

ALA President

The role of the ALA President is to be the Association's chief spokesperson and to work closely with the ALA's Executive Director in identifying and promoting library issues nationwide and internationally. The ALA President is recognized as the Association's leader by its members. They're vital to the governance of the Association and serve as presiding officer at Executive Board and Council meetings. In order to support these roles, the ALA president receives professional media training, professional training and assistance from ALA's parliamentarian, and significant staff support as outlined below. Based on the experience of successful Past Presidents, an incoming ALA President should realistically expect that this position will be equal to at least a half-time job.

The ALA President also serves as President of the ALA-Allied Professional Association* [ALA-APA].
**Individuals considering ALA/APA office are encouraged to consult with their employer regarding any restrictions regarding lobbying activities or service on the Board of a 501(c)6 organization, and to consult with ALA staff regarding accommodation to any such restriction.*

Duties and Responsibilities

Listed below are the primary responsibilities of the president, president-elect, and immediate past president:

By virtue of office or practice the **president-elect** is a/the:

- Chair of the ALA Committee on Appointments
- Chair of the Council Committee on Committees
- Co-chair (along with the BARC chair) and presiding officer of the Planning and Budget Assembly
- President-elect of the ALA-APA
- Presiding officer for Council, Membership, and the Executive Board in the absence of the president
- Member of the ALA and ALA-APA (ALA-Allied Professional Association) Council
- Member of the ALA Executive Board
- Member of the Executive Board's Executive Committee.
- Member, ex-officio with vote, of the Board of Trustees of the Freedom to Read Foundation

By virtue of the office or practice, the **president-elect** also:

- Serves as spokesperson for the Association in the absence of the president or when asked to do so
- Appoints members to the ALA Committees
- Appoints Executive Board members to serve as liaisons during their presidential term
- May select a thematic focus, in keeping with the prevailing ALA message or promotional campaigns, for use in the development of conference programs, including the President's Program, in public relations efforts, and in membership promotion efforts
- Prepares an inaugural address to be presented at the Inaugural Celebration
- Represents the Association at meetings, conferences, receptions, legislative hearings, and other events
- May attend the Committee on Legislation's Legislative Retreat in Washington, D.C.

- Provides a quarterly written president-elect report on plans, goals, and activities to date. The report may be presented at ALA Membership Meetings, the Membership Information Session, or ALA Board/Council Meetings.
- May assist the president with speaking order at Board meetings.

By virtue of office or practice the **president** is a/the:

- Presiding officer for Council, Membership, and the Executive Board
- Chair of the Executive Board's Executive Committee
- President and presiding officer of the ALA-APA
- Member of the ALA and ALA-APA (Allied Professional Association) Council
- Member of the Planning and Budget Assembly
- Member of the ALA Executive Board
- Member, ex-officio with vote, of the Board of Trustees of the Freedom to Read Foundation

By virtue of the office or practice, the **president** also:

- Serves as chief spokesperson for the Association
- Promotes ALA's programs, priorities, and key messages
- Leads the Association in planning for the future
- Works closely with members to ensure that their ideas and concerns help drive the overall direction of the association
- Generates enthusiasm and support among members for the Association's goals
- Develops presidential focus areas in context with current ALA strategic directions and activities.
- Plans the format, speakers and program for their President's Program at Annual Conference in partnership with Conference Services
- Carries out their programs and projects during the presidential year
- Attends a number of selected state, national, and international library association venues, including IFLA
- Represents the Association at meetings, conferences, receptions, legislative hearings, and other events
- Represents ALA in various media forums throughout the year
- Attends the Committee on Legislation's Legislative Retreat in Washington, D.C.
- Attends and makes remarks at Library Legislative Day in Washington, D.C. (coordinated by the ALA Washington Office) – early May
- Represents the Board and serves as moderator at the spring Staff Awards Ceremony – in conjunction with Executive Board Spring Meeting in April
- Presides at the opening of the exhibits at Annual Conference
- Presides at the Annual Conference Opening General Session, Awards Ceremony, Closing General Session, and Inaugural Ceremony.
- Presides at the Executive Board Candidates Forum
- Provides a written quarterly president report on initiatives and activities. The report may be presented at the ALA Membership Meeting, Membership Information Session, or ALA Board/Council Meetings.
- Presides over ALA-APA meeting at Annual Conference
- Writes bi-monthly column for *American Libraries*
- Fills vacancies on ALA committees as they occur during the year (Note that this responsibility is assumed to be delegated to the president)

