



# Core Professional Values for the Teen Services Profession

**yalsa**  
Young Adult Library  
Services Association  
[www.ala.org/yalsa](http://www.ala.org/yalsa)

# FOREWORD

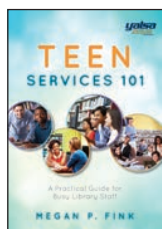
These core values were developed in 2013-2014 by the Professional Values Task Force of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). Members of the task force were Sarah Debraski, Meg Finney, Gretchen Kolderup, Amanda Murphy, Lalitha Nataraj (chair) and Vivian Wynn. YALSA's Board of Directors adopted the guidelines on June 27, 2015.

# ABOUT YALSA

The mission of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) is to expand and strengthen library services for teens. Through its member-driven advocacy, research, and professional development initiatives, YALSA builds the capacity of libraries and librarians to engage, serve, and empower teens and young adults. YALSA is a subspecialty of the American Library Association, the world's largest and oldest library organization, and a financially stable 501(c)3 not-for-profit.

To learn more about YALSA or to access other national guidelines relating to library services for and with teens, go to [www.ala.org/yalsa](http://www.ala.org/yalsa).

Get in the loop with YALSA!  
[www.ala.org/yalsa/products&publications](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/products&publications)



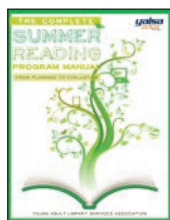
**\*New\*** Teen Services 101: A Practical Guide for Busy Library Staff | \$40/\$36 for ALA members

This guide provides practical tips and instructions on how to build core teen services into the overall library program. Whether you're a new teen services librarian, or staff in a one person library, this how-to guide on teen services can help you effectively serve teen patrons.



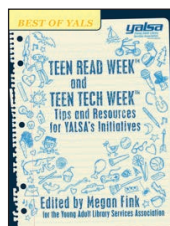
Practical Programming: The Best of YA-YAAC | \$40/\$36 for ALA members

Young adult enthusiasts around the world coalesce at YALSA's discussion list, YA-YAAC to chat about cool craft ideas, share teen programming successes, and solicit suggestions for challenges. YALSA's newest title provides librarians and library workers with a wealth of tried and true programming ideas for teens.



The Complete Summer Reading Manual: From Planning to Evaluation | \$40/\$36 for ALA members

Summer reading programs are a mainstay of public library services; whether you're embarking on your first or you think you could plan one in your sleep, you're sure to find helpful advice, sources, idea and programs descriptions in this manual.



Teen Read Week and Teen Tech Week: Tips and Resources for YALSA's Initiatives | \$35/\$31.50 for ALA members

This manual will offer guidance to librarians planning their annual events, with advice on best practices, collection development, outreach and marketing, program ideas and more.

Visit [www.alastore.ala.org](http://www.alastore.ala.org) or call 1-866-SHOP-ALA to order today.



# INTRODUCTION

This document includes **nine core values** that define professionalism for those who work for and with teens through libraries. Additionally, this document provides examples of sample indicators for practices that resonate with each value. Potential users of this tool include library administrators, teen services library staff, and faculty at graduate schools of library and information science. The tool is not intended to provide a measure of the skills and knowledge that an individual must have in order to be successful in teen services; rather, the Core Professional Values are viewed as fundamental underlying principles that guide the decisions, actions, and behaviors of library staff working with and for teens. The Core Professional Values complements the American Library Association's Code of Ethics: the Code outlines a broad moral standard for individuals working in libraries, whereas the YALSA values provides further context for those who work for and with teens. "Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values" was consulted when developing this document.

Core Value...	Value is...	A person practicing this value...
<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	Active acceptance of the responsibility for the diverse roles, obligations and actions of the job, including self-regulation and other behaviors that positively influence teens, the profession and the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responds to teen needs</li><li>• Seeks and responds to feedback from multiple sources</li><li>• Acknowledges and accepts the consequences of one's actions</li><li>• Adheres to codes of ethics, standards of practice and other policies that govern the profession, including those created by ALA and YALSA</li><li>• Communicates regularly with others about work-related actions</li><li>• Strives for continuous improvement</li><li>• Maintains membership in professional organizations</li></ul>
<b>COLLABORATION</b>	Fosters relationships within the library and within the community in order to best serve teens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Works with other departments within the organization to create a holistic approach to serving teens</li><li>• Fosters partnerships with schools and other community organizations that serve youth</li><li>• Leverages the talent, expertise, and resources available in the community</li></ul>

