

**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:** Monday, October 12<sup>th</sup>

**BACKGROUND:**

Report on membership activities and membership revenue.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

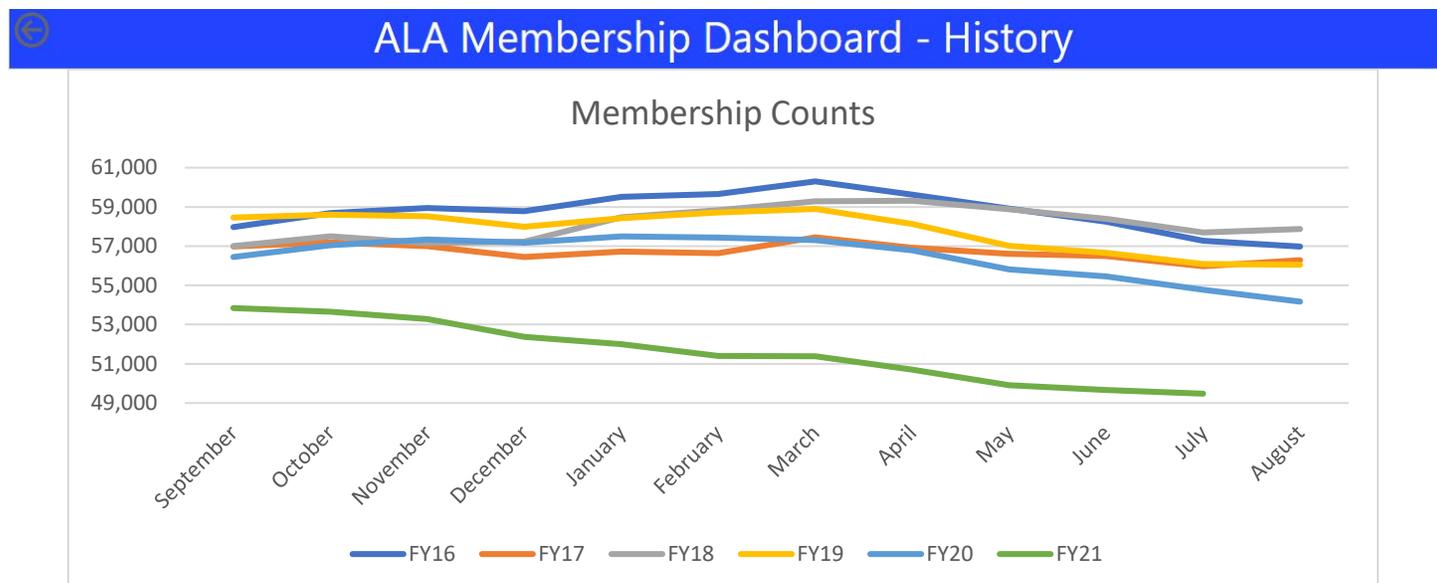
Report on membership activities and membership revenue.

# July 2021 Official Membership Statistics

Count of Personal (Individual) Members:	44,334
Count of Organizational Members:	5,016
Count of Corporate Members:	126
<b>Total:</b>	<b>49,476</b>

ALA's membership decreased 0.3% to 49,476. This remains a 10% decline from 2020 and an 12% decline when compared to the same time in 2019. This time of year, our membership counts typically decline so we are likely going to face additional decline until early Fall.

The dashboard below shows the distribution of our members by type, as well as the number of members who are still within their grace period and have not renewed. It is common for us to have many members who have not paid by the time of their expiration as we actively bill unpaid members for 90-days post expiration. The ALA Count below is higher than 49,476 because of timing.



