# Final Report of ALA’s Conference Accessibility Task Force (CATF)

June 2017

## Contents

Introduction and Background, 2

Summary of Accomplishments, 4

Accessibility Survey: Executive Summary, 5

Recommendations, 6

Conclusion, 19

## Appendices

Appendix A: Resolution Concerning Accessibility of ALA Conferences and Meetings, 22

Appendix B: CATF Charge and Framework, 24

Appendix C: Accessibility Glossary, 25

Appendix D: Survey Results (Questions and Quantitative Responses), 26

Appendix E: CATF Data Gathering Activities, 48

Appendix F: Conference Accessibility Guidelines, 55

Appendix G: CATF Master Training Document, 62

Appendix H: Accessibility Tip Sheet for Exhibitors, 67

Appendix I: Accessibility Tip Sheet for Hotel Staff, 69

Appendix J: Accessibility Resource Repository, 71

## Introduction and Background

The commitment to ensuring equitable access for its members regardless of race, socio-economic status, or disability has been forefront to ALA’s overall mission for much of its existence. Over the past three to four decades, accessibility concerns—strategies for serving patrons and members with disabilities—and policies and procedures governing the burgeoning field of disability librarianship found their home in decentralized interest groups and/or round tables, and in the 1970s, in the Health and Rehabilitative Library Services Division (HRLSD). In the late 1970s, the Association’s commitment to disability librarianship coalesced when the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) was formed with its Libraries Serving Special Needs section. An Accessibility Assembly was created as an ALA committee in 2002 and shortly thereafter folded into the ASCLA structure with representatives from divisions, roundtables, and other units throughout ALA.

The Accessibility Assembly met twice per year with a business meeting at Midwinter and Annual conferences, sharing library disability expertise while lively discussions of myriad accessibility conference feedback ensued. By 2005, as the development of assistive technology, adaptive hardware, and the need—due to increased participation by people with disabilities and an aging boomer member base—for accommodations at conferences became more prevalent, a member of ALA’s ITTS (Information Technology and Telecommunications Systems) staff was assigned to liaise with the Assembly. In addition, the Assembly maintained checklists of suggested service, technology, and equipment improvements for conference events and shared them with ITTS and the ALA Governance Office. As a result, conference improvements such as accessible public computers, scooter rentals, and availability of reliable ASL interpreters were established while ALA simultaneously built accessibility requirements into its contracts with software vendors. Over the last several years, attendance at Accessibility Assembly meetings has dwindled, although interest in accessibility issues has continued to rise, demonstrated by growing attendance and participation in the joint ASCLA/LITA/ACRL Universal Access Interest Group, newly formed division interest groups, and continued accessibility-related programming at conferences from a variety of divisions.

In recent years, however, following multiple incidents in which ALA event attendees with disabilities faced inconvenience, substandard facilities, embarrassment, and (in some cases) exclusion at Association events, members and member leaders within ASCLA and other ALA units began discussing how remedies could be sought and implemented: the consensus was that a more systemic approach was required. In January 2016, at the Midwinter Conference in Boston, ALA Council took action by passing a resolution [see Appendix A] calling for the establishment of a Conference Accessibility Task Force charged with researching accessibility at ALA conferences and meetings, and producing a final set of recommendations for facilitating improvements at future meetings. Those recommendations (81 in total, spanning 17 categories) are found in this final report.

It is also worth noting that in roughly the same time frame, November 2015, the issue of accessibility for professional conference attendees was given national prominence when Mary Robinette Kowal, an internationally known member of the science fiction convention community published a Sci-Fi/Fantasy Conference Pledge to gather signatures and generate interest [see Appendix J]. Among specific recommendations, the pledge referenced a Science Fiction Writers of America accessibility checklist as a guideline/standard for ensuring conference accessibility. In formulating its own set of accessibility guidelines [see Appendix F], CATF draws from previously mentioned ALA’s Accessibility Assembly checklists as well as other industry checklists and guidelines, including ADA Rules on Public Accommodation; SIG-Access; CSUN Assistive Technology Conference; Foundation Fighting Blindness’ Visions Conference; the University of Michigan Assistive Technology Department; the Modern Language Association Conference; and several other resources [see Appendix J for a full list].

To fulfill its charge to provide informed and well-researched recommendations, **task force representation was sought from and includes diverse perspectives within ALA: Accessibility Assembly, ALA members with disabilities, academic, public, and special libraries, school library media centers, Conference Committee, Exhibits Round Table, Budget Analysis and Review Committee, MLIS students, Retired Members Round Table, Conference Services Staff, and the Executive Board**. Four Task Force subcommittees were formed in spring 2016 to identify and collaborate on separate angles: Survey/Data Gathering, Process Review, Accessibility Guidelines, and Training. These subcommittees researched, deliberated over, and prepared materials culminating in the 80 recommendations and 10 appendices listed below. Over the course of the 18 months additional ALA members contributed invaluable feedback, knowledge and expertise through electronic means and at face-to-face meetings in 2016 and 2017.

## Summary of Accomplishments

### Meetings

Over its 18-month lifespan from January 2016 through June 2017, the Task Force held 16 teleconferences and met in person consecutively at conferences in Orlando, Atlanta, and Chicago. Research and asynchronous communication through email was extensive and informed the shape and scope of final recommendations and supportive documents. The input from ALA’s Conference Services staff was instrumental in assessing current accessibility practices and processes, as were conversations with members of ALA’s Training, Orientation, and Leadership Development committee, Round Table Coordinating Assembly, Exhibits Round Table, ACRL and ASCLA Offices, and Learning Round Table’s 2017 Emerging Leaders cohort. It was heartening to work with these and other ALA units all endeavoring toward increased inclusion and participation for all members.

### Programs

To augment its charge, the Task Force provided programming at the 2017 Midwinter conference in Atlanta, sponsoring a session within the News You Can Use series featuring disability rights pioneer John Wodatch, a retired 40-year veteran of the United States Justice Department, and co-author of the landmark 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. Audience members learned a great deal from Mr. Wodatch about the founding of the ADA, challenges and successes since its passage, and its application to libraries and librarianship. Additionally, CATF partnered with ALA administration to focus a series of Kitchen Table Conversations on accessibility, and through this structured sharing process extremely useful public and member feedback was gathered.

### Documentation

In its deliberations, CATF sought to define some basic terminology for a brief Accessibility Glossary [see Appendix C], with the intent of future stakeholders further honing the definition language in order to arrive at working terms for eventual inclusion in ALA policy. With input from Task Force members, information gathered from the aforementioned Accessibility Assembly checklists, institutional Conference Services staff expertise, ALA’s legal counsel, and examination of convention center and hotel contracts, an Accessibility Guidelines document has been compiled and made available with publication of CATF’s final report [see Appendix F]. These dynamic guidelines will be reviewed annually and updated accordingly.

Through the hard work of the Task Force’s Training Subcommittee, a Master Training Document that identifies four core groups has been created, identifying the existing and required knowledge and accessibility needs of ALA units [see Appendix G]. As corollaries to this ALA staff and member training rubric, accessibility tip sheets for exhibitors and hotel staff have been compiled [Appendix H and Appendix I]. In addition, the Training Subcommittee collaborated with LearnRT’s team of ALA Emerging Leaders to finalize presenter training guidelines to replace and update "Best Practices for Presenters," which appears on each successive conference website. All the aforementioned works are meant to exist as live, regularly reviewed and updated documents. The accessibility landscape must be reflected by dynamic procedures that can change according to shifting technology and best practices within the realm of universal design.

Finally, in the month preceding the 2017 ALA Annual Conference and issuance of its final report, CATF collaborated with the ALA Office for Research and Evaluation (ORE) to launch an online survey to gather the experiences and assessment by current and lapsed ALA members and recent exhibitors regarding conference and virtual meeting accessibility.

##

## Accessibility Survey: Executive Summary

The following summary is intended as a very brief and very partial analysis of data garnered from a 30-question Survey Gizmo online questionnaire, disseminated from May 22 to June 3, 2017.

Due to a late start and insufficient time before the report due at the 2017 ALA Annual Conference, an in-depth study and analysis of the survey results will take place after the conference in Chicago. In cooperation with the ALA Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) and as part of the continuing data gathering activity of ALA, CATF Data Gathering/Survey Subcommittee chair Melissa Cardenas-Dow is planning to undertake an exploratory study of the information gathered over the course of the CATF’s 18-month tenure. This study, in addition to further analyzing the results provided by January 2017 Kitchen Table Conversations and the June 2017 Survey Gizmo accessibility survey of membership, exhibit vendors, and lapsed ALA members, is intended to develop indicators focused on areas or aspects that can improve the accessibility of ALA’s in-person conferences and virtual meetings. A detailed summary of qualitative and quantitative survey data, along with a brief exploration of conference accessibility literature, can be found in Appendix E (CATF Data Gathering Activities).

The Survey Gizmo online questionnaire results, listed in Appendix D (Survey Results), are just the first inklings of quantifiable information about how people with disabilities interact with barriers at physical venues and in virtual spaces. The need to create baseline data is very real, and thus CATF launched this survey. The survey sample drew from a broad swath: up to 46,000 potential current individual ALA members (opting in to ALA communications), a few thousand current exhibitors, as well as lapsed ALA members within the past 3 years.

The response rate of 605 complete entries—883 total respondents who began the survey—was quite small, possibly due to the inconvenient timing a few weeks after an ALA member satisfaction survey (i.e. recipients may have been suffering from survey fatigue). Despite the low return, the statistic that pops out (see question 23) is the number of respondents who self-identified as a person with a disability: 91 of 523, or 17%; if one factors in 41 who “prefer not to say,” the number could be construed as 132 or 25%. If anywhere from 17 to 25% of conference attendees identify as a person with a disability, it translates to approximately 1700 Midwinter attendees or 3400 plus at an Annual Conference (averaging the two meetings at 10,000 and 20,000 attendees respectively). This may be an unscientific postulation, but if future baselines of 17-25% are corroborated, the size of the population potentially facing barriers is quite significant, and this is also borne out upon examination of the several hundred choices between one or more categories of disability (see question 24).

The percentages reflected by answers containing ratings of “somewhat difficult” or “very difficult”—sprinkled throughout the survey—are proportional to the 17% disability-identity figure, and the answer variations with respect to different types of barriers requires further analysis. The primary question for ALA Conference Services and other stakeholders going forward is how, without surveying an overly large sampling, we can reach the conference and virtual meeting attendees who face challenges. We expect a narrower strategy to target people with disabilities *and* people who face challenges but do not self-identify as having a disability. The raw quantitative data can be viewed in Appendix D. Descriptive, open text questions have not yet been analyzed, but will be summarized in the research study alluded to above and will be posted on the CATF Connect page as a public document later in the year.

## Recommendations

These 81 recommendations are divided into three overarching categories that are subdivided by theme:

1. **Before Conferences**: virtual and in-person meeting planning for conference

2. **During Conferences**: coordinating accommodations and addressing concerns on-site

3. **After Conferences**: ongoing assessment and evaluation

For each recommendation, there is an attempt to anticipate appropriate delegation, i.e. which ALA unit or units is best suited to tackle a specific recommendation or set of recommendations.

The Task Force has also tried to rate the urgency of each recommendation, though we understand that there are interceding variables such as cost, workload, and staffing that may alter the suggested timelines:

**Priority Level 1**: ideally enacted within 6 months, by Midwinter Conference 2018

**Priority Level 2**: ideally enacted within 12 months, by Annual Conference 2018

**Priority Level 3**: ideally enacted within 18 months, by Midwinter Conference 2019

It is the Task Force’s expectation that ALA Administration, including the Executive Director in conjunction with pertinent offices, will ultimately decide how best to proceed with assessment, prioritization, and implementation.

### Part 1. Before Conference (Recommendation Categories 1-8)

Categories:

1. Site Visits
2. Accommodations and Housing
3. Conference Center Spaces
4. Communication with Site Personnel
5. Web Accessibility
6. Program Planning Process and Preparation
7. Exhibits
8. Social Events and Off-Site Locations

#### Category 1: Site Visits

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.1 | Appoint a member of the advance site visit team whose responsibility will be to ensure that the space is accessible to people with disabilities. The appointed member will use a checklist to evaluate the conference center spaces, hotels, and other associated facilities on the conference campus. Whenever possible, a local ALA member with ADA knowledge and/or expertise should be considered. At minimum, the checklist will conform to the Department of Justice ADA Standards (2010). | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 1.2 | As a follow-up to negotiated contracts with conference hotels, send venues an ADA checklist requiring written verification of checklist parameters (see Appendix I: hotel staff tip sheet). Results can be leveraged by ALA contracts office to require compliance. | Priority 2 | ALA Conference Services |
| 1.3 | Ensure that results indicating non-compliance from both site visits and hotel ADA compliance verification questionnaire can be leveraged by ALA contracts office to require accessibility improvements and/or inflict penalties. | Priority 2 | ALA Conference Services |

#### Category 2: Accommodations and Housing

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2.1 | Request documentation from hotels detailing their compliance with the Department of Justice ADA Standards listed in 1.1. | Priority 3 | ALA Conference Services |
| 2.2 | Require that all conference hotels offer accessible rooms in all room types, rates, and class levels. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 2.3 | Require that hotels have a disability training plan in place for their staff. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 2.4 | Require that conference hotels guarantee that guests with disabilities who, upon booking, request an accessible room at a lower rate not be charged a higher rate if the reserved room has been assigned to another guest. In the event a hotel mistakenly or deliberately assigns a reserved, accessible room to another guest, the hotel must: 1) find another accessible room at the reserved rate, 2) find an accessible room in a different hotel, or 3) provide an acceptable, non-accessible room for the same low or even discounted rate due to the inconvenience and ADA violation. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |

#### Category 3: Conference Center Spaces

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3.1 | Designate "quiet room" areas near speaker auditoriums, the exhibit halls, and large, noise-abundant areas. Ensure these areas are marked with signage and in all maps used for the conference, and that staff and volunteers tasked with assisting attendees know where these areas are located. | Priority 2 | ALA Conference Services |
| 3.2 | Ensure that meetings expected to address accessibility issues and concerns are in closer proximity to main areas of the conference, to provide easier access. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 3.3 | Provide universally designed maps that mark major/commonly-used convention center locations (ALA Offices, Council room, Registration, etc.) and that detail accessible routes throughout the conference space. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 3.4 | Ensure that all restrooms, including gender-neutral restrooms, and any other specially designated spaces, conform to ADA accessibility guidelines. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 3.5 | Ensure meeting rooms adhere to minimum ADA clearance standards (must accommodate ample aisle width for wheelchairs, etc.) | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 3.6 | Require adjustable lighting options be present in all convention center and hotel meeting rooms, of particular importance for people with low vision when viewing content projected on screens. | Priority 3 | ALA Conference Services |
| 3.7 | Establish procedure for requesting and obtaining meeting/program door-to-door accompaniment services within convention center and hotels. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 3.8 | Designate relief areas for working/service animals. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |

