

Guidelines for Campaigning by Candidates for ALA Office

Overview

The process for nominations and elections for candidates for ALA president-elect, treasurer and councilors are governed by the Association's Constitution and Bylaws, Article III, Sections 1-6. The ALA Nominating Committee recommends candidates annually for the position of president-elect and members-at-large for Council and candidates for the position of treasurer every three years. Support is provided to those candidates standing for election for the positions of ALA President-Elect, Treasurer, and Council members-at-large in accordance with guidelines approved by the ALA Council in 1992 that ensure that "there is equality of opportunity for all members of the American Library Association to seek elected office regardless of their personal financial resources or their access to organizational or other financial support." The ALA Executive Director is charged with developing "an election guide for candidates, listing available ALA services and other helpful information." These guidelines are updated regularly to reflect changes in communication technology and other external and internal factors that influence the election process.

Support Provided to Candidates for ALA President-elect and Treasurer

All candidates for ALA President-elect and Treasurer receive the following support from ALA and its units:

- A press release issued by ALA Communication Marketing Office (CMO) announcing the candidates.
- Information on the ALA election web site containing the candidate's photo, biography and statement of professional concerns.
- A link on the ALA election web site to a website maintained by the candidate.
- Mailing labels or email addresses (subject to member communication preferences) for all members, provided at no cost.
- Electronic distribution of one message from each of the candidates for President-elect and Treasurer to all ALA members.
- A complimentary meeting space at the ALA conference event preceding the election to hold campaign-related strategy meetings or social events. The candidates are responsible for food, beverage, meeting supplies or any other charges associated with these meetings.
- A table at the ALA conference event preceding the election to display campaign materials.
- An Association-wide candidates' forum held virtually preceding the election.
- The publication of full-page candidate's statement in the March issue of *American Libraries*.
- A candidate's statement limited to 300 words included in the ballot distributed to all members.
- A reimbursement of \$1,000 to each candidate for President-elect and Treasurer to help offset the cost of website development, postage, printing and other campaign-related expenses.

Support Provided to Candidates for ALA Council

Following the recommendations that Council approved in 1992, all candidates for ALA Councilor-at-Large receive the following support from ALA and its units:

- A candidate's statement limited to 150 words included in the ballot distributed to all members.
- A listing of candidates' names, positions and organizational affiliations published in *American Libraries*.

Use of ALA funds to support the campaigns of individual candidates

Other than the support provided as specified above, no additional ALA funds may be used to support the campaign of any individual candidate for ALA office. ALA policy defines ALA funds as funds of all offices, divisions and round tables. This includes use of budgeted funds for mailings or production of campaign materials or use of staff time to support the candidacy of any individual candidate for ALA office.

Vendor Support

While Council did not adopt specific guidelines for support provided by vendors, the 1992 draft Guidelines also remain the basis for current practice with regard to vendor support:

"Campaign contributions by vendors, either in cash or in kind, have the potential of seriously skewing the election process. Candidates should avoid such contributions; vendors should be encouraged to make financial contributions to recognized ALA endowments and special funds previously established to receive these."

Campaign

Materials: ALA currently has no policies regarding campaign materials. The types, numbers, and distribution of such materials are generally left to the discretion of each candidate. At the ALA conference event preceding the election, a table will be provided to each candidate to display campaign materials.

Visits: Candidates may request visits with ALA groups or vice versa (i.e. ALA Divisions, Roundtables, Chapters, Committees, etc.) to campaign. ALA groups need to be mindful of the candidate's time and to ensure fairness and respect is observed for all candidates. Candidates are encouraged to work together during these visits to maximum opportunity and time. ALA does not provide funding for candidate travel during the campaign. All travel arrangements and expenses are the responsibility of the candidate.

Spending: Candidates are expected to use good judgment in their use of financial or other resources available to them in conducting their campaigns. ALA does not have any policies explicitly relating to the financing of campaigns. There are no limits on the amount of money a candidate may spend, on how the candidates choose to finance their campaigns, whether a candidate may raise money for their campaign, or how they decide to spend the campaign funds raised.

Endorsements

The principle stated in the 1992 Council guidelines is to guarantee “equality of opportunity for all members of the American Library Association to seek elected office regardless of their personal financial resources or their access to organizational or other financial support” and to insure that no candidate is given an advantage by receiving a higher level of support from the Association or its units. Endorsement by an ALA unit constitutes organizational support not available to all candidates. Therefore, ALA units may not endorse candidates. However, for information purposes, divisions and round tables may publish lists of all the members of that division or round table who are running for ALA office in their official communication channels.

Appointed committee chairs, or members of committees may endorse candidates and may use ALA electronic discussion lists to express their support for an individual candidate or candidates for ALA offices, as long as they do not use their official titles or create the impression that they are speaking on behalf of an ALA committee or unit of ALA. Candidates can list endorsers by name, but not by ALA title or office. Executive Board members shall not endorse any candidate in any American Library Association election.

Approved by ALA Executive Board 2021 Virtual Annual Conference Meeting July 1, 2021
Approved by ALA Executive Board 2008 Fall Executive Board Meeting October 25, 2008
Amended at the 2009 Spring Executive Board Meeting April 25, 2009