

AWARDS MANUAL  
OF THE  
AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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ALA and ALA Unit awards are listed in the ALA Handbook of Organization. A list of all award winners is available at the Annual Conference -Literature Distribution Center or in the ALA Office. Further information on all ALA awards and award winners may be found on the ALA website [www.ala.org/ work/ awards](http://www.ala.org/work/awards). Listings of jury members may be obtained from the ALA Awards Committee Staff Liaison.

Revised August 2008

## FUNCTION STATEMENT

The ALA Awards Committee shall make recommendations to the Executive Board and the ALA Council on all policies relating to ALA distinguished service, exemplary accomplishment, and/or achievement awards, and ALA book/media awards to be made or sponsored by ALA and its units. It shall administer all such awards presented in the name of the American Library Association, known as "ALA General Awards." All ALA General Awards shall recognize achievements within the profession. The Committee shall review periodically the appropriateness of existing ALA General Awards; shall recommend modification, elimination, or suspension of existing ALA General Awards as needed; and shall make recommendations with respect to proposed new ALA General Awards. The Committee shall appoint juries to select recipients of ALA General Awards (i.e., awards not administered by a unit of the Association), and shall coordinate the work of these juries and committees. The committee will work with other units of the Association to coordinate tracking, statistics, and other information about all awards sponsored by ALA and its units.

The Awards Committee shall be responsible for maintaining the ALA Awards Manual, which includes information for all awards presented by ALA or any of its units; it shall also provide general guidance regarding the procedural aspects of the Awards Program (such as information concerning deadline dates and publicity releases).

Each unit of ALA shall determine, within the general policies governing awards, new awards relating to its specific area of responsibility, known as "ALA Unit Awards." Each unit shall review periodically the appropriateness of its existing awards; and shall modify, eliminate, or suspend its existing award(s) and shall handle all details and expenses with respect to its award(s).

Each unit will submit its proposals for new awards or changes to existing unit awards as prescribed in the ALA Awards Manual to the ALA Awards Committee at a regular meeting of the committee at least six months prior

to the anticipated date of advertisement. The Awards Committee will review and provide assistance to the unit on questions of procedure and coordination with other ALA units. All new awards must be reported prior to the implementation date to the Awards Committee, Executive Board, and Council.

Each unit is also responsible for submitting complete records as prescribed In the ALA Awards Manual concerning its award(s) to the Awards Committee in order that the ALA Awards Manual may be maintained.

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ALA Awards Policy

## POLICY

Each year, the American Library Association seeks to honor, through its awards program, those who have rendered distinguished Service to libraries and librarianship. Such recognition is made for individual achievement of a high order in some area of librarianship. The winners of ALA awards for individual achievement constitute a "hall of fame" for librarianship. The juries making the selections are responsible for maintaining the high standards established by their predecessors in selecting individuals who have furthered to a notable degree the purposes of the profession.

Administration of the ALA general awards and grants is under the jurisdiction of the Awards Committee, appointed by the President-elect and approved by the Executive Board. The Chair of the ALA Awards Committee appoints juries to select recipients of ALA general awards and, along with the staff liaison, coordinates the work of these juries.

No limit is imposed on the number of ALA general awards and grants established, but it is expected that the number will remain small since the prestige of existing awards may be lessened with each new award that is established. The minimum amount for ALA Recognition Awards is \$5,000, and for Grants, \$10,000. **Offices, Divisions, and Roundtables are not ALA association-wide awards and do not have to adhere to the minimum monetary amounts.**

All awards should recognize achievement within the profession and all aspects of the profession should be represented in the ALA Awards Program. Overlapping in closely related areas should be avoided.

Policy (cont.)

The winner of each award is selected according to the stated terms of the particular award. Neither jury members or their library can be considered for the award if they are serving on the jury making that award. Apart from these limitations, no member of the profession shall be either selected for or excluded from any award on the basis of the position an individual holds. ALA awards are intended to recognize living persons rather than to honor the deceased; therefore, awards are not made posthumously except in situation where death occurs between the time nominations are closed and the winners announced. ALA awards may honor retired librarians unless otherwise excluded under the terms of an award for which they have been nominated. For purposes of awards, the term "librarian" is not limited to those with formal library degrees, but includes anyone with a recognized library affiliation.

