

ALA F&A/BARC - ALA FY20 Plan By Department

Date 3/29/2019

DEPARTMENT: Conferences

FY20 Strategic and Operational Priorities

What are your strategic and operational priorities in light of the prior three years' (FY17-FY19) operational and financial results?

For the past 2 years, there has been much discussion and research exploring the future direction of the ALA Midwinter Meeting. The finding revealed a steady decline in financial performance due to inconsistent registration trends (attendee and exhibits), increased expenses from the meeting space requirements, ALA overhead recovery and overall production costs. Based on the recommendation of the ALA Conference Committee, the last Midwinter Meeting will take place in January 2020. A new event will launch in January 2021.

The jury selection process for the annual conference is in its third year of implementation. Each year improvements on the process have been incorporated based on feedback. This will continue in FY20.

FY20 Key Initiatives and Desired Outcomes

What are the top initiatives that your department plans to undertake in light of those priorities? What outcomes constitute success?

There are 2 initiatives that Conference Services will focus on in the next fiscal year. The first initiative is the design and launch of a new event that will be conservative in expectations for the first year with the potential for growth and reach to new sectors of ALA constituencies. The second initiative is securing an Education Specialist on staff, which had been identified as a resource gap in the unit. This position will be instrumental in building the education program for the new event as well as the continuous assessment of the the juring process for the annual conference.

Key Assumptions/Risks/Opportunities

What assumptions are inherent in your plan? What risks are you watching in light of those assumptions? What additional opportunities do you anticipate may appear that may impact your plan?

The new event has the potential to attract a national audience, yet initially will be positioned as smaller (registrants and facility) than the present Midwinter Meeting. The smaller footprint will reduce space rental costs and control meeting/session-related expenses such as audio-visual. A significant impact to the success of the new event relies on the motivation of staff and member leadership to create more meaningful opportunities for committee work to take place separate and apart from the traditional dependence on a Midwinter Meeting, while still accommodating high-level governance activity. This will help limit the production expense by requiring less space to be contracted for meetings. The opportunity for ALA to host a smaller event will bring new cities and regions as potential locations, in areas that have been underserved by ALA's larger face-to-face offerings.