

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Boston  
January 8 – 12, 2016**

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

**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 ran through June 30, 2015. They submitted a document for the Board’s consideration at the Annual Conference; however, the consensus of the Board was that the document needed further refinements. At the meeting, Lorraine Squires, the taskforce chair, expressed a willingness to continue work on the document, despite the fact that the taskforce’s term was up. Lorraine has provided a new draft of the document for the Board’s consideration.

**Action Required:** Discussion

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### **Feedback from Board Meeting in June 2015**

- The Board had a discussion about who the document should focus on: is it the 33% of libraries that have teen services librarians? The Board wondered if trying to be more inclusive, would just require a word change from librarians to library staff, or would the content need to be changed? There seemed to be a consensus that the Board wanted the document to be universal/holistic, and to serve as a vehicle for anyone with the responsibility for serving teens in a library setting.
- The Board felt there was an unevenness in the different elements: some are very specific and some are more upper level, strategic. The Board recommended that the taskforce adopt the format of the “Core Professional Values for the Teen Services Profession” document where the weedy things are given as examples of the broader ideas
- Overall, there was a feeling that the document didn’t necessarily go far enough in terms of integrating Futures Report principles. The taskforce should feel free to scrap parts of it that are outdated and/or not be married to the 7 existing competency areas
- Lorraine Squires expressed a willingness to continue work on the document, despite the fact that the taskforce’s term is up

### **Feedback the Taskforce is currently seeking from the Board**

- Is the level of specificity in this latest draft adequate, or should we be more general or more specific? Should each section be directed to “library staff working for and with teens” rather than “librarians?”
- What is missing? What is redundant?
- We would also like approval to:

- Reach out to the YALSA bloggers who have discussed the Futures Report on the YALSAblog for comment on the draft Competencies
- Look at the proposed competencies through the lens of the recently published guidelines, “Core Professional Values for the Teen Services Profession” to ensure the two documents are aligned
- Solicit feedback from YALSA members and the library community, possibly through a Twitter chat

## **DRAFT: Updated Competencies for Librarians Serving Youth**

### **1. Professional Development and Leadership**

- a. Develop and demonstrate a commitment to professionalism and ethical behavior.
- b. Plan for personal and professional growth and career development.
  - i. Be open and flexible to learn new technologies for programming and for new ways to access information.
- c. Model professional conduct with all youth served and commit to ensuring such conduct from all staff, community members, and volunteers working with teens.
- d. Ability to stay connected to community and trends to better prepare teens for workforce.
- e. Design, implement, and evaluate an ongoing program of professional development for all staff, to encourage and inspire continual excellence in service to young adults. (2010 Competencies)

### **2. Knowledge of Population**

- a. Can design and conduct a community analysis and needs assessment (from 2010 Competencies).
  - i. Able to use a variety of demographic data tools to understand, communicate, and encourage respect and consideration for the full range of teen groups in the community through socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and other relevant filters.
- b. Has strategies to reach out to and communicate with specific groups in the library’s community,
- c. Understands the strengths, aspirations, interests, needs, or issues within specific groups of teens, and takes special care to articulate the needs of underserved groups.
- d. Understands and can articulate the most pressing problems and challenges of the teens in the community,
- e. Is conversant with the developmental needs of teens, including teens with special needs. *(from 2010 competencies)*
- f. Keeps up-to-date with popular culture and technological advances that interest young adults. *(from 2010 competencies)*

### **3. Reference, Readers’ Advisory, and Collection Development**

*(from 2010 competencies Knowledge of Materials + Access to Information)*

- a. Meet the informational and recreational needs of young adults through the development of an appropriate collection for the wide range of teens in the community
- b. Develop a collection development policy that supports and reflect the needs and interests of young adults and is consistent with the parent institution's mission and policies. (Should this also include a nod to ALA's Freedom to Read/View Policies?)
- c. Demonstrate a knowledge and appreciation of literature for and by young adults in traditional and emerging formats.
- d. 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.
- e. Serve as a knowledgeable resource to schools in the community as well as parents and caregivers on materials for young adults.
- f. Organize physical and virtual collections to maximize easy, equitable, and independent access to information by teens.
- g. Utilize current merchandising and promotional techniques to attract and invite young adults to use the collection.
- h. Formally and informally instruct young adults in basic research skills, including how to find, evaluate, and use information effectively.
- i. Be an active partner in the development and implementation of technology and electronic resources to ensure young adults' access to knowledge and information.

