



Reference and User Services Association  
A division of the American Library Association

# RUSA Futures Town Hall

# Welcome & Today's Agenda

- Welcome
- Context for the creation of the RUSA Futures Task Force
- RUSA Futures Task Force: charge, members, work thus far, recommendations
- Your RUSA membership dollars and the RUSA budget
- Open discussion / Q&A
- We're collecting feedback from RUSA members today and until August 21
  - Link: <https://forms.gle/42tcENWccJ5SyMK28>





# Context: Creation of the RUSA Futures Task Force

- Effects of the pandemic across professional associations nationwide are impacting traditional revenue streams and putting budgetary pressure on associations to swiftly evolve and adapt
  - Relevant ALA initiatives include the Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE) & [Forward Together](#), and Operating Agreement Workgroup [[.doc file](#)]
  - Actions taken by divisions include the recent merger of ALCTS, LITA and LLAMA to form Core [[news release](#)]
- Other membership and budgetary considerations
  - Over the last dozen years, RUSA membership has declined by approximately 45%
  - ASGCLA's recent changes have financial implications for RUSA as we share staffing costs



# Context: Creation of the RUSA Futures Task Force

- We sent a [letter to the membership](#) on April 30 summarizing those key points
- In the letter, we asked you for your feedback on what we'd shared. A few representative responses included:
  - "I am heartened by what is happening with CORE, and I'd like to see RUSA be as bold as it needs to be to evolve."
  - "As long as [my section] continues to exist in some form, that's what's important to me."
  - "RUSA is in many ways a mini-clone of ALA (i.e. we have Sections, ALA has Divisions...) and we cannot maintain the overhead associated with our long-term organizational structure (as ALA cannot with theirs) ... I think we can be successful as a diaspora. We have a lot of worthwhile efforts going on, and the associated overhead, but similar to MPOW we have to take a hard look at costs and benefits -- and make hard choices."
  - "RUSA is essential to the future of library services. I love how I always find useful information whenever I browse the website."



# RUSA Futures Task Force Charge

The [RUSA Futures Task Force](#), reporting to the RUSA Board, is charged to investigate and recommend a course of action for the transition or dissolution of RUSA. Priority will be given to preserving and continuing key activities, publications, and member benefits as well as advocating for reference and user services as a key element of our profession. This Task Force will also undertake the duties of Budget & Finance in this time period.

# Task Force Members

Christina Pryor, RUSA President-Elect

Rebecca Eve Graff, RUSA RSS Representative

Emily Hamstra, RUSA CODES Representative

Shannon D. Jones, RUSA ETS Representative

Jenny McElroy, RUSA HS Representative

Mike Paxton, RUSA STARS Representative

Andy Spackman, RUSA BRASS Representative

Bill Ladewski, RUSA Executive Director







# RUSA Futures Activities

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# SWOT

## Strengths

- RUSA staff
- Strong identification with sections
- Networking
- Programming and continuing education

## Opportunities

- Partnership opportunities outside of ALA
- Create more welcoming home for all staff
- Expand to include all public services staff
- Regional training and online learning

## Weaknesses

- Complex organizational structure
- Financially unsustainable as is
- Lack of clear ties to RUSA from sections
- Recent shift toward academic representation

## Threats

- Economic loss (pre and during COVID)
- Declining membership
- Membership recruitment issues
- Alternative training resources



# Recommendations (July 2020)

1. Investigate how to maintain current, independent ALA Division status.
  - a. Modifications to better serve our membership
  - b. Reaching out to non-current RUSA members (potential and lapsed members)
  - c. Timeline for a trial period of extended independence
  - d. Monitoring viability and regularly assess need for new RUSA Futures Task Force
2. If remaining an independent ALA Division is not possible explore:
  - a. Merger with Core
  - b. Creation of sections in PLA and ACRL that work collaboratively
3. Decision on independent status feasibility should be made by November 2020
4. Prioritize communications and member engagement





# \$67 Membership Cost Breakdown



**\$18.76**

(29%)

**Membership Services**

**\$13.40**

(20%)

**Operations**

**\$13.40**

(20%)

**Awards**

**\$12.06**

(18%)

**Educational Services**

**\$8.71**

13%

**RUSQ**

- Member database and listserv management
- RUSA Connect management & maintenance
- Member marketing and website support

