



**Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC),
a division of the American Library Association (ALA)
Annual Report 2023-24
Dr. Jonda C. McNair, President**

ALSC began this year by focusing on working toward the goals and objectives outlined in the newly developed 2023-2026 strategic plan. The organization remains strongly committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion, which undergirds all aspects of its work—from ensuring that award and process committees consist of culturally diverse members, to pushing back against censorship of children’s literature that allows all youth to see images of themselves and their identity markers represented, to inviting members of affiliates such as APALA, CSK, and AILA to participate in the Bill Morris Seminar and gain valuable experience in media evaluation.

A lot of good work has taken place this year! The Youth Media Awards press conference (YMAAs) in Baltimore, Maryland, was a highlight—and so much fun! It was because of the hard work of award committee members, chairs, and priority group consultants that the 2024 YMAAs were possible. For the first time, the Randolph Caldecott Medal was awarded to a picture book illustrated by an African American woman. Vashti Harrison winning the 2024 Caldecott Medal for *Big* is a BIG deal! A second Newbery Honor in the history of this award was given to a Native author, Nasuḡraq Rainey Hopson, for *Eagle Drums*. The selections across the ALSC book awards demonstrate that committee members are committed to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as they consider excellence and innovation in materials for youth. In addition, the ALSC Children’s Literature Lecture, given in April by Newbery Honor author Rita Williams-Garcia, was a huge success at the Carnegie Public Library in Pittsburgh.

While all this good work is taking place, ALSC members are also committed to supporting one another and librarians in general in various ways by creating toolkits, compiling booklists, posting on the ALSC Blog, publishing articles in *Children and Libraries*, and encouraging members to take on leadership roles. In fact, the Nominating Committee is holding a community forum in June featuring a panel of past and current leaders to encourage ALSC members to take on leadership roles in the organization.

None of this work would happen without the dedication of ALSC’s hardworking staff members under the leadership of Alena Rivers, the ALSC Board, and our strong membership. They are committed to putting good books in the hands of children and helping to ensure that they all have equal opportunities for healthy, successful futures.

ALSC Strategic Plan 2023-2026

On September 1, 2023, ALSC began a new [three-year strategic plan, operating from 2023-2026](#). The development of this new strategic plan began in the fall of 2020 with the ALSC Executive Committee, Board, and a series of small-group discussions involving various stakeholders within the association's membership. In a shift from the previous strategic plan, ALSC has identified five key areas of strategic focus:

1. Organizational Excellence
2. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
3. Communication
4. Literacy
5. Media Evaluation

The first three areas of strategic focus are key elements of association best practices; the final two are content-specific areas of strategic focus for the association and its members.

Using these areas of focus as a guide, ALSC identified key overarching commitments (values and goals that guide the association's work but that may not have key deliverables) as well as strategic initiatives (key activities that will have quantitative results or key deliverables within the time frame of the strategic plan).

Overarching Commitments

- All Association work includes an EDI goal and/or lens.
- Committee work and charges are evaluated and prioritized regularly.
- The Association has sustainable, diverse revenue streams.
- Opportunities for engagement are multimodal.

Strategic Initiatives

- Prioritizing culturally diverse committees that are supported by diverse appointments advisory committees and transparency about the appointments process.
- Building and bolstering strong relationships with mission-aligned organizations that are part of the ecosystem of children, literacy, and libraries.
- Identifying and implementing strong communication practices across the Association.
- Offering a mentorship program that supports members across different career levels and library types, with connections across shared experiences.
- Developing and providing strong cultural competency training and support, in particular related to media evaluation
- Producing and publishing a landmark guide for libraries to support emerging readers using evidence-based strategies.

The work of both the overarching commitments and strategic initiatives are implemented through member-driven work, primarily via committee workplans that are developed as a guide at the beginning of each committee service year. Key committee work from the 2023-24 year includes:

- The creation and announcement of the Request for Proposals for a "Best Practice for Supporting Emerging Readers in Library Spaces" project; this work has been driven by the Research and School Age Programs and Services committees.

