

**YALSA Board of Directors**  
ALA Midwinter Meeting 2021, Virtual  
**January 22-26, 2021**

**Topic:** Short-Term Leave Plan

**Background:** The pandemic continues to impact volunteer members in unforeseen ways, which necessitates that YALSA institute a plan that supports all volunteers' potential need for short-term leave during their term of service. Previously, member volunteers' short-term leave requests were addressed on a case-by-case basis. The plan supports member volunteers and, in turn, the association's work by anticipating next steps for possible short-term leaves by YALSA leaders and committee members. This document is brought forward by Amanda Barnhart, Todd Krueger, and Kelly Czarnecki.

**Action Required:** Action

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**Overview:**

Emergency situations are often unanticipated events that create hardships on impacted individuals. As it is predicted that this upcoming change in seasons will be followed by a potentially greater impact of the coronavirus disease upon the nation, it would be advantageous to support member volunteers' need for short-term leave that would absolve them on a temporary basis from their obligations required by their volunteer role.

Also, enacting precautionary measures earlier is likely to alleviate additional stress and scrambling by the other committee members, board liaisons, and additional support members. Having such conversations early may better prepare volunteer members for the potential expectations needing to cover and facilitate group work. While this document has been developed to address an immediate issue, it's purpose remains relevant beyond the duration of the coronavirus disease and can be implemented for any emergency situation experienced by a volunteer member.

YALSA Volunteers  
Short-Term Leave Plan

In order to ensure support for YALSA member volunteers and that the cumulative contributions of YALSA volunteer groups continues uninterrupted, as much as is possible and responsible, a Short-Term Leave Plan is needed to assist YALSA activities in meeting the goals set forth in the

Implementation Plan. In the event that a YALSA Volunteer is temporarily unable to perform their responsibilities due to an emergency situation, such short-term leave of absence is defined as a period of time of 3 weeks and up to 8 weeks. In this document, a YALSA member volunteer includes those individuals actively serving on a current YALSA volunteer group with the position title of Committee Member, Chair, Editor, Manager, or who serve on the YALSA Board.

The plan's details include courses of action defined by the member volunteers' role and are explained below. Should a YALSA member volunteer determine that their short-term leave needs to be **extended**, the person taking leave should immediately notify the President. Upon the return of a short term leave, the volunteer member will quickly communicate with the President and other support members with a brief update. It is the responsibility of that volunteer to connect with the appropriate individuals to assess the work missed and become re-involved in the collaborative process.

Should a member volunteer determine that they are unable to continue in their role, they will immediately notify the President, who will inform the appropriate support members. The chair and board liaison will become active in the recruitment for a replacement and offer recommendations to the President, if a replacement is warranted.

Although this document supports short-term leave requests, the YALSA Board understands that some situations may require alternative solutions beyond those listed in this document. Should anyone wish to explore such options and is currently a volunteer or is considering volunteer opportunities, please contact the current YALSA President.

When an short term leave is needed, the appropriate course of action will be undertaken:

#### YALSA Board Roles and Responsibilities

All board members are responsible for communicating short-term absences with the President and Executive Director.

- An active **YALSA Executive Committee Member** includes those individuals currently serving in the role of an elected officer:
  - **President** - According to the YALSA Bylaws, the President-Elect “shall have the duties of President in the absence of the President.” Some liaison duties may be delegated to the Immediate Past President.
  - **President-Elect/Immediate Past President** - The President will temporarily step in to complete any appointments or other business that have an upcoming and

immediate deadline. Liaison responsibilities will be distributed amongst the standing board committee members of which the individual has been assigned.

- **Fiscal Officer** - The YALSA Executive Director will share any financial updates, if requested. Liaison responsibilities will be distributed amongst the standing board committee members of which the individual has been assigned.
  - **Secretary** - The YALSA Board meets informally once a month in a virtual environment and formally twice a year. For these sessions, the President will request a volunteer or appoint a volunteer to take meeting minutes. Liaison responsibilities will be distributed amongst the standing board committee members of which the individual has been assigned.
  - **Division Councilor** - The President will communicate with the Youth Council Caucus to explore whether the AASL and/or ALSC Councilor may forward communications to the President. Liaison responsibilities will be distributed amongst the standing board committee members of which the individual has been assigned.
- An active YALSA Board member includes those individuals currently serving on the YALSA Board with the position title of **Director-at-Large** or those serving in an **Ex-Officio** capacity (i.e. the Board Fellow, Advocate, Financial Advancement Committee chair, Organization and Bylaws chair).
    - Liaison responsibilities (if there are any) will be distributed amongst the standing board committee members of which the individual has been assigned, with the exception of the Financial Advance Committee chair and Organization and Bylaws chair. Responsibilities for these two chair positions will be prioritized and re-distributed to board members who have experience in either group.