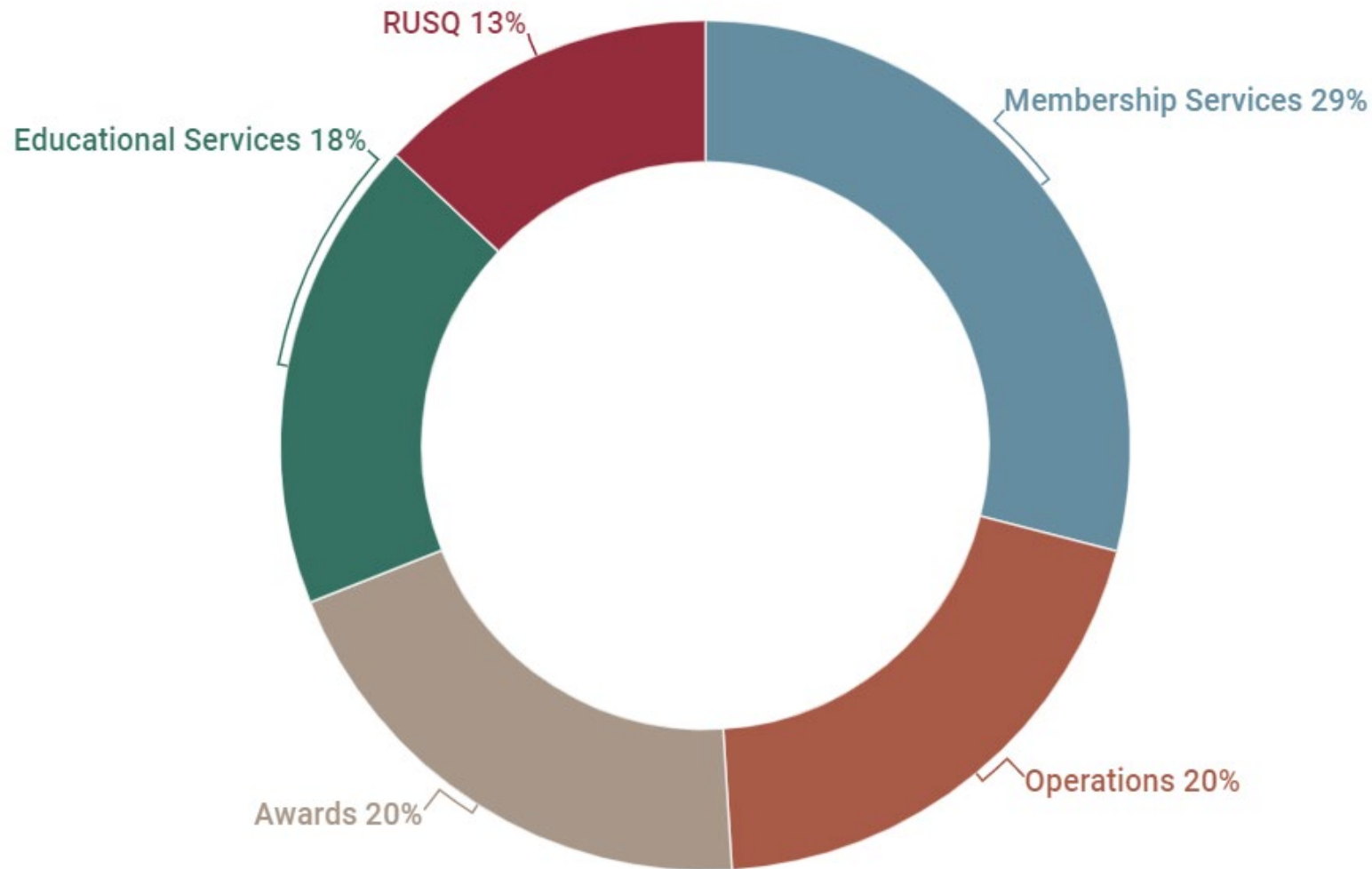
- Liaison to ALA departments & offices (finance, IT, etc.)
- Appointment and volunteer database management
- Virtual meeting request management

- Conference Award management- Annual & Midwinter
  - Book & Media, Achievement, Carnegie
- Awards database management
- Award Committees support

- E-learning management
- Conference Education Mgmt.- Annual & Midwinter
- Marketing and website management

