MISSION STATEMENT

“Bringing the Alaska library community together through learning, advocacy, and collaborative action.”

VISION STATEMENT

“The Alaska Library Association supports libraries to empower communities through the 21st Century.”

VALUES STATEMENT

- Treasures the diversity of its membership, which represents all types and sizes of libraries from all regions of the state.
- Values the spirit of cooperation and unity that defines the Alaska library community.
- Believes in the right of free access to all types of information and ideas for individuals and works to safeguard intellectual freedom essential to democracy and our system of government.
- Promotes professional growth through continuing education for library staff at all organization levels and stages of their careers.
- Works for the advancement and protection of libraries through the political and advocacy process.
**FOCUS AREAS & STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (2013-2016)**

**DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

A. Influence national policy on traditional cultural expressions (TCE) by providing a working model based on Alaskan libraries and cultural institutions.

Measure: ALA and other state chapters endorse and adopt the Alaska-developed TCE model by 2016.

Action Plan:

- Establish a TCE working committee headed by co-chairs Linda Wynne and June Pinnell-Stephens
- Describe and document TCE history, policy, and needs
- Develop Alaska education/awareness workshop
- Secure funding to deliver workshop around Alaska
- Take workshop on the road first to Alaska, then other states
- Publicize success stories

Time Frame:

- 1-2 years: develop workshop; locate funding
- 2-4 years: roadshow; document and publish; reevaluate results

B. Increase overall membership with special emphasis on attracting library workers at all organizational levels and from all types of libraries and targeting non-traditional membership groups such as Friends, Board trustees, community associates, politicians, and other library stakeholders.

Measure: AkLA membership increases to include 90% of Alaska’s library employees by 2016.
Action Plan:

- Change membership rates to include
  1) Special memberships for allied groups such as AkASL for a reduced fee
  2) Nominal rates for Friends, Trustees, and community associates

- Expand communications
  1) Use mailing list, newsletter, conference programs, and web presence to advertise the benefits of belonging to AkLA and serving on committees and roundtables
  2) Add all statewide library personnel to listserv with widespread campaign
  3) Create new literature regarding membership rates and benefits
  4) Encourage library directors to inform their library staff about membership options and development opportunities

- Foster increased participation
  1) Develop specialized roundtables to attract underrepresented groups
  2) Develop conference sessions for those interests
  3) Provide funding for underrepresented groups to go to conferences
  4) Revive local chapters
  5) Develop virtual conferences and training

Time Frame:

- 1-2 years: change membership rates and implement basic outreach/communication strategy
- 2-5 years: implement follow-up communication/outreach activities and initiate increased participation activities; evaluate results
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP

C. Actively support new members of the association and profession.

Measure: Develop dynamic mentoring, leadership, and networking opportunities and programs designed for AkLA newcomers and younger professionals and library staff by 2015.

Action Plan:

- Expand networking opportunities through the New Members Roundtable during conference and beyond
- Develop a mentoring pilot project and sponsor other formal and informal events pairing experienced librarians with less-experienced ones
- Implement an orientation and welcome program for library staff new to the state and AkLA
- Design conference and virtual training opportunities for younger professionals specifically in the areas of management and leadership development
- Develop pathways to cultivate a new generation of AkLA leaders and office holders
- Convene a “Succession Summit” to plan for future statewide succession needs and assess transition challenges

Time Frame:

- 1-2 years: identify goal champions; design and pilot specific orientation, development, mentoring, and training programs; secure funding as necessary
- 2-4 years: fully implement programs; evaluate results
ADVOCACY

D. Develop a group of library citizen-advocates able to advocate effectively on behalf of libraries and library values on the local and state level.

Measure: a committed, knowledgeable group of citizens and library stakeholders, who are not librarians, will be mobilized and active on behalf of libraries by 2015.

Action Plan:

- Establish an active Advocacy committee to spearhead and coordinate recruitment and training
- Local librarians will develop list of local advocates and supporters
- Advocacy committee solicits advocates/spokespeople
- Secure funding to bring together potential advocates for orientation and training
- Secure agreement to serve
- Reward and support those who serve

Time Frame:

- 1-2 years: identify potential advocates; locate funding; offer orientation/training sessions
- 2-3 years: develop advocacy goals and plan; deploy advocates; evaluate results
ONGOING ACTIVITIES

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The Library Membership Committee works to promote and develop membership in the Association by direct contact, through the local chapters, by direct invitation by mail, and through AkLA publications. The committee conducts an annual membership drive, usually early in the fall until after the schools are in session in order to attract new school librarians.