#### Category 4: Communication with Site Personnel

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 4.1 | Share Accessibility Guidelines document with convention center and individual hotel management 6 months prior to event and solicit their comments and questions. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 4.2 | Send hotel staff tip sheet (Appendix I) to each conference hotel and request it be disseminated, read, and discussed by hotel staff. A copy should be placed at all hotel front and concierge desks. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 4.3 | Include information for Conference Accessibility Contact (hotline, email, text number, app) as part of the registration process, including prominent positioning on conference home and registration pages, and as a reminder response to registrants requesting disability accommodations. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 4.4 | Create an Accessibility Pledge that can be incorporated into the conference registration process, featured prominently on conference web pages, and/or rolled into the ALA Code of Conduct statement currently under review for EDI statement incorporation. | Priority 2 | ASCLA, ODLOS, ALA Council, Policy Monitoring Committee |
| 4.5 | Continue to review and edit conference scheduler to ensure comprehensive accessibility tagging. | Priority 3 | ALA Conference Services, ITTS |
| 4.6 | Continue to include a section in the conference program book that identifies all events related to accessibility and create a process to ensure that the tagging system is used to identify all relevant events. | Priority 3 | ALA Conference Services |
| 4.7 | Make conference program book available online as a fully accessible electronic document for attendees with print disabilities. | Priority 2 | ALA Conference Services, Committee on Publishing, Publications Office |

#### Category 5: Web Accessibility

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5.1 | Maintain a quality assurance process to assure content on all ALA conference web pages conforms to the standards set forth by the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). To accomplish this goal, test conference web content and pages using assistive technologies including screen reader and magnification software, text recognition software, and dictation software. | Priority 1 | ITTS |
| 5.2 | Whenever possible, conduct usability/accessibility tests with rotating groups of member volunteers rather than the same testers from previous testing periods. | Priority 2 | ITTS |
| 5.3 | Request that online content aggregators (e.g. onPeak, Cadmium, etc.) submit a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) as part of their contractual obligations. | Priority 2 | ITTS |

#### Category 6: Program Planning Process and Preparation

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 6.1 | Require preconference coordinators to ensure that event locations for both on- and off-campus preconferences are fully accessible. Provide preconference coordinators with all relevant tip sheets to ensure an accessible preconference experience for attendees with disabilities. | Priority 1 | TOLD Committee, ALA Office Executive Directors, ALA Division Presidents, Round Table Coordinating Assembly (RTCA) |
| 6.2 | Require program coordinators, once a program proposal has been approved, to ask presenter(s) about their accessibility needs. Accessibility needs may include mobility (i.e. equitable access to a raised dais, standard or alternate podium, etc.), communication (i.e. CART or live captioning, ASL interpreter, or microphone), sensory needs, or specific software such as assistive technology. | Priority 1 | RTCA, TOLD, ITTS, ASCLA |
| 6.3 | As part of the automated acceptance procedure, provide presenters with acceptance notices that contain a link to ALA's presenter guidelines page on the conference website and/or other resources. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services, ITTS |
| 6.4 | Prior to each Annual conference, update and/or appoint appropriate people to review presenter guidelines posted on ALA conference web pages. | Priority 2 | LearnRT, ALA Conference Services, TOLD Committee, ASCLA |
| 6.5 | Mandate program coordinators to require all presentation content uploaded to ALA's speaker center or scheduler (e.g. handouts, PowerPoints, PDFs) to follow best practice guidelines for accessibility. Presenters should be directed to presenter guidelines page or other resources. | Priority 1 | TOLD, ASCLA, ITTS |
| 6.6 | Ensure program coordinators request that all presentation handouts be available in standard print, large print, electronic formats, and braille with advance notice.  | Priority 2 | TOLD Committee, LearnRT |
| 6.7 | Create a clearinghouse (speakers’ bureau) of people with expertise in accessibility and universal design issues to aid program planners in choosing speakers. | Priority 3 | ASCLA, ODLOS |

#### Category 7: Exhibits

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7.1 | Following registration, provide exhibitors with 1) all related accessibility contact and reporting information, 2) an accessibility tip sheet for exhibitors (Appendix H). | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services, ERT |
| 7.2 | Follow up with all exhibitors to ensure that accessibility tip sheet has been reviewed and understood. Provide a forum for questions, comments, and feedback to arrive at solutions prior to arriving at the convention center/exhibit hall. | Priority 2 | ERT |
| 7.3 | Provide rest areas with benches throughout the Exhibit Hall. | Priority 2 | ALA Conference Services |

#### Category 8: Social Events and Off-Site Locations

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 8.1 | Require that ALA units (divisions, round tables, interest groups, etc.) ensure that social events are held in fully accessible locations and venues so that people with disabilities may attend. This includes off-campus locations. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services, Accessibility Assembly |
| 8.2 | As part of on-campus and off-campus event promotion, require that social event coordinators offer participants an option to request special accommodations (such as sign language interpretation). | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services, Accessibility Assembly |
| 8.3 | When food is to be served, event coordinators will ensure dietary restrictions are accounted for. | Priority 2 | ALA Conference Services, Accessibility Assembly |
| 8.4 | In the city guide to restaurants published for each conference by American Libraries, include accessibility information in restaurant reviews. Provide restaurant reviews with accessibility ratings at information kiosks and other booths addressing local amenities. | Priority 2 | American Libraries Advisory Committee |

### Part 2. During Conference (Recommendation Categories 9-12)

Categories:

1. On-Site Accessibility Services Management
2. Transportation
3. Awareness and Publicity of Reporting Issues
4. Virtual Participation

#### Category 9: On-Site Accessibility Services Management

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 9.1 | Designate a Conference Services staff member(s) to serve as the Conference Accessibility Contact during daytime business and evening event hours. Designated staff member will log incoming problems, complaints in accessibility tracking database and record resolution for the problem/complaint or indicate it was not resolved. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 9.2 | Ensure that Conference Accessibility Contact respond to all communication immediately or in a reasonable and timely manner depending on urgency of question, complaint, or grievance. Accessibility staff will engage appropriate convention center and hotel staff or vendors to mediate and resolve all accessibility related issues to the satisfaction of each querent. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 9.3 | Review all logged accessibility questions, complaints, and grievances daily to ensure a suitable resolution is reached. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 9.4 | Offer sign-language interpreters through advance scheduling and whenever possible for last minute coordination for meetings, programs, etc. In addition to daytime business hours, make interpreters available for evening social events. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 9.5 | Provide an adequate number of scooters (based on post-conference assessments) for rental to attendees with mobility accommodation needs. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 9.6 | To accommodate attendees with food allergies, Label ingredients for all food being served in convention center restaurants, food courts, coffee and sandwich stands, and throughout exhibit hall. | Priority 3 | ALA Conference Services, ERT |
| 9.7 | To accommodate the growing number of attendees with latex allergy, prohibit the use of latex gloves in all food service locations. Also prohibit latex balloons and latex promotional items throughout conference. | Priority 2 | ALA Conference Services, ERT |
| 9.8 | Strongly recommend that all attendees and exhibitors be mindful and considerate of environmental sensitivities to fragrances, perfumes, air fresheners, cleaning products, and other allergens. | Priority 3 | ALA Conference Services, ERT |
| 9.9 | Contact independent living centers in each conference city to obtain helpful information such as maps, brochures and place them at conference registration area. | Priority 3 | ALA Conference Services |

#### Category 10: Transportation

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 10.1 | Maintain contracts with local paratransit or accessible van service for attendees needing transportation   accommodations to reserve rides during business and evening event hours. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 10.2 | Maintain list of on-call accessibility ride service options in event that contracted paratransit service not available. Provide voucher system or method of reimbursement for attendees with disabilities who must use backup accessible ride services. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 10.3 | Allow scooter rentals from convention center to be used off-site at hotels and other conference events. Contract for special provisions to allow scooter renters to take scooters to their hotels overnight. | Priority 2 | ALA Conference Services, BARC? |

#### Category 11: Awareness and Publicity of Reporting Issues

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 11.1 | Provide a Conference Accessibility Contact able to respond quickly during business and early evening event hours throughout each ALA national and division conference. Ensure that individual is reachable by phone, email, and text message, and available for attendees to report accessibility issues in need of immediate redress or reasonable response times for non-urgent situations. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 11.2 | Advertise Conference Accessibility Contact on conference website home page, conference mobile app, conference marketing email blasts, relevant issues of American Libraries, conference handbook, daily electronic and print editions of Cognotes, and on conference badges. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services, Membership Office, AL Advisory Committee, Committee on Publishing, Public Awareness Office |
| 11.3 | Advertise Conference Accessibility Contact information/assistance prominently in clear signage throughout convention centers at Registration desk, all Information Kiosks, and shuttle bus stations. Provide accessibility hotline information to all registration staff, ALA Office attendants, and Information Kiosk personnel within the convention center. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 11.4 | Strongly encourage that presenters, meeting leaders, or program coordinators who receive or encounter accessibility concerns during the span of the conference report immediately to ALA's conference accessibility contact via one of the designated methods (hotline, email, in person at conference services). | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services, TOLD Committee |
| 11.5 | Require that exhibitors who receive or notice accessibility concerns and barriers during the span of the conference report immediately to ALA's conference accessibility contact via one of the designated methods (hotline, email, in person at conference services). | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services, ERT |
| 11.6 | Encourage conference attendees who encounter accessibility barriers or concerns (for themselves or others) during the span of the conference report immediately to ALA's conference accessibility contact via one of the designated methods (hotline, email, in person at conference services). | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services, Public Awareness Office |

#### Category 12: Virtual Participation

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 12.1 | Guarantee Robust WiFi (i.e. make WiFi hot spots available) for eParticipation wherever meetings are held. | Priority 1 | Web Advisory Committee (WAC), ALA Conference Services, ITTS |
| 12.2 | Offer landline telephone (teleconference bridge console with microphones) availability for remote participant teleconferencing. Provide cost and relevant logistical information to all ALA units with practical advance notice for possible implementation. | Priority 3 | ALA Conference Services |

### Part 3. After Conference (Recommendation Categories 13-17)

Categories:

1. Assessment and Improvements to Future Conferences
2. Surveying Methods
3. Site and Systems Review
4. Virtual Meetings Between Conferences
5. Follow-Up Communication

#### Category 13: Assessment and Improvements to Future Conferences

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 13.1 | Identify appropriate software for and implement a permanent conference accessibility issue tracking database. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services, ITTS, Conference Committee |
| 13.2 | Examine ALA accessibility guidelines at minimum once per year for making necessary updates. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services, Conference Committee, Accessibility Assembly, ODLOS Advisory Committee |
| 13.3 | Review the logs in problem/complaint database to identify trends or systemic issues that should be addressed for future conferences. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services, Conference Committee |
| 13.4 | Review logs of scooter requests and rentals to determine if current numbers of scooters were adequate. Review additional equipment requests for assessing whether other mobility accommodations should be considered.  | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services, Conference Committee |

#### Category 14: Surveying Methods

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 14.1 | Conduct in-depth analysis of CATF’s 2017 member/exhibitor survey and its final descriptive report in order to guide exploratory/evaluative study methods for ALA administration and member leaders. | Priority 2 | ALA Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE), Committee on Research and Statistics (CORS) |
| 14.2 | Follow up the CATF descriptive research analysis with an exploratory/evaluative study to develop accessibility indicators that can be used to support continuous inquiry of conference practices, processes, and policies. | Priority 3 | ALA Conference Services, ALA ORE, CORS |
| 14.3 | Distribute the resulting accessibility indicators that can be used to support continuous inquiry by pertinent staff and members regarding conference practices, processes, and policies. | Priority 3 | ALA ORE, ALA CORS, ASCLA |
| 14.4 | Incorporate accessibility-related questions into post conference evaluation surveys going forward. | Priority 1 | ALA Membership Office |
| 14.5 | Incorporate accessibility questions into program evaluation surveys. | Priority 2 | Conference Committee |

#### Category 15: Site and Systems Review

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 15.2 | Designate the Accessibility as the primary unit within ALA to monitor communications and evaluate implementation of CATF recommendations going forward. | Priority 1 | ASCLA Board, ODLOS Advisory Committee, ALA Executive Director |
| 15.1 | Report Accessibility issues that cannot be resolved satisfactorily to the U.S. Access Board so that a record of reported violations is maintained. Consider reporting same claims to local governance agencies such as Municipal Convention Center Bureaus, state oversight agencies, local Disability Awareness advocacy organizations, etc. | Priority 3 | ALA Conference Services |
| 15.3 | Maintain an accessibility appointee from ASCLA/Accessibility Assembly as a permanent representative on the Conference Planning Committee. | Priority 2 | Conference Committee, ASCLA Board, Accessibility Assembly, Policy Monitoring Committee |
| 15.4 | Create a written report based upon any accessibility concerns logged in the accessibility issues tracking database and share/discuss with Conference Committee prior to its next meeting. As a courtesy, provide copies of the report to the ASCLA Executive Director to be distributed to the ASCLA Board and Accessibility Assembly chair. In the report, include logged grievances and concerns expressed about the convention center, hotels, transit, and all events during the conference. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services, Conference Committee, ASCLA Executive Director, ASCLA Board, Accessibility Assembly Chair |
| 15.5 | Add the glossary of definitions of accessibility developed by the Task Force to the ALA Policy Manual. Audit all definitions of accessibility across the association to ensure the broadest possible understanding; and explore core values and roles and responsibilities statements to assess accessibility within ALA. | Priority 3 | ALA Governance Office, Policy Monitoring Committee |

#### Category 16: Virtual Meetings Between Conferences

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 16.1 | Provide cost for CARTing (live captioning) services to divisions, round tables, and committees in advance for scheduling. | Priority 1 | BARC, TOLD, RTCA, Division E.D.s |
| 16.2 | Adopt accessible Conferencing Software platform for eParticipation. | Priority 1 | ITTS, Web Advisory Committee |
| 16.3 | Use virtual meeting platform that complies with the World Wide Web Consortium's WCAG 2.0 (web content accessibility guidelines). | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services |
| 16.4 | Include CARTing (live captioning) services, recording, and post-meeting caption functionality for all virtual meetings. | Priority 1 | ITTS, WAC |
| 16.5 | Request vendors to complete a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) as part of all virtual meeting platform contracts. | Priority 2 | ITTS, WAC |

#### Category 17: Follow-Up Communication

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Priority Level** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 17.1 | Ensure that any changes made to accessibility guidelines and procedures are formally recorded, posted on the conference website, and disseminated widely to relevant units and stakeholders. | Priority 1 | ALA Conference Services, Accessibility Assembly |
| 17.2 | Initiate accessibility training and/or documentation for program and meeting coordinators and presenters on an ongoing basis.” | Priority 2 | Division E.D.s, TOLD, RTCA |

#### Postscript:

When CATF began its work, we examined several recent final Task Force reports for the Association, including the July 2016 Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion final document. Among the many excellent TF-EDI recommendations, six in particular resonated with CATF members through their endorsement of the inclusion of underrepresented and unacknowledged community members within ALA and librarianship in general: 4.3, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 5.6, and 6.3 [see Appendix J].

