

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Annual Conference, San Francisco  
June 26 – 30, 2015**

**Topic:** Competencies for Librarians Serving Youth Update

**Background:** At the 2014 Annual Conference the Board voted to establish a taskforce to update YALSA’s “Competencies for Librarians Serving Youth” document, with particular emphasis on aligning the document to the principles in the Futures Report. The document was last updated in 2010. The taskforce’s term of service runs through June 30, 2015. Loraine Squires, the taskforce chair, has provided a draft of the updated document for the Board’s consideration. The Board will want to decide if the changes are acceptable as is, or if the document needs further refining.

**Action Required:** Action

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**Questions for discussion** (since this is the first draft of the update, please avoid focusing on wordsmithing issues and instead look at the overall meaning and context of the content)

- Does this version do a thorough job of incorporating the principles in the Futures Report? If not, what areas need improvement?
- Are the seven overarching areas still relevant? Should any be added or deleted?
- Given the trend in more flexible hiring practices where libraries are employing individuals to work in teen services who do not have an MLS degree, should YALSA focus this document only on “librarians?”
- Does this document do a successful job of aligning with other YALSA guidelines, position papers, etc.? Is there any unnecessary overlap? If so, what?
- Does this document do a successful job of incorporating/making appropriate mention of other YALSA guidelines, statements, etc.? If not, what should be added?
- Would this document benefit from supplemental materials, such as a glossary, annotated bibliography or list of related resources? If so, what kind?
- Overall, does this document present a strong vision for 21<sup>st</sup> century library staff?

**Additional Resources**

- Futures Report [www.ala.org/yaforum/project-report](http://www.ala.org/yaforum/project-report)
- YALSA guidelines can be found at [www.ala.org/yalsa/guidelines](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/guidelines)

**DRAFT: YALSA’s Competencies for Librarians Serving Youth: Young Adults Deserve the Best**

## Introduction

The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA) that supports library services ~~to~~ for and with teens, developed these national guidelines for librarians and library staff who serve young adults. Individuals who demonstrate the knowledge and skills laid out in this document will be able to provide quality library service for and with teenagers. Institutions seeking to improve their overall service capacity and increase public value to their community are encouraged to adopt these competencies.

YALSA first developed these competencies in 1981, which were revised in 1998, 2003, ~~and 2010~~ and 2015. The competencies can be used as a tool to evaluate and improve service, a foundation for library school ~~curriculum~~ curricula, serve as a framework for staff training and a set of guiding principles for use when speaking out for the importance of services ~~to~~ for and with teens in libraries. The competencies form the backbone of *Young Adults Deserve the Best: YALSA's Competencies in Action* by Sarah Flowers (ALA Editions, 2010). In addition, YALSA has developed an evaluative tool for public libraries to use with the competencies at [www.ala.org/yalsa/competencies](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/competencies).

Primary Audiences ~~audiences~~ for the competencies include:

- ~~Library educators~~ LIS faculty
- School and library administrators
- Graduate students
- ~~Young adult~~ Teen services specialists
- School librarians
- Other audiences include:
  - All library staff
  - Secondary school educators
  - Staff at youth-serving organizations
  - Advocates for youth
  - Library trustees
- Library training coordinators
- Public library generalists
- ~~Human resources directors~~
- ~~Non-library youth advocates and service providers~~

These competencies frequently refer to "library services," which are intended include the following facets when possible:

- Passive programming and displays
- Active programming, workshops, and performances
- Reference services for teenaged patrons
- Space in libraries dedicated to teens
- Computer and technology access
- Advocacy and to legislative bodies, community groups, funding organizations, and other stakeholders

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## Area I. Leadership Advocacy and Professionalism

The librarian will be able to:

1. Develop and demonstrate leadership and advocacy skills ~~in-by~~ identifying the unique needs of the young adults in the library's community and working to meet those needs and advocating for service excellence, including equitable funding and staffing levels relative to those provided for adults and children.
- ~~2. Consistently demonstrate professional, approachable, and ethical behavior in dealings with teen library users and the community at large. Develop and demonstrate a commitment to professionalism and ethical behavior.~~
- ~~2.~~
3. Plan for personal and professional growth and career development, including the pursuit of knowledge about teen development and behavior, young adult literature, and trends in technology; may extend to participation in ALA and YALSA, state level library organizations and/or the pursuit of an BLS/BLIS or MLS/MLIS degree.
- ~~3. Design and conduct community analyses and needs assessments when needed to plan for new services or reassess existing ones.~~
4. Use outcomes based evaluation methods to monitor and report on library programs and services.
5. Be aware of current research and public policy and practice regarding teen development, connected learning, communication and technologies.
6. Advocate for service excellence for young adults in library settings; including equitable funding and staffing levels.
7. Advocate for library-friendly public policies and library funding for young adult services at local, state and federal levels whenever possible.
- ~~4. Encourage young adults to become lifelong library users by helping them to discover what libraries offer, how to use library resources, and how libraries can assist them in actualizing their overall growth and development.~~
- ~~5. Develop and supervise formal youth participation, such as teen advisory groups, recruitment of teen volunteers, and opportunities for employment.~~
- ~~6. Model commitment to building assets in youth in order to develop healthy, successful young adults.~~
- ~~7. Implement mentoring methods to attract, develop, and train staff working with young adults.~~

