

American Library Association (ALA)

Draft Strategic Plan

(Version: December 2009)

10-30 YEAR PLANNING HORIZON
~ CORE IDEOLOGY & ENVISIONED FUTURE ~

Core ideology describes an association's consistent identity that transcends all changes related to its relevant environment. It consists of two elements - **core purpose** – the association's reason for being – and **core values** – essential and enduring principles that guide an association in creating its culture and making decisions.

Envisioned future conveys a concrete yet unrealized vision for the association. It consists of a **big audacious goal** – a clear and compelling catalyst that serves as a focal point for effort – and a **vivid description** – vibrant and engaging descriptions of what it will be like to achieve the big audacious goal.

Core Ideology

Founding Purpose

The object of the American Library Association shall be to promote library service and librarianship. (ALA Constitution, Article II)

Mission

To provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all. (ALA Policy 1.2)

Core Organizational Values

The Association is committed to:

- Member service
- All types of libraries - academic, public, school and special
- All librarians, library staff, trustees and other individuals and groups working to improve library services
- An open, inclusive, and collaborative environment
- Professionalism and integrity
- Excellence and innovation
- Extending and expanding library services in America and around the world
- Social responsibility and the public good

Envisioned Future

Draft Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG)

ALA builds a world where libraries are central to life-long learning and where everyone is a library user.

Draft Vivid Description of the Desired Future:

ALA is recognized as leading and supporting a continuous transformation of libraries of all types in response to the changing needs, expectations, demographics, and technology of the populations they serve today and into the future. Libraries and their staff are perceived as relevant and vital to the communities they serve; connecting people and ideas to each other and to the rest of the world. Through transformation, all people have greater access to the knowledge, information, cultural heritage, and entertainment when and where they desire and expect it. Users are the primary advocates for the library; recognizing library services as essential to individual and societal enrichment.

As a result, all types of libraries are adequately funded, librarianship is a sought after profession, information is accessible to all and all people in the United States are literate.

3-5 YEAR PLANNING HORIZON
~ OUTCOME-ORIENTED GOALS AND DIRECTION SETTING OBJECTIVES ~

The following thinking represents strategic areas of focus for the next three to five years. The goals articulate the outcomes ALA would like to achieve and answer the question, "What will constitute future success?" The achievement of each goal will move the organization toward realization of its envisioned future. The goals are not necessarily identified in priority order.

Objectives provide direction on how ALA will accomplish its articulated goals. Objectives are considered in the 3-5 year planning horizon.

Draft Goals and Objectives

Goal Area: Advocacy and Public Policy

Goal Statement: ALA equips and leads advocates for libraries and the library profession and plays a key role in formulating policies and standards that affect library services.

Objective (1): Increase ALA's role in the formulation of library-related local, state, national, and international policies and standards.

Objective (2): Increase public awareness of the value and impact of all types of libraries and the role of librarians and library staff.

Objective (3): Increase support for research and evaluation to provide evidence regarding the value and impact of libraries.

Objective (4): Provide resources and training for advocates to lead efforts to secure local library funding and support.

Objective (5): Advocate for intellectual freedom, privacy, literacy, fair use, preservation of cultural heritage, equity of access, and permanent public access to government information.

Objective (6): Form alliances with organizations that share goals to advance public policy issues affecting libraries.

Goal Area: Building the Profession

Goal Statement: ALA ensures excellence and diversity in the library field.

Objective (1): Increase the availability of and access to continuing education and continuous learning opportunities for librarians, library staff, trustees and library advocates in a variety of formats.

Objective (2): Ensure that library education reflects the core values of the profession, its future needs, and the needs of its communities.

Objective (3): Ensure that the library workforce reflects an increasingly diverse global community.

Objective (4): Increase ALA activities in assisting libraries in recruiting and retaining the highest quality library workforce.

Goal Area: Transforming Libraries

Goal Statement: ALA leads the transformation of libraries and library services in an ever-changing environment.

Objective (1): Increase leadership development opportunities for library transformation.

Objective (2): Create opportunities to share “next practices.”