Given that the charge of our work focuses specifically on conference and virtual meeting accessibility, we decided not to include these six TF-EDI items in the recommendations section of our report, which would have been modified with language highlighting universal design and accessibility. However, CATF feels obligated to cite and support these recommendations, which stress and reinforce the importance of universal inclusion in future library trends, leadership recruitment, LIS core competencies, gathered member data, and overall representation for ALA and prospective library workforce members.

## Conclusion

Throughout the course of its deliberations the CATF has attempted to pinpoint both successful applications of accessibility principles for ALA conferences and meetings, and identify existing accessibility gaps to be filled. Although we have been impressed with the ongoing work by the Accessibility Assembly and the staff of ALA Conference Services to identify and remove barriers in order to improve the ALA conference and virtual meeting experience, the complexity and size of ALA requires even more focus to achieve reasonable accommodation across the board. We were particularly struck by two systemic issues blocking progress toward a more accessible conference; namely the lack of timely reporting by attendees experiencing barriers, and an absence of issue-tracking by ALA.

In the first instance, we learned that the majority of complaints or grievances about inaccessible spaces, technology, or equipment were made after the conference in question, and therefore could not be ameliorated right away (this is also difficult because each conference site has unique challenges). In the second instance, because ALA has not been quantitatively tracking accessibility complaints or grievances, most of the information on inaccessibility at conferences has been qualitative or anecdotal at best. It was the proffering of several anecdotes, in fact, that aided the ASCLA Board in its decision to propose an accessibility task force, and though these episodes entailed legitimate grievances, they were not documented at the exact time of infraction or occurrence. Therefore, documentation of future grievances, along with proposed or actual remedies and degree of successful remediation, must be put into place to gauge progress going forward.

With regard to tardiness of or reluctance in reporting of barriers at conferences, we as an association must instill a climate of acceptance and remind all members and attendees, with and without disabilities, to report accessibility issues. ALA Conference Services needs to know when problems arise or they will not be able to resolve them. There is a need for increased, targeted outreach to conference attendees with disabilities to publicize the existence of on-site point-persons (Conference Accessibility Contact), as well as stressing the importance of reporting issues immediately. Many of the Task Force’s recommendations address this strategy as well as other methods for increasing awareness of accessibility to content presenters, event planners, and general attendees. Similarly, Conference Services needs to track accessibility grievances and resolutions to problems in an organized manner, to track data over the short and long term and especially to identify wider trends so that universally designed solutions may be employed. Survey data needs to be consistently gathered from ALA membership and other conference attendees such as vendors, exhibitors, and other stakeholders.

The growing acceptance and integration of accessibility and universal design within ALA and society at large is encouraging. At its meeting at the 2016 Annual Conference, the Library Information and Technology Association (LITA) Board voted to adopt an accessibility pledge for its national LITA Forums held each autumn. LITA followed the core principles of the Worldcon Sci-Fi pledge [see Appendix J]:

1. The convention has an accessibility statement posted on the website and in the written programs offering specifics about the convention’s disability access;
2. The convention has at least one trained accessibility staff member with easy to find contact information (There are numerous local and national organizations that will help with training); and
3. The convention is willing and able to make accommodations for its members as it tries to be as accessible as possible.

CATF applauds LITA for taking this initiative and urges AASL, ACRL, ALSC, PLA, YALSA, and other future event sponsors, to adopt similar measures for their conferences, forums, and symposiums.

The adoption by ALA in January 2017 of “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion” as a fourth strategic direction strengthens the resolve and commitment of the Association and signifies the importance of accessibility. Members and people of all abilities must be welcomed, celebrated, and given the same opportunities to participate successfully in ALA.

This Task Force has embedded its recommendations throughout the conference planning process. We have included provisions for routinely reviewing these recommendations by a reinvigorated Accessibility Assembly and Conference Services. As our members—and society at large—age and as people with disabilities come to play a role in society reflecting their proportion of the population, ALA will be well-positioned to meet their needs. The Task Force hopes that it can, along with other crucial ALA bodies, steer the Association on the path to strong, and eventually complete, accessibility. It is time for us to take our place at the leading edge of this civil rights struggle.

### Respectfully submitted by the Members of ALA’s Conference Accessibility Task Force:

**Mike Marlin**, Co-Chair and Process Review Subcommittee Chair
Director, California Braille & Talking Book Library; ALA Executive Board

**Christopher Corrigan**, Co-Chair
Digital Reference Librarian, Library of Congress – National Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped; ASCLA Division Councilor

**Melissa Cardenas-Dow**, Survey/Data Gathering Subcommittee Chair
Social Sciences Librarian, California State University-Sacramento; ALA Council

**Lily Sacharow**, Secretary and Training Subcommittee Chair
Reference & Instruction Librarian, Berkeley College (NY); ASCLA Board

**Carrie Banks**, Supervising Librarian, Inclusive Services, Brooklyn Public Library; ASCLA Board

**Clara Bohrer**, Director, West Bloomfield Township Public Library (MI); Chair, ALA Conference Committee

**Roberto Delgadillo**, RSS Librarian, University of California – Davis; ALA Council

**Lori Goetsch**, Dean of Libraries, Kansas State University Libraries; Budget Analysis & Review Committee (BARC)

**Christina Golm**, Reference and Instruction Librarian, Merced College (CA); ASCLA 2016 Emerging Leader

**Pat Hogan**, Retired (IL); Retired Members Round Table Councilor

**David Lysinger**, Arts Rights Acquisitions Manager/Exhibits Director, Recorded Books; Exhibits Round Table Board

**Alec McFarlane**, President, National Literary Society of the Deaf, Inc.

**Janice Rosen**, Librarian, District of Columbia Public Library

**Christine Vortia**, Teen & Social Media Librarian, East Orange Public Library (NJ)

ALA Staff Liaison:

**Mary Ghikas**, Accessibility Guidelines Subcommittee Chair
Senior Associate Executive Director, ALA Conference Services

Prior Members:

**Janet Nelson**, Director of Library Engagement, Demco Inc.; Exhibits Round Table Board

**Julia Starkey**, MLIS Simmons 2015

The Task Force additionally thanks the many individuals and organizations who gave their time through conversations, e-mails, surveys, and online forums. In particular, we thank Kathy Rosa and Kelsey Henke of ALA’s Office of Research and Evaluation, and Karen Aguilar and Alee Navarro from ALA Conference Services.

## Appendix A: Resolution Concerning Accessibility of ALA Conferences and Meetings

2015-2016 ALA CD#31\_11216\_FINAL

2016 ALA Midwinter Meeting

*This resolution was adopted by the ALA Council on Tuesday, January 12, 2016.*

### Resolution Concerning Accessibility of ALA Conferences and Meetings for People with Disabilities

Whereas the ALA Council passed a Committee on Organization motion to appoint an Accessibility Assembly representative to the Conference Committee (CD#27.2 of 2010);

Whereas ALA Policy A.7.1.1 prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in any of the facilities used by the American Library Association;

Whereas ALA policy A.7.1.3 states that those involved with planning for and executing conferences “shall be aware of and sensitive to the problems of conference participants with disabilities, in the selection, planning, and layout of all conference facilities, especially meeting rooms and exhibit areas”;

Whereas the intent of ALA’s Core Values is to foster a diverse environment within the Association (ALA Policy B.1.1);

Whereas ALA policy B.3.3 states that “The American Library Association actively commits its programs and resources to those efforts that combat prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination against individuals and groups in the library profession and in library user populations on the basis of race, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, creed, color, religious background, national origin, language of origin or disability” and;

Whereas despite these policies, barriers to accessibility for conference attendees with disabilities persist;

Whereas practical methods for addressing and resolving accessibility grievances during conferences and meetings are not firmly established;

Whereas the Conference Committee Accessibility Assembly liaison has only recently been re-assigned to the committee;

Whereas there needs to be consistent and systematic review of all contracts to ensure that they require digital content vendors and conference venues to comply with provisions with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and;

Whereas there is no set training program for all leaders and staff of ALA units pertaining to the needs of ALA members and conference attendees with disabilities; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved,* that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members:

Establish and charge a Conference Accessibility Task Force to:

1. Collect data from ALA Members and conference attendees with disabilities;

2. Establish methods for reviewing and addressing accessibility grievances;

3. Draft guidelines for review of contracts to ensure ADA and WCAG compliance;

4. Research best practices for accessibility training and makes a recommendation for implementation;

5. Report progress to Council during the ALA Annual Conference 2016 and ALA Midwinter 2017 and;

6. Make a final report to Council with recommendations during ALA Annual Conference 2017 in Chicago.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association

Tuesday, January 12, 2016, in Boston, Massachusetts

Keith Michael Fiels

Executive Director and Secretary of the ALA Council

## Appendix B: CATF Charge and Framework

Official Charge, February 2016:

The Conference Accessibility Task Force of the American Library Association is charged to do the following:

* Collect data from ALA members and conference attendees with disabilities;
* Establish a process for reviewing and addressing accessibility problems;
* Draft accessibility guidelines to be used by ALA in reviewing contracts, to ensure ADA and WCAG compliance;
* Research best practices for accessibility training and make recommendations for implementation;
* Report progress to ALA Council during Annual Conference 2016 in Orlando and Midwinter Meeting 2017 in Atlanta; and
* Make a final report, with recommendations, to ALA Council at Annual Conference 2017 in Chicago.

Procedures:

* The task force will be initially comprised of 13 members and two co-chairs.
* The task force may elect to hold face-to-face meetings at the 2016 Annual Conference and/or 2017 Midwinter Meeting.
* The group will work primarily in ALA Connect.
* Virtual meetings (not during conferences) are assumed, by a broadly accessible means, such as conference calls.
* Work will also take place between meetings using asynchronous communication.
* The task force will reach out to and consult with other individuals or groups as necessary to the completion of its charge.

## Appendix C: Accessibility Glossary

### Accessibility Definitions

Written and Compiled by ALA’s Conference Accessibility Task Force, January 2016 through June 2017

#### Ableism

Ableism is the set of beliefs, practices, and ways of doing and being that prioritizes average or typical capacity and functioning of the human mind and body. **As with racism, ableism indicates oppression by the dominant culture.** The term is not necessarily a neutral one and is cited for reference purposes only.

#### Accessibility

Accessibility is the concept that focuses on enabling participation by all people to the fullest extent possible, by eliminating barriers. The goal of accessibility is to create an inclusive society for all people with disabilities. This means everyone has equal access to perceive, understand, engage, navigate, and interact with all elements of the physical and digital world. **Accessible and inclusive services bring more diverse communities of users to our libraries.**

#### Disability

**Disability is a natural part of the human experience.** It is the condition that results from interaction with the barriers society creates for people who interrelate with the world differently than the majority of “able” people. Disability need not signify a person’s state of limited or diminished capacity.

#### Impairment

Impairment (or handicap) is a narrowly defined term describing a limitation of a specific ability or set of abilities. The term is utilized by some sectors and avoided by others due to its negative connotations.

#### Universal Design

Universal Design is the process of creating products, services, and environments for ease of use by people with the widest possible range of abilities, operating within the widest possible range of situations.

Universal Design conceptual founder [Dr. Ronald Mace’s definition](https://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about_us/usronmace.htm):

The process of designing all products and the built environment to be aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life.

##

## Appendix D: Survey Results (Questions and Quantitative Responses)

### Conference Accessibility Survey 2017: Member Results

Response Statistics

|  | Count | Percent |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Complete | 530 | 60 |
| Partial | 353 | 40 |
| Disqualified | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 883 |  |

1. Are you an ALA member?

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes  | 98.2%  | 825  |
| No  | 1.8%  | 15  |
|   | Total  | 840  |
|  | Skipped | 11 |

2. Are you a member of any of the following ALA-affiliated organizations? Please check all that apply: [Check boxes]

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Member of an affiliate organization  | 66.0%  | 435  |
| Member of a national LIS organization that is not part of the current ALA-affiliated list (examples: Special Libraries Association, NASIG, etc.)  | 13.7%  | 90  |
| Member of a regional or state library association represented in ALA governance  | 52.0%  | 343  |
| LIS student at an ALA-accredited program  | 5.9%  | 39  |
| Other: Please write in details, including the names of with whom you are affiliated.  | 6.4%  | 42  |

3. Have you attended an ALA national or division conference in person? Examples: ALA Annual, ALA Midwinter, PLA, ACRL, LITA, AASL

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes  | 83.2%  | 702  |
| No  | 16.8%  | 142  |
|   | Total  | 844  |

4. Please rate your general experience with navigating the convention center.

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Very easy  | 12.6%  | 70  |
| Easy  | 40.7%  | 226  |
| Neither easy or difficult  | 31.9%  | 177  |
| Difficult  | 14.1%  | 78  |
| Very difficult  | 0.7%  | 4  |
|   | Total  | 555  |

5. Please rate your general experience with changes of elevation inside the convention center.

|   | Very easy  |   | Easy  |   | Neither easy or difficult  |   | Difficult  |   | Very difficult  |   | Responses  | Average  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  |   |   |
| Elevators  | 21.0%  | 113  | 36.0%  | 194  | 35.1%  | 189  | 7.1%  | 38  | 0.9%  | 5  | 539  | 0.0  |
| Escalators  | 31.6%  | 173  | 43.1%  | 236  | 20.1%  | 110  | 3.3%  | 18  | 1.8%  | 10  | 547  | 0.0  |
| Stairs  | 18.9%  | 101  | 33.6%  | 180  | 29.9%  | 160  | 12.0%  | 64  | 5.6%  | 30  | 535  | 0.0  |
| Indoor ramps, including sloping floors within individual rooms or unenclosed spaces inside the convention center  | 23.4%  | 124  | 38.4%  | 203  | 31.6%  | 167  | 6.4%  | 34  | 0.2%  | 1  | 529  | 0.0  |
| Total  | 100.0%  | 511  | 100.0%  | 813  | 100.0%  | 626  | 100.0%  | 154  | 100.0%  | 46  | 2150  |   |

