

American Library Association (ALA) Liaison Report
May 2026

Submitted by Melody Scagnelli-Townley

- PLA Conference attendance update
 - There were just around 6,000 attendees at PLA 2026.
- Treasurer's updates
 - FY26 budget is tracking as expected at a \$1.8M deficit for the 6 months ending February 2026
 - Projected \$5.5M deficit for FY27
 - Structural deficit identified at \$7.1M
 - Final budget approval is scheduled for June 2026.
- Virtual membership meeting
 - **Wednesday, June 17th, from 4:30-5:30 pm EST.**
 - [More information including the meeting agenda can be found here.](#)
 - You can submit questions for ALA leadership prior to the session by [filling out this form](#) by Monday, June 15th.
 - Please register using the following link: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)
 - **PLEASE NOTE: register for this session via Zoom by Sunday, June 14th to ensure you receive your voting credentials for the meeting.** Your active participation is vital, and registering by the deadline ensures that your voice is heard and your vote counts. ***Voting credentials will be distributed on Tuesday, June 16th. ALA staff may not be able to accommodate members who have not Zoom registered by Sunday, June 14th.***
 - One of the main discussion items will be "How is the present economic climate affecting membership growth and involvement for ALA?"
- ALA Annual Conference
 - The conference will run from **June 25-29** in Chicago.
 - Registration rates vary and are based on your individual ALA membership status (i.e. what category of membership).
 - There are options for full conference, single day, and exhibits only.
 - To register for a hotel, you must be registered for the conference.
 - [Full conference information here.](#)
- ALA Annual Conference featured speakers
 - Opening General Session Speaker: Rachel Maddow, **Friday, June 26th** from 4-5 pm CST
 - ALA President's Program Featured Guest: Jill Biden, **Sunday, June 28th** from 4-5:30 pm CST.
 - Closing General Session Speaker: Wayne Brady, **Monday, June 29th** from 4-5 pm CST.
- ALA Annual Conference-adjacent update
 - The [Obama Presidential Center](#) is a cultural and civic space on Chicago's South Side that brings together museum exhibits, public art installations, a welcoming green space, beautiful skyline views, and, of course, a library!

- The Center will open to the public on Juneteenth (June 19), and the [Museum tickets](#) will be available May 6. (Looks like all June tickets may be sold out at this point.)
- Membership updates
 - Cathy Zimmerman, Membership Committee Chair, and Bill Ladewski, Membership Relations Services Director provided the following updates:
 - September 2025: 43,491 ALA members
 - End of March 2026: 45,671 ALA members
 - Membership growth after PLA conference estimated 5% growth for 2026 compared to the estimated 3% growth in 2024
 - The Executive Board approved the increase in ALA Membership Dues for FY27 to align with the 2025 Consumer Price Index.
 - Meaning, dues increase by 2.7%, with all membership types seeing an increase of \$1-\$3.
 - Moving forward, no dues increase shall exceed the Consumer Price Index percentage change for the preceding twelve months unless approved by council and ratified by association Members.
- ALA Staff unionization process updates
 - A supermajority of ALA employees formally requested that ALA management voluntarily recognize their union, [ALA Workers United](#), in a letter delivered to ALA Executive Director Dan Montgomery on March 30th.
 - “Voluntary recognition is an established process that allows workers to freely exercise their right to choose union representation without the unnecessary duplication and delay of an election,” according to a statement from union leaders.
 - Employees have also filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board to trigger an election if the union is not voluntarily recognized.
 - We are anticipating updates to this by the end of May.
- Emerging Leaders program update
 - Lorelle Hopkins, APA Executive Director & Special Assistant to Executive Director, provided the following updates:
 - There are plans to survey over 1,200 former participants.
 - The future cohort size will be reduced to 25-30 individuals.
 - There would be one group project for all rather than a silo-ing with multiple groups doing multiple projects.
 - Proposed timeline for new applications:
 - Applications open Jan 2027
 - In-person event in June
 - Program completion by Oct 2027
 - She noted concerns regarding volunteer capacity and workload.
 - She identified the need for a clearer funding model & implementation plan.
- Modernization of member experience through technology