- The assessment and recommendation of a new ALSC Mentorship program structure by the ALSC Membership committee.
- The review and recommendations of more efficient use of revenue streams and funding sources for key ALSC initiatives, including use of Endowment funds, by the Budget committee, the CAL Editorial Advisory committee, and the EDI committee.

ALSC members, staff, and leadership have actively considered how their work can impact the strategic plan's objectives. ALSC committees share their activities through quarterly reports that gather information on progress toward each strategic plan area. These reports and the work of staff and leadership continue to reveal steady progress toward strategic plan initiatives.

Membership

Statistics

At the end of FY23, ALSC had a total membership of 3,269. As of April 2024 (most recent reporting at this writing), ALSC had a total membership of 3,270. Compared with April 2023, ALSC membership decreased by 2.79% as of April 2024 reporting, which was greater than ALA's membership loss (0.18%) but less than that of several other divisions, including ACRL (3.47%), CORE (3.5%), and YALSA (4.53%), over the same period. In general, ALSC membership is reflective of ALA trends and continues to be affected by limited ALSC staff capacity and cost.

Emerging Leader

In November 2023, ALSC named Kristin Tarnas, a teacher librarian at Hawai'i Preparatory Academy, where she serves as the K-8 librarian on the Village Campus, as its sponsored representative in ALA's 2024 Emerging Leader program.

Mentoring Program

Due to limited staff capacity, ALSC did not conduct a Mentoring Program this year. However, the Membership committee has a proposal for a new iteration of the ALSC mentorship program in process; the association looks forward to re-implementing this important and meaningful program to facilitate networking and professional growth for members.

Engagement and Advocacy

Throughout the year, ALSC leaders and members take advantage of opportunities to spread the word about the work of ALSC and its membership and to learn from and make connections with other organizations, libraries, and professionals who work on behalf of children.

- ALSC occasionally hosts online discussions called [Community Forums](#) during which participants can chat live with the ALSC President, members of the Board of Directors, fellow ALSC members, and presenters. Members who cannot participate live may submit questions in advance via email or Twitter. Transcripts of the chats are shared afterwards. This year thus far, there have not been any forums.

In addition to Community Forums, ALSC also hosts **We Are ALSC Chats**. Led by ALSC committees, these informal chats (held on Zoom or Twitter) are open to members and non-members and are designed to be

online networking chats for resource sharing and discussion around timely topics in children's services. This year's Chats, thus far, were:

- May 2024 - Digital Storytelling and Content Creation with Children
- April 2024 - Do I Self-Censor? How to Avoid This Pitfall

The [ALSC Roadshow](#) offers ALSC members the opportunity to represent the Association at conferences and other relevant events around the country. There has not been Roadshow activity thus far this year, which may be due to limited staff capacity.

The ALSC Membership committee has hosted two **Virtual Meet-Ups** via Zoom this year to provide engagement opportunities, cultivate community among members, and attract prospective members. This year's get-togethers thus far have included:

- April 2024 – Virtual ALSC 101
- August 2023 – All about the ALSC Volunteer Form

Professional Awards and Scholarships

ALSC Distinguished Service Award

This award honors an individual member who has made significant contributions to, and had an impact on, library services to children and ALSC. The 2024 recipient is:

- Oralia Garza de Cortés

Baker and Taylor Summer Reading Program Grant (Donor: Baker and Taylor)

This \$3,000 grant provides financial assistance to a public library for developing an outstanding summer reading program for children. The 2024 recipient is:

- Hutchinson Memorial Library, Randolph, Wisconsin

Bechtel Fellowship (Donor: University of Florida's Endowment in memory of Louise Seaman Bechtel and Ruth M. Baldwin)

This fellowship provides a stipend up to \$7,500 to allow a qualified children's librarian to spend a month or more reading at the University of Florida's Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature. The 2024 recipient is:

- Doris Gebel

Children's Literature Lecture

This award honors an individual of distinction in the field of children's literature who delivers a distinguished lecture on behalf of ALSC. The 2025 Lecture will be delivered by:

- Kyle Lukoff

Maureen Hayes Author/Illustrator Visit Award (Donor: Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing)

This \$4,000 award was established with funding from Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, in honor of Maureen Hayes, to bring together children and nationally recognized authors/illustrators by funding an

author/illustrator visit to a school or public library that has never had the opportunity to host one. The 2024 recipient will be announced via press release soon.

