

# friends of kansas LIBRARIES

Assist - Support - Educate

FoKL POINT Newsletter — March 2026

## First Friday with Friends Your 501(c)(3) Roadmap



**First Friday with Friends**  
**Your 501(c)(3) Roadmap**  
**with Dalton Torneden**

**FRIDAY,  
APRIL 3  
@ 9AM**

**Join us on  
Zoom!**

On **April 3rd at 9:00 AM**, Dalton Torneden, FOKL Vice President, and Children's Librarian & Outreach Coordinator at Eudora Community Library will present a First Fridays with Friends session focused on everything you need to know about Friends of the Library startup basics and 501(c)(3) requirements.

Dalton will walk attendees through the basics of getting a Friends group started, including organizational steps, applying for tax-exempt status, and understanding IRS filing requirements. He will also cover ongoing compliance responsibilities to help groups stay in good standing year after year. This informative session is perfect for new Friends groups, board members, and anyone interested in strengthening library support efforts in their community. Join us on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88484969231>.

## FoKL Grant and Award Applications 2026 Due April 1st!

FoKL is accepting applications for our 2026 Grants and Awards until **April 1st**. Don't miss this chance to help fund a new project for your library or to recognize outstanding volunteer work in your Friends group. Find links to award information and forms below, or visit us at [www.fokl.net](http://www.fokl.net).

### Challenge Grants



Apply for up to \$500 in matching funds for your next great idea! Applications available at: <https://fokl.net/challenge-grants/>

### Outstanding Friends Group Award

Recognize the many accomplishments of your Friends group. Applications available at: <https://fokl.net/outstanding-group-award/>



### Outstanding Individual Friend Award

Recognize that one shining star in your Friends group. Applications available at: <https://fokl.net/outstanding-individual-award/>



## Steps to Starting a New Friends Group

A Friends group can be a valuable resource for your library by providing financial support for library programs and also serving as a pool of willing volunteers at events. The more Friends you have, the more positive word of mouth your library will receive in the community — a kind of marketing/promotion that can't be bought.

If you are just beginning the process, check out our starter guide below. And don't forget that at any point you may contact FoKL and ask for assistance from our experienced board members. Your Friends organization is encouraged to [join FoKL](#), making you eligible to apply for a [Start Up Grant](#).



1. The Librarian, the library board, and small group of interested community volunteers should meet to identify the reasons and needs for forming a Friends organization. Read ALA's [Working Together: Roles and Responsibilities Guidelines](#). As you meet together, decide if a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between the Library Board and your new Friends group is appropriate.
2. If you decided to go for it, create a core committee of interested persons (5-8) to establish the structure of the new Friends organization. Appoint a temporary acting chair, secretary, and treasurer.
3. You may want to identify an attorney or accountant in your community who would be willing to donate services to assist with tax exempt status and other legal matters.
4. Decide on the name for your Friends group.
5. Establish By-Laws ([see sample here](#)).
6. Apply for a [tax-identification number from the IRS](#). This number is needed before establishing a checking account and if your group wishes to apply for tax exempt status.
7. Establish a checking account with at least two signers.
8. Explore 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, which would allow donations to your group to be tax deductible. Visit the IRS information page for [application form 1023-EZ](#) and the Kansas Secretary of State's guidance on: [starting a non-profit organization](#) and [operating a non-profit organization](#).
9. Determine dues and membership categories.
10. Develop an overall membership campaign and design a brochure. Your campaign may be in the form of a direct mailing, social media blitz, a table at the library or community event, or a traditional media campaign through newspapers, radio, and posters. Be sure to include community officials, leaders, and organizations.
11. Use your membership campaign to promote your first "all member" evening or weekend event. Plan an interesting program to attract attendees and serve light refreshments. At the event, hold a brief business meeting to elect officers for their first full terms. You may also wish to invite a FoKL Board member to speak, and your core committee should share your vision for the group, along with the benefits of forming a Friends organization. Have membership brochures and pens available and the acting treasurer ready to accept dues.
12. Schedule a board meeting as soon as possible to plan first year activities, and to develop both short and long range plans and projects for the organization.
13. Once projects have been selected, appoint or elect a chairperson for each one. Friends projects may enhance existing or add new services for the library, such as purchasing new materials for the collection; providing children's programs; purchasing library furnishings, computers and other equipment; funding renovations or additions to the existing library building; raising money for a new library building.
14. Encourage the members of your new Friends organization to attend FoKL's [First Friday with Friends](#) events on Zoom to connect with Friends groups across the state. You might also consider attending the annual [Kansas Library Conference](#) to gain a larger understanding of library issues and advocacy.

*Sources for "Steps to Starting a New Friends Group" include publications from [American Library Association](#), [United for Libraries](#), and [Friends of Tennessee Libraries](#).*

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## You are Invited!

On Thursday, March 26, the Kansas regional library systems will offer an After Lunch Course on **Everyday Advocacy** with Dr. Andrew Smith (Emporia State University).

The session will focus on practical ways library staff, trustees, Friends groups, and volunteers can communicate the value and impact of libraries with community members and local and state officials. The emphasis is on building relationships and maintaining ongoing conversations, not only engaging during moments of challenge.

Date: Thursday, March 26

Time: 1:30–2:30 p.m.

Format: Virtual

Register at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/everydayadvocacyks>. All library friends, volunteers, and advocates are welcome!

### Contact us!

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