

American Library Association

Strategic Plan

2011-2015

June 18, 2010

Core ideology describes an association's consistent identity that transcends all changes related to its relevant environment. It consists of two elements - **core purpose** – the association's reason for being – and **core values** – essential and enduring principles that guide an association in creating its culture and making decisions.

Founding Purpose:

The object of the American Library Association shall be to promote library service and librarianship. (ALA Constitution, Article II)

Mission:

The mission of the American Library Association is to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all. (ALA Policy 1.2)

Core Organizational Values

The Association is committed to:

- Extending and expanding library services in America and around the world
- All types of libraries - academic, public, school and special
- All librarians, library staff, trustees and other individuals and groups working to improve library services
- Member service
- An open, inclusive, and collaborative environment
- Ethics, professionalism and integrity
- Excellence and innovation
- Intellectual freedom
- Social responsibility and the public good

Key Action Areas

*ALA is committed to eight **Key Action Areas** as guiding principles for investment of energies and resources:*

Advocacy for Libraries and the Profession

The association actively works to increase public awareness of the crucial value of libraries and librarians, to promote state and national legislation beneficial to libraries and library users, and to supply the resources, training and support

networks needed by local advocates seeking to increase support for libraries of all types.

Diversity

Diversity is a fundamental value of the association and its members, and is reflected in its commitment to recruiting people of color and people with disabilities to the profession and to the promotion and development of library collections and services for all people.

Education and Lifelong Learning

The association provides opportunities for the professional development and education of all library staff members and trustees; it promotes continuous, lifelong learning for all people through library and information services of every type.

Equitable Access to Information and Library Services

The Association advocates funding and policies that support libraries as great democratic institutions, serving people of every age, income level, location, ethnicity, or physical ability, and providing the full range of information resources needed to live, learn, govern, and work.

Intellectual Freedom

Intellectual freedom is a basic right in a democratic society and a core value of the library profession. The American Library Association actively defends the right of library users to read, seek information, and speak freely as guaranteed by the First Amendment.

Literacy

The ALA assists and promotes libraries in helping children and adults develop the skills they need—the ability to read and use computers—understanding that the ability to seek and effectively utilize information resources is essential in a global information society.

Organizational Excellence

The association is inclusive, effective and responsive to the needs of ALA members.

Transforming Libraries

ALA provides leadership in the transformation of libraries and library services in a dynamic and increasingly global digital information environment.

*The **Goals and Objectives** represent strategic areas of focus for the next three to five years. The goals articulate the outcomes ALA would like to achieve and answer the question, “What will constitute future success?” The achievement of each goal will move the organization toward realization of its envisioned future. The goals are not necessarily identified in priority order.*

Objectives provide direction on how ALA will accomplish its articulated goals. Objectives are considered in the 3-5 year planning horizon.

Goals and Objectives

Goal Area: Advocacy, Funding and Public Policy

Goal Statement: ALA equips and leads advocates for libraries, library issues and the library profession, and plays a key role in formulating legislation, policies and standards that affect library and information services.

Objective (1): Increase public awareness of the value and impact of all types of libraries and the important role of librarians and other library staff.

Objective (2): Increase research and evaluation documenting the value and impact of all libraries.

Objective (3): Increase resources and training for advocates seeking to secure increased funding and support for all libraries.

Objective (4): Lead advocacy for crucial library issues such as literacy, intellectual freedom, privacy, fair use, preservation of our cultural heritage, information literacy, equity of access, and permanent no fee public access to government information.

Objective (5): Increase ALA’s role in the formulation of library-related local, state, national, and international legislation, policies and standards.

Objective (6): Increase collaboration and alliances with organizations at all levels to advance legislation and public policy issues affecting libraries, librarians and information services.

Objective (7) Use new technologies to build greater public understanding and support for libraries of all types.

Goal Area: Building the Profession

Goal Statement: ALA promotes excellence and diversity in the library field.

Objective (1): Ensure that library education and training reflect the core values of the profession and the needs of the communities served by libraries of all types.