No individual may be selected for the same award more than once, except in such cases where the award is made for an accomplishment or project, such as a publication, not previously honored; further, no individual shall be selected for more than one award administered by the ALA Awards Committee in any one year. A single individual; however, may be selected for more than one award over a period of years.

## AWARDS COMMITTEE

The Awards Committee is responsible for the coordination and administration of the general ALA Awards Program. The Staff Liaison works directly with the Awards Committee chair for overall administration and policy oversight. Award juries and committees of any unit or division function independently and not as a subcommittee of the Awards Committee.

In accordance with Article VIII. Committees. Sections 1 & 2 of the ALA Bylaws the Committee consists of nine members appointed by the Executive Board upon the advice of the Committee on Appointments, with consideration being given to recommendations made by division presidents, members of the current Awards Committee, and the membership at large of the Association. The interests of various types of libraries and library activities should be represented on the Committee at all times, with priority to have wide geographical distribution among the members.

Members are appointed for two-year terms, and reappointment may be made for a second, but not a third, consecutive term. The Executive Board designates the chair annually.

Any vacancy occurring on the Committee is filled by appointment by the Executive Board. Such member is expected to serve until the expiration of the conference year in which the vacancy occurs, at which time an appointment shall be made to complete the unexpired term.

Donors and/ or sponsors of ALA Awards are not eligible for appointment to the Committee.

**Meetings**

The Committee meets during the Midwinter Meeting and the Annual Conference of the Association. Additional meetings may be called by the chairperson if appropriate.

Minutes of all meetings of the Committee are prepared by the Staff Liaison and filed at Headquarters in the Governance office.

ALA policy 7.4.4. Closed meetings may be held only for the discussion of matters affecting the privacy of individuals or institutions.

**Responsibility of the Awards Committee** Members of the Awards Committee are responsible for:

1. Administering the general awards and grants presented in the name of the American Library Association, known as "ALA Awards." The exception is for Honorary Members who are nominated by the Executive Board and elected by ALA Council.
2. Presenting recommendations to Council on all policies relating to awards to be made or sponsored by ALA and its units.
3. Reviewing the appropriateness of existing ALA Awards at least every three years to insure conformance with ALA goals and objectives and consistency of application. Reports of jury chairs provide basic information for this review.
4. Recommending modifications, elimination, or suspension of existing ALA Awards.
5. Making recommendations with respect to proposed new awards.
6. Encouraging the establishment and funding of new awards as appropriate.
7. Publicizing the awards program by announcing in advance each year the awards that are to be made and for reporting the names of all winners after selections have been made.
8. Serving on one ALA Awards jury, when appropriate. Where juries require members from the Awards Committee beyond the number available, a former member of the Awards Committee may be appointed.
9. Encouraging and submitting nominations.

**Duties of the Chair** It is the duty of the Chair to:

1. Call meetings of the Committee during the Midwinter Meeting and the Annual Conference, and to call any other meetings that may be needed throughout the year. The Staff Liaison is responsible for completing Meeting Request Forms and submitting all requests to Conference Services.
  - a. Meetings during Midwinter Meeting are the principal business meetings of the year when, for example, proposals for new awards are considered, reviews of existing awards are presented, and the discontinuance of current awards are recommended. Plans for the presentation of awards during the Annual Conference are discussed at these meetings.
  - b. Meetings during the Annual Conference should also be for the purpose of outlining the year's work with both incoming and outgoing members of the Committee and jury chairs, and for transacting other business as necessary.
  - c. A meeting should be scheduled in advance of at least one Council meeting, in order that appropriate recommendations might be made to Council during Midwinter. (ALA Recognition Awards only).
2. Appoint juries for all awards administered by the Committee as soon as possible. Suggestions should be requested from the current jury chairs regarding potential members to serve as chairs and members of the next year's jury. Suggestions for jury appointments may be requested from division presidents and units within ALA, state agencies and associations, Awards committee members, headquarters staff, and the association membership, at large. In most cases, it is appropriate to seek a representation of people from different types of libraries; in some cases, the specifics of the award require designated representation.