- Production costs of RUSQ fulfilled by ALA Production Services

# Membership Rev (Budgeted) \$168,000

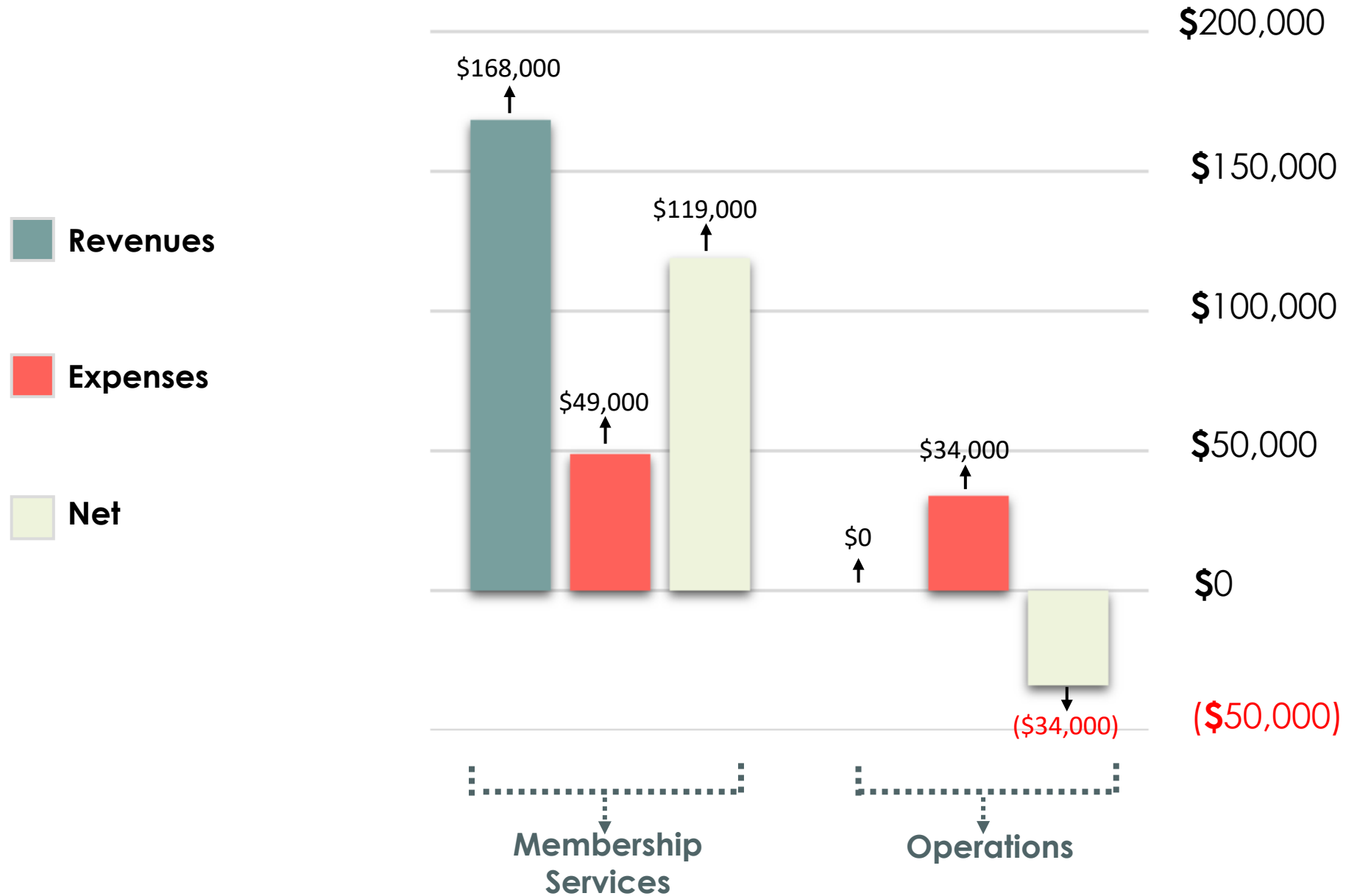


- **Membership Services (29%)**
  - Member database and listserv management
  - RUSA Connect management & maintenance
  - Member marketing and website support
- **Operations (20%)**
  - Liaison to ALA departments & offices (finance, IT, etc.)
  - Appointment and volunteer database management
  - Virtual meeting request management
- **Awards (20%)**
  - Conference Award management- Annual & Midwinter
    - Book & Media, Achievement, Carnegie
  - Awards database management
  - Award Committees support
- **Educational Services (18%)**
  - E-learning management
  - Conference Education Mgmt.– Annual & Midwinter
  - Marketing and website management
- **RUSQ (13%)**
  - Production costs of RUSQ fulfilled by ALA Production Services



