Advocating for UELMA in Your State – Tips for Getting Started
Adapted from July 2012 AALL Advocacy Training Handout by AALL GRO staff and Michele Finerty, California UELMA Advocate

By volunteering to work for the enactment of the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act (UELMA) in your state, you’ll learn how to be an effective legislative advocate. Remember, legislative advocates are made, not born!

Use the following tips to start advocating for UELMA in your state:

- **Know the Issue.** Read and familiarize yourself with UELMA and determine how it would impact the legal materials in your state.

- **Connect.** Contact Emily Feltren, AALL’s director of government relations. She’ll connect you with any officials, legislators or individuals who have taken the lead in your state.

- **Get what you need.** The AALL Government Relations Office (GRO) can request informational packets from the Uniform Law Commission be sent to you.

- **Reach out.** Your allies can help! Contact your state’s uniform law commissioners, chairs of chapter government relations committees, or state library associations for help.

- **Meet.** Arrange a meeting with the contacts you have. Formulate questions to ask and get answers face to face.

- **Help out.** If a bill has not yet been written, offer to assist your state contact in recruiting sponsors or co-sponsors.

- **Track it.** Follow the bill’s progress throughout the legislative process.

- **Speak up.** Draft testimony or letters in support of the bill. AALL has the information to guide you.

Remember, the paths to UELMA differ from state to state. In Connecticut, the state uniform law commissioner first reached out to AALL, while in Colorado (the first state to enact UELMA), Emily Feltren connected Susan Nevelow Mart to representatives in the Uniform Law Commission and state Senate. California’s group of law librarians called upon the state’s legislative counsel because she had been a member of the ULC’s Committee to Draft UELMA and learned that there was already a bill with a sponsor!

With the help of the GRO and its resources, advocating for UELMA can be a fun and rewarding way to support access to official, authentic online legal information while making a difference in your state.