

**American Library Association**  
**Midwinter 2021 Updates and Talking Points**  
Prepared for the ALA Executive Board  
January 19, 2021

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**Marquis Speakers, Shifts in LIS Practice, and Full House as ALA Sunsets Midwinter Event and Reimagines Association**

As the American Library Association prepares to welcome nearly 6,000 attendees (against an original target of 5,000 attendees) for its last Midwinter Meeting members and staff are deeply engaged in change management at every level of the organization: Governance (Forward Together); Operational (Operating Agreement); and Strategic and Financial (Pivot Strategy). Updates and overviews of each of these areas of work will be provided at the Executive Board, Membership Information Session, and Council meetings scheduled for Thursday, January 21 through Wednesday January 27. Links to each of these meetings are provided below for quick access:

- **Thursday, January 21, 2021**  
ALA Executive Board Meeting Session I  
12:00 PM – 4:00 PM CT  
Meeting Link: <https://ala-events.zoom.us/j/94285005693?pwd=VmJrNmduME1hd2VUK1VwRVBGZzhSZz09>
- **Friday, January 22, 2021**  
ALA Executive Board Meeting Session II (ALA ED Presents on Pivot Strategy from at 11 am)  
11:00 PM – 2:00 PM CT  
Meeting Link: <https://ala-events.zoom.us/j/94285005693?pwd=VmJrNmduME1hd2VUK1VwRVBGZzhSZz09>
- **Saturday, January 23**  
Membership/Information Session  
11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. CST  
Registration Link: [https://ala-events.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_XsMXfsHXS96-ZmD5QzoNXw](https://ala-events.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XsMXfsHXS96-ZmD5QzoNXw)
- **Sunday, January 24**  
Council I Meeting  
1:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m. CST  
Registration Link: [https://ala-events.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_mD\\_-sjlBQo6iCba2rlspQA](https://ala-events.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mD_-sjlBQo6iCba2rlspQA)
- **Monday, January 25**  
Council II Meeting  
12:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. CST  
Registration Link: [https://ala-events.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_mD\\_-sjlBQo6iCba2rlspQA](https://ala-events.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mD_-sjlBQo6iCba2rlspQA)
- **Tuesday, January 26**  
Council III Meeting  
12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. CST  
Registration Link: [https://ala-events.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_mD\\_-sjlBQo6iCba2rlspQA](https://ala-events.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mD_-sjlBQo6iCba2rlspQA)
- **Wednesday, January 27**  
Executive Board Meeting III  
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM CT  
Meeting Link: <https://ala-events.zoom.us/j/94285005693?pwd=VmJrNmduME1hd2VUK1VwRVBGZzhSZz09>

In addition to the intensive work of association renewal, Midwinter will also highlight timely keynote presentations by civil rights icon Ruby Bridges; GLBTQIA pioneering cartoonist Christian Cooper; poet Joy Harjo; anti-racism activist Dr. Ibram X. Kendi; and our newest First Lady and lifelong educator, Dr. Jill Biden. As well, Midwinter will feature timely convenings on the evolution of LIS services during this period of intensive change such as RUSA's **"Definition of Reference Discussion"** which follows a series of town halls on changes in how reference is defined and delivered. [The 2021 Symposium on the Future of Libraries](#) returns this Midwinter with nearly twenty sessions exploring near- and longer- term trends such as discussions on **"The Future of Digital Equity"** and Artificial Intelligence intended to help libraries adapt to the needs of our communities, and programs that preview the new Lib Learn X literature and education-forward meeting set to launch January 2022.

And don't miss...

The **"I Love My Librarian" Awards** ceremony on Saturday afternoon (January 23) gives ALA members an opportunity to honor ten peer public, school, college, community college, or university librarians selected by the library community to receive a \$5,000 cash award. Likewise, the **"News You Can Use"** ["News You Can Use"](#) sessions span bookmobile and school library services, emergent conversations among ACRL members, library leaders concerned with intellectual freedom, or virtualizing professional development in remote work contexts, and provides platforms to ALA partners such as the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services, Digital Public Library of America, IMLS, OCLC, and United States Board on Books for Young People to engage practitioners in prescient discussions on practice and service strategies.