Objective (3): Encourage and recognize risk taking and experimentation with innovative and transformational ideas.

Goal Area: Member Engagement

Goal Statement: ALA provides an environment in which all members participate in, contribute to, and benefit from engagement in their association.

Objective (1): Increase member and staff innovation and experimentation through new opportunities for member engagement.

Objective (2): Increase member engagement through technology.

Objective (3): Increase member engagement by eliminating barriers to participation.

Objective (4): Develop new models to recognize member contributions.

Goal Area: Organizational Excellence

Goal Statement: ALA operates effectively, efficiently, and nimbly to accomplish its mission.

Objective (1): Increase resources to ensure program and service vitality.

Objective (2): Enhance the association's organizational structure to meet the changing needs of the members.

5 YEAR PLANNING HORIZON – MEGA ISSUES

***Mega issues** are issues of strategic importance that represent challenges the organization will need to face in defining the ultimate direction of its long-range plan. These issues represent potential impediments to achievement of the envisioned future and form a basis for dialogue about the choices facing the organization. These questions can also serve as an ongoing menu of strategic issues that ALA governance can use--in a knowledge-based approach to gathering insights relative to ALA's strategic position and directional choices--to create regular opportunities for strategic dialogue about the issues facing the profession of librarianship.*

Mega issue questions most frequently identified are in **bold**, but not in priority order.

- 1. How will ALA ensure the future relevance of libraries?**
- 2. How can ALA create greater satisfaction from member involvement?**
- 3. How will ALA truly succeed in implementing transformative organizational change?**
- 4. How will ALA ensure its future financial success?**
- 5. How will ALA keep up with the changing role of technology within libraries?**
- 6. How should ALA respond to the changes in the publishing industry?**
- 7. How will ALA position itself globally?**
8. How can ALA better measure achievement and success of the organization?
9. What roles does ALA play in ensuring that libraries are central to lifelong learning?
10. How can ALA improve collaboration within itself?
11. How can ALA lead the profession in recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce?
12. How will ALA continue leadership in practices for preservation recognizing an increasingly electronic environment?
13. How should ALA incorporate "information science" into our goals and strategic objectives?
14. How should ALA staff committees and divisions be structured to transform libraries and support all ALA members?
15. How can ALA facilitate MLS librarians and support staff to join forces to strengthen their combined value rather than compete with each other?
16. What programs and services can member groups within ALA stop supporting to free up resources for new initiatives?
17. How will ALA adjust to technical changes and help libraries and librarians do the same?

18. How will ALA become more entrepreneurial to ensure financial stability and growth?
19. How will ALA more effectively train local libraries and librarians to promote public awareness and support of libraries?
20. Is the MLS a valid credential?
21. How can ALA increase the diversity of the profession?
22. How can ALA reorganize its governance structures to become a more effective and nimble organization?
23. Should ALA look at new potential types of members?
24. How can ALA stay at the forefront of the profession and in an ever-changing information age?
25. How will ALA deal with a declining traditional member base?
26. How will ALA deal with the rise of Google blog and other commercial library look-alikes?
27. How will ALA ensure that students have access to quality school library programs?
28. How will ALA facilitate the improved cooperation among types of libraries to truly guarantee that libraries are central to lifelong learning?
29. How can ALA best encourage and reward risk-taking and innovation by its members and staff?
30. How should ALA effectively partner with its chapters and affiliates to implement its vision and strategic plan?
31. How can investments in future conferences be reconsidered to respond to member's desire for only one face-to-face meeting a year?
32. What economic constraints need to be reorganized in planning for the next five years?
33. How will ALA respond to the increasing emphasis on environmental issues?
34. How will ALA keep up with member expectations regarding virtual participation in new technologies?
35. How will ALA evaluate which programs and services are redundant in order to free up resources to take on new programs and services?
36. What role do trustees and friends of the Library play in the growth of ALA?
37. How can divisions work more collaboratively?
38. How can ALA ensure employment opportunities for current and future library school students?
39. How will libraries get the level of funding they will need to meet public expectations?
40. If massive digitization takes place, what happens to fair use?