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## Area II. Knowledge of Client Group

The librarian will be able to:

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- ~~1. Become familiar with the developmental needs of young adults in order to provide the most appropriate resources and services.~~
- ~~2-1. Keep up-to-date with popular culture and technological advances that interest young adults.~~
- ~~3-2. Demonstrate an understanding of, and a respect for, diverse cultural, religious, and ethnic values, with a particular emphasis on the variety of populations in the library's community.~~
3. Understand the needs of young adults with special needs; consult with interdisciplinary professionals to provide an array of material formats and library programs, including nontraditional formats and programs that meet the needs of a variety of learning styles. Identify and meet the needs of patrons with special needs.
4. Reach out to and serve ALL teens in the community, no matter what their backgrounds, interests, and needs might be, and regardless of whether or not they frequent the physical library space.
5. Be knowledgeable and up-to-date about the community's demographic makeup and emerging populations.
6. Develop and supervise formal youth participation, such as teen advisory volunteers, and opportunities for employment.
7. Encourage informal youth participation through passive and drop-in programs, online forums, and acting as a co-learner with teens in the library and the community.
8. Develop and manage services that utilize the skills, talents and resources of young adults in the school or community.
- ~~4-9. Identify young adult interests and groups underserved or not yet served by the library, including at-risk, homeless or incarcerated teens, those with disabilities, non-English speakers, etc. as well as those with special or niche interests. Develop methods for better serving individuals from these groups in the library, virtually, and/or through outreach efforts.~~

### Area III. Communication, Marketing & Outreach

*The librarian will be able to:*

- ~~1. Form appropriate professional relationships with young adults, providing them with the assets, inputs and resiliency factors that they need to develop into caring, competent adults.~~
- ~~2. Develop relationships and partnerships with young adults, administrators and other youth-serving professionals in the community by establishing regular communication and by taking advantage of opportunities to meet in person.~~
- ~~3-1. Be an advocate for young adults and~~ effectively promote the role of the library in serving young adults, demonstrating that the provision of services to this group can help young adults build ~~assets~~skills and connections, achieve success, and in turn, create a stronger community.
- ~~4-2. Design, implement, and evaluate a strategic marketing plan for promoting young adult services in the library, schools, youth-serving agencies and the community at large.~~

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~~5. Demonstrate the capacity to articulate relationships between young adult services and the parent institution's core goals and mission.~~

~~6-3.~~ Establish an environment in the library wherein all staff serve young adults with courtesy and respect, and all staff are encouraged to promote programs and services for and with young adults.

~~7. Identify young adult interests and groups underserved or not yet served by the library, including at-risk teens, those with disabilities, non-English speakers, etc., as well as those with special or niche interests.~~

4. Promote young adult library services directly to young adults through school visits, library tours, etc., and through engaging their parents, educators and other youth-serving community partners.

5. Foster connections in the community between and among teens, content experts, mentors, youth advocates, community agencies, and library staff for optimal use of the library as a learning lab, collaborative space, and community center.

8. Work with library administration and/or IT administrators to establish and operate an online presence for and with youth and teen services, including via social media outlets, to promote physical and virtual library programs and resources to teens where they spend time online,

9-6. Encourage young adults to become lifelong library users by helping them discover what libraries offer, how to use library resources, and how libraries can assist them in actualizing their overall growth and development.

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## Area IV. Administration

*The librarian will be able to:*

1. Develop a strategic plan for library service with young adults based on their unique needs and needs of the community.

~~2. Design and conduct a community analysis and needs assessment.~~

~~3-2.~~ Apply relevant research findings towards the development and improvement of young adult library services.

~~4-3.~~ Involve young adults in planning and decision-making processes that affect programs, materials selection, and services for their age group. Design activities to involve young adults in planning and decision-making.

~~5-4.~~ Develop, justify, administer, and evaluate a budget for young adult services. Ensure equitable funding and staffing levels relative to those allotted for children's and adult services.