Midwinter 2021 will include an experiential learning session on **microaggressions in libraries**, envisioned and sponsored by ALA President Julius C. Jefferson, Jr. and coordinated by ODLOS. This live session, a LibLearnX preview, will take place on Sunday, January 24, 2021, from 9:45 -11a.m. CST. It is intended to be the first in a series of experiential equity, diversity, and inclusion sessions.

Ending the focus on Midwinter is a callout of the Public Policy and Advocacy-designed program ["New Directions from State and Federal Policy Makers. Maximize Your Influence!"](#) which helps to answer the questions 'Where do library priorities fit in with the 117th Congress and state houses? What can we expect from the new Administration? What are the top issues most likely to move over the next two years? How can you be an effective advocate at all levels of government during COVID restrictions?' This program is well timed to coincide with the start of a new Administration, Congress, and state legislative session.

## **Forward Together**

Following a series of convenings in Fall 2020, ALA President Jefferson sent a call for councilors to volunteer for the next phase of the Forward Together Working Group. Twenty-five councilors indicated their interest to serve on this working group. The newly appointed Working Group will develop the resolution based on the *Forward Together Working Group* analysis and report. The resolutions will include the various parameters of the proposed new structure at a conceptual level. Council will comment on the various resolution components with the goal of finalizing a draft and final proposal for subsequent Council Meetings in March 2021 and at the June 2021 Annual Conference. The draft calendar follows.

January 2021 Virtual Midwinter Council Meeting	<p><b><u>Forward Together Final Report and a TBD Appointed Working Group to Begin Shaping the <i>Forward Together</i> Resolution</u></b></p> <p>Forward Together Chairs to provide a final report to Council. This report will help inform the work of Council/TBD Appointed Working Group to begin drafting the <i>Forward Together</i> resolution.</p> <p>Note: The resolution(s) can include the various parameters of the proposed new structure at a <b>conceptual</b> (i.e.: <b>non-Bylaws</b>) level. Council will debate on the various components via the resolution and will continue to work in the development of the resolution <i>virtually</i> with the goal to bring forward proposed resolution(s) for vote at subsequent Council Meetings (i.e., March 2021, Annual Conference 2021, etc.)</p>
March 2021 Virtual Council Meeting	<p><b><u>Virtual Council Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The newly appointed Working Group to provide an update of their work to the ALA Council.</p> <p>This may help prepare Council for a vote in June 2021. Voting may occur.</p>
June 2021 Annual Conference Council Meeting	<p><b><u>Annual Conference Council Meeting: Council to Vote on the <i>Forward Together</i> Resolution</u></b></p> <p>Council will debate, amend, and vote on the various components via the resolution.</p>
June 2021 – January 2022 (6 months)	<p><b><u>Drafting the New ALA Bylaws Per Approved Resolution</u></b></p> <p>If applicable, work on drafting new bylaws may occur per approved resolution(s).</p> <p>Key Stakeholders: ALA Parliamentarian, Constitution &amp; Bylaws Committee, Committee on Organization, and the ALA Governance Office. The last step is a review by ALA's Legal Counsel.</p>

## Operating Agreement Review

The Operating Agreement Work Group was proposed during ALA Midwinter 2020 with a final charge and appointments set in June 2020. The Operating Agreement Work Group members includes:

Role	Name	Position
Chair	Maggie Farrell	UNLV
Division Member	Clara Bohrer	West Bloomfield Township Public Library
Division Member	Diane Chen	Stratford STEM Magnet School Library
Roundtable Member	Sophia Sotilleo	Lincoln University (PA)
Membership Member	Miranda Bennett	University of South Carolina
Publishing Committee	Christine Dulaney	Library of Congress
SCOE Rep	Andrew Pace	OCLC
Member	Clara Harmon	Calumet City Public Library (IL)

