

7.4.3

OPEN MEETING POLICY: An Interpretive Statement  
of the American Library Association

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renumbered by Council  
at the 2003 ALA

7.4.4

The policy on Open Meetings, 7.4.3., reads as follows:

"All meetings of the American Library Association and its units are open to all members and to members of the press. Registration requirements apply. Closed meetings may be held only for the discussion of matters affecting the privacy of individuals or institutions."

The American Library Association is a national educational association with an organizational pattern of units and sub-units with distributed responsibility for the conduct and accomplishment of its business. As a membership association, its structure, procedures, and actions do not parallel public or governmental bodies.

In support of its goal of promoting and improving library service and librarianship, the ALA conducts activities such as: developing standards; accrediting library school programs; granting scholarships, awards, and other recognitions; developing and conducting continuing education programs; publishing monographs and periodicals; reviewing and recommending publications; publicizing library needs and services; recommending legislation; providing advisory assistance; conducting many other projects and programs related to the development or improvement of library services.

Many of these activities require discussion by a planning or evaluating group, and an assessment of individual or institutional achievement. Questions have been raised concerning the manner in which the Open Meeting Policy relates to ALA's activities.

In implementing the above policy, the following general concepts should be kept in mind:

Personnel assessment areas in association activities should be structured so that no individual's right to privacy will be abridged or endangered.

Discussions of confidential information regarding an institution should not abridge the institution's right to privacy.

Information regarding individuals and institutions may be considered by the individual or institution to be confidential or highly sensitive (private) at one date, but public information at a later date; the association may need to take timing into account in identifying specific matters of privacy.

ALA members and other interested persons should be encouraged to attend meetings where business is conducted; closed meetings should be planned only when they are essential to protect privacy.

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Matters affecting the privacy of individuals or institutions frequently include such areas as:

Deliberations concerning the performance of personal members, or institutions, or paid staff of the ALA and its units.

Deliberations concerning professional achievements, contributions, and qualifications of members being considered for office.

Deliberations concerning the qualifications of individuals or institutions being considered for grants, scholarships, or similar recognition.

Deliberations concerning the ability of an institution to meet published criteria or standards.

Deliberations concerning contractual matters, and matters with legal or financial implications for individuals or institutions.

Deliberations concerning awards to individuals for achievements and/or creative works.

Deliberations concerning awards to institutions or organizations.

The work of the Association should normally be accomplished at the Annual and Midwinter meetings, in sessions open to all of the membership. It is the responsibility of the chair of each unit to insure that the spirit of the open meeting policy is enforced. Each chairperson should identify any need for a closed portion of a meeting at the time the meeting is announced; that fact should be made known in advance. No matters other than those requiring protection of privacy may be discussed during that time period. All actions taken in closed session must be reported to the membership of the parent unit and made public at the earliest possible time after the closed session.

Although a unit's workload may be such that some of its business must be conducted through correspondence or meetings held outside of conference, notice of meetings held outside of Annual Conference and Midwinter Meeting must be announced prior to the meeting and the results of the meeting made public at the earliest possible time.

Questions or complaints regarding adherence to the Open Meeting Policy should be addressed to the chief officer of the governing unit.

January 31, 1981

106.4 Rules and Regulations (cont.)

1978 AR  
Exhibit #5

\* 106.4.3 Open Meetings

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All meetings of the American Library Association and its units are open to all members and to members of the press. Registration requirements apply. Closed meetings may be held only for the discussion of matters affecting the privacy of individuals or institutions.

106.4.4 Distribution of Materials at ALA Council and Membership Meetings

Permission for the distribution of materials within the ALA Council and Membership Meeting areas, if the material is not official documentation, must be granted by the Executive Director or the ALA President.

106.4.5 Media Access to Information

National library media, and other media making a request, shall receive all information and documentation that is sent to Council and Executive Board prior to meetings of these bodies except, in the opinion of the Executive Board, anything affecting the privacy of individuals or institutions, and shall receive all information presented to those registering at meetings of the Association.

106.4.6 Purpose of Midwinter Meetings

The ALA Midwinter Meeting shall be devoted primarily to carrying on the business of the Association through meetings of the Council, boards and committees. There are to be no programs, general business or membership meetings of the divisions, sections or Round Tables except as a limited number of program meetings, institutes, conferences or workshops may be specifically authorized by the Executive Board.

106.4.7 Meetings of the Executive Board

The ALA Executive Board shall meet during the weeks beginning with the last Mondays in April and October, subject to availability of its members. Dates shall be selected and published well in advance.

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AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Item: CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS Item Number: 204.15  
Approved by: ALA Council Page: 1 of 2  
Issue Date: June, 1971 Supersedes: \_\_\_\_\_

Open meetings

VOTED, That it be the established policy of the American Library Association that all meetings of the Association be declared open to all members and recognized members of the press with closed meetings being only for the discussion of matters affecting privacy of individuals or institutions.

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GROUND RULES FOR COMMITTEES OR OTHER UNITS:

1. The chairmen of committees or other units should notify the editor of AMERICAN LIBRARIES, in time for publication in advance of the meeting, of the date, place, and subject of meetings held outside the Midwinter Meeting or Annual Conference.
2. If possible the meeting room should be large enough to accomodate the expected number of Observers.
3. It is desirable that members of the press be provided with the agenda for meetings, not necessarily with documentation.
4. Requests for information from observers should be accepted by the committees.
5. The committee may hold executive sessions for discussion of matters, affecting the privacy of individuals or institutions. Whenever possible, such sessions, for the convenience of observers should be grouped at the beginning or end of meetings.

GROUND RULES FOR OBSERVERS:

1. Observers are asked to notify the committees of their planned attendance in advance of the meetings.
2. Observers are asked to bear in mind the obligations of the committees to transact Association business.
3. Observers are requested to bear in mind space restrictions which may sometimes prevail and recognize that space provisions for observers may be limited by factors beyond the committee's control.

## AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

*Item:* CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS      *Item Number:* 204.15  
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*Issue Date:* June, 1971      *Supersedes:* \_\_\_\_\_

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### INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS:

The American Library Association welcomes the press to the meetings of the Association and its units.

The Press Room and the Press Table at meetings of the Membership, Council, and Executive Board, are intended to help the Press cover meetings of those bodies.

The National Library Press will receive all information and documentation that is sent to the Council and Executive Board prior to meetings of those bodies except, in the case of the Executive Board, anything affecting the privacy of individuals and institutions, and all information presented to those registering at meetings of the Association.

The National Library Press is welcome to attend meetings of ALA units held outside the Annual and Midwinter meetings. It is desirable that the Press be provided with the agenda of those meetings, not necessarily with all documentation.

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Finally, it should be borne in mind by all that it is the committee's meeting and the chairman should take all steps necessary to carry out the purpose of the meeting.