AkLA has a number of roundtables for the members sharing a common interest in a type of library or a library service. These roundtables reflect the diversity and interests of the membership. Two of the roundtables are highlighted below due to their focus on diversity and inclusion.

The New Members Roundtable was formed to help people who are new to Alaska, librarianship, and/or AkLA become actively involved in the Alaska library community. The roundtable hosts an event at the annual conference to bring new AkLA members and the new conference attendees together with AkLA leadership.

The Alaska Native Issues Roundtable serves as a forum for librarians and library staff who are interested in raising awareness of Alaska Native issues and concerns within the library community and acting as advocates for them. The roundtable fosters culturally appropriate library philosophies and practices in order to better serve Alaska Native library users and communities in the development of services, collections, programs, staff, and overall library environment.

AkLA publishes on its website the “Culturally Responsive Guidelines for Alaska Public Libraries” to help public librarians examine how they respond to the specific informational, educational, and cultural needs of their Alaska Native users and communities.

COOPERATION

AkLA provides a number of tools to foster cooperation and communication among members, including a website, a wiki, mailing lists, membership directory, quarterly newsletter, and social media presence.
The Authors to Alaska roundtable is composed of AkLA members interested in coordinating author visits within the state. Originally focused on school visits by authors, it now encompasses visits from both adult and children’s authors and illustrators.

Book Bonanza is a collection development program that provides an excellent way to empower librarians and schools to choose the books they need for their libraries. With donations from generous people/organizations, Book Bonanza offers book credits for new books to the libraries that demonstrate the greatest need through an essay entitled “How new books will make a difference to kids in my library.”

**INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM & ACCESS**

The Intellectual Freedom Committee educates the membership on the importance of promoting and protecting intellectual freedom, privacy, confidentiality, and rights to access information. The committee stays abreast of national and state developments and alerts the AkLA membership on proposed legislation infringing on intellectual freedom. The committee coordinates response to intellectual freedom problems reported by librarians and educators and maintains the database of challenges and incidents in Alaska.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP**

AkLA is committed to providing continuing education to improve the quality of library service throughout the state. The Association provides many opportunities to develop leadership through service to the organization, including running for office or serving as chair of a committee or roundtable.

The Continuing Education Committee suggests and implements opportunities for library education, training activities, and continuing education for library personnel, library board members, and volunteers.

The Association's annual conference is a venue for professional development that offers sessions, workshops, and other educational programs. For many members, the annual conference is their primary opportunity for professional development.

Many of the Association's roundtables organize programs at conference as well as other continuing education activities throughout the year.
Local chapters support professional development by hosting the annual conference on a rotating basis. In addition, chapters often provide educational opportunities during regular meetings throughout the year.

The Association offers scholarships to provide financial assistance to worthy students pursuing graduate studies leading to a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies and to encourage graduates to return to Alaska to work in professional library positions. Scholarships are also available for graduate studies leading to a library media specialist/school librarian certificate and to encourage graduates to return to Alaska to work in professional school library positions.

AkLA also administers a Continuing Education Fund Grant to provide scholarships for travel to the annual conference as well as seed money for continuing education opportunities.

The New Members Roundtable works to provide leadership training and experience for new librarians, to help them transition into leadership positions within AkLA and their local communities. The roundtable also promotes cross-training between newer and more experienced librarians.

**ADVOCACY**

Each year at its annual face-to-face meeting in September, AkLA establishes a set of legislative priorities. These priorities address what AkLA believes are the most pressing needs of libraries of all types around the state. The Association agrees to work to secure passage of legislation that furthers these priorities.

Over the years Association members have felt the need for an AkLA Lobbyist in Juneau. The lobbyist is charged with identifying friends and advocates of libraries in the legislature, monitoring legislation, and assisting AkLA members in preparing and presenting testimony at hearings. It is the responsibility of the AkLA Lobbyist to follow the priorities as adopted by the AkLA Executive Council.

The Library Advocacy Committee’s charge is to plan, develop, and promote library advocacy initiatives for the Alaska Library Association. One of its main duties is to coordinate with the Executive Council and the AkLA lobbyist to promote AkLA’s legislative priorities. In addition, the committee works to develop resources, materials, and expertise to support advocacy and marketing ideas for libraries in Alaska.