3. Present matters concerning awards to Council, as necessary, for action or information.

### **Juries**

Juries are appointed annually by the Awards Committee Chair for the purpose of selecting recipients of the ALA Awards. Donors are not eligible to serve on the jury for their award. There are five members per jury. Award winners will be selected by the juries within two weeks after the Midwinter.

Neither jury members nor their institutions are eligible for nominations for the award jury on which they are currently serving. If this occurs, jury members should recuse themselves from discussion or voting or decline the nomination if they have a conflict of interest. If a further conflict of interest exists, the jury members should recuse themselves from voting. If necessary, final determination shall be made by the ALA Award Committee Chair. If there is any other conflict of interest, it should be discussed with the ALA Awards Committee Chair who will make the final determination.

### **Duties of the Jury Chair**

As the person responsible for overseeing the selection process for a specific award, the Jury Chair should become familiar with the general description, selection criteria, and previous recipients of the award.

It is the duty of the Jury Chair to:

1. Schedule meetings during the Midwinter Meeting as needed for the selection of an award recipient. ALA policy 7.4.4. Jury deliberations are "closed sessions."
2. Insure that the jury understands the criteria and selection process for that particular award.
3. Publicize their particular award to colleagues and notable candidates using as wide a variety of communication mechanism as useful.
4. Encourage and submit nominations considered worthy of an award.
5. Manage the awards distribution and deliberation process as needed.
6. If applicant pool is inadequate, review the jury's file for the previous year.
7. Make the award selection; forward appropriate documentation to the ALA Awards Program Office.

## PROCEDURES

### **Publicity**

The Staff Liaison prepares the awards announcement which appears in the September issue of *American Libraries*, and ALA Online and other ALA electronic publications. They also prepare a press release with a brief description of all ALA Awards to encourage nominations.

### **Nominations**

Nominations and letters of recommendations may be received from individual ALA members and should reach the ALA Awards Program Office by the date noted on the application. Each nomination should be submitted in writing and accompanied by a statement of qualifications as well as reasons for the choice. No less than six (6) copies should be submitted to the ALA Awards Program office at Headquarters. Receipt of each nomination will be promptly acknowledged to the person who made the nomination.

Members of the jury are to publicize awards and encourage nominations. Jury members should canvass various segments of the profession for suggestions and appropriate nominations. (This procedure may be started prior to the awards announcement.)

Nominations which were considered worthy by a jury may be forwarded to the incoming chair of the jury for consideration in the next year. Nominations which have been pending for more than three years are to be destroyed.

Each annual jury must rule on the eligibility of nominations according to the overall policy outlined in the Awards Manual and in the stated terms of the particular award. Jury chairs may seek the advice of the Awards Committee in interpreting policy and terms.

### **Jury Meetings**

In concurrence with ALA open/closed meeting policy, all jury meetings will be closed when considering merits of individuals or projects for awards and grants unless otherwise specified by the donor and agreed to by the Awards Committee. Juries can meet at the Midwinter Meeting, electronically, via conference call, or when appropriate.

Bylaws VIII Section 8. Votes in the Executive Board, as well as in committees, may be taken by mail, electronic system, or conference call, provided that all members are canvassed simultaneously. An affirmative vote from two-thirds of a quorum of the body shall be required.

Jury chairs should inform the ALA Awards Committee Chair of any problems that arise in the handling of their duties and make any recommendations concerning the award which they deem necessary.

**Lack of Suitable Applicants** Juries are not obligated to make a selection of a winner in any year when appropriate candidates for an award are not available.

**Selection** Each jury member will be provided with the names of all eligible candidates/projects, the nominating statements, and other supporting documentation prior to the Midwinter Meeting. A systematic procedure for evaluating nominations should be agreed upon prior to selection. If a vote is taken, all jury members, including the chair, are entitled to vote.

