

Capwiz
Guidelines for Use by Local Libraries & Other Library Organizations
Last Updated: 11/4/2009

Background

What is Capwiz?

Capwiz is an online tool to support grassroots advocacy efforts. Capwiz has two main functions. First, Capwiz can be used to create Action Alerts to disseminate information about issues or legislation. Second, Capwiz facilitates contact with elected officials.

The American Library Association (ALA) has provided funding to make Capwiz available to the Maryland Library Association (MLA), as well as other library entities across the country, for use with state and local advocacy efforts. MLA's use of Capwiz is coordinated through the MLA Legislative Panel. Federal Action Alerts are posted by ALA, while Maryland Action Alerts are posted by the MLA Legislative Panel.

Where can I find Capwiz?

To view Capwiz, go to <http://capwiz.com/ala/md>. A link to Capwiz is also provided on the MLA web site. Simply go to <http://www.mdlib.org> and click on the link for Capwiz on the left side below Legislative News.

Can Capwiz be used for advocacy efforts at the local level or for other library organizations?

The MLA Legislative Panel feels that Capwiz can be an effective tool for the advocacy efforts of a wide range of Maryland's libraries and library organizations. Capwiz is available for use by Maryland's local libraries and other Maryland library organizations according to the guidelines below.

Guidelines

NOTE: For the purpose of these guidelines, a local library or other library organization that wishes to use Capwiz will be referred to as the Library.

Criteria for Action Alerts

- The Action Alert must deal with issues that impact libraries in Maryland.
- The Library requesting the Action Alert must be:
 - Public;
 - Academic – Public or Private;
 - School; or
 - A Special library that is supported by tax dollars.

Content of Action Alerts

- The Action Alert includes information about the issue, such as a background summary or talking points.

- The Action Alert may include a Message section, with or without a pre-written letter, to facilitate contact with elected officials.
 - Local Officials – Due to the limitations of Capwiz, if local elected officials are elected by district then the Message section cannot automatically identify the local elected officials based on an advocate's address and therefore the Message section cannot be used for direct contact to local officials. However, with a few extra steps, advocates may still use Capwiz to contact local officials. If local officials are elected at large, then the Message section may be used for direct contact to local officials.
 - Federal Officials – The MLA Legislative Panel does not have the ability to select federal elected officials as recipients of Messages. However, with a few extra steps, advocates may still use Capwiz to contact federal officials.

The Library will:

- Use a provided template to submit all content electronically to the MLA Legislative Panel. The content should include details such as background information and/or talking points, a sample letter (optional) and which elected officials should be contacted.
- Disseminate information about the Action Alert to potential advocates.
- Notify the MLA Legislative Panel when the Action Alert should be updated or removed.

The MLA Legislative Panel will:

- Review the Action Alert and obtain approval from the MLA Legislative Panel Officer and the two Assistant Legislative Panel Officers. Other members of the Maryland library community may be involved in the review process as needed.
- Reserve the right to edit the Action Alert as needed. The Library will be notified of any modifications.
- Notify the MLA President and MLA President Elect of the Action Alert.
- Post the Action Alert.
- Send an Action Alert e-mail message to the specified person(s) for further distribution. This may include up to five individual e-mail addresses or a designated group within the Capwiz database.
- Update or remove the Action Alert when notified by the Library.
- Provide usage statistics, upon request, on the Action Alert, as they are available.