Light the Way: Library Outreach to the Underserved Grant (Donor: Candlewick Press)

This \$3,000 grant is sponsored by Candlewick Press in honor of author Kate DiCamillo and the themes represented in her books. The grant is awarded to a library with exceptional outreach to underserved populations. The 2024 recipient is:

- Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield, Massachusetts

Penguin Random House Young Readers Group Award (Donor: Penguin Random House Young Readers Group)

This award provides a \$600 stipend, provided by Penguin Young Readers Group and Random House Children's Books, for up to four winners to attend their first ALA Annual Conference. Applicants must have fewer than 10 years of experience as a children's librarian and work directly with children. The award was not given out for 2024.

Bound to Stay Bound Books Scholarship (Donor: Bound to Stay Bound Books, Inc.)

The Bound to Stay Bound Books (BTSB) Scholarship provides financial assistance in the form of four \$8,000 annual awards for the education of individuals who intend to pursue an MLS or advanced degree and who plan to work in the area of library service to children. This work may be serving children up to and including the age of 14 in any type of library. The scholarship is made possible through the generous contributions of Bound to Stay Bound Books, Inc. The 2024 BTSB winners will be announced later in June.

Frederic G. Melcher Scholarship

The Frederic G. Melcher Scholarship provides financial assistance for the professional education of individuals who intend to pursue an MLS degree and who plan to work in children's librarianship. This work may be serving children up to and including the age of 14 in any type of library. Two \$8,000 scholarships are awarded annually. The 2024 Melcher winners will be announced later in June.

ALSC Spectrum Scholarships

ALSC sponsors three Spectrum Scholars annually through the Frederic G. Melcher Endowment. Since the program began in 1997, ALA has awarded more than 1,000 Spectrum Scholarships to qualified applicants enrolled in an ALA-accredited graduate program in library and information studies or an ALA-recognized NCATE School Library Media program. The 2024 ALSC Spectrum Scholars will be announced later in June.

Ellen Fader, ALSC past president (2005-2006), has provided a generous donation to the Spectrum Scholarship for an eleventh year. Her contribution will support a student through the 2024-2025 school term. The scholarship recipient will be announced later in June.

Literary & Related Awards

While ALSC is best known for its landmark awards, the **Newbery and Caldecott Medals**, the association administers a wide range of book and media awards, including the **Batchelder Award** for distinguished translated books; the **Belpré Awards** for books that best represent Latinx culture, co-sponsored with the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking (REFORMA) and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA); the **Excellence in Early Learning Digital Media Award** for distinguished digital media for an early learning audience; the **Geisel Award** for

the most distinguished book for beginning readers; the **Odyssey Award** for excellence in audiobook production, jointly administered with YALSA and sponsored by *Booklist* magazine; and the **Sibert Medal** for the most distinguished informational book. ALSC's **Children's Literature Legacy Award** honors an author or illustrator whose books, published in the United States, have made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children.

ALSC member evaluation committees also produce lists of recommended children's media: Notable Children's Books, Notable Children's Recordings, and Notable Children's Digital Media.

ALSC's 2024 and past award winners and notable lists are available at the Book & Media Awards Shelf at <https://alsc-awards-shelf.org/>.

The ALA Youth Media Awards (YMA) Press Conference was webcast live on January 22, 2024, during the ALA's LibLearnX conference in Baltimore, Maryland, and [the archive presentation is available, along with the full list of recipients.](#)

Initiatives

ALSC is home to El día de los niños/El día de los libros (Children's Day/Book Day), commonly known as Día, a major national initiative, supported by the Quicklists Consulting committee, with oversight from the ALSC Board of Directors. ALSC also administers Everyday Advocacy, which is supported by the Public Awareness and Advocacy committee, with oversight from the Board.