The jury chair will notify the Staff Liaison, and jury members of the jury's selection, as soon as it is made. The Staff Liaison will instruct the jury chair when to notify the winner.

In the event that the same person is selected for two or more awards in the same year, the Staff Liaison shall contact the winner, and ask the winner which award he/she would prefer to receive, and the appropriate jury will be asked to make another selection.

When notifying the winner, the jury chair should request one color head photo (any size) and their vita to use in publicity releases. If the winner is a library, request one color photograph of the library (any size). This information should be sent to the Awards Committee Staff Liaison by March 30th. Copies of the letter to the winner should be sent to the chair of the Award Committee and to the Staff Liaison.

## ALA Awards Procedures

The winner of the award should be reminded that while the news of his/her selection may be shared with friends and colleagues, no formal announcement is to be made until the press releases are prepared by the Staff Liaison and publicized through the Public Information Office.

**Preparation of Press Releases** Jury chairs should complete a Media Profile Form indicating why this candidate was selected. Form should be sent to the Staff Liaison as soon as possible after the selection is made.

**Preparation of Award Citations** The Jury Chair is responsible for writing the citation for presentation at the Awards Ceremony. Citations are to be sent to the Staff Liaison as soon as possible after the selection is made. The citation will be edited, if necessary, and prepared for printing.

The citation should be suitable for reading at the presentation ceremony and should:

1. Include pertinent information, succinctly stated, as to why the winner was selected.
2. Not exceed 200 words in length.
3. Exclude biographical information except as it may be significant in the winner's having been selected for the particular award.

**Maintaining Files** Files are held for three years by the Staff Liaison and then purged. Communications pertinent to policy and procedure will be distributed to the new jury chairs by the Staff Liaison if necessary.

**Duties of the Staff Liaison** The Staff Liaison:

- a. Functions as the staff liaison to the Awards Committee and as the juries' contact at ALA Headquarters.
- b. Attends all Midwinter and Annual Conference meetings of the Awards Committee.
- c. Prepares timetables, jury orientation packets, rosters, and general information for the Committee and juries.
- d. Submits copy for the *ALA Handbook of Organization*.

- e. Prepares nomination letters and appointment acceptance forms for ALA award jury members from names provided by the Chair.
- f. Monitors the progress of the nominating process and checks to make sure all juries are making timely progress in the selection process. Forwards award proposals where appropriate.
- g. If available, submits information to *American Libraries* for June announcement of award winners. Compiles and prepares the online award information.
- h. Updates and maintains the awards web page [www.ala.org/work/awards/index.html](http://www.ala.org/work/awards/index.html)
- i. Prepares and orders the citations, requests award monies, and arranges for checks to be processed prior to Annual Conference. They will also provide necessary information helping winners direct their thank you
- j. Prepares and makes all arrangements for award presentations at the Inaugural Banquet, including letters of invitation to the winners and donors, the banquet script for the Chair, and photographer (if required).

In addition, the staff liaison is also responsible for the following:

1. Sending copies of the Awards Manual to awards committee members and jury chairs and providing them with a timetable of deadline dates.
2. Preserving important archival material such as statements affecting policy, proposals for awards whether approved or not, correspondence of lasting value, names of the members of award juries, and relevant financial reports.
3. Preparing press releases announcing the terms of all ALA awards and inviting nominations from the membership at large. This information is to be sent to the ALA staff member responsible for the preparation of the *ALA Handbook of Organization* and to the Public Information Office.

Letters, for example, should be sent to ALA chapter councilors and library associations urging nominations from their members.

4. Notifying each winner and donor/sponsor when and where to be present for the award ceremony. Coordinate with Conference Services complimentary tickets for award recipients and donors. Notifying award donors of the juries' selection.
5. Prepare the committee chair's speech for the Awards Reception.
6. Update online list of award winners by September of each year.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW AWARDS

A request that a new ALA or unit award be established may come from any member or unit of the Association or from any individual or group outside the Association interested in the recognition and development of libraries and librarianship.

