your vote:** staff, trustees, friends, and volunteers.

4. **Begin building a campaign team.**
   The team should be driven primarily by trustees and volunteers. A listing of campaign activities is available online in the *Public Library Vote Toolbox*. [Visit www.midhudson.org/vote and refer to the Website Index.]

5. **Gather statistics to support your case.**
   They are readily available in the *Public Library Vote Toolbox*. [Visit www.midhudson.org/vote and refer to the Website Index.]

6. **Get your fiscal transactions in order.**
   Make your budget reports transparent, easy to understand, and available to the public. Establish reliable bookkeeping procedures and consider CPA oversight.

7. **Make your "Annual Report to the Community" a public relations piece.**
   You can post it on your library's website, hand it out as a bookmark, or organize a community mailing to raise public awareness about the library's contribution to the community. Find ideas and examples for creating an Annual Report that promotes your library in the *Public Library Vote Toolbox*. [Visit www.midhudson.org/vote and refer to the Website Index.]

8. **Begin developing messages for your vote.**
   These are three or four key points you will use to convince the public about the necessity of your vote. To develop messages that resonate with your community, you may want to conduct a focus group, issue a survey, or talk with a trusted person who is well connected in your community. Resources for message development and focus group facilitation are available online in the *Public Library Vote Toolbox*.
   [Visit www.midhudson.org/vote and refer to the Website Index.]

> *"We always do a survey before the vote. There is a psychological value to a survey. It sends the message, "we asked you and this is what you wanted."*
> —Patti Haar, Director, Patterson Library, NY

Step 3: Ready-Set-Go:
Putting the Pieces in Place

1. **Brainstorm a list of individuals and groups who can be called upon for support during your campaign.** You may want to utilize these individuals in the following ways:

   - Identify at least two people who will be "champions" in the community and actively support your case. These individuals should be known, respected, and willing to speak openly about their support for the library and provide high-impact quotes for public relations materials.
   - Organize community presentations. Arrange for a few volunteers to visit community groups and make presentations on behalf of the library's upcoming vote. This helps to raise awareness, create goodwill, and short-circuit possible misinformation surrounding your vote. Ensure that presenters are capable public speakers, thoroughly supportive and knowledgeable of the proposal. Make sure that they are adequately prepared to answer questions and that they work from the same script.
   - Create a "Friends & Allies" group, or an email list of 10-20 well-connected patrons who will support your cause. You can get them initially by asking for their support and then making them an "insiders group." You can then email them updates and ideas to circulate within the community that support your case.
   - Consider organizing a "Vote Yes Committee" or "Citizens to Support the Library" group who will be able to actively advocate and ask people to "vote yes" on your behalf. This group may consist of supportive community leaders, businesspersons, library friends and volunteers.

2. **Solidify the messages that will form the basis for your campaign.**
   Resources for message development are available online in the *Public Library Vote Toolbox*. [Visit www.midhudson.org/vote and refer to the Website Index.]

3. **Develop a strategy for your vote.**
   Determine proactive steps you can take to ensure your vote's success. The strategy section of the *Public Library Vote Toolbox* can be a reliable resource for planning. [Visit www.midhudson.org/vote and refer to the Website Index.]

4. **Develop a public relations strategy.**
   Generate a list of activities that your library will do to effectively reach the groups most important to your vote's success. These may include public meetings, special programs, bookmarks, or direct mailings. See the online *Public Library Vote Toolbox* for additional public relations ideas. [Visit www.midhudson.org/vote and refer to the Website Index.]

5. **Develop a timeline for your vote efforts.** A sample timeline is available online in the *Public Library Vote Toolbox*. [Visit www.midhudson.org/vote and refer to the Website Index.]

> "Libraries need to understand the value of strategic planning before they do a vote. Preparation is required."
> —Judi Smith, Board President,
> East Fishkill Community Library, Hopewell Junction, NY

Lessons Learned from Library Votes: Words from the Wise

This document offers insight gathered from library administrators and advocates experienced with votes in the Mid-Hudson Library System, across New York State, and around the U.S.

On Doing a Public Vote

- **Don't be afraid.**
  "Don't be afraid of failure, you will learn more from failure than from success. Everything we learned from our failed vote helped us to go back and win the next time." —Kevin Rosswurm, Director, Cuyahoga Falls Library, OH

- **It's not as hard as you think.**
  "The chances for success are pretty high. With the absence of some huge fight, you've got a pretty good chance of winning." —Steven Cook, Director, Starr Library (Rhinebeck), NY

- **Work continuously to build support for your library.**
  Since the climate within a community constantly changes, it is dangerous to assume that your library's budget will be approved simply because it has been in the past.