Objective (2): Increase the availability of and access to continuing education, career development and certification opportunities for librarians, library staff, trustees and library advocates

Objective (3): Provide increased leadership and career development opportunities for Library and Information Science students

Objective (4): Increase the diversity of the library workforce to reflect an increasingly diverse national and global community.

Objective (5): Increase ALA activities to assist libraries in recruiting, developing and retaining a high-quality, diverse library workforce.

Goal Area: Transforming Libraries

Goal Statement: ALA provides leadership in the transformation of libraries and library services in a dynamic and increasingly global digital information environment.

Objective (1): Increase opportunities to share innovative practices and concepts across the profession, nationally and internationally, and among all libraries.

Objective (2): Increase recognition of and support for experimentation with innovative and transformational ideas.

Objective (3) Help libraries make use of new and emerging technologies by promoting and supporting technological experimentation and innovation.

Objective (4): Increase leadership development and training opportunities designed to support the ongoing transformation of libraries.

Goal Area: Member Engagement

Goal Statement: ALA provides an environment in which all members, regardless of location or position, have the opportunity to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from engagement in their association.

Objective (1): Increase member and staff innovation and experimentation in the creation of new opportunities for face to face and virtual engagement.

Objective (2): Increase member engagement by identifying and eliminating barriers to participation and through technological innovation.

Objective (3): Develop new models to recognize member contributions in a changing association.

Objective (4): Continue to enhance a web presence that engages members and the public.

Goal Area: Organizational Excellence

Goal Statement: ALA operates effectively, efficiently, creatively and in a socially responsible fashion to accomplish its mission.

Objective (1): Develop and sustain the resources required to ensure the vitality of the association, its programs and services.

Objective (2): Enhance the association's organizational structure to meet the changing needs of members, libraries and the users they serve

Objective (3): Assess and continuously improve products and services to better serve current members and to attract new members.

Objective (4): Strengthen support for and collaboration with Chapters and Affiliates.

Appendix:

*The **envisioned future** conveys a concrete yet unrealized vision for the association. It consists of a **big audacious goal** – a clear and compelling catalyst that serves as a focal point for effort – and a **vivid description** – vibrant and engaging descriptions of what it will be like to achieve the big audacious goal.*

Big Audacious Goal:

ALA builds a world where libraries, both physical and virtual, are central to life-long discovery and learning and where everyone is a library user.

Vivid Description of the Desired Future:

ALA is recognized as leading and supporting a continuous transformation of libraries of all types in response to the changing needs, expectations, demographics, and technologies of the populations they serve. Libraries and their staff are perceived as vital to the communities they serve; connecting people and ideas to each other and to the world.

All people have wide access to knowledge, information and their cultural heritage, when and where they need and expect it. Users are the primary advocates for libraries, recognizing library services as essential to learning and to individual and societal enrichment.

Libraries are widely recognized as key players in economic development, in building strong and vibrant communities, and in sustaining a strong democracy. Libraries are also recognized as an essential component of the educational system, providing critical youth literacy services, enriching formal education, and supporting lifelong learning. They are key providers of free and permanent public access to government information and e-government services.

School libraries are considered fundamental to a student's education and school librarians are seen as indispensable instructional leaders. Academic and research libraries and librarians are indispensable in advancing learning and scholarship and preserving our cultural heritage. Public libraries are recognized as the interactive place where people find the best resources, programming, and learning opportunities and use information to solve problems and build bridges between people. The services of libraries of all types are readily accessible and welcoming to all, including persons with disabilities.

Libraries collaborate effectively with each other, with museums, archives and other information providers to increase public access to information. They offer

access to local and global resources in a vast variety of print and electronic formats. Library users have access to physical libraries that serve as community learning centers, and online access to library resources 24 hours a day, and through a variety of technologies. Libraries embrace technology and are seen as trusted leaders in the information age

As a result, all types of libraries are adequately funded, librarianship is a sought after profession, librarians are leaders in the information community, information is accessible to all and all people in the United States are literate library users.