### Policy

The following points should be carefully considered before a new ALA award is established:

1. The intent and purpose of the individual or group making the proposal or donating a sum of money to be used for awards purposes. ALA awards shall recognize significant achievements within the profession and not serve primarily as advertisements for the donor.
2. The existence of already established awards in the same or similar areas of interest, since overlapping awards are to be avoided.
3. The monetary award to the winner.
4. Five-year commitment of funding.
5. ALA awards represent two types: Grants and Recognition. Effective 1995, the minimum amounts are as follows:

Grants \$10,000

Recognition \$ 5,000

**Offices, Divisions, and Roundtables are not ALA association-wide awards and do not have to adhere to the minimum monetary amounts.**

6. The Awards Committee will consider the administrative fees in reviewing a request for a new award, and the cost of administering an award. The administrative fee for new awards is 20% of the award amount, not to exceed \$1,000. This administrative fee does not apply to the Endowment Scholarships.

For awards by a unit of ALA, administrative costs estimated by the unit shall be included in the proposal and in budget requests as needed.

The purpose of the administrative fee shall be to pay for:

- a. Costs of preparation, printing and distribution of award criteria and nomination forms.
- b. Costs for preparing appropriate citations and/ or plaques.
- c. Publicity and promotion of the award.
- d. Expenses for the award presentation ceremonies.

### **Administration**

The practicality of administering the proposed award:

- a. A workable set of objective standards for selecting a winner is needed.
- b. Awards demanding large or bulky mailings of material among jury members are to be avoided.
- c. The availability of appropriate candidates is essential. (Awards for special projects, study, or writing are generally pursued by the individuals or groups intending to perform the work.)

The life expectancy of the award:

- a. A date for the Awards Committee or unit to review and determine the continuation of an award should be set at the time an award is established. A trial period of three years is usual.
- b. Endowments to insure the continuation of recognized awards of five or more years standing are to be encouraged.

### **Application Procedure**

A copy of the award proposal must be submitted electronically to the Awards Committee Staff Liaison at least one month prior to the Committee's regular meeting. This frequently is a two stage process. The applicant may be asked to make revisions before approval. This may or may not be accomplished within the space of a one conference depending on the nature or extent/complexities of the changes recommended by the Committee. Applicants should allow enough time for this process.

The Awards Committee shall consider each proposal at a regular meeting. It is recommended that a representative of the ALA unit most closely connected with the proposal attend this meeting to answer questions and to hear the advice of the Committee.

The committee will not approve new proposals electronically that haven't been discussed at a regular meeting.

## FORMAT FOR PREPARING AN AWARD PROPOSAL

- Name of Award
- Definition, Purpose and Criteria: Specify the person(s) or group(s) eligible to receive the award, the purpose(s) for which the award will be given, and a brief outline of the criteria to be followed in selecting a winner. Number and Frequency of Award: Designate the number of possible recipients at any one time and the frequency that the award is to be presented. State if a suitable candidate is not found, the award will not be presented that year.
- Selection of Jury to Administer the Award: Indicate the person who appoints the committee to administer the award; what, if any, particular group or groups from which the juries will be chosen; the number of jury members and any special qualifications needed by the jury members.
- Deadline for Nomination of Candidates: Specify the date nominations are due and the form that nominations will take, e.g., a statement of outstanding contributions, etc. The dates of the Midwinter Meeting affect the date nominations are due. Unless otherwise specified the deadline for nominations should be December 1.
- Screening of Candidates and Recommendations: Indicate the process to be used in determining the award recipient.
- Presentation of the Award: Specify dates for the announcement and presentation of the award. ALA awards should be designated for presentation at an appropriate meeting, e.g. Awards Reception, at the Annual Conference.
- Form and/or Type of Award: Designate the form and/or type of award to be given. (e.g. cash, citation, medal, etc.)

- Donor: Specify the individual, group, institution, etc. who will provide funds for both any cash award to be given and the administrative expenses incurred.
- Budget: Develop a 3-5 year budget showing award expenses, administrative fees, promotional costs, certificate costs, and other appropriate expenses.
- Contact Person: name, address, and telephone number, fax or email.
- Promotional plans: Promotion of the award availability and award recipient publicity plans
- Evaluation: Plans for evaluating effectiveness of the award

Note: A copy must be submitted electronically to the Awards Committee staff liaison prior to the Midwinter Meeting or Annual Conference. The staff liaison will notify you when to attend the committee meeting for further discussion.