Día

This year ALSC produced updated, free graphics for libraries and other organizations to use in promoting their Día programs and celebrations. ALSC's Quicklists Consulting committee created a set of booklists for children ages birth through 14, in English and Spanish, which are available for free download on the ALSC website. ALSC received a \$3,000 Carnegie-Whitney Grant from ALA in March, which covered all associated costs (editorial, translation, design) for the 2024 booklists.

This year, the Día National Program Registry was rebuilt using Airtable with the assistance of ALA's IT department. The new format provides enhanced searching and filtering capabilities. The registry map also was given a new, updated look and now lives on the Google Maps platform.

ALSC works to integrate the values of Día throughout its work and continues to promote the growth of the Program Registry, encouraging its use and sharing resource materials to increase awareness of the initiative.

Everyday Advocacy

The Everyday Advocacy (EA) website helps educate library workers serving youth about the importance of advocacy, taking out the dread factor! EA provides resources for both day-to-day advocacy and crisis advocacy.

The EA website recently was reviewed and updated by the Public Awareness and Advocacy committee, as part of their workplan. Updates were made to statistical and data resources; new information was added about advocating to legislators; new links were added to advocacy events and ALA campaigns; new stories were uploaded to the "Get Inspired" section; and a new section was created about "Advocating for Equity."

Grants, Projects, Partnerships & Letters of Support

National Summer Learning Association

ALSC has partnered with National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) to promote National Summer Learning Week since 2019. The board has renewed the collaboration to 2024 and will continue to share information about NSLA's resources and activities. NSLA has shared ALSC's *Learning Beyond: 21st Century Summer and Out-of-School-Time Programs for Youth* toolkit on its website.

University of Washington – Autism-Ready Libraries

In March 2020, ALSC provided a letter to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in support of a University of Washington Information School (iSchool) project, Autism-Ready Libraries. The project was funded by IMLS and aimed to improve libraries' capacity to provide early literacy programming to autistic children and their families.

The iSchool released, in May 2023, the [Autism-Ready Libraries Toolkit \(ARLT\)](#), which includes early literacy programming and training materials to empower librarians to effectively serve autistic children and their families. ALSC has shared news of this new resource via its various communications networks, and hosted a free, members-only webinar on the toolkit in October 2023.

Welcoming Spaces National Forum Grant - IMLS \$150,000

ALSC received a National Leadership Grant from IMLS in the area of Community Catalysts. ALSC, in collaboration with the Association of Children's Museums (ACM), planned to convene a one-day National Forum attended by representatives from 12 children's museums, 12 libraries, and up to 24 of their partnering organizations to distill a set of best practices from their exemplary work serving immigrants and refugees. Due to continued complications brought about by the global COVID-19 pandemic, ALSC and ACM postponed the forum and requested a no cost extension to the grant to host a virtual event in 2022. An extension through February 2024 was granted.

In addition to the virtual event, ALSC and ACM compiled effective practices resulting from the forum and disseminated an effective practices document to elevate these practices and encourage their adoption by libraries and children's museums; those findings are posted on the ALSC website and available as a PDF download for the field's use. ALSC and ACM stakeholders presented on the forums' findings in a variety of ways, including at ACM's Annual Conference (2023), ALA's Annual Conference (2023), and through a free webinar available on ALA's eLearning platform.

Ongoing Partnerships

ALSC continues to maintain strong associations with internal and external ALA partners, including YALSA, Booklist, REFORMA, and USBBY.

Publications & Professional Resources

Along with serial publications—*Children and Libraries: The Journal of the Association for Library Service to Children* and the *ALSC Matters* electronic newsletter, and the *ALSC Update* e-mailings, the Association also produces publications and resources, such as booklists, toolkits, books, and white papers. Resources not addressed elsewhere in this report are included below.

Booklists

2024 Summer Reading Lists

The Quicklists Consulting committee updated the [Summer Reading lists](#) this spring with new titles to keep children reading all summer. The committee also included recommendations for digital resources, connecting kids with a wide array of apps, podcasts, and websites. Four free, downloadable booklists, covering birth through eighth grade students, are available.