By virtue of office or practice, the **immediate past president** is a/the:

- Chair of the Board Effectiveness committee: evaluates Board performance at the conclusion of every session and coordinates the Board Effectiveness sessions at the Spring and Fall Executive Board meetings
- Board liaison to the Round Table Coordinating Assembly
- Presides at the Presidential and if applicable, Treasurer Candidates Forum
- Chairs the evaluation process for the ALA executive director. Develops the written performance evaluation in consultation with the president, president-elect, treasurer and other members of the Executive Board

Additional duties, responsibilities, and opportunities may also arise during the year.

Traits & Attributes of ALA President-elect Candidates

(Developed by 2012 Nominating Committee- expanded by 2015 and 2016 Nominating Committees)

- Outstanding ability to speak publicly and deal with media/legislative interactions on the state, national and international levels
- Leadership, management and organizational skills particularly for leading Council and Executive Board; strong ability to build consensus
- Sees the broad ALA picture and has a thorough knowledge of all aspects of ALA, its governing bodies, units, and its procedures and goals
- Passionate about libraries of all types, our profession and our values and ALA's mission;
- Fiscal experience and knowledge of sizable budgets
- Someone who recognizes and voices the reality of our environments, circumstances, opportunities, and situations, and works toward moving the Association forward
- Willing and able to advocate for libraries of all types
- Responsive, nimble, flexible and able to adapt to a changing, fast-paced environment
- Is aware of the duties and time commitment required of the position and has sufficient organizational and personal support
- Comfortable in networking and building alliances with people and organizations outside of the library world

Frequently asked Questions by potential candidates for ALA President-elect

Q: *What is the time commitment expected of the ALA President-elect and President?*

Both the ALA President-elect and President receive many invitations to speak, to visit chapter or other association conferences, or to represent ALA at other functions. Each officer's travel schedule is discretionary. Depending on the officer's professional and personal situation, they may choose to travel a lot or a little. Members do want to see the officers, and there are times when one or both of the officers must be available to represent the Association, but it is possible to develop a sensible travel schedule that allows the officer to be out and about without having a disastrous effect on their job and personal life. At a minimum, both the ALA President-elect and President are expected to attend the Winter/January event and Annual Conference as well as the Spring and Fall Executive Board meetings (held at ALA headquarters in Chicago in April and October respectively) as well as participate in monthly conference calls with the Executive Board and the Executive Committee of the Executive Board. Most ALA Presidents also attend the annual meeting of the International Federations of Library Associations (IFLA) which is generally held in August in a venue abroad.

In addition to meeting attendance, ALA Presidents receive 6 to 10 media requests per week. These include telephone interviews with reporters from radio, print and Web media. The ALA president also participates in multiple face-to-face interviews with high-level editors/reporters during Media Day in New York or Washington, D.C. and there may be an occasional network broadcast opportunity that will require the ALA President to travel to a network affiliate location.

The President-elect and President have non-travel commitments that include making appointments to the various ALA and Council committees, responding to written communications from members, preparing reports to the Board and Council, etc. Additionally, the President and President-elect may have regular (weekly or bi-weekly) telephone conversations with the ALA Executive Director and the Director of the Office of ALA Governance.

Q: *What kind of financial support does ALA provide the ALA President during their term in office?*

The successful candidate serves on the ALA Executive Board for three years: one year as President-elect; one year as President; one year as Immediate Past President. During the President-elect and Presidential year, the individual is provided two line-item budgets. One budget is designed to cover travel and administrative expenses (such as the services of a part-time administrative assistant, postage and other general supplies). The second budget is provided to cover expenses associated with the planning and execution of the presidential initiatives. These budgets have proven to be more than adequate to cover all expenses incurred during the President-elect and Presidential years and the officer is not expected to pay for any expenses out-of-pocket without being reimbursed by ALA. ALA also pays for the individual's registration, travel and lodging at the January/Winter meetings and Annual Conferences during their years on the Executive Board.