Those preparing new awards should be present when the committee considers the proposal. In such cases where award money is offered to ALA, the Awards Committee, with the approval of the Executive Board with as much guidance as it is possible to get from the potential donor, shall define the intent of the award and set up the criteria for selecting a winner.

Should a proposed ALA award be deemed appropriate by the Awards Committee according to the policy noted above, the chair of the Awards Committee presents the proposal at a regular meeting of the ALA Council for adoption. If approved, the Executive Director will inform the donor of the acceptance of the award. In the case of a proposed unit award, the Awards Committee need only send a statement of the award as an information item to Council.

Should a proposed ALA award be deemed inappropriate by the Awards Committee, a recommendation for its rejection is sent to the Executive Board, but a rejected proposal need not be presented to Council. In the case of a proposed unit award being rejected, the Awards Committee should indicate to the unit representative its reasons for not forwarding its proposal to the Executive Board and Council. A revised proposal can be submitted to the awards committee at the next regular meeting of the committee.

## DISCONTINUING OR SUSPENDING AWARDS

### **Policy**

ALA awards may be discontinued or suspended for any of the following reasons:

1. General lack of interest in the award as shown by the failure of a jury to receive any nominations or applications for the award for three consecutive years.
2. Inability of three consecutive juries to make a selection of a winner because the terms of the award are not relevant, impractical, or outdated.
3. Continuing pressure on a jury to influence the selection of a winner.
4. Withdrawal of financial support by the donor.
5. Any other reasons deemed appropriate by the Awards Committee.

A recommendation to discontinue or suspend an ALA award is presented to Council for action.

### **Sunsetting Procedures**

If an award is discontinued or suspended for any one of the reasons stated above, a statement indicating one of the following reasons should be received by the Staff Liaison or the Chair of the Awards Committee:

1. A letter from the donor indicating the reason for discontinuation of the award, preferably six months to one year prior to discontinuation.
2. If applicable, a letter from the estate of a personal donor in the event of death indicating procedures for the continuation or discontinuation of the award.
3. A letter from the unit indicating the reason for discontinuation and the effective date, preferably six months to one year prior to discontinuation.

## PRESENTATION CEREMONY

The Awards Committee Staff Liaison coordinates and schedules all awards presentations and announcements. ALA Recognition Awards are usually presented at the Awards Reception, prior to the Inaugural Banquet of the ALA Annual Conference.

Awards are presented in a dignified manner and setting.

Ceremonies may vary from year to year, at the discretion of the incoming ALA President-Elect. It is recommended that:

1. The recipients are presented to the presiding officer by the chair of the Awards Committee with the ALA Awards chair reading the citation in whole or in part.
2. The purpose of the award is stated in presenting a winner.
3. Acceptance speeches by the recipient as well as the donor/sponsor are not allowed.
4. The announcement of unit awards presented at other meetings of ALA not be repeated at the ALA Awards Reception.

### OTHER UNIT AWARD RESPONSIBILITIES

Each ALA division or unit is responsible for the administration of those awards it presents within the general ALA policies governing awards.

**Unit Responsibility** Each unit will:

1. Review periodically the relevancy of its existing award(s) and report on this review to the ALA Awards Committee.
2. Modify, eliminate or suspend its existing award(s) and notify the ALA Awards Committee Chair and the Staff Liaison of any such action.
3. Handle all details and expenses with respect to its award(s).
4. Submit an electronic copy of its proposal for new awards or revisions of existing unit awards to the ALA staff liaison one month prior to a regular meeting of the Committee.

**ALA Awards  
Committee  
Responsibility**

The ALA Awards Committee will:

1. Review and provide assistance to the unit on questions of procedure and coordination with other units.
2. Report all new awards, prior to implementation date to Council.

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American Library Association

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