## Member Engagement in Division and Round Tables:

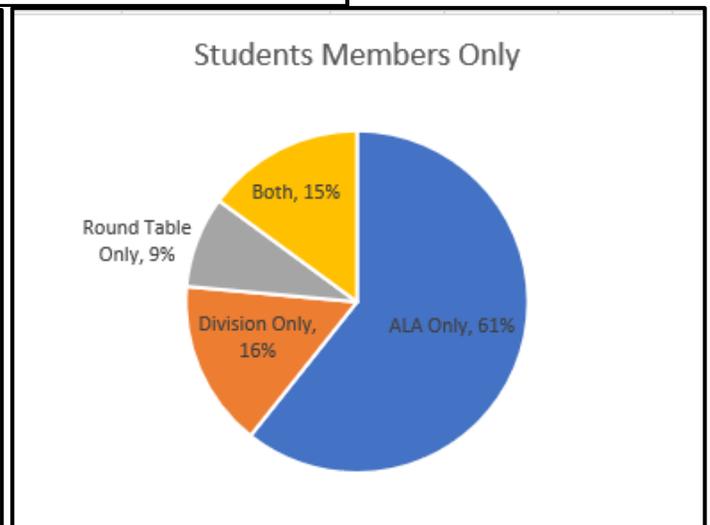
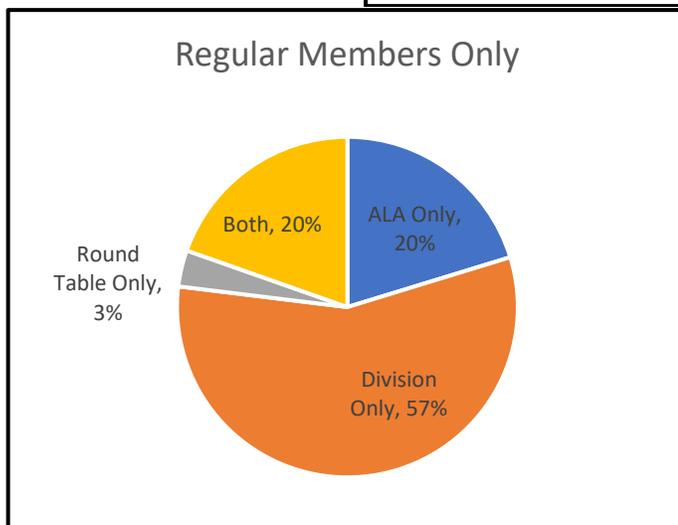
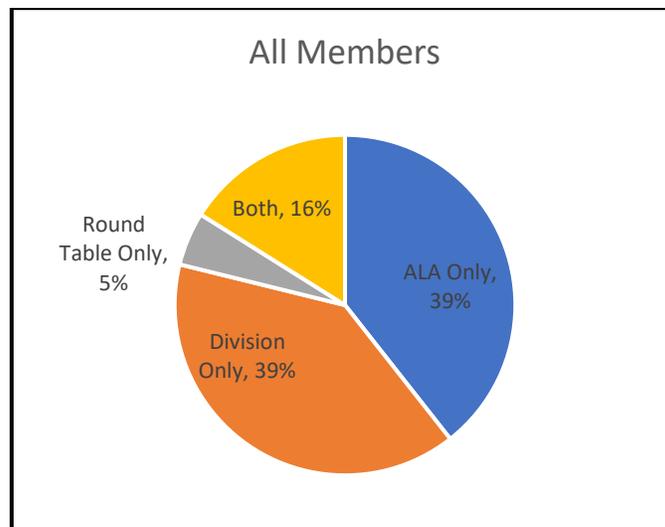
Division memberships currently total 40,140 which is a slight decrease from last month and in alignment with the ALA membership trend. With some divisions resuming in-person conferences, and with Fall virtual programming we expect these numbers to rebound.

Round table memberships currently total 17,683 which is a slight decrease from last month and in alignment with the ALA membership trend.

In looking at the overall ALA participation, you can see below that:

- 39% of members are only members of ALA
- 40% are part of a division only
- 5% are part of a round table only
- 16% are part of both a division and round table

Since FY19 when we last reviewed these numbers, we have had an increase of 3% of members without a division or round table. This is an opportunity for us to highlight division and round table engagement as we know that members who have found their community within ALA are more likely to renew. Promotion of divisions and round table membership is already integrated into the new member onboarding campaign. The large number of student members in ALA only is an area of focus as well. This is partially because the joint student membership process is hosted outside of our main dues e-commerce platform and joint student members cannot join a division or round table when they join ALA. This is on the list of IT improvements.



