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 **2917 ALA Annual Conference**

AMERICAN LIBRARY

ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC

DIRECTIONS

Mission

The mission of the American Library Association is to “provide leadership for the development,

promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in

order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.”

Core Organizational Values

The Association is committed to:

Extending and expanding library services in America and around the world

All types of libraries - academic, public, school and special

All librarians, library staff, trustees and other individuals and groups working to improve library

services

Member service

An open, inclusive, and collaborative environment

Ethics, professionalism and integrity

Excellence and innovation

Intellectual freedom

Social responsibility and the public good

Key Action Areas

Advocacy for Libraries and the Profession

ALA actively works to increase public awareness of the crucial value of libraries and librarians, to

promote state and national legislation beneficial to libraries and library users, and to supply the

resources, training and support networks needed by local advocates seeking to increase support for

libraries of all types.

Diversity

Libraries play a crucial role in empowering diverse populations for full participation in a democratic

society. In the library workforce, programs of recruitment, training, development, advancement and

promotion are needed in order to increase and retain diverse library personnel who are reflective of the

society we serve. Within the Association and in the services and operations of libraries, efforts to include

diversity in programs, activities, services, professional literature, products and continuing education

must be ongoing and encouraged.

Education and Lifelong Learning

ALA provides opportunities for the professional development and education of all library staff members

and trustees; it promotes continuous, lifelong learning for all people through library and information

services of every type.

Equitable Access to Information and Library Services

ALA recognizes the critical need for access to library and information resources, services, and

technologies by all people, especially those who may experience language or literacy-related barriers;

economic distress; cultural or social isolation; physical or attitudinal barriers; racism; discrimination on

the basis of appearance, ethnicity, immigrant status, housing status, religious background, sexual

orientation, gender identity, gender expression; or barriers to equal education, employment, and

housing.

Intellectual Freedom

Intellectual freedom is a basic right in a democratic society and a core value of the library profession.

ALA actively defends the privacy and right of library users to read, seek information, and speak freely as

guaranteed by the First Amendment.

Literacy

ALA assists and promotes libraries in helping children and adults develop the skills they need, including

the ability to read and use technology, understanding that the ability to seek and effectively utilize

information resources is essential in a global information society.

Organizational Excellence

The association is inclusive, effective and responsive to the needs of ALA members.

Transforming Libraries

ALA provides leadership in the transformation of libraries and library services in a dynamic and

increasingly global digital information environment. Every library is a hub of community engagement,

innovation and continual learning.

Strategic Directions

Advocacy

ALA and its members work with libraries, the broader library community and members of the public to

advocate for the value of libraries and for public support for libraries of all types at the local, state,

federal and international level.

This work includes a broad continuum of activities, including raising public awareness of the value of

libraries, training and supporting library advocates, advancing legislation and policies that support

information and library services in all types of libraries, and effectively responding to specific

opportunities and threats.

Advocacy efforts support ALA’s core values, provide a vision of innovation, focus on the impact of

libraries and librarians, enable the future of libraries and promote libraries as centers of community

engagement, lifelong discovery, and learning.

Goals

There is deep public understanding of the value and impact of libraries of all types on the

communities they serve, the broad range of services offered by libraries, and the indispensable

role of the librarian and library staff in providing these services.

Decision-makers and stakeholders see a nationwide network of library advocates, advocating for

libraries of all types.

The library is a hub of community engagement and continual learning: a place to form the

critical thinking skills fundamental to learning in a technologically evolving world, to access

information, and to create and share new knowledge.

Libraries are funded with staff and resources to meet the needs of their communities.

Across a diverse library community, there is a shared focus and common understanding of

advocacy and a sustained commitment to work collaboratively to reach common advocacy

goals.

Advocacy is integrated into the daily work of librarians and library staff.

Advocacy is part of educational preparation for librarians and library staff.

All libraries and all states have an advocacy plan.

ALA plays a key role in formulating legislation, policies, and standards that affect libraries and is

recognized in the U.S. as the voice for libraries and librarianship.

ALA works with a wide range of partners and stakeholders to achieve library advocacy goals.

ALA equips the library community with resources and training, available in a wide variety of

formats and venues.

Strategies

1. Develop a sustained national advocacy campaign to increase public awareness of the value,

impact and services provided by librarians and libraries of all types.