Día Reading Lists

Each year, the Quicklists Consulting committee compiles lists of books for children from birth through age 14 that celebrate many cultures and backgrounds. The lists, [this year available in English and Spanish](#), are provided to promote Día and the sharing of diverse books with children.

Gardening Booklist

This spring, the Quicklists Consulting committee compiled a booklist for the American Horticultural Society's 32nd annual National Children & Youth Garden Symposium, a professional development event for youth garden educators from across the country, to be held at the Chicago Botanic Garden in July. The event's theme, "Stories in the Garden," emphasizes the connections between gardening and literacy. The booklist features recommended illustrated children's books that feature plants and gardening concepts. The resource is available for [free download on the ALSC website](#).

Toolkit

The Every Child Ready to Read 2nd Edition kit has been converted to a digital-only product, which was released this spring in the [ALA Store](#). This new edition mirrors the content and resources of its paper counterpart.

Social Media

Facebook

The [ALSC Facebook account](#) is used to broadcast important messages, promote awareness of the association and library service to youth, and provide inspiration, resources, and news to our members and all interested colleagues. With more than 13,700 followers, the account continues to be an engaging space. In the most recent 90-day period, content shared on the ALSC Facebook page has reached more than 4,800 individuals.

Twitter

[ALSC's Twitter presence](#) continues to be strong. @WeAreALSC currently has more than 16,800 followers. ALSC has been using this platform to engage with members during webinars, community forums, and conferences/events using respective hashtags.

ALSC Blog

The [ALSC Blog](#) strives to position the association as a thought-leader and to be the destination for individuals seeking ideas and inspiration around library services for young people. Daily posts address subjects such as programming, collection development, and partnerships. In 2023-24, the blog has averaged over 29,000 views per month; and currently ranks number five in FeedSpot's 90 Best Library and Librarian Blogs.

ALSC Events and Continuing Education

2024 William Morris Seminar: Book Evaluation Training

The 2024 Bill Morris Seminar will convene on Thursday, September 19, 2024, immediately preceding the 2024 ALSC National Institute. Participants will gather to develop their skills and expertise in children's book evaluation and to practice their own book discussion skills in small group breakout rooms. This year, invitations were sent to all affiliated organizations who announce children's book awards at the ALA Youth Media Awards press conference to send a representative to participate: AILA, AJL, APALA, CSKART, REFORMA, RRT, and Schneider.

ALSC National Institute

The 2024 ALSC National Institute will be held September 19 – September 21, 2024, in Denver, Colorado.

ALA Annual Conference & Exhibition

The ALA Annual Conference is scheduled for June 27- July 2, 2024, in San Diego, California. ALSC Annual Conference programs and educational sessions will include the following:

Special Programs – 2024 ALA Annual Conference

- Newbery-Caldecott-Legacy Awards Banquet
- ALSC Awards
- Pura Belpré Celebración (co-produced with REFORMA and YALSA)
- Odyssey Award (co-produced with Booklist and YALSA)

Educational Programs – 2024 ALA Annual Conference

ALSC is presenting the following nine educational programs during ALA Annual Conference, which were selected by ALSC's Program Coordinating committee (PCC).

- Depositing Joy: Programming and Service for Families Experiencing Homelessness
- Get On Board! Evaluating and Honoring Excellent, Developmentally-Appropriate Board Books to Promote Early Literacy
- Kindergarten Readiness Initiative: Supporting Early Learners and Their Families
- Multitudes: The Power of Authentic & Diverse Representation in Muslim Stories
- Museum Objects in Libraries as Catalysts for Family and Community Engagement
- Play Imagine Experience: Transforming Access to Early Childhood Literacy Skills
- SING, TALK, READ: Engaging the Brain, Body, and Senses through Nonfiction Picture Books
- Soft Censorship of LGBTQIA+ Content and Its Chilling Effect on the Children's Book World
- Summer Fun School: A Community-Based Approach to Addressing Learning Gaps through Equitable Summer Services

2024 ALSC Charlemae Rollins President's Program – 2024 ALA Annual Conference

ALSC looks forward to hosting the 2024 Charlemae Rollins President's Program, "Illuminating the Legacy of Illustrious African American Librarians," on July 1. This program will feature Christopher Paul Curtis,

Breanna McDaniel, and Velda Simpson (Chicago Public Library) and discuss the legacy and impact of African American librarians in children’s literature.

