

**TO:** ALA Executive Board

**RE:** ALA Membership Report

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

Information report

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**

Melissa Walling, MBA, CAE, Director, Member Relations & Services

**CONTACT PERSON:**

Melissa Walling, mwalling@ala.org, ext. 2159

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**

N/A

**DATE:** Tuesday, January 4, 2022

**BACKGROUND:**

Report on membership activities and membership revenue.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Report on membership activities and membership revenue.

## August 2021 Official Membership Statistics (Official FY21 Statistics)

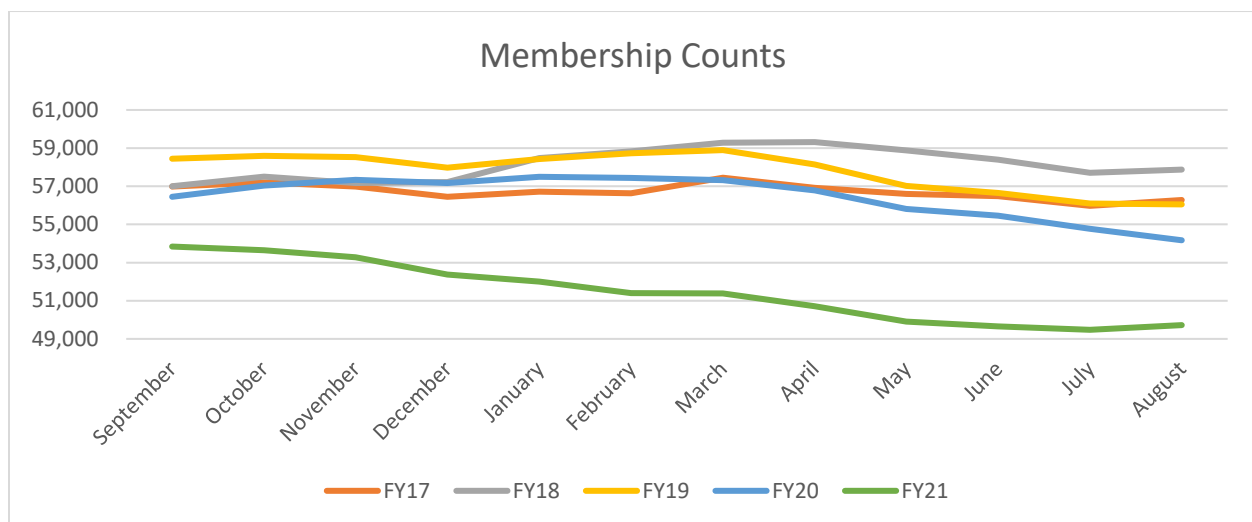
<b>Count of Personal (Individual) Members:</b>	44,567
<b>Count of Organizational Members:</b>	5,028
<b>Count of Corporate Members:</b>	132
<b>Total:</b>	49,727

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ALA membership counts ended the fiscal year at 49,727. This was a projected decline due to the challenges of the pandemic and we ended the year with an 8% decline from FY20 and an 11% decline from FY19. This was a slight uptick from July which would follow our usual seasonal membership fluctuations.

This decline was lower than budgeted, and we anticipate these numbers to rebound in FY22 with a focused membership strategy, resuming in person events such as PLA and Annual Conferences, and an overall rebound of the economy. With 2/3 of ALA members paying dues from their own pocket, ALA dues revenue is sensitive to economic conditions.

Division Membership counts ended the year at 40,400 and Round Table Membership counts at 17,723. With the dissolution of Four divisions at the start of FY21, it is difficult to benchmark Division membership year over year; however, Round Table Membership held steady when compared to FY20. This trend supports the conclusion that increasing engagement within Divisions and Round Tables is key to supporting membership retention.