2. Provide coordinated resources and training to keep library advocates informed and engaged.

3. Recruit, mobilize and inspire a growing network of library advocates at the local, state, national

and international levels.

4. Gather, develop, and disseminate research documenting the value, outcomes and impacts of

libraries of all types.

5. Explore funding, organizational and governance structures and their impact on libraries of all

types in order to ensure the sustainability and future of libraries.

6. Identify advocacy best practices, using research and evidence to increase support and funding

for libraries of all types.

7. Identify and work with partners and stakeholders to achieve advocacy goals for all types of

libraries.

Information Policy

ALA’s information policy efforts empower people to use libraries and information based resources to

improve their lives and communities. Information policy comprises laws, regulations, court decisions,

doctrines, and other decision-making and practices related to information creation, storage, access,

preservation, communication, accessibility, and dissemination.

ALA advocates in diverse policy areas including intellectual freedom, privacy, civil liberties,

telecommunications, funding for education and research programs, funding for libraries, copyright and

licensing, open access, government information, and literacy. Progress in these policy areas enables

libraries to advance important societal goals such as employment, education, entrepreneurship, equity,

personal empowerment, community engagement, creation of new knowledge, literacy, and civic

participation. ALA’s interests reside at the local, regional, state, national, and international levels. ALA

serves as a knowledgeable resource and advocate on policy issues within these areas for ALA members,

library professionals, decision makers and influencers, the media, and the public.

Goals

ALA is among the first tier of groups that governments and other organizations turn to and trust

on information policy issues.

Treaties (and other international statements), legislation, regulation, court cases, corporate

policies, and other important information policy outcomes incorporate ALA positions.

ALA policy positions are easily available, accessible and comprehensible to all audiences.

ALA leaders have sufficient understanding of information policy so that they may be effective

policy advocates. Some of these leaders are cultivated as national policy champions. The ALA

and library communities at large understand the basics of information policy and why it is

important for libraries.

The requisite structures (including social media and other technology) are in place for ALA to

engage in effective advocacy on information policy in the long run.

Strategies

1. Develop and revise positions and strategies for each information policy issue based on ALA

values and priorities and substantive (facts and data) and analysis of threats and politics.

2. Develop and maintain information policy messaging and mechanisms to communicate with all

relevant audiences.

3. Lead and participate in effective coalitions, with member participation, to take action in

addressing information policy issues.

4. Initiate policy advocacy (including research) towards the attainment of ALA information policy

goals.

5. Develop and maintain a process for coordinating information policy activities across policy

topics and ALA units.

Professional and Leadership Development

Recognizing that the professional and leadership development of all who work in libraries is

essential to high-quality professional practice and the future of libraries and information services,

ALA will:

Provide professional development opportunities appropriate to all levels of experience and

expertise, in multiple formats/venues, with diverse presenters and educators;

Provide leadership development opportunities both within the Association and for the field;

Maintain strong but flexible accreditation standards and processes;

Coordinate the multiple opportunities available throughout ALA to provide coherent and

accessible continuing education frameworks for all members;

Attach meaningful recognition to learning opportunities;

Increase diversity and inclusion within the field;

Provide clear pathways that help members set and meet professional and leadership

development goals;

Develop a pervasive culture that encourages continuous learning based on content and

forms of recognition provided by ALA;

Align leadership development and continuing education with the best thinking about the

changing information environment and ALA’s Center for the Future of Libraries.

Goals

ALA is a premier provider of quality professional development, including continuing

education, for a global membership.

All library staff and trustees have the education and training they need to be successful in a

disruptive environment, with pathways and a suite of options that meet them where they

are.

There is a commitment to ongoing professional development and continuing education with

formal, meaningful recognition (e.g., certification, digital badging, micro-credentialing).

It is easy for members to get involved in ALA.

Association-wide mentoring engages emerging leaders and supports diversity. Paths to

leadership within the Association are clear, and people at all levels want and are helped to

be library leaders. Leadership is recognized as both formal and informal, managerial and

non-managerial.

Peer-to-peer learning/interaction facilitated by ALA helps members reach their goals.

Librarianship and library leadership reflect the communities they serve as well as the world

around them.

The outcome of learning is knowledge supporting positive individual and organizational

change.

The MLIS curriculum addresses changing 21st-century library and information services and

community needs. Library administrators and trustees value and support all library staff

having professional and leadership development opportunities.

