



## ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ADMINISTRATORS PLAN OF WORK TEMPLATE FOR STANDING COMMITTEES

*Not applicable for event planning committees*

ALA is the undisputed leader for the business of law, focused on the delivery of cutting-edge management and leadership products and services to the global legal community.

We identify and provide solutions to the most strategic and operational challenges our members and customers face today, while we prepare them for the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow.

The [strategic plan and goals](#) of the association are available for review on the ALA website.

**COMMITTEE NAME:** [Membership Development Committee](#)

**COMMITTEE CHAIR:** [Timothy B. Corcoran](#)

**COMMITTEE LIAISON:** [Lori Hughes](#)

**COMMITTEE SIZE:** [9-10](#)

**COMMITTEE TERM:** [3 years, non-renewable](#)

**CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS:** [Summer](#)

**SELECTIONS MADE:** [Fall](#)

**MISSION STATEMENT:** [We are a cross-section of passionate volunteers who evaluate, enhance, and innovate the membership experience. We represent legal business professionals to improve and deliver an inspired member experience.](#)

**PURPOSE:** [The Membership Development Committee focuses on the identification, development, and implementation of strategies and tactics to advance ALA goals and objectives related to membership. Membership development is important as a means to govern the organization and achieve its overall mission. It has become more challenging as a result of many factors influencing legal management, and is now more critical in particular for these key reasons: 1\) member retirements outpacing new member enrollments, 2\) law firm mergers, 3\) increased competition from alternative sources of education and networking, and 4\) member organization budget cuts.](#)

**ROLE:** [We present ideas to the Board or other Committees or staff functions to increase member acquisition and retention, or to improve member experience. We also, where warranted, take on tasks at the committee or individual level to help implement our ideas. We do not generally participate in day-to-day operational tasks that are best handled by association staff.](#)

**COMMITTEE MEMBER SELECTION PROCESS:** [The current committee members are Timothy B. Corcoran, Chair; Judy Hissong, CLM, Vice Chair; Lori Hughes, Board Liaison; Jessica Beyer; Brent Bridges, CLM; Sarah Didrikson; Elyssa Goldstein, CLM, PHR, SHRM-CP; Michael Keats; Marsha Kendall, SPHR, SHRM-SCP; and Shannon Silveira. Tim, Brent, and Shannon are scheduled to conclude their terms in 2019, so we expect to welcome 3 new members in 2019. We will review volunteer expressions of interest with an eye toward maintaining a diverse committee profile. Judy will](#)



ascend to the Chair role in 2019, and we are currently assessing interest and suitability from within our ranks for the incoming Vice Chair role.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS/ELIGIBILITY:** Membership on ALA committees is open to any regular member, associate member, business partner, consultant, or other interested party whose knowledge, skills, and expertise is deemed useful to the work of the committee. Only regular members may serve as chair or chair-elect. A keen interest in membership, commitment to the value of ALA, enjoyment in talking with other members/prospects, good follow-through and strategic vision are required. We also value diversity, as our focus is on the ALA of tomorrow. Our committee members should be able to represent both their own demographic stakeholders (role, geography, organization size, organization type, age, gender) as well as consider the needs of the organization as a whole, at the national, regional, chapter, and individual levels. We challenge long-standing perceptions and norms and think outside the box to develop ideas that will improve the value of the association investment for current and future members.

**IN PERSON MEETINGS/COMMITTEE MEMBER EXPECTATIONS:** Attendance is required at the annual committee meeting which coincides with the Annual Conference. Members must be available for monthly and as-needed scheduled committee video-conference calls. Each committee member may be assigned leadership roles for major projects to distribute the workload, and it is expected that committee members volunteer for assignments equally.

**STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE ALA GOALS:** The Membership Development Committee has acted on its mission statement in 2018 by focusing on three priorities, each of which will continue in 2019: Establishing best practices for critical “moments of truth” where members or prospective members interact with ALA; identifying key stakeholders (“pillars”) for whom ALA can be more proactive in delivering value; modifying the organizational dues structure to provide additional benefits to members and incentives to prospective members.

#### **COMMITTEE DELIVERABLES:**

Moments of Truth: This sub-team has taken on the task of identifying critical points of interaction between members, or prospective members, and ALA, with an eye toward “reducing the friction” in these interactions and making it easier for members to do business with ALA. We approach this effort with two key assumptions: (a) Members’ interests are not well-served when each chapter and HQ approach key member interactions in variable and unique ways, especially when processes tend to change from year to year as new volunteers take on leadership roles; and (b) We don’t need to re-invent key processes because somewhere within ALA there is a best practice that we can identify and share on a wider basis. This approach draws on the immense expertise of our volunteer leaders at all levels and fosters a culture of collaboration across boundaries, which is far more likely to gain traction than a missive from HQ. This is a repeatable process, but the initial effort is focused on member recruitment and onboarding. In 2018 the sub-team gathered input from multiple sources at the HQ and chapter level through a variety of tactics including a survey and CLI participation. From the compiled feedback, we are developing a best practices tool kit that will be distributed to all levels of ALA. We expect this tool kit to be available in the first half of 2019, targeting the annual conference and CLI as key opportunities to showcase the end product. The objectives are to reduce the variability and potential inefficiency of key interactions so that current and prospective members aren’t frustrated and disillusioned, and to allow volunteer leaders at all levels to focus on more strategic issues rather than re-inventing essential operational tasks. Upon completion of this effort, we intend to identify another critical “moment of truth” and repeat the process.