The greatest losses in Personal Members have been with Regular and Library Support Staff Memberships. In fact, when compared to our peak membership numbers in 2008, we have lost 14,000 Regular Members which is the largest contributor to the decline. These numbers correlate with previous findings that indicated that individual membership is often tied to and subsidized by employers. To that end, to the degree that the membership decline reflects the number of furloughs and layoffs that the LIS community has absorbed during the protracted pandemic, we will need to perform a longer term (at least five year) analysis and remediation plan for membership stabilization and growth that may take us past the current 2026 end date of the pivot strategy.

The short-term trend, however, has informed the following strategies to kick off in FY22.

- Coordinating membership reinstatement campaigns highlighting new membership benefits including the ALA/APA Salary Survey and selected e-learning courses as our reinstatement numbers are down 42% from FY21.
- Operationalizing new member recruitment of non-member CE registrants, advocates, and chapter/affiliate members. While acquisition of new members remained steady, especially Students, we have more opportunities to connect with non-members across the association.

- Converting graduating Students to Regular Members will be a focus area leaning into increased communications and collection of data to connect Students with Divisions and Round Tables of interest.
- Monitoring the new member onboarding campaign launched in August, FY21 and launching virtual new member orientations throughout the year and at LibLearnX.

It will also be important to focus on implementing a simplified membership model and finding efficiencies in our online join and renewal processes. We look forward to collaborating with staff across the organization as well as the ALA Membership Committee and the ALA Member Promotions Task Force to mobilize and grow membership.

## FY21 ALA Membership Dues

### ALA Membership Dues

Total Revenues Budgeted/Actual/Remaining:	\$ 3,717,768	\$ 4,647,656	\$ 929,888
Total Expenses Budgeted/Actual/Remaining:	\$ (110,000)	\$ (101,908)	\$ 8,092
Contribution Margin:	\$ 3,607,768	\$ 4,545,748	\$ 937,980

The membership dues ended the year ahead of budget, but behind FY20 by approximately 10%. For FY21, we projected a dues revenue decrease of approximately 30% which did not manifest. We will not end FY21 as low as expected due to both deferred revenue that we had collected before the pandemic, as well as higher than expected membership renewal rates.

In FY21, our membership renewals did not follow the usual monthly pattern which meant many renewing members did not receive the expected renewal communications from us. For FY22, we are committed to executing the full renewal cycle for all members. We are also doing targeted membership recruitment to lapsed members that will highlight some of the new membership benefits.

## FY22 Key Membership Activities and Focus Areas

FY21 remains all about membership growth, here are a few of our key priorities:

- **Membership Model** – The ALA Membership Committee and ALA Executive Board are recommending a simplified membership model to ALA Council CD#44 for implementation for FY24.
- **Membership Growth and Recruitment** – Membership renewals have not been following a normal pattern during the pandemic and our members have sometimes been working outside of the library. We have activated both a lapsed member and a win back campaign to reclaim members who did not renew their membership. This will be primarily a digital campaign, but we hope to include a print tactic as well. The first tactics target those whose membership lapsed in 2020 and early 2021 and, separately, those who dropped their membership between 2017 and 2019. This is a 4-month campaign and is nearing completion. To date the campaign has reclaimed 815 members for a revenue total of approximately \$90,000.  
In addition, we are activating two ALA Chapter pilot programs to learn about potential initiatives coordinated with chapters (the joint student membership program is very successful). The District of Columbia Library Association will be one of the pilots.
- **Membership Onboarding:** MRS will activate the virtual orientation for new members including a special orientation in conjunction with LibLearnX. This will be an opportunity to showcase the value of membership to new members. <https://www.ala.org/membership/new-members-social-orientation-sessions>
- **LibLearnX:** As the first members-only conference, MRS is working closely with Conference Services and our Communications & Marketing Office to embed member acknowledgements and recognition throughout the event. We are also working with the Gaming Round Table to activate a series of escape rooms highlighting member value to accompany our membership booth as well as an ALA Channel of videos showcasing content generated by ALA Divisions and Offices.

- **Student Community on Connect:** A Student Members only community will be activated the first week of January 2022 to create an opportunity for Students to engage, network and connect with their peers. Conversation for the first month will be guided by volunteers from our Student Chapters.