

June 9, 2025

Dear ALA Council,

As the American Library Association continues to face unprecedented challenges and transformative opportunities, our commitment to serving members and advocating for libraries remains steadfast. We are called not only to respond to today's shifting landscape, but to shape the future of our association and our profession with intention, clarity, and unity.

Last fall, the ALA Executive Board initiated a strategic planning process by engaging expert consultants to develop the next comprehensive strategic plan for our organization. This plan—built from robust data analysis, focus groups, interviews, and member surveys—centers the voices of our members while charting a purposeful course forward.

At the core of this plan is an updated mission: *Empowering and advocating for libraries and library workers to ensure equitable access to information for all*. It is anchored by a bold vision: *Libraries thrive so everyone can succeed*.

On behalf of the Executive Board, I am honored to share with you the draft of ALA's new Strategic Plan. This document reflects our shared aspirations, and the structural focus required to lead the association into its next chapter. We believe this plan will serve as our blueprint for resilience, innovation, and collective progress.

It is essential that Council engage in review now so that we may formalize this Strategic Plan together at the Annual Conference, ensuring continuity of operations and momentum in executing strategies crucial to our members, our profession, and the communities we serve.

We are recommending approval of the Strategic Plan during Council III on Monday, June 30.

In advance of that session, we warmly welcome your insights, suggestions, and support.

Your engagement is essential as we advance together, grounded in shared values and a unified vision for the future of libraries.

With appreciation and in partnership,

Sam Helmick

ALA President-elect

ALA Strategic Plan

Mission: Empowering and advocating for libraries and library workers to ensure equitable access to information for all.

Vision: Libraries thrive so everyone can succeed.

Values: Access, Equity, Intellectual Freedom and Privacy, Public Good, Sustainability

| Domain | A. Advocacy | B. Member Experience | C. Organizational Redesign | D. Financial Sustainability | E. Professional Development |
|-----------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|
| Goal Statement | Champion libraries and empower advocates to support our core values | Deliver a personalized member experience that deepens engagement, strengthens retention, and reinforces ALA's value to the members at every stage of their careers. | Redesign and strengthen ALA's organizational structure to foster clarity, accountability, and collaborative leadership. | Optimize ALA's capacity for impact through disciplined financial stewardship, streamlined operations, and resource allocation into mission-aligned growth. | Offer educational and leadership opportunities that promote lifelong learning and career advancement. |
| | Strategic Objectives | Strategic Objectives | Strategic Objectives | Strategic Objectives | Strategic Objectives |
| Strategic Objectives | 1. Develop a unified, proactive advocacy strategy centered on ALA's values of access, equity, and intellectual freedom. | 1. Redesign the membership model to improve flexibility and demonstrate value. | 1. Optimize programs and align organizational functions in accordance with ALA Forward recommendations. | 1. End operating deficit spending, adhere to clear/realistic/reality sized budgeting practices. | 1. Expand meaningful opportunities for engagement by providing a breadth of educational and informational resources such as virtual learning, networking, leadership and career pathways, mentoring, and certifications. |
| | 2. Expand partnerships with aligned organizations to impact ALA's reach, credibility, public visibility, and policy influence | 2. Improve all member-facing digital platforms. | 2. Realign elements of the ALA governance structure to provide for more efficient decision-making. | 2. Review programs/services to identify opportunities for consolidation, streamlining, or elimination. | 2. Support library workers with a variety of skills and knowledge to support their learning and professional growth. |
| | 3. Build an infrastructure to rapidly respond to opportunities and crises. | 3. Reimagine the conference experience to engage more of the membership. | 3. Advance the "Our ALA" model. | 3. Centralize functions and operations to eliminate duplication and maximize efficiency. | 3. Research and gather data to identify educational needs of library workers to develop opportunities in emerging and evolving trends. |
| | 4. Empower advocates with toolkits, templates and legislative updates to amplify their voice at the local and state level. | 4. Explore new ways of communicating and engaging with members. | 4. Implement consistent onboarding, training and leadership development programs for Board members and staff in alignment with association and non profit management best practices. | 4. Redesign or sunset low-performing, financially un-sustainable or outdated offerings. | 4. Support and strengthen accreditation function of the association. |
| | 5. Launch a national public awareness campaign highlighting intellectual freedom, access to information, and the societal value of libraries in democracy and education. | | | 5. Create and invest operating surpluses to build a reserve fund to support the association's financial health. | |

Notates urgent priorities

ALA Strategic Plan

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Mission

Empowering and advocating for libraries and library workers to ensure equitable access to information for all.

Vision

Libraries thrive so everyone can succeed.

Values

- Access
- Equity
- Intellectual Freedom and Privacy
- Public Good
- Sustainability

Domains and Goal Statements

- **Advocacy:** Champion libraries and empower advocates to support our core values.
- **Member Experience:** Deliver a personalized member experience that deepens engagement, strengthens retention, and reinforces ALA's value to the members at every stage of their careers.
- **Organizational Redesign:** Redesign and strengthen ALA's organizational structure to foster clarity, accountability, and collaborative leadership.

- **Financial Stability:** Optimize ALA's capacity for impact through disciplined financial stewardship, streamlined operations, and resource allocation into mission-aligned growth
- **Professional Development:** Offer educational and leadership opportunities that promote lifelong learning and career advancement.

Strategic Objectives per Domain-List View

Advocacy

- Develop a unified, proactive advocacy strategy centered on ALA's values of access, equity, and intellectual freedom
- Expand partnerships with aligned organizations to impact ALA's reach, credibility, public visibility, and policy influence.
- Build an infrastructure to rapidly respond to opportunities and crises. (urgent priority)
- Empower advocates with toolkits, templates and legislative updates to amplify their voice at the local and state level.
- Launch a national public awareness campaign highlighting intellectual freedom, access to information, and the societal value of libraries in democracy and education.

Member Experience

- Redesign the membership model to improve flexibility and demonstrate value.
- Improve all member-facing digital platforms.
- Reimagine the conference experience to engage more of the membership.
- Explore new ways of communicating and engaging with members.

Organizational Redesign

- Optimize programs and align organizational functions in accordance with ALA Forward recommendations. (urgent priority)
- Realign elements of the ALA governance structure to provide for more efficient decision-making.
- Advance the "Our ALA" model. (urgent priority)
- Implement consistent onboarding, training and leadership development programs for Board members and staff in alignment with association and non-profit management best practices.

Financial Sustainability

- End operating deficit spending, adhere to clear/realistic/reality sized budgeting practices. (urgent priority)
- Review programs/services to identify opportunities for consolidation, streamlining, or elimination.
- Centralize functions and operations to eliminate duplication and maximize efficiency.
- Redesign or sunset low-performing, financially un-sustainable or outdated offerings. (urgent priority)
- Create and invest operating surpluses to build a reserve fund to support the association's financial health.

Professional Development

- Expand meaningful opportunities for engagement by providing a breadth of educational and informational resources such as virtual learning, networking, leadership and career pathways, mentoring, and certifications.
- Support library workers with a variety of skills and knowledge to support their learning and professional growth.
- Research and gather data to identify educational needs of library workers to develop opportunities in emerging and evolving trends.
- Support and strengthen accreditation function of the association.