6. Please rate your general experience with accessing the convention center building from outside.

|   | Very easy  |   | Easy  |   | Neither easy or difficult  |   | Difficult  |   | Very difficult  |   | Responses  | Average  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  |   |   |
| Outdoor ramps  | 24.3%  | 130  | 41.0%  | 219  | 29.4%  | 157  | 5.1%  | 27  | 0.2%  | 1  | 534  | 0.0  |
| Outdoor stairs  | 20.9%  | 110  | 37.2%  | 196  | 27.5%  | 145  | 11.0%  | 58  | 3.4%  | 18  | 527  | 0.0  |
| Doors, including automatic and revolving doors  | 24.7%  | 132  | 44.4%  | 237  | 24.9%  | 133  | 5.1%  | 27  | 0.9%  | 5  | 534  | 0.0  |
| Total  | 100.0%  | 372  | 100.0%  | 652  | 100.0%  | 435  | 100.0%  | 112  | 100.0%  | 24  | 1595  |   |

7. Please rate your general experience with convention center facilities, amenities and services.

|   | Very easy  |   | Easy  |   | Neither easy or difficult  |   | Difficult  |   | Very difficult  |   | Responses  | Average  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  |   |   |
| Meeting rooms  | 20.3%  | 111  | 49.0%  | 268  | 23.2%  | 127  | 7.3%  | 40  | 0.2%  | 1  | 547  | 0.0  |
| Exhibit halls  | 19.2%  | 105  | 44.2%  | 242  | 26.5%  | 145  | 9.0%  | 49  | 1.1%  | 6  | 547  | 0.0  |
| Restrooms, including positioning of individual stalls, sinks, hand dryers, etc. inside the restrooms  | 23.0%  | 126  | 48.3%  | 264  | 22.1%  | 121  | 6.0%  | 33  | 0.5%  | 3  | 547  | 0.0  |
| Seating areas  | 19.1%  | 104  | 37.5%  | 204  | 27.2%  | 148  | 13.2%  | 72  | 2.9%  | 16  | 544  | 0.0  |
| Drinking fountains  | 16.4%  | 88  | 40.7%  | 218  | 33.8%  | 181  | 7.8%  | 42  | 1.3%  | 7  | 536  | 0.0  |
| Food vending services, including trucks, carts, and areas within the convention center  | 15.3%  | 83  | 32.2%  | 174  | 34.0%  | 184  | 16.6%  | 90  | 1.8%  | 10  | 541  | 0.0  |
| Information desks and kiosks  | 20.7%  | 113  | 49.4%  | 269  | 25.1%  | 137  | 4.8%  | 26  | 0.0%  | 0  | 545  | 0.0  |
| Security services  | 15.2%  | 80  | 33.1%  | 174  | 48.1%  | 253  | 3.0%  | 16  | 0.6%  | 3  | 526  | 0.0  |
| Facilities services  | 16.3%  | 86  | 31.2%  | 164  | 49.0%  | 258  | 2.5%  | 13  | 1.0%  | 5  | 526  | 0.0  |
| Total  | 100.0%  | 896  | 100.0%  | 1977  | 100.0%  | 1554  | 100.0%  | 381  | 100.0%  | 51  | 4859  |   |

8. Please rate your experience with traveling between the venues of the ALA Conference, from the convention center to the hotel venues and back.

|   | Excellent  |   | Above average  |   | Average  |   | Below Average  |   | Poor  |   | N/A  |   | Responses  | Average  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  |   |   |
| Traveling between venues within the convention center.  | 12.0%  | 60  | 22.2%  | 111  | 46.7%  | 233  | 13.2%  | 66  | 3.4%  | 17  | 2.4%  | 12  | 499  | 0.0  |
| Traveling between convention center and hotel where I am staying.  | 12.4%  | 62  | 22.2%  | 111  | 38.1%  | 191  | 17.2%  | 86  | 3.6%  | 18  | 6.6%  | 33  | 501  | 0.0  |
| Traveling between convention center and other meeting sites (examples: restaurants, libraries, cultural centers, meeting rooms in hotels not adjacent or connected to the convention center, etc.)  | 5.7%  | 28  | 13.6%  | 67  | 41.8%  | 206  | 22.1%  | 109  | 7.3%  | 36  | 9.5%  | 47  | 493  | 0.0  |
| Total  | 100.0%  | 150  | 100.0%  | 289  | 100.0%  | 630  | 100.0%  | 261  | 100.0%  | 71  | 100.0%  | 92  | 1493  |   |

9. Please rate your experience with the following travel-related issues.

|   | Excellent  |   | Above average  |   | Average  |   | Below Average  |   | Poor  |   | N/A  |   | Responses  | Average  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  |   |   |
| Walking distance between venues inside the convention center  | 9.0%  | 45  | 14.2%  | 71  | 50.4%  | 252  | 20.8%  | 104  | 4.8%  | 24  | 0.8%  | 4  | 500  | 0.0  |
| Distance between shuttle drop-off/pick-up and venues inside the convention center  | 10.8%  | 54  | 20.2%  | 101  | 41.5%  | 207  | 12.6%  | 63  | 3.4%  | 17  | 11.4%  | 57  | 499  | 0.0  |
| Availability of transportation  | 11.4%  | 57  | 22.7%  | 113  | 46.8%  | 233  | 10.2%  | 51  | 2.2%  | 11  | 6.6%  | 33  | 498  | 0.0  |
| Availability of personal assistance  | 7.4%  | 36  | 12.5%  | 61  | 28.2%  | 138  | 10.4%  | 51  | 3.5%  | 17  | 38.0%  | 186  | 489  | 0.0  |
| Allotment of time to get to and from sessions  | 6.9%  | 34  | 16.0%  | 79  | 46.4%  | 229  | 21.3%  | 105  | 7.5%  | 37  | 2.0%  | 10  | 494  | 0.0  |
| Choices of modes of transit  | 8.5%  | 42  | 16.9%  | 83  | 51.0%  | 251  | 13.4%  | 66  | 3.3%  | 16  | 6.9%  | 34  | 492  | 0.0  |
| Total  | 100.0%  | 268  | 100.0%  | 508  | 100.0%  | 1310  | 100.0%  | 440  | 100.0%  | 122  | 100.0%  | 324  | 2972  |   |

10. Please select which mode(s) of transit you most typically use during an ALA conference.

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ALA shuttle service  | 74.8%  | 376  |
| Car, Uber/Lyft, taxi  | 31.8%  | 160  |
| Public transit bus  | 17.7%  | 89  |
| Walking/on foot, scooter  | 72.4%  | 364  |

11. Please rate your experience with using signage and direction assistance at the venues of the ALA Conference.

|   | Excellent  |   | Above average  |   | Average  |   | Below Average  |   | Poor  |   | N/A  |   | Responses  | Average  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  |   |   |
| Standing signage  | 17.6%  | 82  | 30.4%  | 142  | 42.6%  | 199  | 6.2%  | 29  | 1.7%  | 8  | 1.5%  | 7  | 467  | 0.0  |
| Overhead signage  | 17.2%  | 80  | 28.5%  | 133  | 43.1%  | 201  | 6.9%  | 32  | 1.5%  | 7  | 2.8%  | 13  | 466  | 0.0  |
| Information kiosks  | 17.9%  | 84  | 33.5%  | 157  | 38.8%  | 182  | 5.8%  | 27  | 0.6%  | 3  | 3.4%  | 16  | 469  | 0.0  |
| Easel signs at each convention center meeting room  | 21.9%  | 103  | 34.0%  | 160  | 35.1%  | 165  | 5.7%  | 27  | 0.6%  | 3  | 2.6%  | 12  | 470  | 0.0  |
| Accompaniment by convention center staff  | 8.6%  | 40  | 17.1%  | 79  | 24.4%  | 113  | 5.0%  | 23  | 1.3%  | 6  | 43.6%  | 202  | 463  | 0.0  |
| Accompaniment by hotel staff  | 8.4%  | 39  | 13.2%  | 61  | 25.9%  | 120  | 4.5%  | 21  | 0.6%  | 3  | 47.3%  | 219  | 463  | 0.0  |
| Bluetooth beacons in conjunction with personal smartphone and/or tablet  | 3.9%  | 18  | 8.9%  | 41  | 14.8%  | 68  | 5.4%  | 25  | 2.8%  | 13  | 64.2%  | 296  | 461  | 0.0  |
| Maps printed in the conference book  | 11.3%  | 53  | 27.1%  | 127  | 44.2%  | 207  | 6.0%  | 28  | 2.4%  | 11  | 9.0%  | 42  | 468  | 0.0  |
| Maps available online (conference website)  | 9.7%  | 45  | 26.9%  | 125  | 37.3%  | 173  | 6.5%  | 30  | 2.2%  | 10  | 17.5%  | 81  | 464  | 0.0  |
| Maps available on the mobile app  | 8.9%  | 41  | 20.1%  | 93  | 26.8%  | 124  | 7.3%  | 34  | 3.0%  | 14  | 33.9%  | 157  | 463  | 0.0  |
| Total  | 100.0%  | 585  | 100.0%  | 1118  | 100.0%  | 1552  | 100.0%  | 276  | 100.0%  | 78  | 100.0%  | 1045  | 4654  |   |

12. Please rate your experience with different staff members and program presenters at the venues of the ALA Conference.

|   | Excellent  |   | Above average  |   | Average  |   | Below average  |   | Poor  |   | N/A  |   | Responses  | Average  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  |   |   |
| How knowledgeable were program presenters and organizers in addressing your access needs?  | 9.7%  | 41  | 12.8%  | 54  | 21.1%  | 89  | 3.3%  | 14  | 0.7%  | 3  | 52.3%  | 220  | 421  | 0.0  |
| How considerate were program presenters and organizers in addressing your access needs?  | 10.5%  | 44  | 16.2%  | 68  | 18.9%  | 79  | 2.6%  | 11  | 1.0%  | 4  | 50.8%  | 213  | 419  | 0.0  |
| How knowledgeable were convention center staff in addressing your access needs?  | 10.0%  | 42  | 17.1%  | 72  | 18.1%  | 76  | 3.8%  | 16  | 0.7%  | 3  | 50.2%  | 211  | 420  | 0.0  |
| How considerate were convention center staff in addressing your access needs?  | 11.6%  | 49  | 16.9%  | 71  | 17.8%  | 75  | 3.3%  | 14  | 0.7%  | 3  | 49.6%  | 209  | 421  | 0.0  |
| How knowledgeable were hotel staff addressing your access needs?  | 8.8%  | 37  | 16.0%  | 67  | 20.0%  | 84  | 1.9%  | 8  | 1.0%  | 4  | 52.4%  | 220  | 420  | 0.0  |
| How considerate were hotel staff addressing your access needs?  | 10.0%  | 42  | 16.5%  | 69  | 19.6%  | 82  | 1.2%  | 5  | 0.5%  | 2  | 52.2%  | 218  | 418  | 0.0  |
| Total  | 100.0%  | 255  | 100.0%  | 401  | 100.0%  | 485  | 100.0%  | 68  | 100.0%  | 19  | 100.0%  | 1291  | 2519  |   |

13. How did you register for the conference? Please select the choice that best describes your experience.

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Online registration using a desktop or laptop  | 96.2%  | 400  |
| Online registration using a tablet, phone, or other mobile device  | 1.2%  | 5  |
| Mail-in registration  | 1.4%  | 6  |
| Telephone registration  | 0.2%  | 1  |
| On-site registration  | 1.0%  | 4  |
|   | Total  | 416  |

14. Did you request any accommodations for housing through ALA conference services?

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes  | 38.8%  | 164  |
| No  | 61.2%  | 259  |
|   | Total  | 423  |

15. How often do you experience barriers during meetings at an ALA conference?

|   | Always  |   | Very often  |   | Often  |   | Rarely  |   | Never  |   | N/A  |   | Responses  | Average  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  |   |   |
| Difficulty hearing due to size of room  | 3.2%  | 13  | 6.3%  | 26  | 22.4%  | 92  | 48.5%  | 199  | 12.9%  | 53  | 6.6%  | 27  | 410  | 0.0  |
| Difficulty hearing due to audio acoustics in room  | 2.2%  | 9  | 7.8%  | 32  | 20.8%  | 85  | 50.4%  | 206  | 12.7%  | 52  | 6.1%  | 25  | 409  | 0.0  |
| Difficulty seeing due to size of room  | 2.2%  | 9  | 10.0%  | 41  | 29.4%  | 121  | 42.1%  | 173  | 10.5%  | 43  | 5.8%  | 24  | 411  | 0.0  |
| Difficulty seeing due to size screen projection  | 2.4%  | 10  | 5.1%  | 21  | 21.7%  | 89  | 48.3%  | 198  | 15.4%  | 63  | 7.1%  | 29  | 410  | 0.0  |
| Lack of alternate formats of print material, (e.g. electronic, Braille, large print, etc.)  | 2.4%  | 10  | 3.9%  | 16  | 8.5%  | 35  | 13.7%  | 56  | 10.2%  | 42  | 61.2%  | 251  | 410  | 0.0  |
| Total  | 100.0%  | 51  | 100.0%  | 136  | 100.0%  | 422  | 100.0%  | 832  | 100.0%  | 253  | 100.0%  | 356  | 2050  |   |

16. Please rate your access experience with the following ALA in-conference communication materials.

|   | Excellent  |   | Above average  |   | Average  |   | Below average  |   | Poor  |   | N/A  |   | Responses  | Average  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  |   |   |
| Cognotes  | 25.7%  | 104  | 27.7%  | 112  | 26.2%  | 106  | 2.0%  | 8  | 0.2%  | 1  | 18.3%  | 74  | 405  | 0.0  |
| Brochures  | 15.8%  | 63  | 22.8%  | 91  | 39.3%  | 157  | 1.3%  | 5  | 0.8%  | 3  | 20.1%  | 80  | 399  | 0.0  |
| Flyers  | 15.8%  | 63  | 22.1%  | 88  | 40.2%  | 160  | 1.8%  | 7  | 0.8%  | 3  | 19.3%  | 77  | 398  | 0.0  |
| Online scheduler (including the mobile app)  | 19.2%  | 77  | 29.2%  | 117  | 24.2%  | 97  | 6.2%  | 25  | 2.2%  | 9  | 19.0%  | 76  | 401  | 0.0  |
| Total  | 100.0%  | 307  | 100.0%  | 408  | 100.0%  | 520  | 100.0%  | 45  | 100.0%  | 16  | 100.0%  | 307  | 1603  |   |

17. Did you have accessibility concerns that you reported to ALA Conference Services staff?

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes  | 5.8%  | 24  |
| No  | 94.2%  | 388  |
|   | Total  | 412  |

18. Please think of a specific time when you reported an accessibility concern to ALA Conference Services. Please rate the handling of your concern.

|   | Very satisfied  |   | Satisfied  |   | Fair  |   | Not Satisfied  |   | Very unsatisfied  |   | N/A  |   | Responses  | Average  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  | Row %  | Count  |   |   |
| Please rate the timeliness of response to your concern.  | 29.2%  | 7  | 25.0%  | 6  | 20.8%  | 5  | 0.0%  | 0  | 12.5%  | 3  | 12.5%  | 3  | 24  | 0.0  |
| Please rate your overall satisfaction with the handling of your concern.  | 25.0%  | 6  | 29.2%  | 7  | 16.7%  | 4  | 4.2%  | 1  | 12.5%  | 3  | 12.5%  | 3  | 24  | 0.0  |
| Total  | 100.0%  | 13  | 100.0%  | 13  | 100.0%  | 9  | 100.0%  | 1  | 100.0%  | 6  | 100.0%  | 6  | 48  |   |

19. Have you attended an ALA Midwinter Conference, Annual Conference or ALA annual division conferences through virtual means?