Children’s Literature Lecture Award

Rita Williams-Garcia was awarded the 2024 Children’s Literature Lecture Award, which honors an individual of distinction in the field of children’s literature who delivers a distinguished lecture on behalf of ALSC. The 2024 Lecture was held on April 17, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It was hosted by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, with support from the University of Pittsburgh.

Online Courses

From summer 2023 to spring 2024, ALSC offered the following [online courses](#):

- American Sign Language with Children in Storytime or in the Classroom: A Practical Guide
- At Home Learners and the Public Library
- Intellectual Freedom and Ethics: Maintaining Your Values in a Challenging Era
- Outreach Services for Underserved Children
- Tools and Techniques for Promoting Early Literacy in BIPOC Communities
- Using Picture Books to Discuss Social Justice and Equity

Webinars

ALSC offers hour-long [live webinars](#) with a youth-services focus. Topics this year have included:

- Full STEAM Ahead: Maximizing Wonder and Learning in Library Programs

Additionally, ALSC hosted three free, members-only webinars:

- Autism-Ready Libraries: Early Literacy Services for Autistic Children and Their Families
- Training Frontline Staff to Deal with Book Challenges Effectively
- Understanding and Embracing Collection Development Policies and Procedures

Recorded Webcasts

ALSC offers [archived webinars](#), which have already taken place, as on-demand video that can be watched at any time. In efforts to support ALSC's continuing education goals, webinars archived prior to this year were offered free to ALSC members as a benefit of their membership.

Select on-demand webinars are available to members and non-members on the ALA eLearning platform.

Board Work

The [ALSC Board of Directors works year-round](#)—in person at ALA conferences and virtually—reviewing strategic plan implementation and priorities, discussing mega issues, deliberating on organizational matters, and making decisions that move the association forward. Directors are elected by the ALSC membership and serve a three-year term. Board schedules, along with official documents and minutes, are available on the [ALSC website](#).

ALSC Finances

as of March 2024 report (7 months of data)

	Budgeted	Actual
Total Revenues	\$1,138,087	\$925,376
Total Expenses before Overhead & Taxes	\$827,271	\$444,502
Contribution Margin	\$310,815	\$480,873
Overhead to ALA	\$143,553	\$104,575
Taxes	\$0	\$0
Net Revenue for 7 months of FY24	\$167,263	\$376,299
Beginning Net Asset Balance (as of September 1, 2023)	\$5,849,580	
Ending Net Asset Balance	\$6,761,002	

Looking Ahead

Our next year will begin with the continued work of carrying out the goals of the 2023-2026 strategic plan. Committee assignments and work plan projects will be aligned with the strategic plan to ensure that key areas and topics such as literacy and media evaluation are highlighted. ALSC would also like to work toward increasing membership in the organization with the addition of a staff person devoted to membership. Our organization will also continue to support the rights of young readers to have access to quality materials that speak to their needs, experiences, and identity markers. ALSC believes that books can and should play a major role in helping children to be successful in their lives.

2023-24 ALSC Board of Directors and Staff

Executive Committee:

Dr. Jonda C. McNair, President

Dr. Robert Bittner, Vice-President/President-Elect

Amy Koester, Immediate Past President

Julie Roach, Division Councilor

Robbin Ellis Friedman, Fiscal Officer

Directors:

Jaime Eastman

Maria F. Estrella

Danielle Jones

Allison M. Knight
Katherine Lawrence
Sada Mozer
Tori Ann A. Ogawa
Georgina M. Rivas-Martinez

ALSC Staff:

Alena Rivers, Executive Director
Sarah Polen, Deputy Director
Ana Cackley, Awards Coordinator
Anne Michaud, Program Officer, Governance
Laura Schulte-Cooper, Senior Program Officer, Communications and Website