

PLA Board Responsibilities

Commitment to PLA

A Board member should have a strong interest in the present and future of PLA. Board members should embrace the core purpose of PLA and have enthusiasm for assisting the Association in establishing and realizing the goals and objectives of the PLA strategic plan. Service on PLA division-level committees, task forces, or advisory groups demonstrates interest in PLA but is not a prerequisite for service on the Board. Board members should be willing to serve as ambassadors on behalf of PLA and to fundraise for PLA through relationships with vendors and other current and potential partners. Board members should attend the PLA Conference(s) (as circumstances allow).

The PLA Board of Directors has general oversight and direction of the affairs of the association. It conducts all business pertaining to the association, and has authority to make decisions for the association during the periods between meetings.

Specific expectations:

1. Attend all Board meetings (face-to-face and virtual) in their entirety.
2. Vote on all Board actions (face-to-face and virtual).
3. Assume responsibility for implementing and advancing the strategic plan.
4. Review, assess, and oversee policies and actions taken by the association.
5. Adopt programs to carry out the association's core purpose.
6. Approve the budget.
7. Approve funding for new initiatives.
8. Support Board actions publicly even if individually one has reservations about the decision.
9. Employ a chief staff executive to carry out policy.
10. Provide the Executive Director with appropriate resources to carry out the programs adopted, and evaluate the Executive Director based upon performance.
11. Fulfill assignments as board liaisons, representatives of the association, and on Board working groups.
12. Evaluate and expeditiously follow up on actions by the Board.
13. Be available to members, individuals and groups for discussion and concerns.
14. Represent PLA within ALA and externally to peers, partners, and others, as requested.
15. Understand that the Board is a working Board and requires a significant time commitment.

The Board of Directors must work toward the greater good of the Association. In order to do so, the Board must operate as a whole and not as individuals. Each position is of equal importance to its success, and if any one Officer or Board member fails, the working ability and effectiveness of the entire Board and organization is impacted. A Board must have mutual respect among its members. Free and open discussion is encouraged in meetings.

Expectations of effective Board members:

1. Ensure that programs are responsive to PLA membership needs and support the strategic plan.
2. Listen to needs and interests of membership. Report to President and Executive Director issues or concerns from members.
3. Fulfill Board liaison assignments as well as assignments to Board working groups, committees or representative of the Association.
4. Board work is year round and Board members attend all Board meetings (face-to-face and virtual) in their entirety.
5. Evaluate and expeditiously follow up on actions taken at Board meetings.
6. Use Board meeting time effectively (intelligently); bring all important matters before the Board; present in writing any recommendations for action.
7. Prepare for each Board meeting by carefully studying the agenda and supporting materials.
8. Ask questions for clarification during the discussion period before the Board formally acts as appropriate.
9. Read Board documents and budget reports to make careful, informed decisions on issues and the future of the association.
10. Participate actively in Board decision-making by voicing opinions.
11. Support Board actions publicly even if individual reservations exist about the decision.
12. Keep abreast of PLA activities and issues by reading meeting minutes and maintain communication with member units you serve as Board liaison to.
13. Maintain constructive relationships within all units and divisions of the association.
14. Send copies of correspondence (or CCs on e-mail) to Executive Director, President, or other members of the Board as appropriate.
15. Read thoroughly: PLA foundation documents, *ALA Handbook of Organization*, PLA Bylaws, the Board orientation manual, and other materials pertaining to the job.
16. Study ALA and PLA program information to be a knowledgeable (intelligent) source of information for members and nonmembers.

Financial Expectations of Board members:

Board members are expected to fully support the Association's activities, including:

1. Attend the PLA Conference.
2. Support development of current and new partnerships with current and potential partners including but not limited to other library support organizations, external non-profit organizations related to libraries and others as appropriate.
3. Support new PLA fundraising efforts.
4. Recognize the possibility that they may be called on to spend additional days at ALA and PLA conferences for special Board work sessions.

Role and Relationship of PLA Executive Director to the Board

1. Informs the Board of Directors, members, and others on the conditions of the association and all important factors influencing it.