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~~6. Build and support spaces dedicated to the goals of teen services. Such spaces may include a library's teen room or area; learning labs or makerspaces accessible to teens; online sites or forums for teen library users; and library outposts in the community. Develop physical facilities dedicated to the achievement of young adult service goals.~~

~~7-5.~~ Develop written policies that mandate the rights of young adults to equitable library service.

~~8-6.~~ Design, implement, and evaluate an ongoing program of professional development for all staff, to encourage an understanding of young adult needs and inspire continual excellence in service to young adults.

~~9-7.~~ Identify and defend resources (staff, materials, facilities, funding) that will improve library service ~~to for and with~~ young adults.

~~10-8.~~ Document young adult programs and activities so as to contribute to institutional and professional memory.

~~11. Develop and manage services that utilize the skills, talents, and resources of young adults in the school or community.~~

9. Develop a library environment that is culturally responsive to community needs, current with technological advances, and information-rich across a variety of formats.

10. Implement mentoring methods to attract, develop and train staff who work in young adult materials and readers' advisory, reference services, and programming.

## Area V: Knowledge of Materials

*The librarian will be able to:*

1. Meet the informational and recreational needs of young adults through the development of an appropriate collection for all types of readers and non-readers.

2. ~~Develop~~ Create and adhere to a collection development policy that supports and reflects the diverse needs and interests of young adults, ~~and is~~ Such a policy should be consistent with and included in the parent institution's mission and policies.

3. Demonstrate a knowledge and appreciation of literature for and by young adults in traditional and emerging formats.

~~4. Develop a collection of materials from a broad range of selection sources, and for a variety of reading skill levels, that encompasses all appropriate formats, including, but not limited to, media that reflect varied and emerging technologies, and materials in languages other than English.~~

4. Serve as a knowledgeable resource to schools, ~~in the community as well as~~ parents, ~~and caregivers, and other interested parties~~ on regarding materials for young adults.

5. Use a broad range of authoritative selection resources to build and maintain a collection that proffers choices for a variety of reading levels and interests, in appropriate and accessible formats and media.

6. Ensure the collection reflects the diversity and demographics of the community's population through materials in a variety of languages and formats.

~~5-7.~~ Use a broad range of digital resources to complement traditional materials.

## Area VI - Access to Information

*The librarian will be able to:*

1. Organize physical and virtual collections to maximize easy, equitable, and independent access to information by young adults.
2. Utilize current merchandising and promotional techniques to attract and invite young adults to use the collection.
3. Provide access to specialized information (i.e., community resources for local youth, ~~work by local youth, etc.~~).
4. Formally and informally instruct young adults in basic research skills, including how to find, evaluate, and use information effectively.
5. Be an active partner in the development and implementation of technology and electronic resources to ensure young adults' access to knowledge and information.
- ~~5.~~ Maintain awareness-a working knowledge of ongoing technological advances, trends, and new technologies that connect young adults to information both in the library environment and beyond the library collection online, and how they can improve access to information for young adults.
6. Implement flexible strategies for services that allow teens to access information and library services when needed, whether present in the physical library or accessing library materials remotely.
7. Demonstrate fluency in and willingness to experiment with technologies used to access library materials, including websites, apps, and databases from a variety of platforms and devices.
8. Use the model of connected learning to ensure that teens have both formal and informal opportunities to learn to use technology in meaningful, authentic ways.

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## Area VII. Services

*The librarian will be able to:*

1. Design, implement and evaluate programs and services within the framework of the library's strategic plan and based on the developmental needs of young adults and the public assets libraries represent, with young adult involvement whenever possible.
2. Identify and plan services with young adults in non-traditional settings, such as hospitals, home-school settings, alternative education, foster care programs, and detention facilities.

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3. Provide a variety of informational and recreational services to meet the diverse needs and interests of young adults and to direct their own personal growth and development.
4. Continually identify trends and pop-culture interests of young people to inform, and direct their recreational collection and programming needs.
5. Instruct young adults in basic information gathering, research skills and information literacy skills - including those necessary to evaluate and use electronic-digital information sources - to develop life-long learning habits.
6. Actively involve young adults in planning and implementing services and programs for their age group through advisory boards, task forces, and by less formal means such as individual discussion, surveys, focus groups, e.g. (i.e., surveys, one-on-one discussion, focus groups, etc.)
7. Create an environment that embraces the flexible and changing nature of young adults' entertainment, technological and informational needs.
8. Ensure that programs are strongly connected to building skills that are of use in academic, career/professional, or personal contexts.
9. Offer practical and concrete opportunities for teens to learn new things, become civically engaged, and develop themselves personally.
10. Network and consult with content experts to connect them directly with teens in physical and virtual library environments.
- ~~7-11.~~ Serve as a co-learner with teens, working alongside them to foster meaningful and resonant connected learning experiences.