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<b>Core Value...</b>	<b>Value is...</b>	<b>A person practicing this value...</b>
<b>COMPASSION</b>	Strives to identify with others' experiences. Shows concern, empathy, and consideration for the needs and values of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicates effectively, both verbally and non-verbally, with others, taking into consideration individual differences in learning styles, language, cognitive abilities, etc.</li><li>• Builds and maintains knowledge of teens' social, emotional, mental, and physical development and how they shape the teen experience</li><li>• Strives to understand teens' lives from their perspective in order to create genuine connections</li><li>• Places the needs of teens above one's own</li><li>• Provides services for and with underserved and underrepresented teen populations</li></ul>
<b>EXCELLENCE</b>	Consistently uses current knowledge and theory while understanding personal limits. Integrates judgment and the teen perspective. Embraces advancement, challenges mediocrity, and works toward development of new knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates investment in the profession</li><li>• Participates in collaborative practices to promote high quality outcomes</li><li>• Demonstrates high levels of knowledge and skill in all aspects of teen services</li><li>• Engages in acquisition of new knowledge throughout one's career</li><li>• Shares knowledge with others</li><li>• Demonstrates emotional intelligence and processes emotional information to navigate the social environment</li><li>• Demonstrates mastery of soft skills including social norms, communication, language, personal habits, interpersonal skills, supervising people, leadership, etc. to ensure successful interactions with a range of stakeholders, including supervisors, teens, and community partners</li><li>• Projects a professional image, including suitable appearance/dress, use of correct manners and etiquette, effective communication, and appropriate personal behavior. Recognizes that different situations can call for different dress, behaviors, speech, etiquette, etc.</li></ul>

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<b>Core Value...</b>	<b>Value is...</b>	<b>A person practicing this value...</b>
<b>INCLUSION</b>	Recognizes and respects the wide variety in people's heritages and lived experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Builds knowledge in order to understand the backgrounds and lived experiences of those in the community the library serves, especially when they differ from one's own</li><li>• Respects and fosters a diversity of viewpoints</li><li>• Recognizes and refrains from acting on one's social, cultural, gender, and sexual biases</li><li>• Confronts harassment and bias among one's self and others</li><li>• Welcomes, values and creates a safe environment for and with teens of all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and those with different abilities and identities</li><li>• Includes teens in library decision-making</li><li>• Creates meaningful, skill-building volunteer and leadership opportunities for and with teens</li><li>• Recognizes teen expertise and creates ways for that expertise to be shared</li></ul>
<b>INNOVATION</b>	Approaches projects and challenges with a creative, innovative mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develops, tests and evaluates new ideas</li><li>• Pushes the boundaries of what the library is and what it does for and with teens</li><li>• Maximizes resources to provide the best library services and experiences for and with teens</li><li>• Recognizes that learning comes from failure and experimentation</li><li>• Demonstrates a willingness to take calculated risks to improve teen services</li></ul>

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<b>Core Value...</b>	<b>Value is...</b>	<b>A person practicing this value...</b>
<b>INTEGRITY</b>	Upholds strong moral and ethical principles. Acts truthfully, fairly, and without ulterior motive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Puts patrons/library above personal interest or gain</li><li>• Maintains confidentiality</li><li>• Adheres to the highest standards of the profession, including those articulated by ALA and YALSA</li><li>• Articulates and internalizes stated ideals and professional values</li><li>• Resolves dilemmas with respect to a consistent set of core values</li><li>• Is trustworthy</li><li>• Takes responsibility to be an integral part of the library and community</li><li>• Chooses employment situations that are congruent with the profession's values and ethical standards</li><li>• Acts on the basis of professional values even when the results of the behavior may place one's self at risk</li></ul>
<b>PROFESSIONAL DUTY</b>	Committed to meeting one's professional obligations, to serving the profession and to positively influence the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pursues continuing education opportunities regularly</li><li>• Keeps abreast of teen issues and library trends</li><li>• Contributes to the library community and supports the growth of other librarians and library workers</li><li>• Promotes the profession</li></ul>

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<b>Core Value...</b>	<b>Value is...</b>	<b>A person practicing this value...</b>
<b>SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY</b>	Promotes the mutual trust between the profession and the larger public. Responds to societal needs as they relate to teens and libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can articulate the teen perspective when friction arises between adults (patrons or staff) and teens in the library</li><li>• Seeks opportunities both inside and outside the library to speak up and act for teen services rather than waiting to be asked to do so</li><li>• Advocates for the educational, developmental, and recreational needs of teens, especially as they relate to library services</li><li>• Promotes policies that support the needs and interest of teens and their families</li><li>• Advocates for changes in laws, regulations, standards, and guidelines that affect the ability of libraries to deliver excellent library services for and with teens</li><li>• Promotes community volunteerism</li><li>• Provides leadership in the community</li><li>• Participates in collaborative relationships with other youth service providers and the public at large</li><li>• Ensures the blending of social justice and economic efficiency of services</li></ul>

# All Teens Deserve a Bright Future: *Libraries can Give them One*

Last year, experts and practitioners from across the U.S. discussed the future of teens and libraries. The result? Some straightforward and achievable recommendations for engaging and empowering teens. This report captures findings from the 2013 meeting about how libraries can connect with youth-serving groups and community organizations to help the nation's teens succeed in school and prepare for careers.

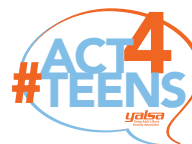
The report is available for free at [www.ala.org/yaforum](http://www.ala.org/yaforum)

Read the report to find out how your library can change teens' lives for the better and join the discussion on Twitter with [#act4teens](https://twitter.com/act4teens).

Find other resources or connect with the Young Adult Library Services Association at [www.ala.org/yalsa](http://www.ala.org/yalsa)



The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action



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