## FY21 ALA Membership Dues

### ALA Membership Dues (Q3 Close)

Total Revenues Budgeted/Actual/Remaining:	\$ 3,717,768	\$ 3,499,496	\$ (218,272)
Total Expenses Budgeted/Actual/Remaining:	\$ (110,000)	\$ (79,318)	\$ (30,682)
Contribution Margin:	\$ 3,607,768	\$ 3,420,178	\$ (187,590)

Based on Q3 close, and the first preliminary close for FY21, membership dues will end 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

We focused this quarter on analyzing key membership data and trends to determine how to prioritize efforts. We started by analyzing data from 2020/2021 when compared to 2008/2009 to look for trends during a downturn. 2008 is an important benchmark – this was not only ALA’s highest membership count and pre-recession but also the number of members that we aspire to for pivot plan growth. We found that:

- Regular Member renewals were nearly 10,000 members lower on average than 2008. This trend was affirmed by the Avenue M research. Our number one priority for the upcoming year is recruitment and retention of library workers.
- New member acquisition is down about 20%. Operationalizing new member recruitment of non-member CE registrants, advocates and chapter/affiliate members will be a priority.

In reviewing data from recent years only, our reinstatement numbers are down significantly. That is likely a result of virtual conferences with lower participation than in person conferences. We will prioritize a win back and a reinstatement campaign to lapsed members over the last 3 years.

Based on this, the first quarter of FY22 is all about membership growth. Here are a few of our key priorities:

- **Membership Model** – The ALA Membership Committee is recommending a simplified membership model to the ALA Executive Board, EBD #10.1
- **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 are activating 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 have been completed to those whose membership lapsed in 2020 and early 2021 and this campaign will continue for 3-4 months with various messages. 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 Arizona Library Association will be one of the pilots.
- **Conferences** – MRS will coordinate ALA’s presence at AASL, and we have worked to integrate into the AASL membership experience. This will be a significant step forward in presenting a unified ALA brand and our first in-person conference in some time. We will also be working closely to support messages to non-members to join ALA to attend LibLearnX, a member only event. A virtual Annual Conference created an opportunity for our unit to host virtual member meet ups. The Committee on Membership hosted an all member meet up and the Student Chapters hosted a student member meet up. The virtual ALA Lounge had 1622 views and our Showcase items had 336 views and 42 clicks. We featured 20 resources, campaigns, and tools in our Showcase from across

the association – most viewed: Baby Yoda Library Cards (65), Conference At Home (36), JobLIST (25) / Jason Reynolds, BBW 2021 Chair (25). The [Conference At Home](#) was a new engagement initiative and anecdotally it was well received. This featured President Jefferson’s playlist, downloadable conference ribbons and a social media pet parade.

- Membership Onboarding** - an exciting project we concluded last quarter is the membership onboarding project. This is project we are working on in conjunction with CMO and was launched in August 2021. As noted in the annual Marketing General Membership Marketing Benchmarking Report, “78% of associations that have seen a renewal rate increase in the past year have also had a tactical plan to increase engagement.” Without a successful onboarding strategy for new members, it is difficult to secure a members’ affinity for the organization and ensure a membership renewal. This work is being done through an investment by OverDrive. The campaign is a year-long series of 13 messages each highlighting a key benefit of ALA membership. The goal is to introduce ALA in digestible amounts and greater detail to promote participation and engagement. The campaign will be reviewed monthly to assess member response and revise communication if appropriate. In addition to the emails, we created a **New Member Center**: <http://www.ala.org/membership/new-member-center>

During the onboarding campaign, we ask new members to complete a survey indicating why they chose to become an ALA Member with the goal of eventually directing them to personalized content. The top three reasons are to advance their career, attend conferences and CE events and network

## Answers to Questions Onboarding\_New Member Survey

As of: 10/8/2021 2:16:49 PM

### Page: New Member Survey

**Question: From my ALA membership, I want to...**

Number Who Answered: 135

[View Details](#)

Advance or change my own career	81	60 %
Attend conferences and other events (webinars, workshops)	84	62 %
Be mentored by more experienced colleagues	55	41 %
Contribute to work related to equity, diversity, and inclusion	58	43 %
Contribute to work related to freedom of speech, privacy, and censorship	29	21 %
Find resources and tools to use in my library	70	52 %
Learn from continuing education and certification opportunities	62	46 %
Network and build relationships with others in the field	73	54 %
Participate in advocacy efforts to influence legislation and policy	26	19 %
Promote libraries to the public by supporting public awareness efforts	50	37 %