  "We had taken our place in the community for granted and we realized that we could no longer do that." —Margaret Cincotta, Director, North Merrick Public Library, NY

  "Get out of your office! Build personal relationships with people. Don't make it seem like the only time they see or hear from you is when you are asking for money." —Barbara Aron, Director, Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District, IL

  "Show people how the library fits into their lives, that it's not just a place where academia go." —Patti Harr, Director, Patterson Library, NY

- **Take advantage of the knowledge and experience of other libraries.**
  "It was great having Josh Cohen and Martin Miller talk to my board about doing a 414. I also talked with Patti Haar [Director, Patterson Library] endlessly." —Gillian Thorpe, Director, Julia L. Butterfield Library (Cold Spring), NY

"We created a bookmark about our 414 and listed six other libraries in our area that had already done one, because we knew that there was safety in numbers." —Patti Haar, Director, Patterson Library, NY

- **Get buy-in from internal audiences: library staff, board members, Friends, and volunteers.**
  "Bring staff into the planning early on. They deal with the public daily and are an important part of collecting accurate information, as well as providing direct feedback from the public. In our library, they were particularly helpful with creating the Frequently-Asked-Questions we developed as part of our public education program. You need all the eyes and ears you can get working for you out in the community too." —Judi Smith, Board President, East Fishkill Community Library, Hopewell Junction, NY

- **Include stakeholders in library planning and campaign efforts.**
  "I reached out to several community leaders and asked them to be part of our strategic planning process. Now I have some of these people calling to check on how the planning process is going. These are significant people in the community whom I had no contact with beforehand." —Margaret Cincotta, Director, North Merrick Public Library, NY

Practical Considerations

- **Recognize that a public vote is a political process.**
  "When it comes to the actual vote strategy, a library director should approach it like a politician, not a librarian. For my first vote, I approached it like a librarian and gave the public tons of information. Then I learned that they get overwhelmed easily and the information gets twisted. It is much better to put out bits of information in sound bites and to have talking points that are repeated continuously." —Denise Medeiros, Director, Dartmouth Public Library, MA

  "Regardless of wealth, communities that vote on their library budget provide significantly greater financial support to their library than those communities that don't." —Jerry Nichols, Director, Palmer Institute for Public Library Organization & Management at Long Island University

- **Consider the timing of other votes.**
  "We met with government and educational officials to find out when the school and local villages were holding their votes so that the library would not compete with them." —Barbara Aron, Director, Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District, IL

  "Avoid confusing people. We had a small building campaign prior to our budget vote and people were saying, 'Didn't we already have a vote?' Try to educate people to avoid misunderstanding about previous votes." —Kevin Rosswurm, Director, Cuyahoga Falls Library, OH

- **Make your campaign a grassroots effort.**
  "Until the public is aware of and impacted by some of the library's hardships, they are not motivated. Consider leaving buckets on the bookshelf collecting water after the rainstorm if you have a leak, don't try to hide it. You need the community to notice and start talking about it." —Denise Medeiros, Director, Dartmouth Public Library, MA

"One primary reason why our special district vote didn't pass was because there wasn't a groundswell of public support. The referendum kind of came from on high: from the Library and the State. There needs to be citizen support. Trustees need to get the buzz started in the community." —Kevin Gallagher, Director, Thrall Library in Middletown, NY, on why their first Special District Referendum vote was successful and their second was unsuccessful.

- **View the vote as an educational process.**
  "You have to educate the public about the library's needs and let them know that their support is critical." —Kevin Rosswurm, Director, Cuyahoga Falls Library, OH

- **Recognize that people often don't trust the government.**
  "They often think that institutions have money hidden away and that they are mismanaging money. For this reason, you have to promote the openness and transparency of the library." —Margaret Cincotta, Director, North Merrick Public Library, NY

- **Have some money to work with.**
  Keep in mind that library funds cannot be used for a library's vote, so they must be obtained through other means, such as donations or fundraising.

  "We collected money from each trustee toward campaign materials and this seemed to work well." —Sue Hartshorn, Former Board President, Starr Library, Rhinebeck, NY

- **Become privy to local dynamics.**
  "Learn how things work in your community and then purposefully build contacts of influence. You can begin by first harvesting the internal connections the library has via the director, staff, board, Friends, and volunteers." —Kevin Rosswurm, Director, Cuyahoga Falls Library, OH

- **Make sure you have a committed group of volunteers to promote the vote within the community.**
  "The Friends can do things for the library's campaign that the library cannot do for itself." —Linda Deubert, Director, Heermance Memorial Library (Coxsackie), NY

Strategies for Success

- **Start early.**
  "A library should begin planning at least one year ahead. Preparation for our vote was actually three years in the making. Our library cut some hours, library staff had to pay into to get health insurance and some programs were cut. We started building the case long before the vote."
  —Barbara Aron, Director, Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District, IL

