

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Item: Round Tables Item Number: 219.1
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 Issue Date: January/July 1976 Supersedes: _____

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION - ROUND TABLES
 STATEMENT OF ROLE AND FUNCTION

Round Tables are provided for in the ALA Bylaws, Article VII.

- I. ROUND TABLES ROLE WITHIN ALA. Round tables may conduct continuing educational activities; study and discuss topics of round table concern; work with other ALA units on joint projects; issue publications with the advice, assistance and approval of the ALA Publishing Committee; conduct projects and programs in the areas of the round table's purpose; and, recommend activities and policies to any and all units of the Association, including the Council.
- II. POLICY FUNCTIONS. As noted in the Constitution, Article VI and in the Bylaws, Article VII, there are three bodies within the Association which have the authority to determine and act for the ALA in matters of policy. These three bodies are: the Council, the Divisions, and the Membership. The Council determines all policies of the Association. Divisions have responsibilities only within the area of the particular division's concern; membership has the authority to set aside Council action as outlined in Article VI, Section 4c. Recommendations of round tables regarding a lack of policy, a new policy, or suggested changes in policy should be forwarded by the round table to the appropriate body for action. Adoption and promulgation of policies can be made only by those bodies of the ALA so authorized by the ALA Constitution and Bylaws.
- III. FINANCES. Round tables shall not incur expenses on behalf of the Association except as authorized. All round table funds are to be in the custody of the ALA Executive Board, to be accounted for and disbursed by its designated officer only upon authorization of the round table officers. In accordance with ALA policy, the ALA is responsible to all round table members to assure that round table funds are expended and accounted for properly. Any formal solicitation of funds by any ALA unit from outside organizations, agencies, groups or individuals must be authorized by the Executive Board or the ALA Executive Director; the acceptance of all unsolicited funds must be authorized by the Executive Director to assure that the terms and conditions are consistent with ALA policies and avoid conflicts of interest. The receipt and disbursement of all round table funds will be processed by the ALA administrative offices in the same manner as such fiscal activities are conducted for all ALA units. Contracts, grant agreements, project proposals, and other similar financial documents are signed by the ALA Executive Director for all ALA activities and units.

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- IV. SERVICES OF ALA TO THE ROUND TABLES. The ALA will supply to the round tables such support services as: staff liaison and related staff services; maintenance of round table membership and subscription records; accounting services (preparation of monthly budget reports, bill payment); preparing, distributing and counting ballots for annual election of round table officers; services of the Conference Arrangements Office (scheduling and announcement of annual and midwinter conference meetings and other special events, cartage of materials to the ALA meetings); services of the Public Information Office (preparation and distribution of press releases regarding round table events); specialized reference services of the ALA Headquarters Library; use of the ALA mailroom for routine and special mailings; storage of supplies, documents and equipment at the ALA warehouse; organization and storage of round table documents at the ALA Headquarters Library and archives. Round tables will deposit at least two copies of all periodicals and other round table publications in the ALA Headquarters Library. Charges for data processing services, reproduction of materials, mailings, and other similar support services will be charged to the round table at the same rate as such services are made available to other ALA units.

Staff liaison services are made available to round tables to aid the officers and members: in coordinating projects and programs with other units; in handling financial obligations and records; in orienting new round table officers and groups; in determining procedures to expedite or conduct round table projects and programs; in administrative or secretarial phases of round table activities; in planning round table activities.

- V. SERVICES OF ROUND TABLES TO THE ALA. The ALA round tables, through their programs and services, implement and enhance the overall ALA program, further the Association's Goal and Objectives, and provide an added dimension to the ALA structure. Although the round tables differ significantly among themselves in purpose and interest, they share one common characteristic: all round tables are membership units which provide an additional avenue for membership discussion, opinion, and response. In addition, the round tables provide a mechanism for continuing education to the profession. Further, the round tables' purposes and activities are supported by other units of the Association through an interrelated structure of committees, membership units, publications and staff.

At this time, round table personal membership dues range from \$2.00 to \$5.00. As membership fees charged by round tables are relatively low and as such membership fees constitute the bulk of round table funds, it is not currently possible for the round tables to bear a charge which will cover the complete direct and indirect cost of

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services to the round tables from the ALA. However, it is fair and equitable for all membership units of the Association to share in the cost of the Association, as well as in the overall benefits of the Association. Therefore, the ALA Council adopted a schedule of charges ranging from a low of 5% maximum of 10% of a round table's total dues income. The assessment of each round table shall be based on the best estimate of services performed recently by Headquarters staff.