Executive Board Member	Wanda Brown	ALA Past President
BARC Chair	Peter Hepburn	College of the Canyons
Division Staff	Tammy Dillard Steels	YALSA Executive Director
Division Staff	Kara Malenfant	ACRL Interim Executive Director
Division Staff	Kerry Ward	Core (previously LLAMA Executive Director)
Roundtable Staff	Lorelle Swader	Associate Executive Director
Finance Staff	Denise Moritz	Interim CFO
General Fund Staff	Melissa Walling	Director, Membership
General Fund Staff	Kathi Kromer	Director, Washington Office

The OA Work Group has met throughout the fall. The WG has conducted preliminary analysis of the current Operating Agreement and would like to update and optimize the policy. A summary of the issues being considered follows:

- Title – the current title of Operating Agreement is dated, and we should refer to this as its policy name: Policies of the American Library Association in Relation to its Membership Divisions.
- Round Tables – the Round Tables’ relationship could be defined either as part of this policy or reexamined within its own already existing policy ([A.4.3.3 Round Tables of ALA: Role and Function](#)).
- Sec. 2, Values – this section title is confusing and actually refers to operational practices. It is likely that the WG will recommend that this moves to [ALA’s Operational Practices](#) or within another policy or internal management document.
- Sequencing – the WG is considering changes at the same time as other initiatives such as Forward Together, Pivot Strategy development, and internal operational discussions. The WG will monitor various association initiatives to be aware of potential impacts on the operating agreement or how better defining the division relationship might advance these initiatives.
- Financial/Overhead – the WG is focusing on aspects of the relationship before considering financial arrangements since finances should support the relationship; not define the relationship.
- Timeframe – the WG discussions are difficult and the timeframe may have been too ambitious especially given the demands on individual schedules. The WG will examine their anticipated final report due date of June 2021 and may request an extension.
- Planning and Budget Assembly (PBA) Meeting – the Operating Agreement will be an agenda item during the joint PBA/BARC/Division Midwinter meeting.
- Comments, questions, and observations may be shared with WG members. The Operating Agreement WG [website](#) also has a feedback email.

## ALA Pivot Strategy

Necessitated by changing contexts brought on both by ALA’s need to rethink and renew its business plan as well as COVID-19’s impact on the association and libraries more broadly, the five-year pivot strategy seeks to grow ALA’s membership and annual revenues over the next five years by doubling ALA’s streams of growth and revenue from three to six. The plan is informed by charrette (rapid ideation) sessions in which over 120 ALA staff members participated, as well as meetings with leaders and staff of peer associations and library organizations. In finalizing the Pivot Strategy’s development Executive Director Tracie Hall met with various member groups including division boards, Council, BARC and F&A, and solicited Executive Board Feedback to further refine the plan.

Buoyed by this input ALA staff launched the Pivot Strategy this month with a pre-launch planning meeting for Unit Managers held January 13 and two subsequent meetings for Unit Managers and for staff across the associations (all units, offices, and divisions) planned for January 27 and 28, respectively. The Pivot Strategy contains a series of cascading goals that begin with ALA's Mission and Core Values; it's commitment to producing library and community impact; the goal of membership (increase by 5%) and revenue (increase in revenue over spending to 10%) growth by 2025; and the creation of operational and financial efficiencies at the association, functional, and unit levels. A tea of ALA staff representing an array of units, offices, and divisions will have an opportunity to serve on teams charged with implementing change and monitoring progress. ALA's performance management tools are also being aligned to Pivot Strategy goals. Executive Director Hall will speak to the nuances of the plan at the BARC and Executive Board meetings and provide overviews at the upcoming Governance meetings.

