



New Volunteer Structure

FAQs

How was the decision made to change the structure?

- » In November 2020, the ALA Board of Directors appointed a task force charged with reimagining the ALA committee structure. This task force, which came to be known as the Reimagining Our Committees (ROCRs) Task Force, spent nearly three years auditing and redefining the roles of ALA's standing committees, ad hoc committees, project teams and task forces. Throughout this process, it became clear that the Association's original structure assumed that a committee's work was ongoing and that there was always something that the committee needed to be doing. That was never the intent, as evidenced by ALA Policy which states "all committees are reviewed annually by the Board to determine the ongoing need."

The ROCRs Task Force audited the current committee structure and conducted focus groups with volunteers to better understand their experience. The task force also evaluated the investment of volunteer time and energy against the desired state of the Association as outlined by the strategic direction and looked for any mismatches between the two.

The result of that work is an innovative new structure that was imagined to intentionally support the Association's strategic direction across all focus areas while at the same time maximize the impact of volunteers' time and talent, enhance their overall experience, and increase interest in volunteer service.

How long has this been in the works?

- » The ALA Board of Directors appointed the Reimagine our Committees (ROCRs) task force in November 2020.
- » The new structure that was developed as a result of the work of the ROCRs task force was approved by the Board of Directors in May 2023.

Did the task force consult any current committees or members?

- » Yes. Focus groups discussions were held with current and former volunteer leaders to better understand their experience as part of the research and analysis conducted by the task force.

What's the impetus for the change?

- » The Board of Directors wanted to bring ALA's volunteer structure into alignment with the overall vision, mission and strategic direction of the Association.
- » ALA needed to clearly define the various volunteer opportunities available within the organization based on the current and future needs of the Association.
- » We wanted to ensure that the time and talent volunteers invest in a given role is meaningful and added value to their involvement with ALA.

What are the new committees and how many volunteer positions will be available?

» There will be three categories of committees:

KNOWLEDGE

- CLM Certification Question Writing Committee (8–10 volunteers)
- CLM Certification Promotion Project Team (6–8 volunteers)
- Future Readiness Advisory Council (6–9 volunteers)
- Event Project Team (2–8 volunteers per event)

NETWORKING

- Member Experience Committee (7–9 volunteers)
- Member Ambassador Committee (4–7 volunteers)
- Independent Member Advisory Council (6–8 volunteers)
- Shared Interest Groups

RESOURCES

- Chapter Connection Committee
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Advisory Council (7–9 volunteers)
- Legal Management Operations Standards Committee Project Team (5–7 volunteers)
- Business Partner Focus Groups (1–2 volunteers)

Across each of these areas, there will be varying levels of time commitments. Some areas focus on short-term tasks versus others that focus on full longer-term projects.

When will the new structure take effect?

» The new structure will take effect beginning with the 2025–2026 organizational year that begins at the 2025 Annual Conference.

Are there any committees or roles that will remain unchanged?

» Any group required by ALA’s bylaws will remain in place. Thus, the Board of Directors and the Nominating Committee will be unaffected by these changes. ALA has flexibility to align those groups to fit its current needs.

When will applications be accepted for these new volunteer opportunities?

» The call for applications will open in July 2024.

How will applicants be selected?

» In the first year, all applicants will be vetted by a Board Task Force.

If you are currently on a standing committee and your term extends beyond May 2025, do you need to apply?

» Yes. There will be a new call for volunteers in summer 2024. All current committee members including the vice chair will need to apply to be considered for one of the new volunteer opportunities for the 2025–2026 organizational year.

What’s the distinction between a standing committee, ad hoc committee, advisory council, project team, shared interest group, focus group, etc?

» **Standing Committees** are those committees that the Board of Directors uses on a continual basis. They can be set forth in the association’s bylaws or in its board operations and policy manual, or they may be established by custom.

» **Ad hoc committees** are those formed for a limited period of time to address a specific need. When the work of the ad hoc committee is completed, the committee is dissolved. An ad hoc committee may exist for less than a year or for a year or more depending on the extent of the work assigned to it.

» **Advisory Councils** assist the Board of Directors in carrying out their work by providing expertise and advice in selected areas.

» **Project Teams** address short-term needs or projects of the Board and are typically disbanded upon the completion of those tasks or projects.

» **Shared Interest Groups (SIGs)** are also known as professional interest groups or components. These are communities within a larger organization, created around a shared interest in specific areas of knowledge, learning, technology or other characteristics of membership. SIGs offer additional benefits for association members such as access to subject specific information and resources, educational opportunities, networking with like-minded peers, and volunteer leadership opportunities.

- » **Focus Groups** are staff led, incorporating one or more members as necessary, limited in scope, created by the Board to achieve a single objective and report to the Board their results.

This format allows ALA to be flexible, adaptable and fluid and to take action when needed.

What are the qualification criteria to serve on the DEIA Advisory Council?

- » Certified Diversity Professional (CDP®) or other diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility credential preferred but not required.

When will the new charters be provided?

- » The charters will be available when ALA does the call for volunteers this summer.

How can you give feedback about the new structure?

- » Any questions regarding the new volunteer structure can be directed to ALA_President@alanet.org.