#### 4. **Connected Learning**

- a. Understands Connected Learning and how to implement connected learning opportunities.
- b. Understands how the digital divide and knowledge gap affect teens' ability to use 21st century tools to become college- and career-ready.
- c. Able to translate teens' personal and academic interests into opportunities for self-directed, learner-centered inquiry.
- d. Makes connections with other staff, community members, and experts from all over to create a network of learners who can mentor and inspire teens.
- e. With teen input, creates programs that encourage multiple, critical, and digital literacies.
- f. Connects with teens as individuals to encourage connected learning and exploration.
- g. Use the library's virtual and place-based collections and displays to promote teen work and projects.
- h. Mentors teens to encourage them to connect with their community, embrace their skills, and become leaders.
- i. Understands what constitutes a safe and productive space for the community's teens and strives to create and maintain such spaces in the library, in the community, and

online.

## 5. Advocacy

- a. Be a collaborator and work with organizations and your community to form a community support system for teen needs;
- b. Understand and be able to communicate to others the developmental needs of teenagers,
- c. Is equipped to support youth development (emotional, social, psychological),
- d. Involves teens in meaningful library decision-making and planning,
- e. Make connections with other organizations that serve youth or have services/staff that would be appropriate for connected learning opportunities
- f. Build support,
- g. Document successes,
- h. Communicate with shareholders.

## 6. Planning and Evaluation

- a. Develop a strategic plan for library service with teen based on their unique needs.
- b. Regularly uses outcome-based evaluation of teen library programs and services
- c. Applies research findings towards the development and improvement of young adult library services.
- d. Develop, justify, administer, and evaluate a budget for young adult services.
- e. Works with administration and teens to develop written policies that mandate the rights of young adults to equitable library service.
- f. Is familiar with the theories and practices of Change Management and Project Management and can use them when appropriate.

# YALSA's Competencies for Librarians Serving Youth: Young Adults Deserve the Best (updated 2010)

## Area I. Leadership and Professionalism

*The librarian will be able to:*

1. Develop and demonstrate leadership skills in identifying the unique needs of young adults and advocating for service excellence, including equitable funding and staffing levels relative to those provided for adults and children.
2. Develop and demonstrate a commitment to professionalism and ethical behavior.
3. Plan for personal and professional growth and career development.

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.

### **Area II. Knowledge of Client Group.**

*The librarian will be able to:*

1. Become familiar with the developmental needs of young adults in order to provide the most appropriate resources and services.
2. Keep up-to-date with popular culture and technological advances that interest young adults.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of, and a respect for, diverse cultural, religious, and ethnic values.
4. Identify and meet the needs of patrons with special needs.

### **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. 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, achieve success, and in turn, create a stronger community.

4. 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.
5. Demonstrate the capacity to articulate relationships between young adult services and the parent institution's core goals and mission.
6. 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 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.
8. 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.

#### **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.
2. Design and conduct a community analysis and needs assessment.
3. Apply research findings towards the development and improvement of young adult library services.
4. Design activities to involve young adults in planning and decision-making.
5. Develop, justify, administer, and evaluate a budget for young adult services.
6. Develop physical facilities dedicated to the achievement of young adult service goals.
7. Develop written policies that mandate the rights of young adults to equitable library service.
8. Design, implement, and evaluate an ongoing program of professional development for all staff, to encourage and inspire continual excellence in service to young adults.
9. Identify and defend resources (staff, materials, facilities, funding) that will improve library service to young adults.
10. 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.

### **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 a collection development policy that supports and reflect the needs and interests of young adults and is consistent with 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.
5. Serve as a knowledgeable resource to schools in the community as well as parents and caregivers on materials for young adults.

### **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, 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.
6. Maintain awareness of ongoing technological advances and how they can improve access to information for young adults.

**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.
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 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 (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.

**Additional Resources:**

- June 2015 draft of the Competencies that was submitted to the Board, [www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/CompetenciesDraft\\_AN15.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/CompetenciesDraft_AN15.pdf)
- “Core Professional Values for the Teen Services Profession,” [www.ala.org/yalsa/core-professional-values-teen-services-profession](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/core-professional-values-teen-services-profession)
- “Future of Library Services for and with Teens: a Call to Action,” [www.ala.org/yaforum/project-report](http://www.ala.org/yaforum/project-report)