ALA Chapter Councilor-
Roles and Responsibilities
and Sample Job Description

(Approved by the Chapter Relations Committee, May 2025)

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1) Council and Chapter Councilors Overview

- Chapter Councilors are elected by their State Chapter Members (or D.C or territories) to represent their Chapter and the whole library community of their state (or D.C or territories) on ALA Council, the policy making body of the American Library Association.

- ALA Council is made up of 125 members, including 53 Chapter Councilors. All Council members need to be personal members of ALA. Councilors serve a three-year term.

- This document provides general roles and responsibilities for Chapter Councilors. Most ALA Chapters have bylaws, policies, and/or procedures that provide guidelines and requirements for their Chapter Councilor, including how many consecutive terms a Chapter Councilor may serve.

2) Notify ALA of New Chapter Councilor

- Chapter leadership (current chapter councilor, president, or staff) needs to provide your contact information and term start date and end date to governance@ala.org and cro@ala.org so you can be added to ALA Council and ALA Chapter Councilor, and Chapter Leader groups in ALA Connect when your term starts (See Communication below)

3) Orientation for New Chapter Councilor

- New Chapter Councilors should review and familiarize themselves with the Council at https://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/council

- The website provides general information on Council, including a Basic Guide to Council, Meeting Calendar, Agendas, Council Documents, Council Actions, and more. It is best to review at least the previous two years of Council activity.

- Chapters should ensure that retiring Chapter Councilors and new Chapter Councilors should meet for a transition/orientation meeting where knowledge sharing, advice and insights, and current actions and activities of are provided.

- Chapter Leaders/Staff and new Chapter Councilor should meet before assuming the role of Chapter Councilor to go over duties and expectations

- Attend in-person and virtual General Council Orientations

- The Chapter Relations Committee and Chapter Relations Office host a specific Chapter Councilor Orientation each fall and spring. Attend the one prior to or shortly after your term.

- Contact the Chapter Relations Office if you have any questions/issues that you need to discuss

4) General Duties of The Chapter Councilor

- As Chapter Councilor you represent your Chapter, but also the entire library community in your state/district or territory.

- If you are a member of your Chapter's Executive Board, attend all meetings faithfully. Report on ALA and Chapter Relations issues at each meeting. Likewise, report Chapter concerns to ALA and the Chapter Relations Office as needed.

- **If you have a separate American Association of School Librarians (AASL) or Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Chapter you and the Chapter Board should create a communication channel to provide updates and feedback on ALA Council activities.**

- Monitor Council and Chapter groups in ALA Connect. If you have questions, pose them. Please respond promptly when a response is requested.

- Write articles and Councilor's reports as needed and requested for Chapter publications. Your Chapter may also require a report for your Council, Membership Meeting, etc.

- Be part of Chapter and ALA interactions on state, local, and federal issues. Work with Chapter leaders and legislative/advocacy committees to alert ALA of legislation or other state and local issues.

- Promote ALA membership to Chapter members. Urge Chapter members to become active members in ALA's divisions and round tables. Send names of Chapter members who would like ALA Committee appointments to the Chapter Relations Committee chair in the early fall. Publicize Chapter members who have received recognition/election to ALA units/Council.

5) Communications

- ALA Connect is the main location for communication between you and ALA

- Familiarize yourself with the ALA Online Code of Conduct

- You will be added to the **Council** group in ALA Connect when you begin your term. Only members of Council (and ALA Governance Staff) can post to the Council group. Any member can have 'view only' access, and can see and read posts, discussions, and documents.

- The Chapter Relations Office will add you to the **Chapter Councilor** group and the **Chapter Leaders** group. These are closed groups with no 'view only' access for others. The **Chapter Leaders** group includes Chapter Presidents, President-elects, Chapter staff, and Councilors

- Through the Chapter Leaders list ALA will provide informational message that can be passed on to Chapter member list. Work with Chapter leaders and staff to determine which messages to forward and who will post to Chapter member list.

- Be positive about ALA in your Chapter and about your Chapter in ALA. Make certain that you, or your Chapter staff, report to ALA any pertinent dates, information and changes involving your Chapter.

6) ALA and Chapter Conferences and Events

- Make arrangements for an ALA booth or information table at your Chapter conference. The ALA Chapter Relations Office will contact you ahead of your Chapter Conference to provide ALA materials at no cost.

- Welcome any ALA leaders or staff when they visit your Chapter Conference or other Chapter event. If possible, contact them in advance of their visit and offer to assist them in any way you can.

7) State of the Chapter Report

- Each summer, after ALA Annual, the Chapter Relations Office surveys the Chapters for the annual State of the Chapter Report. Chapter Councilors are responsible for ensuring the report is completed by their Chapter. Chapter staff, leaders, or other members may lead in providing information for the Report.

8) Preparation for Council Meetings

- Review previous Council Meeting "Council Action Document"

- Read all Council documents in preparation for Council meetings.

- Share pertinent documents with Chapter leadership (and other identified state associations) for feedback and direction.

Sample Chapter Councilor Job Description

ALA Representative X Chapter Councilor

VISION: X libraries and librarians will be vital and respected components of national and regional library representation.

MISSION STATEMENT: The X Association is a chapter of the American Library Association and is represented by the ALA Chapter Councilor. X's place in the major national library organization depends on its ability to have a vote on the ALA Council, the governing body of the ALA.

GOALS:

- The ALA Councilor will represent X' libraries and librarians by means of votes on ALA

Council, participation in ALA's Chapter Relations efforts, and sharing of ALA endeavors in X.

- X's librarians will be acquainted with ALA activities and endeavors and will be encouraged to participate at the national level.

- X's librarians will be alerted to and involved in library issues of national importance.

OBJECTIVES:

- X's ALA Chapter Councilor will attend all sessions of ALA Council at every ALA Annual and other Council sessions throughout the year (in-person or virtually) and will be available to vote on issues raised.

- X' Chapter Councilor will attend as many Chapter Relations Committee meetings and events as possible, and will use this forum to acquaint ALA with library activities in X.

- The Chapter Councilor will attend XLA Board meetings and membership meetings at conference and will report on issues important to X libraries.

- The Chapter Councilor will act as liaison, when necessary, between the chapter/state association and the national organization and their respective staff members.

- The Chapter Councilor will create a communication channel with American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Chapter _____ and/or Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Chapter _____. The Chapter Councilor will create a communication channel to provide updates and feedback on ALA Council activities. (Applicable if independent AASL and ACRL Chapters)

- Report orally, if requested, to XLA membership at XLA Annual Conference.

- Provide ALA membership information at XLA annual conference through an exhibit booth.

- Write columns on ALA news for each issue of XLA magazine/newsletter

Eligibility

- A member in good standing of X Library Association, who is also a member of the American Library Association

Term

- The ALA Councilor assumes office at the end of the ALA Annual Conference following XLA Board election in the spring, and shall be seated at the first ALA Council Meeting following this date. It is a 3-year term with the possibility of serving a second 3-year term.

Budget

- ALA Councilor budget requests include the Chapter dues to ALA, and Freedom to Read Foundation contributions, as well as travel expenses for ALA Annual Conference. XLA pays 100% of ALA conference registrations, plus reasonable expenses such as airfare, hotel, etc. A concerted effort should be made to keep all expenses as low as possible.