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes  | 8.5%  | 47  |
| No  | 91.5%  | 504  |
|   | Total  | 551  |

20. What communication method or technology did you use? Please check all that apply.

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Telephone land line  | 62.2%  | 28  |
| Mobile phone  | 26.7%  | 12  |
| Skype via laptop or mobile device  | 40.0%  | 18  |

21. Please rate your general experience with virtual participation.

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Excellent  | 4.4%  | 2  |
| Above average  | 35.6%  | 16  |
| Average  | 55.6%  | 25  |
| Below average  | 4.4%  | 2  |
|   | Total  | 45  |

22. During your virtual participation, did you experience any barriers?

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes  | 15.2%  | 7  |
| No  | 67.4%  | 31  |
| Does not apply  | 17.4%  | 8  |
|   | Total  | 46  |

23. Do you identify as a person with a disability or disabilities?

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes  | 17.4%  | 91  |
| No  | 74.8%  | 391  |
| Prefer not to say  | 7.8%  | 41  |
|   | Total  | 523  |

24. Whether or not you answered yes to the question above, please consider letting us know more about factors you feel impact your experiences in ALA and the profession. Select all that apply.

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing  | 13.6%  | 67  |
| Blind, Visually impaired, Low vision  | 9.3%  | 46  |
| Organic reading disabilities (for example: dyslexia, learning disabilities)  | 3.8%  | 19  |
| Chronic illness/disease(s) (for example: cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, HIV/AIDS, respiratory diseases, sickle cell anemia, fibromyalgia)  | 15.0%  | 74  |
| Neurodevelopmental disorder(s) (for example: autism, schizophrenia, ADHD)  | 3.2%  | 16  |
| Mobility impairment(s) (for example: arthritis, neuromuscular disorders, paralysis, missing or partially missing limbs)  | 24.9%  | 123  |
| Anxiety disorder(s) (for example: post-traumatic stress disorder, social anxiety, PTSD, OCD)  | 17.2%  | 85  |
| Mood disorder(s) (for example: bipolar disorder, depression)  | 8.5%  | 42  |
| Cognitive impairment(s) (for example: Alzheimer’s, dementia, brain injury)  | 2.4%  | 12  |
| Other  | 6.3%  | 31  |
| None of the above  | 40.1%  | 198  |
| Prefer not to say  | 4.3%  | 21  |
| Please feel free to tell us more about your answer  | 9.5%  | 47  |

25. What best describes your current position? Check all that apply.

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Director/Dean/Chief Officer/Administrator  | 20.3%  | 106  |
| Libraries/Archives/Museums professional who manages others  | 31.0%  | 162  |
| Libraries/Archives/Museums professional who does not supervise  | 31.9%  | 167  |
| Resident/Intern/Temp  | 1.1%  | 6  |
| Not Employed in Libraries/Archives/Museums  | 1.5%  | 8  |
| Student  | 6.1%  | 32  |
| Retired  | 7.1%  | 37  |
| LIS Educator  | 1.7%  | 9  |
| Vendor  | 1.0%  | 5  |
| Other  | 7.6%  | 40  |

26. How many years of professional Libraries/Archives/Museums experience (post-MLIS or equivalent) do you have?

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Less than 1 year  | 6.6%  | 34  |
| 1 to 5 years  | 18.3%  | 95  |
| 6 to 10 years  | 12.0%  | 62  |
| 11 to 20 years  | 22.4%  | 116  |
| 21 to 30 years  | 16.6%  | 86  |
| Over 30 years  | 21.2%  | 110  |
| Other  | 2.9%  | 15  |
|   | Total  | 518  |

27. Are you of Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin?

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano  | 2.7%  | 14  |
| Yes, Puerto Rican  | 0.8%  | 4  |
| Yes, Cuban  | 0.8%  | 4  |
| No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin  | 89.8%  | 465  |
| Other  | 2.7%  | 14  |
| Prefer not to say  | 3.3%  | 17  |
|   | Total  | 518  |

28. How would you describe your race? Please check all with which you identify.

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| White  | 84.4%  | 434  |
| Black or African American  | 6.4%  | 33  |
| Asian Indian  | 0.4%  | 2  |
| Chinese  | 1.0%  | 5  |
| Filipino  | 0.4%  | 2  |
| Japanese  | 1.0%  | 5  |
| Korean  | 0.2%  | 1  |
| Vietnamese  | 0.4%  | 2  |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native (Use the comments field to let us know name of enrolled or principal tribe)  | 2.1%  | 11  |
| Other Asian (Use the comments field to let us know more information, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, or Cambodian)  | 0.4%  | 2  |
| Mixed Race  | 3.5%  | 18  |
| Some other race (please specify)  | 1.9%  | 10  |
| Additional comments  | 1.2%  | 6  |
| Prefer not to say  | 3.7%  | 19  |

29. What is your age?

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 18 to 24  | 0.8%  | 4  |
| 25 to 34  | 18.6%  | 97  |
| 35 to 44  | 18.6%  | 97  |
| 45 to 54  | 18.2%  | 95  |
| 55 to 64  | 28.0%  | 146  |
| 65 to 74  | 12.1%  | 63  |
| 75 or older  | 1.5%  | 8  |
| Prefer not to say  | 2.3%  | 12  |
|   | Total  | 522  |

30. Do you identify as LGBTQ?

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes  | 11.2%  | 58  |
| No  | 85.2%  | 442  |
| Prefer not to say  | 3.7%  | 19  |
|   | Total  | 519  |

31. How do you describe your gender identity?

| Value  | Percent  | Count  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Female  | 79.1%  | 413  |
| Male  | 17.6%  | 92  |
| Self-Identify  | 1.1%  | 6  |
| Prefer not to say  | 2.1%  | 11  |
|   | Total  | 522  |

##

## Appendix E: CATF Data Gathering Activities

### Survey Rationale and Purpose

In response to the American Library Association’s problem of uneven provision of accessibility in its conferences and virtual meetings, the Conference Accessibility Task Force (CATF) was formed in late January 2016. One of its charges is to gather information that will serve to reveal the various issues, difficulties, and barriers to accessibility that its members and conference participants experience. A descriptive and exploratory research study, one that is strongly based as action research, can serve as the foundation of the Task Force’s recommendations for improving ALA’s conference and virtual meeting planning and implementation procedures, as well as the ways the Association gathers and analyzes information intent on solving ongoing issues and barriers faced by its members with disabilities.

The need for a descriptive and exploratory study of the access issues faced by current and potential members at ALA conferences and events is known to ALA staff and association members alike. Indeed, CATF writes, “Although there has been much anecdotal information regarding grievances espoused by ALA members with disabilities about barriers to accessibility at conferences and virtual meetings, statistical data is needed to assist the subcommittee in their efforts to make constructive recommendations” ([CATF Council and Executive Board Report, June 2016](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/governance/council/council_documents/2016_annual_council_documents/cd_37_CATF_Rpt_61516_INF.pdf)). The research study conducted by CATF aimed to describe the disabilities and the difficulties experienced by ALA conference attendees, their accessibility needs, and begin the exploration of possible avenues that can be taken by ALA administration, staff, and member leadership toward improving conference and meeting accessibility. In this vein, the research study is also a significant attempt to provide a fuller, more robust picture of the quality of accessibility in the environments of ALA conferences and virtual meetings, and illumination of a way forward to improvements arrived at collaboratively and cooperatively between Association membership and staff, focused on the Association’s practices and policies affecting attendee experience.

The CATF study is intended to provide foundational information from which a more targeted evaluative study can be built. Such a later study will hopefully include elements that can assist in operationalizing continuous inquiry into the accessibility needs of ALA members and conference attendees. However, this particular descriptive research endeavor only aimed to provide a baseline picture that a later study can use to start a probe that is deeper and more critical in analysis and provide outcomes that are in line with the needs of the Association to operationalize its data gathering activities intent on improving itself.

As ALA has recently adopted Equity, Diversity and Inclusion as its fourth Strategic Direction, the work of CATF and its inquiry into the accessibility of its conferences and meetings should be seen as part of the broader framework set before the ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy & Outreach Services (ODLOS) and other ALA staff and member groups working to improve ALA’s practices, policies, and perspectives on making the Association as welcoming and open to as many people as possible.

### Development

The Data Gathering Subcommittee started by meeting with the American Library Association Office for Research and Evaluation (ORE) in the late spring and summer of 2016 in order to determine its research approach, as well as find out what data about ALA members with disabilities are collected and retained by the Association. As an initial inquiry, the subcommittee agreed to find out how other professional association conferences handle accessibility in their decision-making and evaluation of conference experience and participation. Through these meetings, the Data Gathering Subcommittee created a list of professional associations with conferences to contact and a short list of questions to ask.

The questions asked by CATF Data Subcommittee members were:

1. Do you collect data on your participants with disabilities? If so, how do you collect this?
2. How do you ensure that your conference is accessible to attendees with such concerns and needs?

Subcommittee members communicated with a number of professional and academic associations with conferences in May and June of 2016 in order to find out the answers to the above questions. Representatives from the following conferences were approached:

1. CSUN Assistive Technology Conference
2. Visions Conference
3. International Association of Accessibility Professionals Conference (IAAP)
4. Society for Military History (SMH)
5. American Historical Association (AHA)
6. Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association (PCA/ACA)
7. Modern Language Association (MLA)

The above associations were chosen based on the membership of the individual subcommittee members, rather than through any random selection process. The subcommittee members gleaned that three of the seven associations use their conference registration process as a means of gathering information about accessibility needs of conference attendees. None gather information about disabilities, difficulties, or issues of association members or conference attendees. Three of the seven did not respond to inquiries. Two of the seven associations include an environmental accessibility scan in their conference planning procedures. The International Association of Accessibility Professionals Conference (IAAP) specifically mentioned that they conduct this environmental scan, which they term as an “accessibility audit,” before contracts are signed with hotels and venues. The other associations did not provide this level of detail through our brief inquiry process.

The work of the CATF continues until the ALA Annual Conference 2017, in Chicago, IL, when a Task Force report will be provided to the ALA Council and Executive Board. The upcoming ALA Annual Conference is scheduled for June 22 to 27, 2017.

### Methodology

The approach taken to the information gathering activities of the CATF is one of action research, where practitioners invested in the improvement of the organization are the same people conducting inquiry, with elements of qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative aspects of CATF’s data gathering work include information gleaned during the two Kitchen Table Conversations sessions during ALA Midwinter Meeting 2017 in Atlanta, GA, as well as the descriptive, open-text questions in the CATF online survey released on May 22, 2017 and remained open until June 3, 2017.

The quantitative online survey was administered to three groups using the INFORMZ email delivery system used by ALA Membership Services. The three groups are current ALA members, lapsed ALA members (lapsed from up to 3 years), and current ALA exhibitors.

Cursory analysis was conducted of the data gathered, but more analysis needs to be done. More in-depth analytical study of both the qualitative and quantitative information gathered will be conducted by ORE and the CATF Data Gathering Subcommittee Chair after the 2017 ALA Annual Conference.

### Qualitative Information: *Kitchen Table Conversations*

Two in-person focus group sessions, billed as part of the ALA Kitchen Table Conversations (KTC), were implemented during the ALA Midwinter Meeting 2017 in late January in Atlanta, Georgia. These two sessions had the specific focus of accessibility at ALA conferences and virtual meetings and were attended by five members at each session. CATF submitted a few questions that could be inserted into the KTC format. KTC facilitators were trained to probe by asking additional follow-up questions. The questions were as follows:

1. What concerns do you have about this issue? Why?
2. How do the issues affect you personally?
3. What does an “accessible” conference look like for you?
4. Thinking back over the conversation we just had, what groups or individuals would you trust to take action on these things?

Since the focus of this research study is to describe the barriers experienced by ALA conference attendees, the data gathered in this study can be used to further future explorations of the impact of organizational changes that arise from the work of CATF. Anticipating such a future study, the Data Gathering Subcommittee chair advocates for a recommendation to develop an exploratory study as part of the continuing data gathering activity of ALA, intended to develop indicators focused on areas or aspects that can improve accessibility in ALA’s in-person conferences and virtual meetings. In tandem with these future indicators of conference accessibility, shorter evaluations can be sent to conference attendees periodically. These shorter evaluations can then be checked against the indicators, allowing ALA to discern its path toward greater, more improved conference accessibility.

### Quantitative Information: CATF Online Survey

As stated previously, the design of the quantitative questionnaire is meant to gather information of the barriers experienced by ALA conference and meeting attendees, particularly attendees with disabilities. However, because the CATF is very aware that ALA has not maintained records of complaints and remedies, the CATF online survey serves as a first attempt to record such issues.

It should also be noted that changes in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements within the last ten years have been considered by CATF, especially with regard to determining the population who ought to receive the CATF online survey.

Prior to the official release of the online survey to its primary audience groups, a small pilot session was conducted among members of CATF and a small number of guests. This was done to allow for feedback on the language and technical mechanics of the online survey instrument.