- One major advancement is the upcoming launch of a fully redesigned volunteer management and application platform, replacing an outdated system with a more modern, secure, and intuitive experience. This will make it significantly easier for members to apply for leadership opportunities, volunteer roles, and participation across ALA.
- Additional improvements underway include expanded online giving capabilities, stronger self-service options for membership renewals and account management, and the development of a new enterprise-wide single sign-on system that will simplify access across ALA's digital platforms while improving security.
- They are also developing a membership auto-renewal option, targeted for FY2027, to help members stay continuously connected without the burden of annual manual renewal.
- New intellectual freedom tools and resources
 - This month, The Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) launched the new [Censorship Search Portal](#), giving members public access to ALA's extensive book ban database for the first time. Users can now search titles and authors to see how often materials have been challenged, where censorship attempts are occurring, and the outcomes of those efforts when available.
 - OIF has also partnered with the Free Law Project to curate the new [Censorship Law Bot](#), a real-time tool that tracks active censorship-related legal cases impacting libraries and library workers nationwide. This helps members stay informed as legal challenges evolve. You can also follow the bot on Bluesky.
 - The newly released 11th edition of the [Intellectual Freedom Manual](#) provides updated guidance on protecting intellectual freedom, fighting censorship, safeguarding privacy, and navigating today's legal and policy landscape.
- ALA "Forward Together" updates
 - ALA Forward continues to serve as ALA's roadmap for the future, aligning resources where they create the greatest impact, strengthening its foundation, and ensuring ALA remains a trusted leader for libraries nationwide.
 - Members can continue following progress, updates, and our new ALA Forward visual roadmap on [ALA's dedicated webpage](#).
- ALA's 150th Anniversary!
 - ALA is celebrating its 150th anniversary!
 - [Learn more at the official anniversary website here.](#)
 - Keep an eye out for the 150th events at ALA Annual Conference.
- ALA FY 2027 proposed Executive Board meeting schedule
 - To make the most efficient use of staff and member leader time and to reduce expenses in planning the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) budget, they are proposing that beginning in FY27 the Board transitions to bi-monthly meetings with two or three hybrid meetings per year—Fall, Spring, and the Annual Conference.
 - Under the current meeting cadence, the Board convenes monthly with four in-person meetings per year — Fall, Winter, Spring, and Annual Conference. As

needed, and at the call of the President or the Board, special Board meetings may be convened to address time-sensitive or emergent matters.

- The recommendation was made to hold the Spring Board Orientation and Executive Board Session fully virtually. Doing the orientation separately will also take pressure off the staff to handle both in a short period of time and allow for breaking into shorter sessions.
- They also propose a mid-year and end-of-year Board effectiveness discussion regarding the new schedule and format.
- 2026-2027 Proposed Board Schedule
 - Virtual: August 20, 2026 @ 12:30-2:00pm CT/1:30-3:00pm ET
 - In-person: Fall Board Session: September 25-27, 2026 Chicago, IL
 - Virtual: November 19, 2026 @ 1-2pm CT/2-3pm ET
 - Virtual: January 21, 2027 @ 12-2pm CT/1-3pm ET
 - Virtual: Spring Board Session: April 16-17, 2027
 - Virtual: New Executive Board Member Orientation: April-May 2027
 - In-person: Annual Conference: June 24-28, 2027 New Orleans, LA
- Banned Books Week
 - This year, Banned Books Week will run **Sunday, October 4th through Saturday, October 10th**.
 - The theme is “Let Books Be: Protect the Freedom to Read”.
 - [More information about Banned Books Week can be found here.](#)
 - There is a page for [free downloadable content which can be found here.](#)
 - Banned Books Week themed swag from [the ALA Store can be found here.](#) More content will be added as we get closer to the date.
- ALSC and YALSA Merger
 - The Association of Library Services for Children (ALSC) and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) will be reuniting.
 - YALSA will dissolve on **August 31st**.
 - Reunification will be effective September 1st.
 - Have questions? Please consult our [Reunification FAQ](#) or reach out to YALSA staff at yalsa@ala.org.
- PLA Conference
 - March 13–15, 2028 in San Francisco, CA.
 - Mark it on your calendars!