- **Reach out to your built-in constituency: your library users.**
  "It's all personal relationships– make contact with the people who use the library and then ask for their support when you need it." —Kevin Rosswurm, Director, Cuyahoga Falls Library, OH

- **Create messages and talking points that will form the basis of your campaign.**
  "*People think in sound bites, you have to have some good ones on hand for either when the media contact you, or whn you meet someone in the grocery store and you are both pressed for time!"* —Judi Smith, Board President, East Fishkill Community Library, Hopewell Junction, NY

- **Utilize a variety of marketing and public relations approaches.**
  "We found that all the communication avenues we used seemed to bring results. Libraries should be sure to use a variety of strategies to reach the public because everyone receives information in different ways." —Judi Smith, Trustee, East Fishkill Community Library, Hopewell Junction, NY

- **Have a board with a wide range of skills and experience to draw upon.**
  "We had a strong board with a nice mix of talents." —Sue Hartshorn, Former Board President, Starr Library, Rhinebeck, NY

  "We had a highly skilled and well-organized board that worked as a team." —Judi Smith, Board President, East Fishkill Community Library, Hopewell Junction, NY

- **Avoid publicly allying yourself with anyone who is likely to be divisive.**
  "We had a local official who offered to serve as a spokesperson, but we knew at least 50% of the people did not like him. We thanked him, but did not accept his offer because we would have risked alienating a large portion of the public." —Bob Briell, Director, Warren-Trumbull County Public Library, OH

- **Be prepared and proactive.**
  "Think about the opposition and how you will respond. Take every potential negative about the library and turn it into a positive." —Margaret Cincotta, Director, North Merrick Public Library, NY

- **When talking with news reporters, put all numbers in writing.**
  "Libraries should have a facts sheet where all numbers and important facts for the library's proposition are in writing. This can help to prevent reporters from printing mistakes." —Gillian Thorpe, Director, Julia L. Butterfield Library, Cold Spring, NY

- **When determining the amount of money to ask for, select a reasonable number and go with it.**
  "I always tell libraries to look at how much of a tax increase you are selling and make a decision based on what seems reasonable. Any amount you ask for you have to be able to justify." —Josh Cohen, Executive Director, Mid-Hudson Library System, Poughkeepsie, NY

  "Rather than calculate like crazy, a board should ballpark what their library will need and then go for it. Just pick a sound number and go with it." —Gillian Thorpe, Director, Julia L. Butterfield Library, Cold Spring, NY

"We knew how much we needed to cover the mortgage for the next 2 – 2 ½ years and we wanted to be able to put the remaining money toward programming. We also considered our long-range plan that called for new books, small salary increases, and small staffing increases. We decided upon our budget based on this long-range plan." —Sue Hartshorn, Former Board President, Starr Library, (Rhinebeck) NY

- **Get library non-users to see beyond their own needs and behaviors.**
  "Remind people who don't use the library, that although they might get all the information they need online and not use he library, their friends and family and most of the community use it. Getting them to think beyond their own needs and attitudes can help them to see that that the library is providing a critical service to the rest of the community." —Lynda Wills, Director, Winchester Public Library, MA

- **Make the library a community center.**
  "We worked to make the library "the place to be" in the community. As a result, more patrons wanted to come, but they got frustrated by not having enough parking, enough computers etc. People saw the need and they wanted something more. They realized they'd have to pay for having something more." —Kathy Parker, Director, Glenwood-Lynwood Public Library District, IL

- **Be positive.**
  "Be optimistic and remember that there is a lot of good will out there toward libraries." —Greg Lubelski, Director, Wayne County Public Library (Wooster), OH

- **Say thank-you.**
  "We wrote a thank-you letter to the editor and put one in our newsletter." —Barbara Aron, Director, Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District

  "We thanked supporters by posting a message on our website, putting signs inside and outside the library and giving patrons some snacks in the library." —Gillian Thorpe, Director, Julia L. Butterfield Library (Cold Spring), NY

PART 5
Additional Resources Available
to Help You with Your Vote

This guide provides assistance in the very first steps of preparing for your vote. A selection of additional resources and services are available to support your library with the complete public vote process, including:

- ***The online toolkit: Public Library Vote Toolbox*** (www.midhudson.org/vote)
  Developed based on the insight and knowledge of over fifty library administrators and advocates experienced with votes in Mid-Hudson Library System, across New York State, and around the U.S., this toolkit is packed with practical resources and best practice strategies that are certain to simplify and stimulate your campaign. Use the resources available to customize your own public vote approach.