CATF deployed the comprehensive online survey, intent on gathering quantitative information from three categories of individuals to whom ALA Membership Services had access: current ALA members, lapsed ALA members (lapsed from up to 3 years), and current ALA exhibitors. Individuals from each category were provided with a survey link through ALA Membership Services’ Informz email service.

### Review of Relevant Literature

Most prominent among the theoretical concepts that members of CATF have expressed outright in a desire to follow and incorporate into the work of improving the policies, procedures, and processes of ALA conference planning and implementation is the concept of universal design. Universal design (UD) as an approach to conference planning and implementation seeks to make the information provided in such venues and meetings accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of ability. Although UD principles are the theoretical guiding framework it seeks to adopt, the members of the Task Force understand that the initial work that must be accomplished is the improvement of accommodations for specific situations. Work in training, education, and implementation of accessibility practices needs to be improved while longer-term conference and virtual meeting universal design is simultaneously explored.

### Traveling with Disabilities

Attempting to understand the barriers experienced by ALA conference attendees also requires understanding of the concept of disability and how disability can be—and is—experienced. The definitions, and therefore the constitution of disability experience, are far from settled nor free from contention and fraught disagreement. Verbrugge (2016) provides a basic definition, one that she acknowledges as only a rudimentary characterization, but nonetheless a principal, overarching one that ties others together: “Disability is difficulty doing tasks/roles on one’s own due to health and lasting for some time. The health problems can be physical, sensory, emotional, or cognitive. Ensuing activity limitations may continue for months or years” (pp. 1124-1125).

From Verbrugge’s basic definition (2016), we can see similarities and differences with definitions provided by the World Health Organization and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (as quoted in Burnett & Baker, 2001). Similarities involve difficulties in performing tasks and assuming roles, and that such difficulties constitute barriers for individuals. Points of difference are aspects of duration, the focus on visible physical impairment, and the focus on health and normal functioning. All three definitions locate disability in the bodies of individuals rather than in the interactions between environments and persons with disabilities. Burnett and Baker (2001) encourage the use of a broader definition of disability, one that follows the ADA’s definition of a “physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual” (United States Department of Justice, 2012). The definition Burnette and Baker promote serves to still circumscribe disability and impairment within individual bodies, but their definition serves the larger purpose of defining “the disabled consumer” as a market segment that the hospitality and travel industries must actively consider when designing products and services.

A significant aspect of conference attendance involves traveling and interaction with environments, as well as travel and hospitality staff. Travelers with disabilities, not just ALA conference attendees with disabilities, must not only deal with barriers from the environments and support personnel in unfamiliar locations, but they must also contend with often unfavorable attitudes of other, more able-bodied travelers. Kim and Lehto (2012) cite various studies that note the significance of the “non-physical elements” of an environment in improving quality of service to travelers with disabilities. Kim and Lehto’s own study, which examined customer complaints, found the service encounter failures experienced by travelers with disabilities tended to be different from more able-bodied travelers. Using the service encounter classification scheme developed by Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault (1990), Kim and Lehto noted that high service failure correlates with lack of mindful design of built environments, which are exacerbated by negative conduct of service personnel. Kim and Lehto’s findings echo the anecdotal information often heard by ALA-CATF members regarding the built environment of conference venues and hotel accommodations, as well as the apathy and poor knowledge exhibited by conference and hotel personnel.

### Conferencing with Disabilities

Literature that specifically address conference participation of individuals with disabilities are few and far between. Perry’s (2015) brief article on academic conferences and services to people with disabilities have provided some great insights and practical tips on how a conference might improve its service delivery. Practical solutions, such as financially supporting accessibility through captioning and providing more accessible formats, abound. Hodge’s article (2014) on the need to closely examine the oft unspoken social conventions of conference session interactions between presenters and audience members are important considerations for improving conference experiences for participants with disabilities.

Understanding how conference experiences are affected by preparations, Burgstahler (2013), corroborating the advice provided in Perry’s (2015) article, advocates for a broad approach to conference planning in order to ensure that everyone is able to fully participate in the conference events, including conference attendees with disabilities.

### Highlights: Facts of Interest

Rates of Response

* Complete: 530
* Partial Completion: 353
* Total: 883
* Completion Rate: 60%

ALA members: 98.2% (count: 825)

Identification as a person with a disability/disabilities:

* Yes: 17.4% (count: 91)
* No: 74.8% (count: 391)
* Prefer not to say: 7.8% (41)

### Details: CATF Survey Gizmo Questionnaire

The insertion of accessible charts and graphs from survey questions is currently in development.

### Future Efforts: Analysis, Data Gathering, and Beyond

The above quantitative survey was intended to gather baseline information on barriers and difficulties experienced by ALA conference and meeting participants and attendees. As the analysis provided in this report is still preliminary, a more thorough analysis, including examining correlations for the quantitative responses and text analysis for the qualitative responses, is needed and will be conducted by ORE and the CATF Data Gathering Subcommittee chair after ALA Annual Conference 2017.

From the analysis of the information gathered from the mixed methods studies and literature review conducted by ALA-CATF, the work to correlate these data gathering activities with the work of developing accessibility indicators (patterned after Grand Rapids Community College, 2014) shall commence.

The articulation of accessibility indicators that are responsive to the work and needs of both ALA staff and members will be the basis of shorter evaluative surveys intent on fostering a continuous evaluative culture in the Association and ensuring that the accessibility of ALA events move toward the ideal of universal design.

### Conclusion

While the CATF online survey cannot be characterized as representative of ALA membership and participants, it does confirm for us some matters that we’ve known through anecdotes, personal observations, and other studies and reports: the demographics of ALA membership and the library profession are overwhelmingly composed of people who identify as ethnically non-Hispanic white, female gendered, and between the ages of 55 to 64. The majority of the respondents to the CATF survey have also said that they have had between 11 to 20 years of experience in the library, archives, and museums professions (LAM). Most respondents (40.1%) have also answered “none of the above” to the question regarding which disabilities factor into their experiences in ALA and the profession.

Considering the maturing demographic of the respondents and the consistent majority responses indicating that potential areas for barriers have minimal impact on the respondents’ ability to participate in ALA conferences and meetings, further analysis of these results is needed.

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## Appendix F: Conference Accessibility Guidelines

### A. Headquarters/On-Site Staff Contact Info:

For questions, arrangements, and reporting:

ALA Conference Accessibility Hotline: 312-280-3225

Conference Accessibility Contact Email: confaccess@ala.org

### B. Before-Conference Guidelines:

#### 1. Conference Planning

* The ALA Conference Committee (standing) is charged: To recommend additions and changes to ALA Policy 7 (Conferences and Meetings) as appropriate; to recommend policies to Council for the consideration and scheduling of conference programming and for simplification of meeting scheduling, including use of technologies; to recommend to Council policies guiding the selection of Conference and Meeting sites and dates; to review recommendations of specific sites and dates prior to their presentation by Conference Services to the ALA Executive Board; to recommend to Council and to ALA Staff a means for communication with the membership to hear their concerns about Conference and Meeting procedures and policies.
* The ALA Conference Committee includes a representative of ASCLA’s Accessibility Assembly to facilitate consideration of and recommendations related to accessibility issues by the Committee.

#### 2. Registration

* Per ALA policy A.7.1.1, ALA contractually requires that the registration system used meet the standards of the [W3C WAI (Web Content Accessibility Initiative)](https://www.w3.org/WAI/guid-tech.html). A statement of compliance at level 2 of WAI is required. ALA ITTS tests for compliance prior to opening each registration cycle.
* The registration process provides a mechanism to collect information from individuals needing specific accommodations.
* The registration and housing reservation process provides a means for registrants to specify an accessible room. ALA’s housing company (onPeak) will work with individual registrants as needed.

3. Speaker/Presenter Guidelines
[Insert linked web page, forthcoming.]

* Speakers/Presenters/Moderators at approved programs are contacted by ALA Conference Services in advance of the conference. Speakers/presenters who require ramp or elevator for a raised podium will be asked to self-identify. Conference Services must be notified two weeks prior to the start of the conference.
* Speaker/Presenter Guidelines are posted on the conference website.
	+ All presenters are asked to upload handouts or PPTs to the Speaker Harvester prior to the start of the conference.
	+ All presenters will receive a link to guidelines for accessible presentations.
* Program Sponsor Guidelines:
	+ Program Sponsors (e.g., ALA Divisions, Round Tables, etc.) are responsible for notifying ALA Conference Services if speaker accommodations, e.g., a platform ramp, are required. Conference Services must be notified two weeks prior to the start of the conference.
	+ Note: Each convention center will have only a limited number of ramps available.

#### 4. Local Arrangements

* ALA identifies and provides local emergency contact information to all attendees, including hospital(s) with emergency care and 24-hour pharmacy. Information is available on the conference website and in the Final Program.
* ALA identifies and provides contact information to all attendees for accessible transportation from the airport and for cab companies with wheelchair accessible cabs.

#### 5. Pre-Conference Communication

* ALA seeks to provide a welcoming environment in which all attendees can learn, network and conduct the Association’s work. Advance communication is critical to making this possible for all. In a complex conference, with many simultaneous operations, it is not always possible to make last-minute changes.
* As part of the ALA Midwinter/ALA Annual Conference registration process, ALA seeks to identify individuals requiring specific accommodations.
	+ The conference registration form asks individuals requiring accommodations (e.g. scooters, interpreters) to so indicate. Individuals may be contacted by ALA Conference Services, if clarification is needed.
	+ Speakers/presenters are contacted by ALA Conference Services prior to the conference, for authorization to record the presentation and other additional information. Speakers/presenters will be asked to self-identify if they require a ramp for a raised platform.
* ALA will provide all attendees with basic accessibility information, e.g. numbers to call for wheelchair-accessible airport transportation.
* ALA will provide all attendees with contact information for on-site accessibility problems.
* ALA will make every effort to ensure that staff/contractors/volunteers assisting in key areas (e.g. Internet Café, Internet Room, Registration, Conference Information) are informed of options for individuals needing accommodations and/or have on-site contact information.

### C. On-Site Guidelines:

#### 1. Conference Campus and Buses

* The ALA Annual Conference historically requires a large and complex “campus,” including a major convention center and numerous hotels. Where special transportation (busing) will not be provided to/from a particular venue (typically because it is close to the convention center) it is important to be sure that there is a wheelchair/scooter-accessible route (e.g., sidewalks, curb cuts).
* Special transportation (bus, shuttle) service is available on a pre-arranged (24-hour advance) basis, as part of ALA’s normal shuttle contract.
* When bus routes are mapped, there should be a check to ensure that buses accommodating mobility issues stop at a curb cut if crossing the street will be necessary.

#### 2. Venues – Hotels

* ALA’s current hotel contracts include the following (or comparable) language:

“HOTEL warrants and represents that as a place of “public accommodation,” it is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (Public Law 101-336) and that HOTEL will, in implementing instructions from ALA for the event covered in this agreement, comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and regulations issued thereunder.

ALA shall be indemnified and saved harmless by HOTEL from and against any and all liability or claim of liability for noncompliance with such provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, or for any personal injury or property damage resulting from any violation of such provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, including all expenses reasonably incurred in the defense of such liability or claim of liability.

The booking of ALA MEETING NAME is contingent upon a satisfactory inspection of HOTEL and, if the inspection reveals areas of significant noncompliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, ALA reserves the right to terminate this agreement without penalty of any kind.”

* If an attendee has requested an ADA-compliant room and the room does not accommodate the particular disability, then the attendee needs to contact the hotel manager and ALA (confaccess@ala.org).
* Because of the total number of hotel sleeping rooms required, not all hotels used by ALA at a major conference will have all potentially desirable services (e.g., some hotels may not provide a full-service restaurant). The hotel listing provided by ALA will clearly indicate amenities available to enable registrants to make appropriate choices.
* ALA meetings, programs and other official events are in accessible spaces (e.g., elevators, ADA clearance requirements).
* All groups sponsoring events in conjunction with ALA conferences will ensure that all events are held in accessible locations. ALA groups will be specifically asked to affirm accessibility prior to contract signing.

#### 3. Venues – Meeting/Program Spaces

* In major event spaces (e.g., ALA Council, Auditorium series) seats are reserved for those requiring use of captioning and interpreters at the front of session rooms.

#### 4. Accommodations

##### a. Mobility

* Electric scooters are available by advance request; a limited number of scooters are available on-site on a “first-come/first-served” basis.
* Wheelchairs are available by advance request; a limited number of wheelchairs are available on-site on a “first-come/first-served” basis.
* Lowered counters are available in the registration areas for individuals requiring them.
* There are accessible computers (on lowered counters) in the Internet Café and Internet Room, for individuals using scooters or wheelchairs or having other mobility issues.
* Special transportation (bus, shuttle) service is available on a pre-arranged 24-hour advance basis, as part of ALA’s normal shuttle contract.
* Seating areas will be available in the Exhibit Hall and on long corridors or hallways (e.g., convention center halls
* Aisles will have sufficient width for a wheelchair/scooter to turn. This should also include author autographing lines. Individuals responsible for creating the “snake line” for those waiting for an author to sign a book should make the line wide enough that a wheel chair/scooter can navigate them, including the line turns.
* Seats will be reserved in the front rows of large theatre-set rooms (Opening General Session, ALA President’s Program, Auditorium Speaker Series) for persons who require special seating, including attendees who are Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing, or Blind or Visually Impaired. Seating will be on a “first-come/first-served” basis. Seating not filled five minutes prior to the start of the program will be opened to the general audience.
* All service animals will be permitted.
* Exhibitors are encouraged to avoid or minimize features that create potential barriers for those with mobility challenges, e.g. additional padding under sections of carpet.

##### b. Hearing

* Captioning is provided for the following sessions: ALA Membership Meeting, ALA Council meetings, ALA Opening General Session, and ALA President’s Program.
* Interpreters are provided to individuals by advance request.
* “On-call” interpreters are available on a “first-come, first-served” basis to individuals who did not make a request in advance.
* Assistive listening devices are available by advance request.
* All service animals will be permitted.
* Seats will be reserved in the front rows of large theatre-set rooms (Opening General Session, ALA President’s Program, Auditorium Speaker Series) for persons who require special seating, including individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind or Hard of Hearing, or Blind or Visually Impaired. Seating will be on a “first-come/first-served” basis. Seating not filled five minutes prior to the start of the program will be opened to the general audience.

##### c. Vision

* All service animals are permitted.
* The Internet Café, Internet Room and ALA Office each include a computer with audio headset, ZoomText and JAWS screen-reading software for the Blind or Visually impaired.
* Seats will be reserved in the front rows of large theatre-set rooms (Opening General Session, ALA President’s Program, Auditorium Speaker Series) for persons who require special seating, including individuals who are Visually Impaired. Seating will be on a “first-come/first-served” basis. Seating not filled five minutes prior to the start of the program will be opened to the general audience.
* To the extent feasible, ALA utilizes beacon/wayfinding technology to assist individuals with visual impairment, as well as other attendees.

