

Chapter Relations Committee
2021 ALA Midwinter

January 24, 2021

10:00 a.m.

- Lappin called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.
- Introductions were made by those in attendance.
- The Chapter Relations Office provided an office update. Michael Dowling, Director of the Chapter Relations Office stated that: “49 states have joined the Joint Student Membership Program, with Iowa Library Association as the newest addition; and gave an update on emergency response efforts coming out of CRO.
- Mariel Colbert, Program Officer stated that: “the Chapter Leaders Forum on February 5th, registration is now open. The 2021 State of the Chapter reports will be due in summer, Chapter Councilors are responsible for submission. Current Listservs are set to retire by the end of the fiscal year and are migrating to ALA Connect. A detailed process to complete this project gracefully is in place.”
- State Ecosystem Initiative report by Jennifer Alvino
 - Reports will be placed on One Voice.
 - Taskforce is now a sub-committee of COLA.
- Advocacy Update report by Megan Cusick
 - State and local web resources are being updated.
 - COLA performed a scan of state level advocacy web resources.
 - COLA reviewed the Library Value Calculator.
 - COLA and OIF are reviewing potential state legislation that affect libraries.
- Forward Together
 - Lappin reported on efforts by the CRC to ensure that chapters maintain representation at ALA. There has not been an official response to the Committee’s letter.
 - Cynthia Czesak and Eileen Palmer mentioned several Chapter Councilors who are on the Forward Together committee.
 - Meg Delaney spoke on the Forward Together Committee’s efforts to clarify their purpose and find areas of agreement.
 - Eileen Palmer asked chapters to review the Forward Together recommendations.
- COVID-19 Vaccination
 - Amy Lappin asked if any chapters would report on their state’s efforts to have librarians recognized as essential workers.
 - Jennifer Alvino spoke from the Maine Library Association’s efforts to have librarians recognized in the plan to disseminate the vaccine.
 - Wendy Cornelisen spoke on Georgia’s efforts, and asked for sample language for letters from ALA.
 - Megan Cusick spoke on the CDC listing education workers as category 1B. Public librarians are listed in category 1C, with decisions being made in local jurisdictions.

- Sherry Machones spoke on Wisconsin's efforts asking the state legislature to recognize librarians in category 1B. The Wisconsin Department of Health wants libraries to be COVID testing sites. She asked that a national organization to reassert the importance of libraries.
- Michael Dowling asked for opinions on an ALA statement from those states that are not making individual efforts.
- Lucinda Nord argued that efforts be made at the state and local level because of the differences in how states are responding. Preferred that ALA provide model language rather than a national statement.
- Stacy Goodhue spoke on potential political difficulties in a national statement.
- Lucinda Nord spoke on how libraries can reach populations who may be vaccine hesitant without jeopardizing library's place as trusted institutions.
- Michael Dowling opined that libraries can be justified in being in CDC category 1B without overstepping localities.
- Megan Cusick spoke on possible local conflict for libraries that are closed should their employees receive a higher priority.
- Estella Terrazas spoke on how the staff of libraries who have remained closed have sometimes been reassigned within their counties.
- Tracy Sumler spoke on the difference between front line staff and background/administrative staff.
- Stacy Goodhue asked that consideration be given to libraries with extremely small staffs, and how a blanket statement can be read in regard to different sized libraries.
- Eileen Palmer asked who is currently looking at reviewing a current resolution coming to Council regarding library workers and the COVID-19 vaccine. Megan Cusick answered that the Committee on Legislation will be reviewing. Amy Lappin offered to advocate the views of Chapters with Council.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

January 25, 2021

10:00 a.m.

- Amy Lappin called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.
- Members of the committee introduced themselves.
- Kathi Kromer – Policy and Advocacy Office
 - Federal funding to libraries and museums increased.
 - Reported on current makeup and challenges in Congress.
 - Reported on the progress of the Build America's Libraries Act.
 - Full report provided to membership.

- There is currently nothing scheduled for National Legislative Day. It is unlikely that there will be an in-person event. Resources will be focused on targeted members of Congress.
 - Legislative groups are holding virtual meetings with constituent groups.
 - Extra \$20 million in IMLS
 - Reintroduction of Build America's Libraries Act: (ALA Press Release: <http://www.ala.org/news/member-news/2020/12/ala-welcomes-build-americas-libraries-act>)
 - First federal funding for libraries since 1996
 - Legislative staff are doing virtual meetings with constituents.
 - Build Relationships w/ Legislators: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/build-relationships>
- Lessa Pelayo-Lozada – ALA Presidential Candidate
 - Spoke on her current platform as presidential candidate, including a strong voice for chapters.
 - Wanda Brown – Executive Board liaison
 - Stressed the importance of leadership and finances as ALA undergoes fundamental change.
 - Steven Yates – Forward Together
 - Forward Together is now in a working group and creating resolutions.
 - The best way to communicate with the working group is through official, public letters, ensuring representation from the committee, and communicating with and through chapter councilors.
 - Joseph Thompson - COL
 - Agrees that chapters should be represented in whatever form ALA takes because of Forward Together.
 - Language mentioning states has been removed from the resolution regarding Covid-19 at the time of report.
 - Members of the committee can comment on the resolution regarding library workers and the COVID-19 vaccine as it is being written and finalized.
 - Committee members expressed that the issue is too urgent for Council to put off for an extended period.

Meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m.