2. Plans, formulates, and recommends for the approval of the Board of Directors basic policies and programs that will further the organization's objectives.
3. Executes all decisions of the Board of Directors except when other assignments are specifically made by the Board.
4. Attends all the meetings of the Board of Directors. In consultation with president, prepares Board meeting agendas. Is responsible for Board meeting records, in addition to regular reports to the Board of Directors.
5. Refers all issues, problems, financial questions, operations matters, or ancillary considerations that may arise exceeding defined level of authority to the Board.
6. Serves as staff liaison to the Budget and Finance Committee, and works with B&F to develop, recommend, and, upon approval by the Board, operate within an annual budget. Ensures that all funds, physical assets, and other property of the association are appropriately safeguarded and administered, and is responsible for financial management.
7. Provides the necessary liaison and staff support to the Board and committees to enable them to properly perform their functions. Sees that committees' decisions and recommendations are submitted to the Board of Directors.
8. Develops, for purposes of day-to-day administration, specific policies, procedures, and programs to effectively and efficiently implement the general policies established by the Board of Directors.
9. Executes contracts and commitments as may be authorized by the Board of Directors for approval.
10. Recruits, hires, trains, and motivates association staff, and is responsible for promotions and terminations within the framework of ALA HR policies and practices.
11. Carries out such other general responsibilities as may be delegated by the officers and the Board of Directors.

Communication- about PLA to ALA and externally

12. Every third year serves on the ALA Senior Management team.
13. Represents the association by establishing and maintaining effective relationships with other organizations external to ALA—both public and private—and sees that the positions of the association are enhanced in accordance with the policies and objectives of each organization.
14. Maintains effective relationships between PLA and ALA and its divisions. Shares information, communicates concerns, participates in governance through attending meeting such as:
 - ALA Joint Meeting of ALA Board and 11 Division Executive Committees
 - Joint meeting of ALA Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC) and the divisions

Rules and procedures for Board Meetings

During its meetings, the official parliamentary authority of the Association guides the Board, which is currently the *Robert's Rules of Order*. However, because the Board is a small group and its meetings tend to be more informal, *strict* adherence to parliamentary procedure is not always

necessary. Board meetings do not include a parliamentarian. In the case of a procedural question, the rules of *Robert's Rules of Order* prevail.

Closed Sessions of the Board

Closed sessions are used only to discuss matters affecting the privacy of individuals, institutions, and the association. The presiding officer reports out following each closed session in order to summarize the discussion and/or note any formal actions taken by the Board. Actions taken in closed session are announced, and votes are confirmed in an open session.

Closed sessions are noted on the agenda. Individual Board members may request a closed session if they feel an issue warrants one. The Board may also decide to go into closed session during a meeting if the item under discussion affects the privacy of an individual, an institution, ALA, or PLA.

The Board is bound by ethics and common sense in observing rules of confidentiality and silence regarding discussions in closed session. In general, if public awareness of the issue will violate the privacy of an individual or institution, the session should be closed. Board members should not reveal the elements or substance of the discussion. If Board members are uncertain what they may reveal, this should be discussed during the closed session.

Voting at meetings

The Board makes its decisions through the voting process. At Board meetings, a majority vote rules. During meetings, Board members indicate their vote by raising their hand and/or by saying "aye", "no", or "abstain" as requested by the chair. The chair notes the outcome of a vote orally, i.e., saying, "the vote passes," "the vote is unanimous", "the vote fails." The chair may report the "ayes" and "nays".

Votes taken in closed session must be reported out, with the vote confirmed in open session.

Voting between meetings

On occasion, the Board may need to conduct business or take votes outside of its regular meetings. This may occur for the following reasons:

At a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the Board decides it needs additional information or staff work before voting and agrees to vote later;

A decision needs to be made immediately, an opportunity arises, or a crisis develops that requires Board action between regularly scheduled meetings of the Board.

Voting between meetings may be conducted via conference call or electronically. If a conference call is held or voting is held electronically, Board members are asked to confirm their vote in open session at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.