#### YALSA Volunteer Roles

- An active **YALSA Manager** or **YALSA Editor** includes those individuals currently serving in the capacity of volunteer member with the position title of Member Manager or Member Editor.
  - The Hub Manager
  - YALS Editor
  - JRLYA Editor
  - YALSAblog Manager
  - Teen Programming HQ Manager

- For any of the roles listed above, volunteers in these specific positions need to identify an individual currently volunteering through their advisory board, who may be able to step in and provide temporary leadership. This identified individual need not assume the complete responsibilities of the position, only temporarily step in to facilitate the completion of work and would collaborate with the board liaison over any concerns or issues. This individual will need to be familiar with YALSA’s EDI Plan and will approach the work with a DEI lens.
  - The Manager/Editor will need to communicate their recommendation to their board liaison.
  - Should any short term leaves be requested, the President will need to be immediately notified of the request and the arrangement prepared.
- An active **YALSA Chair** includes those individuals currently serving on a YALSA jury, committee, taskforce, or advisory board with the position title of Chair or Co-Chair.
    - The Chair will notify their Board Liaison and/or the Membership Manager of the absence duration, who in turn notifies the President to ensure all support members for that volunteer group are aware of the situation.
    - The board liaison will step in as a temporary Chair or share Co-Chair responsibilities with a committee member of the group so that the work of the group is supported. The decision of a co-chair should be pre-arranged by the Chair and communicated with the board liaison.
  - An active **YALSA Committee Member** includes those individuals currently serving on a YALSA jury, committee, taskforce, or advisory board with the position title of Member Volunteer.

Should a YALSA Committee Member in a given volunteer group require an short-term leave:

- The Committee Member will notify their chair and/or the Membership Manager of the situation and absence duration, who in turn notifies the President to ensure all support members for that volunteer group are aware of the situation.
- The group will continue to complete their work as best as they are able in the absence of the individual and the chair will notify the group with a statement about the individual’s immediate short-term leave of absence.

Should more than one YALSA Committee Member in a given group require an short-term leave:

- A decision will be made by the volunteer group's support members to determine priority tasks for the remaining or assess whether a temporary hiatus of the group is warranted. The decision will be communicated to the volunteer group by the chair.

*Document created: October 22, 2020*

**Questions to Consider:**

- *What type of privacy is needed for volunteers? Is there a YALSA resource that refers to volunteer privacy that can guide leaders in how to share updates with their groups?*
- *Does the time period of 3-8 weeks provide ample support?*

**Financial Implications:**

Some staff time will be required to include this plan within YALSA resources or add it to the website.

**Measuring Impact:**

The intent of this document is to support member volunteers in the knowledge that they can take leave and attend to personal challenges without YALSA volunteer work causing them additional stress.

**Alignment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Goals:**

Member volunteers engage in work through virtual environments and this document provides an antidote to a few specific white culture characteristics:

- Sense of urgency. The actions in this document require critical thinking and pre-planning that supports good decisions amidst an environment of urgency.
- Either/or thinking. Rather than determining whether to take or not take leave, this document supports a path for a volunteer to explore alternative solutions with the YALSA President and strikes down the one-size-fits-all approach.
- Perfectionism. Allows for less perfectionism and is an antidote to the negative perceptions against those requesting short term leave.

An emergency situation has a broad definition and accounts for many different potential needs from those serving in various communities. Many members sign-up for volunteer work to advance their career, enhance their peer-to-peer network, or make a difference in the field, etc. and should not be penalized over the impact of emergency situations.

Although the idea for this document originated from the impact of the coronavirus, short term leave will support different types of situations beyond this limited duration, including but not limited to the following:

- Black and brown communities who are disproportionately affected by systemic racism.
- Individuals who may have an invisible or visible disability.

- Caregivers who conduct largely unpaid work are at “greater risk for poor physical and mental health, including depression and anxiety.”
- LIS students, part-time library staff, or library staff who comprise the lower ranks of their organization’s structure. These individuals are more likely to not have insurance.
- Library staff working with the public, especially those professionals in schools or academia, who are exposed on a more regular basis to their students’ trauma and therefore are more greatly susceptible to secondary trauma.
- Furloughed or laid off library staff, as well as those shifting career paths.

Enacting these steps in support of member volunteer short-term leave requests is a preventative measure that will temporarily release expectations of volunteers needing to utilize the benefits of short-term leave, as well as support the continuance of volunteer group work. Should leave requests occur, volunteer group projects should not be derailed much and such projects often generate added value for members.

**Proposed Board Action:**

The YALSA Board approves the plan and agrees to assist volunteer member Managers, Editors, and Chairs with its implementation.

The YALSA Board directs the YALSA Organization and Bylaws Committee to identify appropriate YALSA resources that should contain this document and update them accordingly.

**Resources:**

- YALSA Bylaws  
[http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/BYLAWS\\_2017approvedchanges.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/BYLAWS_2017approvedchanges.pdf)
- Health Equity Considerations and Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups,  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/race-ethnicity.html>
- YALSA’s Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan,  
[http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/2018\\_YALSA\\_EDI%20Plan.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/2018_YALSA_EDI%20Plan.pdf)
- Women, Caregiving, and COVID-19,  
<https://www.cdc.gov/women/caregivers-covid-19/index.html>
- The Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture,  
<https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/white-supremacy-culture-characteristics.html>