### **ALA-APA and Washington Office (PPA) Celebrate Anniversaries**

- APA will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021. Originally, APA was intended for professional certification. In 2002, preliminary bylaws were expanded to include mutual and professional interest of librarians and library workers. Items such as the Salary Survey were moved to APA. APA's goal is to celebrate and conduct activities centered around certification programs in FY 2021, and to focus on salaries and status of library workers in FY 2022. National Library Workers Day will be held on April 6, 2021 and will be one of the many dates that ALA-APA commemorates its two decades.
- ALA's Office of Public Policy and Advocacy (PPA), established in 1945 to represent libraries' interests on Capitol Hill, will celebrate its 75th anniversary which occurred in October 2020 all year long. Over the coming year, the association will leverage the 75-year story of ALA's Public Policy and Advocacy (PPA) work in Washington to showcase ALA's many advocacy wins, boost engagement from current advocates, and provide insight into advocacy work for current and potential ALA members.

### **ALA gains cosponsors for Library Stabilization Fund Act**

- Legislation calling for \$2 billion in emergency library resources, the [Library Stabilization Fund Act](#), was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI), and in the House by Rep. Andy Levin (D-MI-09) in July 2020. The [legislation would provide](#) at least \$1.7 billion of emergency aid directly to state library agencies, \$45 million for Tribal libraries, and \$200 million in competitive grants related to COVID response. In response to an all-out effort by ALA members, the Senate bill secured 17 cosponsors while the House bill secured 68 cosponsors. PPA is working with Sen. Reed and Rep. Levin to reintroduce the legislation in 2021. \*Note, President Jefferson and Sen. Reed will discuss library support during a special Midwinter session.

### **AASL and PPA Engage White House Transition Team**

- ALA worked to provide input to the Biden-Harris Transition Team. We submitted formal comments to three Agency Review Teams: the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Arts & Humanities

(which includes IMLS) and the Department of Education. PPA had a meeting with the FCC Agency Review Team and worked with allies to reinforce the case of libraries. In collaboration with AASL, PPA submitted a [letter](#) to the Biden-Harris education transition team on behalf of ALA President Julius C. Jefferson, Jr AASL President Kathy Carroll, and leaders from forty-eight state chapters.

### **Office of Intellectual Freedom Monitoring Speech Issues**

- In the wake of the January 6 insurrection activities on Capitol Hill, there has been much debate over actions taken by privately held publishers and media platforms. Private companies have the right to determine rights of access. The Office of Intellectual Freedom and its committees continue to actively monitor issues related to speech and access and will keep the ALA community updated on any suggested actions or response.

### **Additional Support for Spectrum Scholarship Program**

- In November, ODLOS received a \$170,000 grant from an anonymous funder to provide an additional 20 scholarships as part of the 2020-2021 Spectrum Cohort. Recipients will be announced in January 2021. The application for the 2021-2022 Spectrum cohort opened September 1, 2020 through the ALA Scholarship Clearinghouse and will close March 1, 2021.

### **Applications open for Grants to Small and Rural Libraries**

- PPO announced the first 200 recipients of its Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC): Focus on Small and Rural Libraries grants on January 5, while also inviting applications for a second funding round that will distribute an additional \$1.4 million to libraries. Up to 450 grants will be awarded in Round 2 of ALA's community engagement funding initiative. Library workers may apply online for grant funding by March 4 at <http://www.ala.org/tools/programming/LTCEG>.

### **Business Advisory Group**

- Earlier this month ALA announced that Executive Director Tracie D. Hall names 13 members to the newly revived ALA Business Advisory Group. Well recognized for their individual achievements, this group of advisors comes from libraries, civic life, technology, and academia and bring the power of their collective expertise to supporting ALA's business development. They are:
  - Charles Adler, co-founder of crowdfunding platform Kickstarter.
  - Adam Bush, co-founder and Provost of College Unbound.
  - Amy Eshleman, former Director of inaugural YOUMedia Center at Chicago Public Library and wife of Lori Lightfoot, Mayor of the City of Chicago.
  - Mae Hong, vice president of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.
  - Sandee Kastrul, president and co-founder of i.c.stars, a technology training program founded in to prepare low-income adults for technology careers.
  - Eric Klinenberg, Professor of Social Science and Director of the Institute for Public Knowledge at New York University and author of Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life.