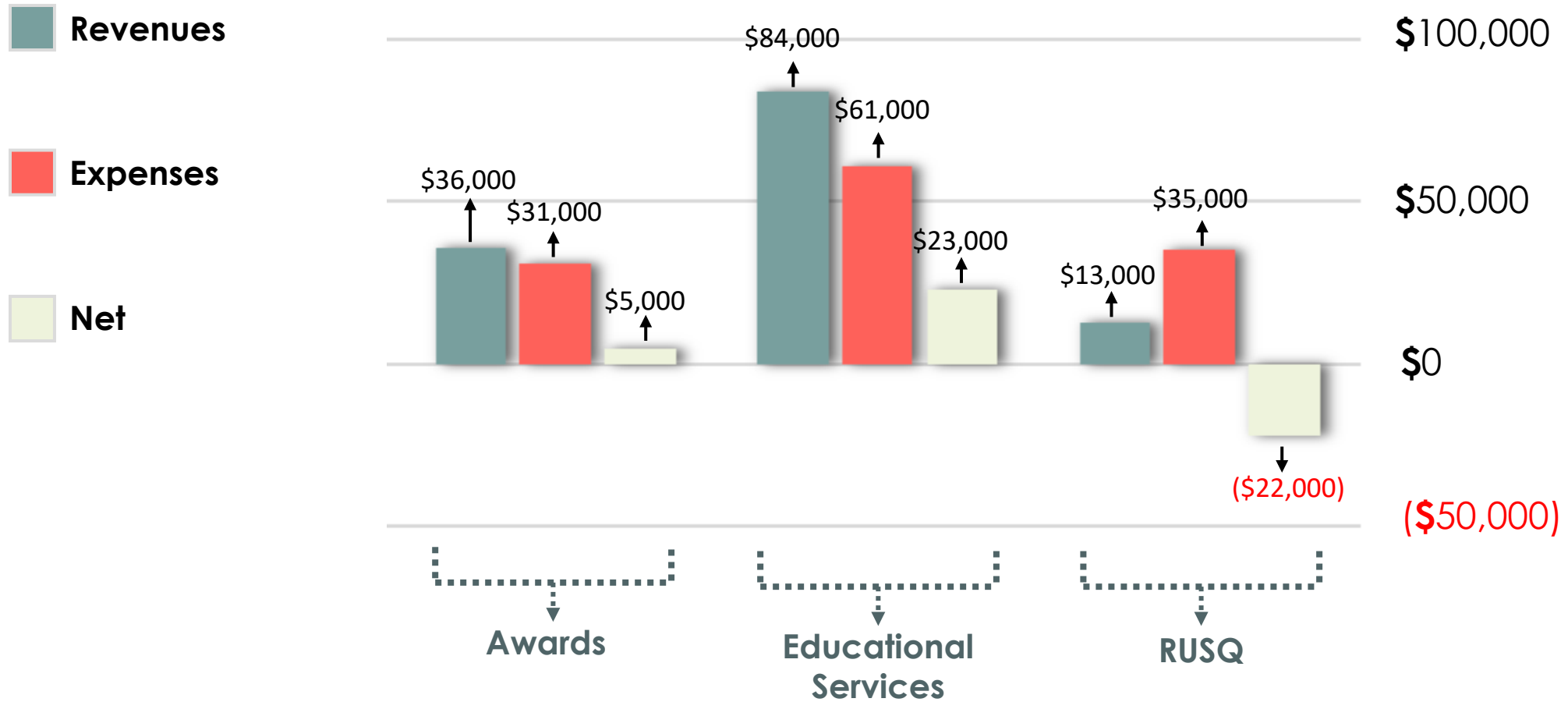


# RUSA Product Lines



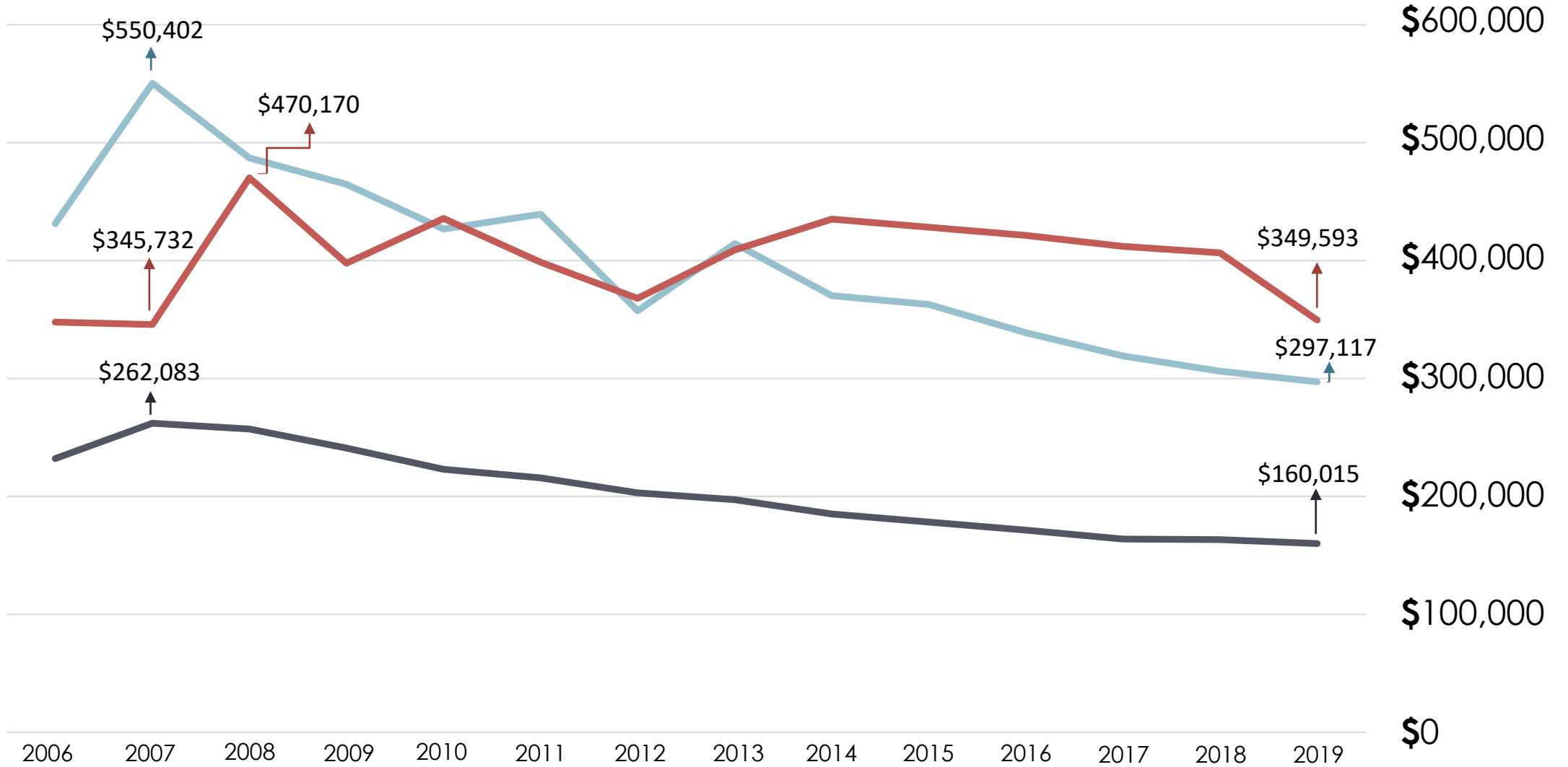


# RUSA Product Lines





# RUSA Historical Revenue & Expense



■ Total Membership Revenue

■ Total Revenue

■ Total Expenses



# Reminder - we want to know what you think!

- We'll take a look at the early responses at the end of today's Town Hall, so now is a great chance to share your thoughts or edit an earlier response
- Link: <https://forms.gle/42tcENWccJ5SyMK28>
- You'll be required to sign in to a Google Account to limit to 1 response per person, but we won't see your email unless you give it to us in the final question
- You can edit your response
  - By clicking "Edit your response" on the confirmation page
  - By going to the form URL again
- The form will stay open until August 21

Open discussion/Q&A



# Review of form responses so far & reminders

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# Thank you!

We'll answer questions as time permits.

Additional questions or comments?

We want to hear from you.

[rusa@ala.org](mailto:rusa@ala.org)