##### d. Other

* ALA makes exhibitors aware of latex and peanut allergies as protected disabilities (e.g., nitrile rather than latex gloves for food service).

### D. Additional Information

#### 1. Detailed Guidelines:

Several detailed documents including guidelines for various types and sizes of events are readily available. The list below includes a few starting points:

[SIGACCESS Accessible Conference Guide](http://www.sigaccess.org/welcome-to-sigaccess/resources/accessible): ACM’s Special Interest Group on Accessible Computing

[WID Accessibility Checklist](https://wid.org/consulting/conference-accessibility/): World Institute on Disability, Conference Accessibility Checklist

[Sci-Fi/Fantasy Convention Accessibility Pledge](http://maryrobinettekowal.com/journal/sff-convention-accessibility-pledge): Mary Robinette Kowal Blog

[ADA Hospitality Accessible Meetings, Events, and Conferences Guide](http://www.adahospitality.org/accessible-meetings-events-conferences-guide/book): This is the “updated, digital version of A Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings, originally published by Independent Living Research Utilization in 1993, written by co-authors June Isaacson Kailes and Darrell Jones. The Mid-Atlantic ADA Center and TransCen Inc. sponsored this update and publication in recognition of the 25th anniversary of the transformational Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990…”

#### 2. Current Statements on ALA Midwinter & Annual Conference Websites

##### a. Accessibility

ALA works to make sure your experience will be a pleasant and accessible one. Here are the features we have in place to ensure that the ALA 2017 Midwinter Meeting is accessible to all:

We caption our main sessions, e.g., President’s Program, Membership Meeting, Council Meetings, and others as requested by organizers.

We have accessible sleeping rooms in our hotel block. There are rooms for people who are Deaf, Blind, and attendees in wheelchairs. Please fill out the housing form and check the appropriate box. An onPeak representative will contact you to make sure you are placed in an appropriate room.

Service animals of all kinds are welcome throughout the ALA Conference.

Our shuttle bus company has accessible buses. Instructions on how to obtain rides are available in each hotel, in the convention center on-site, and in the on-site newspaper, Cognotes.

##### b. American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters

Conference Services coordinates interpreting services for people who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing. To use the service, Interpreter requests should be made prior to conference attendance by contacting the Conference Services Accessibility Hotline, 312-280-3225, or email confaccess@ala.org, before [insert specific date for each conference].

An interpreter is also on-call in the Conference Services Office in [insert specific convention center name for each conference], Thursday through Monday for last minute requests on a first-come, first-served basis.

##### c. Mobility Assistance

Based upon availability in each city, ALA maintains a limited number of wheelchairs and scooters on a first-come, first-served basis for attendees that require mobility assistance. ALA offers these scooters on a complimentary basis to be used during regular session hours.

Scooter pick up and drop off will be located in the [insert specific convention center name of each conference]. Please see the attendant for assistance. You will be asked to sign-out and return the scooters daily with the attendant.

Please make note of the scooter hours: [insert specific dates and times for each conference].

Any scooters brought back past the time noted above will be subject to a $25 fee.

If you require mobility assistance and would like to reserve a scooter prior to the show, please contact the Conference Services Accessibility Hotline, 312-280-3225, or email confaccess@ala.org no later than [insert specific date for each conference]. Reservation requests cannot be taken after the [insert specific date for each conference] deadline; however, additional scooters will be available for use during the conference.

##### d. Statement of Appropriate Conduct at ALA Conferences

The American Library Association holds professional conferences and meetings to enable its members to receive continuing education, build professional networks, and discover new products and services for professional use. To provide all participants—members and other attendees, speakers, exhibitors, staff and volunteers—the opportunity to benefit from the event, the American Library Association is committed to providing a harassment-free environment for everyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, physical appearance, ethnicity, religion or other group identity.

As an association, ALA is strongly committed to diversity, equity and the free expression of ideas. These values have been repeatedly delineated in ALA policy (for instance: Policy A.1.4 – Core Organizational Values; Policy B.1.1 – Core Values of Librarianship; Policy B.1.2 – Code of Professional Ethics). Taken cumulatively, the values and beliefs delineated within ALA policy describe conduct based on a firm belief in the value of civil discourse and the free exploration of competing ideas and concepts – with a fundamental respect for the rights, dignity and value of all persons.

Within the context of ALA policy and the professional practices of librarianship, critical examination of beliefs and viewpoints does not, by itself, constitute hostile conduct or harassment. Similarly, use of sexual imagery or language in the context of a professional discussion might not constitute hostile conduct or harassment.

ALA seeks to provide a conference environment in which diverse participants may learn, network and enjoy the company of colleagues in an environment of mutual human respect. We recognize a shared responsibility to create and hold that environment for the benefit of all. Some behaviors are, therefore, specifically prohibited:

* Harassment or intimidation based on race, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, appearance, or other group status.
* Sexual harassment or intimidation, including unwelcome sexual attention, stalking (physical or virtual), or unsolicited physical contact.
* Yelling at or threatening speakers (verbally or physically).

Speakers are asked to frame discussions as openly and inclusively as possible and to be aware of how language or images may be perceived by others. Participants may – and do – exercise the “law of two feet.” Exhibitors must follow all ALA Exhibits rules and regulations and ALA policies.

All participants are expected to observe these rules and behaviors in all conference venues, including online venues, and conference social events. Participants asked to stop a hostile or harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately. Conference participants seek to learn, network and have fun. Please do so responsibly and with respect for the right of others to do likewise.

Please contact Conference Services staff in the ALA Office at conference if you believe you have been harassed or that a harassment problem exists. All such reports will be directed immediately to the Director of Conference Services, who will determine and carry out the appropriate course of action, and who may consult with and engage other ALA staff, leaders and legal counsel as appropriate. Event security and/or local law enforcement may be involved, as appropriate based on the specific circumstances. A follow-up report will be made to individuals who report being harassed.

Prior to each ALA Midwinter Meeting and ALA Annual Conference, ALA Conference Services will make the following information available:

* Emergency contact information: [updated for each conference]
	+ Local emergency – 911
	+ Local non-emergency – 311
	+ Local taxi company(s) – Local information
	+ Other local services, e.g. hotlines
	+ Resources for Sexual Abuse and Addiction Recovery Center
	+ Report incidents of any sort to Conference Management in the ALA Office (following the conference please contact pgraller@ala.org or call 312-280-3219)

## Appendix G: CATF Master Training Document

### 1. ALA Permanent Staff

All full- and part-time ALA staff members, including:

Information Technology & Telecommunication Services (ITTS)
 Human Resources

Conference Services

Division, Round Table, Committee, and Task Force Staff Liaisons

#### 1.1 Summary:

These are ALA’s full-time equivalent staff members, including those who oversee training, information technology, and conference services—all areas that affect how ALA staff members respond to issues of accessibility. This category also covers the staff members who are official liaisons to divisions, round tables, and committees, as well as other program and meeting organizers within ALA.

#### 1.2 Knowledge Needs:

* Detailed and specific information about existing conference accommodation practices
* Conference-wide accessibility implementation procedures
* Assistive technologies and frequent issues faced by users
* Web accessibility and communication standards for all who have editing access to online content or oversee web-based meetings using ALA-recommended software (see item 2.3 for details)
* Basic presentation-related accessibility, both in-person and online, for speakers, organizers, and audience
* Architectural, transportation, and communication accessibility for those planning meeting and lodging spaces and overseeing other travel arrangements
* Awareness of basic disability etiquette, including the presence of people with disabilities in programming that addresses diversity
* Understanding that in every instance of group meetings and shared content, both at conference and during the year, there is a need to consider accessibility for participants to promote greater inclusion and participation
* Ability to answer basic questions—or forward to appropriate person or resource—of constituents seeking information about accessibility on the web and in-person at events

#### 1.3 Known Current Processes:

* Non-IT training for permanent staff, overseen by HR (Dan Hoppe):
	+ Currently reworking on-boarding process;
	+ Sometimes conducts HR trainings at ALA conferences (Job Placement Center);
	+ 15 non-IT staff members have [access to ALA Support](http://www.ala.org/support/) and can contribute training materials;
	+ There is an [ALA Support accessibility training page](http://www.ala.org/support/accessibility-defined) with some content available to all staff members (and the public);
	+ Created training materials are presented at optional training sessions and are also available for self-study online;
	+ Training needs vary within each ALA unit as responsibilities differ; unit managers and supervisors decide and plan what subjects and areas staff get trained on;
	+ All ALA staff are encouraged to complete one or more training activities per fiscal year and reflect on personal learning.
* Information technology-specific training, overseen by ITTS (Louise Gruenberg, Julianna Kloeppel):
	+ These training areas include web usability and IT accessibility: eLearning Specialist and Usability Officer (above) create training materials for department;
	+ ITTS is currently testing a variety of virtual meeting products; this is one of the hardest things to make accessible;
	+ Each ALA employee receives ITTS new staff training modules; individual supervisors, as well as personal learning interests, determine further training;
	+ Subsequent to new staff training, training needs are communicated via the IT ticketing system or by email;
	+ Invitations to training sessions are also emailed to staff for initiatives to introduce new materials, or to get together a group who need to work on a new resource.
* Conference Services (Mary Ghikas, Paul Graller, Alee Navarro):
	+ Conference Services has been working extensively with the Conference Accessibility Task Force, and will be given recommendations for action following ALA Annual 2017;
	+ Stemming from work with CATF, there now exists a formal Conference Accessibility Guidelines document overviewing current procedures in practice to ensure accessibility.
* Division, Round Table, and Committee Liaisons:
	+ Each division, round table, Task Force, and ALA or Council committee may have a different working relationship with their designated ALA staff member—these staff members are often responsible for informing their constituents of news, training opportunities, and best practice resources;
	+ These staff members must work with constantly rotating leadership to ensure that the most up-to-date materials are provided, and can send out information on topics like accessibility to be distributed further down through the group;
	+ Since these staff members usually remain in place while leadership rotates, they are likely a more consistent contact for helping to reinforce messages of accessibility and universal design put forth by wider ALA and Conference Services.

### 2. ALA Member Leadership

Including, but not limited to:

Division Leaders and Board Members (current and past)

Round Table Coordinating Assembly (RTCA)
 Exhibits RT, LearnRT, SustainRT, etc.

ALA Affiliate Leaders (BCALA, REFORMA, etc.)
 Division Committee Chairs

Interest Group Conveners

Council Members

#### 2.1 Summary:

These are the volunteer members who prepare and organize conference programming, discussions, and both on-site and year-round activities. This group is highly involved in creating and implementing both policies and year-round programs.

#### 2.2 Knowledge Needs:

* Basic understanding of presentation accessibility, including room set-ups, PowerPoint and video guidelines, how to utilize interpreters
* Web accessibility standards for those who have editing access to online content or oversee web-based meetings
* Knowledge of when it will be necessary to inquire about accommodation needs for meetings, talks, and events, and how to request these needs in advance (especially as related to scheduling)
* Knowledge of where to publicize so that librarians and information professionals with disabilities are reached and included, and knowledge of where to access training and information relating to accommodations and inclusion of people with disabilities
* Awareness of basic disability etiquette, including the presence of people with disabilities in programming that addresses diversity
* Understanding that in every instance of group meetings and shared content, both at conference and during the year, there is a need to consider accessibility for participants to promote greater inclusion and participation
* Ability to forward constituents to appropriate resources about accessibility on the web and in-person at events

#### 2.3 Known Current Processes:

* For those hosting virtual meetings, an [Adobe Connect information sheet](https://www.dropbox.com/s/d2eddcz6n6g03ek/ACRL%20Adobe%20Connect%20Staff%20Procedures.docx?dl=0) or [WebEx information sheet](https://www.dropbox.com/s/lv8dg7uys2t6kie/ACRL%20WebEx-Staff%20Procedures.docx?dl=0) is sent out to the organizing party;
	+ It must be noted that Adobe Connect, WebEx, and GotoMeeting **are *not* accessible** products. As of June 2017, ALA is in the process of testing other possibilities for virtual meeting software that will be fully accessible to all. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra is the most promising lead.
	+ Conference call meetings via a collective phone line are often held without assistance of ALA software or staff, and these are usually accessible for most people, including those who may need video relay or other interpreting services.
* Division and Round Table leadership usually have their own training and orientation materials provided to incoming board members, chairs, conveners, etc.
	+ These materials differ considerably in style and content, and may not address issues such as accessibility, especially to the degree of its necessity in conference program and meeting planning;
	+ Volunteer leaders often rely on the communication and expertise of permanent ALA staff to help disseminate accurate and relevant information among their constituents.
* New division presidents have an annual orientation at ALA, which could be a ready-made opportunity for this sort of training or dissemination of related materials.
* Individual groups sometimes hold leadership meetings during Midwinter, Annual, or both, and this might be a venue to promote accessibility and awareness of existing resources within the organization.

### 3. ALA Conference Presenters

Including, but not limited to:

Programs, panels, posters, webinars
 Meeting hosts
 Interest Group conveners

#### 3.1 Summary:

This group includes anyone presenting materials during the conference, either in-person or in an online environment. Possible media include public speaking and panel events, roundtable conversations, PowerPoint or video presentations, poster sessions, presentation handouts, and phone or teleconference meetings.

#### 3.2 Knowledge Needs:

* Basic best practices in accessible presentations:
	+ Font choice and text size
	+ Color contrast
	+ Link labeling
	+ Media captioning
	+ Document accessibility (PDFs, Word, etc.)
	+ Multiple formats of presented content
* Awareness of existing resources for further assistance in these areas, both from ALA bodies and outside the organization, where to seek them out, and how to share information with colleagues
* Understanding that in every instance of group meetings and shared content, both at conference and during the year, there is a need to consider accessibility for participants to promote greater inclusion and participation

#### 3.3 Known Current Processes:

* On all conference websites under Presenters > Best Practices for Presenters, a set of basic guidelines are provided; these were originally created by members of Learning Round Table and were revised in Spring 2017 by LearnRT’s Emerging Leaders along with the Conference Accessibility Task Force;
	+ The aforementioned guidelines are overseen by Alee Navarro, who uses Cadmium software to distribute this same information to presenters, once their proposals have been accepted for a conference.
	+ Guidelines should be edited and managed as practices develop and change, but there may not be a determined group within ALA who is set to review and update them.
* There has been recurring interest from conference attendees in the “skills” series of programs: possible idea for a “skills” session on making presented material accessible.
* Divisions, especially those with separate conferences, distribute their own presenter materials:
	+ ACRL, for example, sends out information to accepted presenters for its biennial conference, including [paper and panel guidelines](https://www.dropbox.com/s/0qfdx4xtcbcouak/Presentation%20tips.docx?dl=0), [poster guidelines](https://s4.goeshow.com/acrl/national/2015/webpages/ACRL2015posterguidelines.pdf), and [webcast presentation guidelines](https://www.dropbox.com/s/iya863wncp4jl3w/Virtual%20Conference%20presenter%20orientation.docx?dl=0).