- Jim Neal, University Librarian Emeritus at Columbia University.
- Marie Oestergaard, Director of Dokk1: Aarhus Public Library (Aarhus, Denmark).
- Veronda Pitchford, Assistant Director of Califa Group, a library membership consortium.
- Harper Reed, Chief Technology Officer, Barack Obama Presidential Campaign.
- Pam Sandlian Smith, Director of Anythink Libraries in Adams County, Colorado.
- Joyce Valenza, Associate Teaching Professor at Rutgers University School of Communication and Information Science and coordinator, School Library Concentration.
- Kelvin Watson, Director of Broward Public Library.

An initiative originally conceived by Past ALA President Jim Neal (2017-18) to support ALA's investigation of new business models, the Business Advisory Group was reconstituted in late 2020 by Executive Director Hall to support the launch and stated goals of the association's developing strategic plan and to bring their innovative approaches and powerful networks to the table for the association's benefit and that of the wider LIS sector and the general public. Advisory Group members have agreed to serve terms of 12 and 24 months.

### **ALA Staffing Updates**

- Although staffing at ALA remains in a holding pattern as the association navigates the dips in revenue brought on by the pandemic, it has prioritized hiring of the ACRL and PLA Executive Directors as well as a new ODLOS Director. Initial screenings for all three positions are underway with interviews set to commence before spring.

### **New Headquarters Office Update**

- Despite the move to ALA's new headquarters located at 225 N. Michigan Avenue, staff working in Chicago continue to work remotely. Having at times been one of the epicenters of COVID-19 contagion over the course of the pandemic, Chicago has asked employers to extend remote work measures to the extent possible. Managers have been given permission to seek building access for required team activity and individual staff members have been able to access the building to perform critical tasks since the beginning of the pandemic. ALA's Executive and Human Resource Offices continue to monitor the city's public health status and have advised staff that they will be informed at least a month before any change in deployment.

### **Financial Update**

- ALA has made concerted efforts to cut costs and manage expenses, but ALA finances continue to be impacted by the pandemic-associated recession and its effect on libraries. In anticipation of this, the FY 2021 budget projected decreases in each of ALA's traditional revenue lines: Conference Services, Membership, and Publishing. As well, at least half of the eight divisions also predicted a negative balance foretelling the effect of the pandemic on their face-to-face meetings and events. Apart from a few exceptions (the Baby Yoda poster, for example), the funding and staffing reductions that libraries have suffered over the length of the pandemic can be felt within the association especially in lapsed memberships that may have been dependent on library support, slowed merchandise sales as many



libraries have not yet fully reopened; and reductions to ALA’s overall conference attendance and revenue models in virtual meeting environments.

- This period, however, has also catalyzed the reexamination and restructuring of ALA’s financial model, a process expected to continue over the next few years as ALA moves to align its more than three-dozen units financially. Operationally, and strategically. In addition to the doubling of business streams seen not only as conduits for revenue flow, but also as channels for membership and stakeholder engagement, ALA is working to centralize areas of work where federated approaches may add to purchase power or cost-savings. Similarly, ALA will also undertake program assessment work to determine tasks and activities that have limited impact on member or revenue generation, the two overarching goals of its new Pivot Strategy which calls on the work of all units to track to at least one of these outcomes and to one or more of the specific goals named in the strategy’s verticals.