Libraries are viewed as exciting places that offer various career paths for people who want

to work in them.

Strategies

1. Develop the ALA professional development space as one centralized online space to search and

discover all ALA learning options (all formats, all topic areas, all levels, all ALA sources) and

related tools including self-assessment, recognition, and tracking. Integrate face-to-face, online

and blended learning.

2. Develop pathways to support and guide networking, professional development, continuing

education, and mentoring.

3. Develop clear education tracks and streams of content for continuing education, with formal,

meaningful mechanisms to recognize achievement.

4. Articulate the role of engagement within the Association in professional and leadership

development.

5. Facilitate and increase opportunities for informal, collaborative, and peer-to-peer, member-to- member

learning/activity at face-to-face events and in online spaces.

6. Develop an association-wide mentoring/ peer-to-peer network, building on components

throughout the Association, its division and round tables, affiliates and chapters, to engage

emerging leaders and support diversity and inclusion.

7. Enhance recruitment/retention for diversity across the profession.

8. Focus on changing practice in a rapidly evolving environment; adjust competency statements,

standards, and content to the skills and knowledge needed in libraries as they continuously

evolve.

9. Work with graduate programs in LIS to rethink and reenergize LIS curricula and accreditation

and improve the connections with changing workforce skill requirements.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The American Library Association recognizes that equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) impacts all aspects

of work among members of the Association, within the field of librarianship, and within the

communities served by libraries. This work includes addressing, dismantling, and transforming policies,

structures and biases throughout the organization and the field of librarianship. ALA, through its actions

and those of its members, is instrumental in creating a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive society.

Goals

Commit to ameliorating marginalization and underrepresentation within the Association and the

communities served by libraries through increased understanding of the effects of historical

exclusion.

Expand the work of ALA and its allies in building a diverse and inclusive profession.

Provide context and understanding of the concepts of equity, diversity, and inclusion and

recognize their intersectional and complex nature.

Empower ALL ALA members to participate in the life of their organization.

Establish resources and support so libraries and librarians can be effective advocates for the

inclusion of all individuals in the life of their community.

Establish ALA as a major voice for the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion in all areas of

information policy.

Provide safe, respectful space for diverse voices and perspectives.

Strategies

1. Conduct or provide professional development opportunities that address issues of equity,

diversity, and inclusion.

2. Review ALA alliances and coalitions to increase focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

3. Build a national advocacy campaign based on existing advocacy assets which focus on the values

of equity, diversity, and inclusion; empower all ALA members to advocate within their

workplace, their community and beyond.

4. Gather, develop, and disseminate research documenting the value of equity, diversity, and

inclusion.

5. Review information policy positions and strategies and revise as needed to clearly

articulate the values of equity, diversity and inclusion.

6. Work with graduate programs in Library and Information Science (LIS) to increase focus

on equity, diversity and inclusion within LIS programs and within the subject matter of

the curricula.

7. Enhance recruitment, mentoring and networking activities by all parts of ALA (including

ALA Chapters) – building on and expanding all components of the Association (including

Spectrum), as well as its affiliates and chapters – to build a diverse and inclusive

leadership for the Association and the profession.

8. Ensure that the values of equity, diversity and inclusion are embedded in all continuing

education, including ALA and ALA Division conferences, relating to all aspects of the

profession and its practice.

9. Develop continuing education specifically focused on understanding and addressing

unconscious bias, power dynamics, microaggressions, white privilege and other topics

related to equity, diversity and inclusion.

10. Critically examine the way that equity, diversity, and inclusion are addressed and

coordinated throughout the Association.

The key actions areas are approved by the ALA Council as programmatic priorities on an

annual basis. The strategic directions, goals and strategies represent areas of intense

focus for the next 3- 5 years. The goals articulate the outcomes we would like to achieve

and answer the question: “what would success look like?” The strategies articulate how

we would move toward the achievement of these goals. For each of the strategic

directions, an implementation plan outlines objectives that support each strategy and

tactics to achieve these objectives. These are updated on an ongoing basis as part of a

continuous process of assessment and evaluation, and are reflected in the Association’s

annual action plan and budget. Adopted by ALA Council June 28, 2015

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion strategic direction was adopted by ALA Council at 2017

Midwinter Meeting in Atlanta, GA.