

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Chapter Relations and International Relations Report

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:

Informational

ACTION REQUESTED BY:

N/A

CONTACT PERSON:

Michael Dowling, Director
Chapter Relations Office and International Relations Office
mdowling@ala.org

DRAFT OF MOTION:

N/A

DATE: January 4, 2022

BACKGROUND:

An update of ALA's Chapter Relations and International Relation activities for the ALA Executive Board Winter Meeting 2022.

ATTACHMENTS:

N/A

**Chapter Relations and International Relations Report
Submitted by Michael Dowling-Director, CRO/IRO**

International Relations

8th Sharjah International Library Conference

ALA and its partners the Sharjah Book Authority and the Combined Book Exhibit were able to hold the hybrid (in-person and virtual) *8th Sharjah International Conference* Nov 9-11, in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Though on-site participation was lower than normal due to the pandemic, 223 librarians from 17 countries attended. They were able to hear presentations from: Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress; Patty Wong, ALA President; Julius C. Jefferson Jr., Immediate ALA Past-President; and Tracie Hall, ALA Executive Director. Live streaming of the keynotes reached another 350 librarians around the world.

National Libraries Summit

In addition to the Sharjah Conference, ALA and the Sharjah Book Authority created the *National Libraries Summit* that was held Nov 8-9. Leaders from 19 national libraries participated. Six each from Africa, Europe and the MENA Region, and Dr. Hayden from the Library of Congress. The four topics of the Summit were: Visibility; Engagement; Impact; and Collaboration. The Summit has allowed ALA to increase its contacts with national libraries. Plan is to host the *National Libraries Summit* again this fall.

ALA-FIL Free Pass to Guadalajara Book Fair

IRO organized the 21st ALA-FIL Free Pass Program to the Guadalajara Book Fair at end of November after postponing in 2020. Though the number of ALA members participating was much lower than in pre-pandemic years, 40 instead of the usual 150, it was a good turnout and a start of a return. Those attending found a safe environment and reported being able to find new books and other resources for their libraries. To assist the members a pre-travel webinar and an on-site orientation were held. ALA Immediate Past-President Julius C. Jefferson Jr. and Executive Board Member Eboni Henry represented ALA.

U.S. Russia Dialog

The Russian-US Library Dialogue, a collaboration between ALA and the Russian Library Association (RLA) hosted online sessions on December 16th and 17th to explore how libraries in both countries can advance a green agenda as part of the UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) and what opportunities there are for joint projects between libraries in the U.S. and Russia. ALA President Patty Wong discussed how ALA is promoting sustainability work within libraries? Rebekkah Smith Aldrich and Casey Conlin of the Mid-Hudson Library System (NY)

outlined opportunities and challenges the green agenda presents to libraries in the U.S. and Russia. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library (KS) and David Siders, Cincinnati, and Hamilton County Public Library (OH) provided examples of programming and planning that their libraries have done. Past presidents Julius C. Jefferson and Loida Garcia Febo continued their participation in this initiative.

Webinars on EDI, Broadband, International Connections

IRRT and IRO teamed up this fall on two critical topics. *Truth and Reconciliation: Decolonizing Approaches Within Social Memory Institutions* attracted nearly 500 participants from around the globe. In October, *Gigabit Libraries and Beyond: Improving Broadband Access Worldwide* introduced registrants to the free toolkit *The Toward Gigabit Libraries Toolkit and Broadband Improvement Plan*.

Showing the continued strong interest in expanding beyond their borders, 200 signed on for *Virtual International Connections: The Global Librarian Exchange Program* which was held in November.

Chapter Relations

Staffing Update

Mariel Colbert, Program Officer, left ALA on January 4th after 3 years in the position. I want to thank Mariel for her effort over last three years in CRO, and her year and a half before that coordinating ACRL Chapters. She will be going to work at the University of Chicago. She was instrumental in getting the final few holdout states to become part of the Student Membership Program, handled the administration of the ALA Library Covid Relief Fund, and was part of the training team on EDI through ODLOS to reach chapters, consortia, and libraries.

ALA Covid Library Relief Fund

CRO continued to assist the 34 Covid Library Relief Fund grantees as they worked to complete their activities. A few of the grant libraries requested adjustments as some of their efforts faced challenges or were able to leverage the grant to receive additional support for resources elsewhere. Grantees provided ALA their 2nd Interim Reports on November 15th. Grantees will provide Final Reports on January 31, 2022.

Communities for Immunity and ALA

CRO and PPO continued representing ALA on this CDC IMLS funded initiative which has now distributed \$1.6 million to libraries, museums, and science centers. Participated in Round Two reviews which led 50 grants, 14 to libraries or library systems being [announced](#) on December 9th.

Chapter Management Exchange

In October, hosted Chapter Management Exchange webinar in October on “EDI in Chapters” Three Chapters shared with their peers how they have set up EDI committees and other groups and what activities they have been doing. Fifteen Chapters attended the live session.

Financial Resources Webinar with CFPB and Veterans Administration

Partnered with Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Veterans Administration to host a webinar in November (*Veterans and Military Families Month*) for librarians on free resources from these two agencies that libraries can refer vets and military families to. The session attracted sixty-five attendees.

EDI Trainings

CRO assisted ODLOS EDI training sessions with chapters, consortia and libraries in California, Illinois, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania.

Hurricane Ida Disaster Relief Donations

CRO connected with libraries hard hit by Hurricane Ida. Thanks to support from members and other library supporters, the ALA Disaster Relief Fund sent \$5,000 each to the Lafourche Parish Library (LA), the St. Charles Parish Library (LA) and the Caldwell Public Library (NJ) ahead of the holidays. St. Charles Parish is using the donation to help replace books and furnishings that were lost. ALA’s donation to Lafourche Parish assists the library’s migration of its back-up systems to the Cloud. And Caldwell will be able to purchase computers and furnishings for their temporary location.