- ***Area libraries that have been through the process.***
  You may wish to contact area libraries that have had experience with the vote process. Conversing with the director or arranging for board members to visit one of your library's board meetings may be very helpful. A list of libraries that have done recent votes and links to their websites can be found online in the *Public Library Vote Toolbox*. [Visit www.midhudson.org/vote and refer to the Website Index.]

  For additional vote history information contact Rebekkah Smith Aldrich at 845-471-6060 ext. 39 or rsmith@midhudson.org.

- ***MHLS consultants: Josh Cohen*** (Executive Director) and ***Rebekkah Smith Aldrich*** (Coordinator of Member Information)
  Josh and Rebekkah are available to speak to your board about planning a vote, developing a campaign strategy, or for individual consultations by phone or email.

 | | | |
  |---|---|---|
  | Josh Cohen | 845-471-6060 ext. 17 | jcohen@midhudson.org |
  | Rebekkah Smith Aldrich | 845-471-6060 ext. 39 | rsmith@midhudson.org |

- ***Professional materials:*** Books and materials supporting the vote process and related subjects are listed in our Public Library Catalog (http://gigcat.midhudson.org), including those in the MHLS Professional Collection. Find information on available materials and ordering instructions at http://midhudson.org/MHLS/professional_collection.htm.

The Magic Quadrant

A Strategy for Library Campaigns

Use this matrix to identify and target your community based on voting and library use habits

REGISTERED VOTER/Low Library Use Type of voter: Neutral/Potential Supporter **Strategy: Get them to use the library** *[Insert total number of individuals here]*	**REGISTERED VOTER/High Library Use** Type of voter: Supporter Strategy: Ensure that they vote *[Insert total number of individuals here]* Magic Quadrant ★
NON-REGISTERED VOTER/ Low Library Use Type of voter: **NOT TARGETED IN A SHORT-TERM CAMPAIGN** **Long-Term Strategy: Get them to use the library/Register them to vote** *[Insert total number of individuals here]*	**NON-REGISTERED VOTER/High Library Use** Type of voter: **SUPPORTER** **Strategy: Get them to register and vote** *[Insert total number of individuals here]*
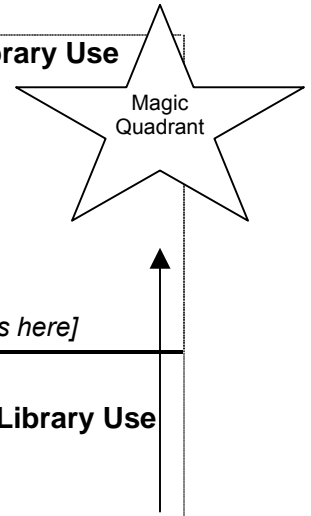
Group Descriptions
- **Voter / High Library Use**: Easiest target group; they usually want to maintain and/or improve services.
- **Non-Voter / High Library Use**: Important target group; effort must be made to get them to vote. Their votes will really make a difference. They know the value of the library but may not "get" how important their vote is to maintain or improve services. They must be encouraged to register and to cast their votes.
- **Voter / Low Library Use**: Build connections with this group and raise their awareness about the value of the public library within the community. Entice them with programs/services so they will form a favorable attitude toward the library.
- **Non-Voter / Low Library Use:** It is unlikely that this group can be swayed to vote for the library in the short-term. It is generally best not to direct time or resources to this group during a public vote campaign. However, as part of your library's strategic planning goals, consider a long-term plan for reaching this group.

WHY USE THIS MATRIX?
This tool enables you to apply strategy to your campaign plans by:
- Assessing how much support you already have and how much additional support you need to win.
- Identifying your existing support base through determining which of your patrons are already voters.

The goal in using this matrix is to strategically move everyone into "The Magic Quadrant." [The top right-hand quadrant of Registered Voters/High Library Users.] *Continue to next page for instructions on creating your matrix.*

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CREATING YOUR MATRIX:

1. Obtain a list of voters from your local Board of Elections.
2. Obtain a list of active patrons from Millennium. [You may want patrons who are active in the last six months or the last year.]
3. Cross-reference the lists to determine how many individuals fall into the categories listed in the matrix above. [Note: Most libraries have done the cross-referencing by hand. Several have employed the help of volunteers in doing this task. The activity can be cumbersome, but the results are invaluable for the campaign.]
4. Record the number of individuals who fall within each quadrant of the matrix.
5. Determine how many "yes" votes you can likely obtain. [This is determined by totaling the number of individuals in the following categories: Registered Voter/High Library Use and Non-Registered Voter/High Library Use.] To determine if you have enough to win, obtain the voter turnout results from similar past votes and compare. Library vote history information can be obtained through MHLS and other vote history data can be obtained through your local Board of Elections. Keep in mind that additional votes can be garnered by targeting the Registered Voter/Low Library Use quadrant.