Pillars: A key outcome of the committee's work to date is the recognition that perpetuating ALA's current membership demographics is insufficient to sustain the organization in the medium- to long-term. As noted in our 2017 presentation to the Board and in our subsequent 2018 actions, we endeavor to welcome additional members to ALA who don't fit the traditional profile of senior administrator of a small to mid-size law firm. To create this bigger tent, this sub-team has spent time identifying key stakeholder groups that can benefit from more, and more targeted, resources from ALA. It's always important to note that this effort isn't designed to compete with other legal associations or to compel ALA to be "everything to everyone." Rather, ALA is uniquely positioned to serve stakeholders engaged in the business of law, a definition that encompasses both junior and senior administrators, as well as lawyers in management roles, junior and senior business professionals in marketing, business development, finance, pricing, HR, operation, as well as those holding similar roles on the buyer side of the equation, such as law department administrators, procurement and legal operations professionals, and business partners who provide services and tools to these constituencies. With the exception of business partners (a.k.a. vendors), there is no restriction prohibiting any of these stakeholders from joining ALA today, but we have failed to engage them in two key areas: (a) the vast majority of our investment in member value is focused on senior administrators in small to mid-size law firms, with only a smattering of offerings optimized for others; and (b) ALA generally adopts a "do it yourself" approach to finding value among the many offerings at the national and chapter level. Of course, ALA leaders have long recognized the challenge members face in establishing ROI when it comes time to renew membership or invest in a new offering, e.g., attend a conference, but rather than focus on an ROI measurement tool, our committee is focused on identifying key stakeholders who would be a valuable addition to the ALA community; identifying services needed by these stakeholders, whether from existing service offerings or by identifying needs otherwise unmet in the marketplace; and adopting a proactive stance to presenting these services to these stakeholders, in a fashion similar to Amazon.com's "If you bought x, you will likely be interested in y" approach. Based on a deeper understanding of the needs of key stakeholders, ALA can better allocate investment to attract and retain members. In 2018 the committee began the work of identifying key stakeholder groups, and in 2019 we will continue this work by collaborating with HQ staff and other committees, e.g., Product & Service Review Committee, Certification Committee, etc., to turn these concepts into investments, and investments into offerings, and offerings into improved retention and recruiting.

Pricing: A key observation offered by this committee to ALA leadership is that our current dues structure poses an impediment to recruitment and retention. Accordingly, in 2018 the committee focused on identifying alternative pricing models that would improve retention and recruitment. The committee recommended a shift away from exclusively offering individual member pricing to offering organizational pricing to all qualified member organizations, with an individual member option for those who don't qualify or otherwise are unconvinced of the value. Our approach is not to force anyone to make an economic disadvantageous decision when it comes to membership dues, but to see a compelling opportunity to improve value in the new dues option. Our recommendation to the Board in August 2018 is to offer a flat fee based on the number of attorneys in a law firm, and a separate flat fee structure for other organizations, which is a widely-used model in the market for other services such as software licensing, and is also the model used by ILTA, a sister legal organization focus on technology. In this model, all members of the organization qualify to be active members. While we don't realistically expect every lawyer and business professional in a law firm to participate in ALA, the intention is to attract those roles identified by our pillars team, for whom ALA can serve as an additional educational and networking resource. Based on initial financial modeling, this adjustment will be neutral to accretive, meaning if all current members were to shift from individual to organizational pricing, ALA dues revenue will remain relatively stable in the short term, with some possible slight upside. Longer-term, the incremental revenue from a substantially larger member base, however, in the form of dues at



the chapter level, and conference registrations, webinars, and other services at the HQ level, could be substantial. As with any pricing change, the impact varies by stakeholder group. Our analysis reflects that individual members in law firms of roughly 30-50 lawyers, and who have no other business professionals or lawyers interested in joining ALA, would see a meaningful increase in dues (on a percentage basis, although more modest on a pure dollar basis). If these individuals already face a stretched value proposition, we might see a decrease in member retention. However, our analysis also shows that numerous members would be delighted to invite additional colleagues to join ALA at minimal incremental cost. The incremental revenue potential from a larger member base has the potential to more than offset slight attrition among those who don't find value in the new pricing model. There are numerous details to be worked out in order to offer organizational pricing in 2019 for the 2020 calendar year. Accordingly, we have attached a roadmap of key decisions and action items. Note that the most critical action requested of the Board is approval to proceed. Despite what appears to be a lengthy runway to prepare and present this option to our membership in advance of 2020, we have to begin execution right away. A final note: a key linkage between the efforts of our Moments of Truth and Pricing teams is the issue of chapter dues. ALA by nature of its distributed governance model imposes not inconsequential burdens on our members by requiring them to navigate various chapter dues rates and structures, some of which offer their own version of group pricing, and this problem is exacerbated for members whose job responsibilities compel them to join more than one chapter. This committee is not, at this time, offering a recommendation to address this. However, we anticipate in the future looking into the relative benefits of (a) aligning chapter and HQ dues structures so that members across the organization receive similar benefits, and (b) combining the registration process so members can complete one process for all registrations and ALA HQ and chapters can work behind the scenes to allocate dues revenues appropriately, removing that burden from the members.

**RESOURCES:** Our ALA Headquarters Liaison is Teena Austin.

**PROPOSED DATE:** October 2018

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Ongoing/January 2019