### 4. ALA General Membership

#### 4.1 Summary:

This group encompasses all ALA members and potential members, including those who regularly attend conferences on-site as well as those who attend only related virtual meetings or who are considering attending a conference in the future.

#### 4.2 Knowledge Needs:

* An understanding that ALA wants conferences to be available to everyone; that everyone is welcome at all conference events
* An understanding that ALA provides a variety of accommodations for people identifying with a disability as well as people for whom an accommodation will enhance their conference experience.
* Knowledge of possible accommodation types, how to request them in advance of conference, and how to request them on-site at conference
* Awareness of Conference Services on-site and accessibility hotlines (phone numbers, booths, emails) where accessibility issues can be immediately reported
* Awareness that we are constantly seeking feedback and doing all we can to improve services; this can be better achieved when concerns are reported *during* conference, not afterward

#### 4.3 Known Current Processes:

* ALA divisions, particularly ASCLA, offer year-round and conference programming related to accessibility, universal design, and inclusion of people with disabilities;
	+ ASCLA, using materials gathered from the Conference Accessibility Task Force and other sources, is aiming to create a more widespread online repository for accessibility training materials.
* Some interest groups, like the Universal Accessibility IG, take a special interest in matters pertaining to accessibility, and generate ideas for programs and projects that will facilitate wider discussion and knowledge of these issues.

## Appendix H: Accessibility Tip Sheet for Exhibitors

### Pre-Conference

**Accessible Booth Spaces**

In order to make your booth accessible to people with accessibility issues, simple alterations can be made to remove or modify physical barriers and provide accessible promotional materials.

* Set up displays to allow those using wheelchairs to easily enter the booth and view materials. This can be done by lowering displays or counters and ensuring there is ample entrance space. Be aware that many mobility devices cannot navigate heavily carpeted areas.
* Make sure carpet is smoothly laid out and that any cords are securely taped down so as not to hinder wheelchair users from accessing your booth. Double padding, ultra-plush carpet may hinder those with mobility issues from entering your exhibit space. Please contact the general service contractor if you notice a potential hazard.
* Provide order forms or promotional materials in alternate formats such as large print or thumb drives for persons who are visually impaired. Emailing promotional information or providing it digitally eliminates the need to print as much material, reduces shipping costs, and helps reduce waste in the environment.
* All video content should be captioned and include written transcripts. These both benefit:
	+ people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
	+ people who speak English (or language of media) as a second language
	+ people who have trouble understanding the audio due to sound quality, pace, accent
	+ people who process information better by reading, or reading and listening simultaneously
	+ people who are viewing the video in a loud setting
* Plan in advance how you will welcome people with disabilities into your booth.
* Approach persons with disabilities with a positive, relaxed attitude—the same way you would approach any other prospective customer.
* If attendee is Deaf and with an interpreter, always address the attendee directly, not the interpreter.
* If altering your display is not an option, make up in service what you lack in “architecture.”
* If your booth will be serving food, prepare signage notifying visitors of potential allergens.

**ADA Compliance**The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that convention facility and services are accessible to those with disabilities. Exhibitors are responsible for ensuring that their booths and exhibits are in full compliance with the ADA. Be sure when planning your booth/exhibit that you take into consideration those with disabilities.

If you have questions about accessibility of your conference booth, please contact ALA Conference Services or use the conference accessibility hotlines: call **312-280-3225** or email **confaccess@ala.org**.

If you have questions about compliance, please contact the ADA information line at **800-514‐0301**.

### During Conference

**Be prepared to discuss accessibility** of your products and services with visitors to your booth. If you are unable to answer the following questions, you should be able to forward any visitor to an appropriate contact person:

* Is your product ADA compliant?
* Does your website and any online services adhere to standards of the World Wide Web Consortium’s Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0)?
* Does your company or product have a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT)?
* Is your electronic/digital product compatible with screen reading software?
* Is your furniture or patron-operated physical system accessible and operable by wheelchair users?
* Are your brochures, flyers, and other materials available as accessible electronic documents?
* Are captions and transcripts provided for all video content?
* If accessibility issues are reported, what is your company/organization doing to resolve them? Is there an accessibility contact person?

Any issues that arise during conference with the accessibility of your booth, exhibit space, or ability to provide service can be **immediately reported** a variety of ways, detailed above.

### Post-Conference

Any complaints received or issues experienced should be filtered through ALA Conference Services and the Exhibits Round Table, to discuss means by which to rectify the issue.

ERT representatives should be prepared to discuss open and/or ongoing accessibility concerns at meetings following each conference.

## Appendix I: Accessibility Tip Sheet for Hotel Staff

### Staff Training

Management should ensure that hotel staff have been trained in the following areas:

* General ADA regulations.
* Hotel’s range of accessibility features available for guests, and related troubleshooting procedures.
* Accessibility of local venues (e.g. nearby eateries, museums, major public attractions).
* The use of respectful language and practices for guests with disabilities.
* Effective communication practices that would benefit guests who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
* Hotel policies addressing use of service animals.

### Hotel and Public Areas Access

The following access is provided:

* to hotel from sidewalks, parking areas and public transportation
* to the rooms
* to the hotel’s services, such as concierge and check-in desks, restaurants, shops, and spas
* to public restrooms
* to any amenities offered, such as drinking fountains, elevators, and ATMs

### Rooms

Conference Services and hotel management should communicate to ensure:

That they have the required/requested number of ADA-compliant accessible rooms.

That these rooms contain:

* accessible outlets
* accessible closets and shelves or drawers
* visual notifications on doors, phones, and alarms

That the guest can get into the bed:

* the mattress is between 20 and 23 inches from the floor
* there is 3-foot clearance on at least one side of the bed

That the guest can use the bathroom:

* the doorway is 32 inches or wider
* there a 60-inch turning radius
* the sink, towels, light switches, and any hooks are accessible to wheelchair users
* the faucet handles are levers
* there is a roll-in shower or shower seat with a transfer seat
* the shower controls are accessible from a sitting position
* the toilet seat is between 17 and 19 inches from the ground
* toilet paper can be reached easily from the toilet without stretching
* there are transfer bars for the toilet on the side wall, between 33 and 36 inches from the ground with no obstructions, and on the rear wall between 33 and 36 inches from the ground

### Visitor/Guest Relations

Hotels should be able to provide the following if asked by ALA Conference Services Staff:

* An emergency evacuation plan for people with mobility, print, and visual disabilities and those who are Deaf.
* A walkthrough to check that all public areas can be accessed independently, that no extra keys or additional assistance is necessary for any lifts or other barriers.
* A room check to see that furniture placement and/or other design choices do not impede accessibility within the rooms.
* Documented provisions that guests with disabilities will not be charged a full rate of an accessible room in a high class if they had originally requested one at a lower class that is already occupied.
* Documented provisions that properly accommodate conference attendees with service animals. All service animals should be allowed to stay with the owner, and no person should be reassigned to a different room that is inconvenient to their needs if they have a service animal.

## Appendix J: Accessibility Resource Repository

### Resources Referenced and Cited in Report

* [Access Guidelines for MLA Convention Session Organizers and Presenters](https://www.mla.org/Convention/Planning-a-Convention-Session/Access-Guidelines-for-MLA-Convention-Session-Organizers-and-Presenters): Modern Language Association
* [ADA Title III: Rules on Public Accommodation](https://www.ada.gov/ada_title_III.htm): ADA.gov
* [CSUN Assistive Technology Conference](http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference/2017/sessions/index.php/public/website_pages/view/1): California State University – Northridge
* [Final Report of the ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](http://connect.ala.org/files/TFEDIFinalReport%202016-06-06.pdf): ALA EDI, June 2016
* [HCI Annual Conference 2017](http://2017.hci.international/): Human-Computer Interaction International Conference
* [IAAP Access Conference](http://www.accessibilityassociation.org/conference): International Association of Accessibility Professionals
* [Making Presentations Accessible](https://www.historians.org/annual-meeting/resources-and-guides/speaker-resources/making-presentations-accessible): American Historical Association Annual Meeting
* [SIG-Access Accessible Conference Guide](http://www.sigaccess.org/welcome-to-sigaccess/resources/accessible-conference-guide/): Association of Computing Machinery, Special Interest Group on Accessible Computing
* [Understanding Disability Models – Social Model of Disability](https://www.identityfirstautistic.org/social-model-of-disability): Identity-First Autistic
* [Visions Conference 2016](http://www.blindness.org/visions/): Foundation Fighting Blindness, blindness.org
* [What is Accessibility?](http://www.cnib.ca/en/services/accessibilities/what_is_accesibility/Pages/default.aspx): CNIB – Seeing Beyond Vision Loss
* [Worldcon Sci-Fi/Fantasy Conference Accessibility Pledge](http://maryrobinettekowal.com/journal/sff-convention-accessibility-pledge/): Mary Robinette Kowal

### Resources on Universal Design for Events, Meetings, and Conferences:

* [A Planning Guide for Accessible Conferences](http://www.accessiblecampus.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/A-Planning-Guide-for-Accessible-Conferences-1.pdf): Council of Ontario Universities – Accessible Campus
* [Accessible Information Exchange—Meeting on a Level Playing Field](https://www.ada.gov/business/accessiblemtg.htm): U.S. Department of Justice, Disability Rights Section, ADA.gov
* [Accessible Meetings, Events, and Conferences Guide](http://www.adahospitality.org/accessible-meetings-events-conferences-guide/book): ADAhospitality.org
* [CCCC Conference Accessibility Guide 2017](https://sites.udel.edu/kersch/files/2017/02/CCCC2017AccessibilityAudit-Portland-1dterai.pdf) and [2016](https://u.osu.edu/composingaccess/files/2016/09/2016-CCCC-Accessibility-Guide-2l9dewx.pdf) (tailored by location): National Council of Teachers of English, Conference on College Composition and Communication, NCTE.org/CCCC
* [Designing Accessible Events for People with Disabilities and Deaf Individuals](https://www.vera.org/publications/designing-accessible-events-for-people-with-disabilities-and-deaf-individuals): Vera Institute of Justice
* [Disability Access at WisCon](http://wiscon.net/policies/accessibility/): WisCon Science Fiction Convention
* [People First—How to Plan Events Everyone Can Attend](https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/0956/): New York State Department of Health
* [Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible](https://adata.org/publication/temporary-events-guide): ADA National Network
* [Universal Design of Conference Exhibits and Presentations](http://www.washington.edu/doit/equal-access-universal-design-conference-exhibits-and-presentations): University of Washington DO-IT Equal Access

### Accessible Events Checklists:

* [Accessible Public Event Checklist](http://sfgov.org/mod/accessible-public-event-checklist): California Mayor’s Office on Disability
* [Creating Accessible and Inclusive Meetings or Events](https://diversity.umn.edu/sites/default/files/AccessMtgsFINAL.pdf) (infographic): University of Minnesota
* [Facilitating Accessible Meetings](http://www.accessiblecampus.ca/reference-library/accessible-event-conference-planning/facilitating-accessible-meetings/): Council of Ontario Universities – Accessible Campus
* [Planning Accessible Meetings and Events Toolkit](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/mental_physical_disability/Accessible_Meetings_Toolkit.authcheckdam.pdf): American Bar Association Commission on Disability Rights

### Conference Diversity and Inclusion—General Resources:

* [6 Steps to Planning a Diverse Conference](https://www.netimpact.org/blog/6-steps-for-planning-a-diverse-conference): NetImpact.org
* [Coordinating Inclusive Events on Campus](https://admin.vancouver.wsu.edu/diversity/coordinating-inclusive-events-campus): Washington State University – Vancouver
* [Creating an Inclusive and Supportive Work Environment](http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/diversity-supportive-environment.cfm): Community Foundations of Canada HR Council
* [Creating More Inclusive Events](https://www.skidmore.edu/leadership/documents/CreatinginclusiveEvents.pdf): Skidmore College
* [Guidance to Create More Diverse Participation for Panel Discussions](http://www.wri.org/sites/default/files/Guidance_to_Create_More_Diverse_Participation_Panel_Discussions.pdf): World Resources Institute (WRI.org)
* [Top 10 Best Practices for Inclusive Multilingual Events](http://memberpower.ufcw.org/files/2014/12/10-best-practices.pdf): JustCommunities.org

### Highlighted TFEDI Recommendations:

| **Number** | **Recommendation** | **Timeline** | **Delegated to:** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 4.3 | Task the Center for the Future of Libraries with inclusion of trends illustrating equity, diversity, and inclusiveness within the profession as part of their work. | Fall 2016 - Spring 2018 | Center for the Future of Libraries |
| 5.2 | Provide guidance for committee appointments to include and increase diversity and inclusion by including a representative from the Committee on Diversity. Assess ALA office advisory groups to determine if advisory groups are present and diverse enough; add a demographic section to the volunteer form to allow members to self-identify as belonging to an underrepresented group. | Fall 2016 - Spring 2017 | Governance, TOLD, COO |
| 5.3 | Assess existing pathways to professional success within the organization for underrepresented groups; make suggestions to fill gaps. | Fall 2017- Spring 2019 | TOLD, COD |
| 5.5 | Determine the numbers of members from underrepresented groups within the association and increase representation of these populations within membership to match the proportions found in society; use the TF-EDI demographic questions as a model for collecting the information. | Reach 50% of target in 2021, 100% of target in 2026 | Membership Committee or another Presidential Task Force with representation from the Membership Committee with a focus on increasing number of diverse members |
| 5.6 | Develop uniform modes for member involvement in committees, task forces, and other Association activities that does not require conference attendance; look at division initiatives in this area as a starting point. | Fall 2016 - Spring 2017 | Membership Committee |
| 6.3 | Ensure equity, diversity, and inclusion (and overall cultural competence) is integrated into every part of every library school class and training and is not a separate training. | Fall 2016 - Spring 2017 | COA (existing ALA group and the two new TF’s on Education and Accreditation); work with the ethnic affiliates to accomplish this point. |