There is no budget extended to the Immediate Past President; however, ALA does continue to pay their registration, travel and lodging at the January/Winter Meeting, Annual Conference, Spring and Fall meetings until their term on the Executive Board ends.

Q: *What other support does ALA provide the ALA President?*

ALA Headquarters and Public Policy and Advocacy Office staff assist the President and President-elect with matters relating to Association policies and procedures, strategic planning, Presidential focus and program development, invitations to and catering for conference social events, registration and housing for the January/Winter Meeting and Annual Conference, legislative matters, Congressional testimony, etc.

The staff of the Communication Marketing & Media Office (CMMO) works with the ALA President to prepare for interview opportunities by providing talking points, relevant topic research, and offering suggestions on how to effectively communicate with reporters/hosts. The CMMO office organizes a full-day media relations training session for the ALA President-elect. The session includes training on how to effectively deliver ALA messages to reporters, as well as how to conduct a satellite television interview.

Since the President and President-elect share presiding duties at Board, Council, and Membership Meetings, ALA's professional parliamentarian provides parliamentary training early in the President-elect year to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with parliamentary procedure.

Presidents and Presidents-elect have also chosen to allocate a portion of their operating budgets to hire clerical or other support at their home institution to help with correspondence, scheduling, travel arrangements, and other tasks related to the ALA presidency.

Q: *What will it cost me to run for ALA President-elect?*

The cost of a campaign can fluctuate greatly depending on how much travel a candidate embarks on during the campaign period. Recent candidates have spent from \$2,000 - \$5,000 on their campaigns. Beginning with the 2009 campaign, candidates are eligible for a reimbursement up to \$1,000 from ALA to help offset the cost of website development, postage, printing and other campaign-related expenses.

Much of the cost associated with campaigning can relate to travel to chapter and affiliate meetings and division conferences during the campaign period.

While some candidates fund the costs of their campaign with personal funds, others have enlisted their supporters to hold such events as receptions and dinners at which they solicit donations from invitees. In addition, many candidates have obtained either in-kind donations or a discount for such items as photocopying, website creation and maintenance, clerical assistance, and travel funds from their home library or employer.

Q: *Does ALA provide any financial support to candidates running for ALA President-elect?*

At their 2008 Fall meeting, the ALA Executive Board approved the following support to all candidates for ALA President-elect:

- A press release issued by ALA/CMMO announcing the candidates.
- Information on the ALA election web site containing the candidate's photo, biography and statement of professional concerns.
- A link on the ALA election web site to a website maintained by the candidate.

- Electronic distribution of one message from each of the candidates for president-elect and treasurer to all ALA members.
- A complimentary meeting room/table preceding the election to hold campaign-related strategy meetings or social events. The candidates are responsible for food, beverage, meeting supplies or any other charges associated with these meetings.
- An Association-wide candidates' forum preceding the election.
- The publication of full-page candidate's statement in *American Libraries*.
- A candidate's statement limited to 300 words included in the ballot distributed to all members.
- A reimbursement of \$1,000 to each candidate for president-elect and treasurer to help offset the cost of website development, postage, printing and other campaign-related expenses.

Q: *Can the ALA President-elect and President collect honoraria for speaking engagements?*

In 1997 the Board approved a policy regarding acceptance of honoraria. The policy has been amended to include guidelines defining what constitutes speaking for or representing the Association and to add the ALA-APA as a permitted fund for designation of honoraria.

“When speaking for or representing the American Library Association, Executive Board members will designate that any payment in excess of expenses go to the Association, any ALA fund, the Freedom to Read Foundation, or the ALA-APA.

When Board members are asked to speak solely on their field of expertise, professional affiliation, or affiliation with an organization other than ALA, without reference to their current position as a member of the ALA Executive Board and without any intention that they are representing ALA or the Executive Board, the issue of honoraria is left to the individual Board member.

In any instance when it is unclear whether the Board member is speaking for or representing ALA, the ALA Executive Director shall be consulted.”

Board members who receive honoraria when speaking for ALA must be aware of the tax consequences related to the receipt of funds.

In order to avoid tax liabilities on the part of the individual Board members, honoraria checks should be made payable to ALA, the Freedom to Read Foundation, or the ALA-APA.