## Two Major Association-wide Goals:

1. Increase Revenue by 10% over expenses; 2. Increase Membership by 5%



- Repair to ALA’s financial accounting capacity and productivity remains a primary concern as the association continues to recoup time lost and reporting gaps created during its period of outsourcing these functions to non-US firm severely impacted by the lack of reliable digital infrastructure and access during the peak of the pandemic. Having now ended that contract, accounting functions have been brought back in house and along with preparing for ALA’s FY 2020 Audit in June 2021 and providing timely and accurate FY 2021 reports remain a top priority. FY 2020 April and FY 2021 September have been reported to staff and form the basis of the financial reporting provided during these Midwinter meetings.
- As ALA begins FY 2022 budget preparation changes to financial planning and modeling are already underway including migrating to a quarterly financial reporting schedule; moving from an “expense-based” to “revenue-based” budget; planning against three (high, mid, low) budget scenarios to ensure that spending is no longer fixed but modulates to a range of revenue probabilities; and that expenses



align to annual revenue models rather than forecast “planned losses” during this period of fiscal revitalization.

- At this Midwinter Meeting, budget objectives are presented to guide ALA’s budget preparation. Since 1997, the Budget Objectives have been titled Programmatic Priorities derived from the *ALA Strategic Directions*. The most recent Programmatic Priorities are:
  - Diversity
  - Equitable Access to Information & Library Services
  - Education and Lifelong Learning
  - Intellectual Freedom
  - Advocacy for Libraries and the Profession
  - Literacy
  - Organizational Excellence
  - Transforming Libraries

In combination with the Strategic Pivot Plan, the focus for the next couple of fiscal years is to increase and diversify ALA revenue streams, enforce new internal controls to align expenditures with revenues, and to develop best practices in association with budget management. This focus will strengthen the fiscal underpinnings of the association and will enable ALA staff and member leaders to achieve the programmatic priorities. The proposed budget objectives for FY 2022 center each of the aforementioned programmatic priorities while focusing on the processes needed to ensure fiscal health and stability for the association and to achieve near- and longer-term financial goals.

#### **The FY 2022 Budget Objectives are:**

##### **Align expenditures with revenues**

ALA staff will closely examine their expenditures according to revenue projections and adjust throughout the year as necessary to balance the FY 2022 budget.

##### **Increase revenue sources**

Currently, ALA relies on three main revenue streams. The Strategic Pivot Plan is developing new and diverse revenue streams with a goal of six primary revenue streams that will support ALA priorities for the long term.

##### **Develop budget surplus**

A small revenue surplus will be planned in order to build a reserve, as well as to improve the liquidity needs for association activities.

##### **Focus on financial stability**

Stabilizing ALA’s finances is a requisite for allowing ALA’s mission and core activities to continue during a very uncertain economy at a time when the association is facing increased demand from the sector for its guidance, resources, and direct services.

##### **Develop new budget metrics**

Benchmarking is critical to assessing the overarching and intertwined goals of increasing membership and revenue; the budget objectives articulated above; the performance of its now doubled revenue streams

(Continuing Education and Contributed Revenue launch as standalone revenue streams in FY 2022; Data, Research, and Design launches in FY 2023); as well as to determine ALA's effectiveness in meeting strategic priorities including digital literacy and access; equity, diversity, and inclusion in libraries and the LIS workforce; and the preservation of library services. These metrics will directly address the priorities as outlined in previous ALA planning as well as its developing Pivot Strategy which will guide its operations over the next three to five years. Laying the groundwork for ALA's approach to fiscal management, these five Budget Objectives will guide ALA staff in developing the FY 2022 budget in addition to providing a foundation for our work in advancing libraries and library workers.

Following ALA Midwinter meetings, ALA staff will begin to work on preliminary budget planning for FY 2022. The staff will consider budget assumptions (EBD#3.20) and budget objectives (EBD#3.19) in order to support the ALA core values and Strategic Plan. The Executive Board will consider freezing net asset transfers from Divisions and Round Tables into the Endowment for FY 2022 in order to provide for operational cash needs. Please note that net asset balances will not be immediately reflected in FY 2022 budget preparation but will be confirmed following the FY 2020 Audit. Member leaders are encouraged to work with the Finance Office in their FY 2022 budget planning processes should they have any questions or concerns.