

**ALA Executive Board  
Spring 2014**

**TOPIC:** Proposed Planning Process Framework and Timeline

**ACTION REQUESTED:** Discussion

**DRAFT MOTION:** n/a

**REQUESTED BY:** Keith Michael Fiels, ALA Executive Director

**DATE:** April 9, 2014

**Programmatic Priorities**

The Executive Board recommended and Council have approved the ALA programmatic priorities that constitute the framework for the *2015 Strategic Plan*. The ALA Programmatic Priorities were approved by Council at the Philadelphia, PA Midwinter Meeting, January 2014, and are as follows:

- Advocacy for Libraries and the Profession
- Diversity
- Equitable Access to Information and Library Services
- Education and Lifelong Learning
- Intellectual Freedom
- Literacy
- Organizational Excellence
- Transforming Libraries

**Strategic Framework and Strategic Initiatives**

Over the last two years, the ALA leadership has engaged in a series of member conversation sessions at conferences, broadened and deepened to include insights from division and round table leadership, Council, focus groups, and a membership survey. The Executive Board and ALA staff have analyzed and synthesized these comprehensive conversations in order to develop a strategic framework that will guide our Association as we re-conceptualize our focus, structure, operations, and culture.

The strategic framework includes three **strategic initiatives**:

- **Advocacy** ALA shall advocate the public value of librarians, libraries and information services.
- **Information Policy** ALA, operating in the public interest, focuses at every level on a diverse set of policy areas that includes: intellectual freedom, privacy, civil liberties, telecommunications, funding for education and research programs, funding for libraries, copyright and licensing, government information, and literacy.
- **Professional and Leadership Development** The professional and leadership development of librarians and library workers is essential to high-quality professional practice and the future of libraries and information services.

### **Enabling Strategies:**

A set of **enabling strategies** have also been identified for ALA to undertake to create a “welcoming, inclusive, engaged and supportive organization” that is focused on the three strategic initiatives. Activities that specifically support a number of these enabling strategies have been reflected in the 2015 budget:

- Create an assessment and evaluation process to measure the effect of the strategic initiatives.
- Review governance structure (including committees and round tables) to identify changes to address the strategic initiatives.
- Review staff structure and compensation to ensure focus on strategic initiatives.
- Build a more robust public communication and public relations/marketing capacity.
- Identify revenue streams and fundraising opportunities to support the strategic initiatives.
- Engage division leaders and staff to define their role and contribution to the strategic initiatives.
- Build a sustainable technological infrastructure that enables ALA to advance the strategic initiatives.
- Align ALA publishing and conferences to support the strategic initiatives.
- Strengthen pathways for member involvement/engagement in strategic initiatives.

### **Planning Context and Environment:**

The Strategic initiatives are part of a larger “Reimagining ALA” process that began with Board and Council discussions in the fall of 2012.

In 2013, the Association began working with the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation on an initiative known as “Libraries Transforming Communities.” As part of this work,

the Association began to systematically engage in a process known as “looking outward.” Using practices developed by the Harwood Institute, ALA has engaged in a series of “kitchen table” conversations held in conjunction with the 2013 Annual Conference and the 2014 Midwinter Meeting.

These conversations have yielded a deeper understanding of member aspirations, identified obstacles to achieving these aspirations, and helped identify specific steps that would help us achieve our aspirations. The results of these conversations have been brought back into the Association through regular “Innovation Space” meetings, where the knowledge gained through the conversations is used to identify specific action plans. 20 Kitchen Table conversations are also planned over the coming year with the Chapters, using Harwood Institute method to help develop the next ALA Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Initiatives operate within the framework of the ALA 2015 strategic plan, which was approved by Council in June 2010.

### **Developing the next Strategic Plan**

In developing the 2010 - 2015 Strategic Plan, the association reached out to its members and involved them in the planning process in a number of ways. Thousands of members participated in a “gap analysis” needs assessment survey; thousands more provided comments on the draft strategic plan itself, which were then incorporated into the draft plan. The process actively involved divisions, round tables, committees, chapters and affiliates. The result has been a plan with broad support from throughout the Association, and one that effectively reflects the broad range of activities and interests that constitute ALA. This current plan runs through August 31, 2015,

The proposed framework for the Association’s next strategic plan builds on the “reimaging ALA” effort, and on the conversations with members and Council that began in 2013 and which will continue on an ongoing basis as part of the process of looking outward.

Based on the experiences of the divisions, and in recognition of the rapid pace of environmental change, a three year planning cycle, rather than a five-year cycle, is proposed for the Association’s next strategic plan.

In October, 2014, a one day retreat the day before the division leadership meeting will be held with representatives of the divisions and roundtables to help frame the next plan. This will be followed by discussions at Midwinter, conversations with members and member groups over the course of the Spring of 2015, and conclude with the presentation of the proposed plan to Council at the 2015 Annual Conference in San Francisco.

Implementation will move ahead quickly in September 2015, using undesignated strategic initiative funds that have been identified for this purpose in the FY 2016 budget. Because budget preparation occurs far in advance of the beginning of the fiscal year (the process begins nine months prior to the beginning of the fiscal year, in order to allow for

review and discussion by Board and Council committees), this mechanism will allow us to move ahead quickly on our new plan.

Going forward, we see the two processes of long range planning and the ongoing focus on strategic initiatives by the Executive Board as an integrated process that allows us to focus our efforts more strategically, to take advantage of environmental changes, while at the same time maintaining a multi-year focus on long term impacts.

## **Planning Timeline**

The proposed calendar of proposed major planning activities is as follows:

### **2013**

Reimagining ALA discussions with Council  
Kitchen Table conversations at Annual Conference  
Reimagining ALA discussions with Division Leadership

### **2014**

#### **Winter**

Kitchen Table conversations at Midwinter Meeting  
Strategic Framework (Initiatives and Enabling Strategies) shared with membership for discussion.

#### **Summer**

Kitchen Table Conversations at Annual Conference  
Discussions of the strategic framework, initiatives and enabling strategies

#### **Fall**

Leadership retreat to develop preliminary framework for Strategic Plan  
Preliminary framework for Strategic Plan shared with membership for comment and discussion  
Membership conversations about the framework and Plan using Connect and other communications channels

### **2015**

#### **Winter**

Council discussion sessions of Strategic Plan at Midwinter Meeting  
Membership discussion at Membership, Division, Round Table and Committee meetings at Midwinter Meeting  
Kitchen Table Conversations at Midwinter

#### **Spring**

Member comments incorporated into draft *2015 -2018 Strategic Plan*

Board discusses and makes revisions to draft plan based on member comments  
Proposed *2015-2018 Strategic Plan* circulated to Council and membership for additional  
comment and discussion

**Summer**

Final Plan approved by Council

**Fall**

FY 2016 funds used to "Jump Start" Strategic Plan implementation and focus on strategic  
initiatives