

Information Policy

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Vision

ALA's information policy efforts empower people to use libraries and information-based resources to improve their lives and communities. Information policy comprises laws, regulations, court decisions, doctrines, and other decision-making and practices related to information creation, storage, access, preservation, communication, accessibility, and dissemination.

ALA advocates in diverse policy areas including intellectual freedom, privacy, civil liberties, telecommunications, funding for education and research programs, funding for libraries, copyright and licensing, open access, government information, and literacy. Progress in these policy areas enables libraries to advance important societal goals such as employment, education, entrepreneurship, equity, personal empowerment, community engagement, creation of new knowledge, literacy, and civic participation. ALA's interests reside at the local, regional, state, national, and international levels. ALA serves as a knowledgeable resource and advocate on policy issues within these areas for ALA members, library professionals, decision makers and influencers, the media, and the public.

Success/Desired Outcomes

- ALA is among the first tier of groups that governments and other organizations turn to and trust on information policy issues.
- Legislation, regulation, court cases, corporate policies, and other important information policy outcomes incorporate ALA positions.
- ALA policy positions are easily available, accessible and comprehensible to all audiences.
- ALA leaders have sufficient understanding of information policy so that they may be effective policy advocates. The ALA and library communities at large understand the basics of information policy and why it is important for libraries.
- The requisite resources and organization are in place for ALA to engage in effective advocacy on information policy in the long run.

Association-wide Strategies for Success

- Develop and revise positions and strategies for each information policy issue based on ALA values and priorities and substantive (with relevant facts and data) and political analysis.
- Develop and maintain information policy messaging and mechanisms to communicate with all relevant ALA audiences.
- ALA leads and participates in effective coalitions, with member participation, to address information policy issues.

- ALA itself initiates policy advocacy (including research) towards the attainment of ALA information policy goals.
- Develop and maintain a process for coordinating information policy activities across policy topics and ALA units.

These association-wide strategies are implemented and success achieved through annual action plans developed, in accordance with their individual missions and charges, by ALA, its divisions and round tables, committees and other groups, within the Programmatic Priorities approved annually by the ALA Council.

Implementation Plans

Develop and revise positions and strategies for each information policy issue based on ALA values and priorities and substantive (with relevant facts and data) and political analysis.

Unit	Objectives (Measurable Steps)	Tactics (Tools Used)
All	Identify information policy issues of interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain input from ALA member groups • Monitor and review current events, research reports, and other externally-produced information • Review relevant information produced by ALA units • Conduct outreach to external (library and non-library) organizations to keep abreast about trends and initiatives
All	Analyze data and information to develop policy positions and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain input from ALA member groups • Synthesize data and information in the ALA context to develop policy positions • Looking across policy positions, develop priorities for efforts, working with ALA member groups as appropriate
All	Develop strategies for pursuing policy positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify relevant tactical approaches • Determine resources available, including potential resources from prospective collaborators • Select tactical approach(es) to use for each policy position
All	Summarize, document, and disseminate positions and strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop dissemination plan for each policy issue—i.e., what kinds of products are needed and what is affordable? • Develop and maintain products • Disseminate products

Develop and maintain information policy messaging and mechanisms to communicate with all relevant ALA audiences.

Unit	Objectives (Measurable Steps)	Tactics (Tools Used)
All	Develop and deliver aggregate-level information policy messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input from and discussion with ALA member groups • Obtain advice from strategic communications firms and internal (ALA) experts • Incorporate messaging into focused and general policy communications as appropriate
All	Develop and deliver targeted messaging on specific issues for particular decision makers and influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain input from subject experts and available materials to determine the content of this messaging • Identify communications strategies and mechanisms that are tailored to the particular audience • Develop and disseminate products (webinars, podcast, brochures, etc.); obtain resources as needed to augment existing capabilities
All	Develop and deliver messaging on specific issues targeted to ALA members and broader audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain member input on determining which information policy topics are of most interest • Develop and disseminate products (webinars, podcasts, brochures, etc.); obtain resources as needed to augment existing capabilities • To the extent possible, integrate policy communications with existing activities rather than creating new mechanisms

ALA leads and participates in effective coalitions, with member participation, to address information policy issues.

Unit	Objectives (Measurable Steps)	Tactics (Tools Used)
All	Identify topics for which coalition work is most advantageous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess nature and effectiveness of current coalition participation • Review information policy priorities and determine topics that may best be advanced through coalition efforts

All	Identify, seek, and obtain opportunities for heightened coalition participation—new coalitions and strengthened presence in existing ones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing relationships to gain access to new potential collaborators and resources • Reallocate policy resources from less effective uses to more effective ones
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ALA itself initiates policy advocacy towards the attainment of ALA information policy goals.

Unit	Objectives (Measurable Steps)	Tactics (Tools Used)
All	Produce and disseminate products on particular topics of special importance that are not currently being emphasized, or present particular opportunities to complement and leverage ongoing activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake research, writing, and production/publication, leveraging cross-ALA resources as advantageous • Request funding, primarily from external sources, but internal (ALA) requests may be pursued in some circumstances • Reallocate internal resources, scaling back less-effective activities and diverting resources to more proactive purposes
All	Explore and engage (or significantly increase engagement in) groups, organizations, and venues outside of the ALA mainstream that present unusual potential for the future of the library community and its interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase participation in South by Southwest and a limited number of other high-potential conferences and convenings • Based on policy priorities, reach out to new groups, especially those outside of the library community for which there is a particular opportunity, initially focusing on how libraries further the group's mission

Develop and maintain a process for coordinating information policy activities across policy topics and ALA units.

Unit	Objectives (Measurable Steps)	Tactics (Tools Used)
OITP and other units	Design, develop, and implement processes to further promote cross-unit communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create listserv to provide access to new developments, proposals, post questions, and otherwise engage ALA staff • OITP, OIF, and other units with significant information policy engagement will explicitly share their reports to the Executive Board and Council