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Guide for OLA Councils

The Ontario Library Association's events and services are supported by hundreds of volunteers in Ontario on over 30 committees. Member involvement is vital to the success of the association.

This document serves to outline some of the key roles played by OLA council members, the OLA staff liaison as well as key tasks that should be undertaken throughout the year. Each council has a by-law, which will provide details on the specific mandate and deliverables of your council and the OLA staff liaison for each council can provide further guidance as needed. All divisions of the Ontario Library Association (OLA) are governed by [By-law No. 1](#)

Roles and responsibilities of OLA Council Members and Staff Liaison

Role of Chair (President)

The President of each council is a member of the OLA Board during their term, refer to [Governance policy G3.3](#) Board Officer role

- Chair meetings
 - For tips on how to chair a meeting, see this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHFrerN7vCc>
- Develop meeting agendas.
 - Ensure that this is shared with council members at least 1 week before each meeting.
- Set meeting dates for the year.
- Ensure the council is working towards its strategic goals.
- Work with OLA staff to request support.
- Draft an annual report to the Board.
- Committee and Council evaluation

Role of Vice President

- Chair meetings when President is absent.
- Advise and regularly consult with the President.
- Provide ongoing support to the members of the Division Councils.
- Assist with the Annual General meeting

The Vice President of each council is a member of the OLA Board during their term, refer to [Governance policy G3.3](#) Board Officer role.



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Role of Secretary

- Take meeting notes.
 - Capture items in the order of the agenda.
 - Capture a general summary of the conversation, not verbatim.
 - Include action items.
 - Resource: <https://www.wildapricot.com/articles/how-to-write-effective-meeting-minutes>
- Work with Chair to draft an annual report to the Board.

Role of Treasurer (Past President)

- Quarterly budget reports.
 - Review with Staff liaison prior to each council meeting.
- Work with the chair and the staff liaison on budget requests for the year.
- Ensure committee expenses remain within the set budget.
- Assist with budget planning.

Role of OLA Staff Liaison

- Share advice when appropriate.
- Orientation
- Provide context for OLA policies and procedures.
- Facilitate communications with OLA members, including via newsletter, social media and the OLA websites.
- Connect with councils as needed.
- Support councils in determining the resources and budget required to complete activities. This may include meeting space, technology needs, staff support, etc.
- Make any purchases needed related to council budget / activities (if budget permits)

Working Guidelines for Meetings

- Assume good intentions regarding your council colleagues.
- The Chair is the arbiter.
- Stay on time and topic (SOTT) – issues not on the Agenda should be “parked” for resolution at the end of the meeting.
- One conversation at a time.
- Ask for clarification where and when needed.
- When stuck, review and summarize.
- Each member should contribute to the best of their ability.
- Recognize, respect, and invite alternative perspectives.
- Use headlines; provide the full story, as necessary.

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- Laugh!

Meeting Agenda Guidelines

These guidelines are offered as a reminder to assist with agenda creation for meetings:

Tips for developing meeting agendas.

- Welcome
- Statement of conflict of interest
- Approval of agenda
- Approval of minutes
- Business arising
- Financial/Budget Reporting: Treasurer's report •
- Program reports/portfolio reviews
- OLA board updates
- Next meeting
- Adjournment

Additionally, the following additional items are suggested to ensure council is on track with the cycle of OLA business:

Meeting #1 (First Council meeting Feb-March)

- Council orientation (led by OLA staff)
- Onboarding of new council members
- Strategic plan review
- Assignment of portfolios (if applicable)
- Confirmation of meeting and event dates
- Orientation to policies, procedures (i.e., expense claim forms)
- Quarterly review of financials (Q1 review September – November)
- Review budget for the year
- Review OLA Strategic Plan – identifying areas of concentration.
- Propose year-plan.
 - Setting goals for the year.
 - Setting up indicators of success.
- Confirmation of year's calendar meetings.

Meeting #2 (June)

- Business arising
- Review awards procedure/scholarship process if applicable
- Create Council budgets for the next fiscal year (September to August)
- Quarterly review of financials (Q2 review December – February)

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- If applicable – consider committee engagement at OLA Super Conference
 - Session submission?
 - Other engagement

Meeting #3 (September)

- Business arising
- Awards process /Scholarship process if applicable
- Quarterly review of financials (Q3 review March –May)
- Review council nomination procedure and positions up for election.

Meeting #4 (November)

- Business arising
- Status report on ongoing projects.
- Planning the AGM (Refer to useful links below)
- Quarterly review of financials (Q4 review June – August)
- Recognition of outgoing council members (or at AGM)
- Planning Super Conference activities (award presentation, convening, etc.)
- Decisions on awards and scholarships finalized and provided to OLA staff.
- Additional council nominations brought forth, if required
- Recommendations for next year.
- Discuss report to Board on activities and progress of the year.
 - See Template for Board report on page 4.



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Template Council Report to OLA Board

Councils should complete a report to the OLA Board. This report should include a summary of activities/deliverables as well as any items requiring board review and approval.

The Board meets four times a year and documents for the Board are due ten days before the meeting date.

Session:	[OLA Board of Directors Meeting]
Subject:	[COUNCIL NAME - link to] Report
Prepared By:	
Date:	

Summary of Activities / Deliverables

Please use this table to summarize the key activities and accomplishments of the council in the past year, note the status [complete, in progress, deferred].

Please also note the strategic priority that it supports. OLA's current [strategic priority focuses on five key priorities listed here](#).

- 1 - Focusing Member Services Across Diverse Career Paths;
- 2 - Influencing Policy and Demonstrating Value.
- 3 - Building Evaluation and Research Capacity.
- 4 - Addressing the unique needs of rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.
- 5 - Enablers: People, Technology and Fundraising

Deliverable	Description	Status	Strategic Priority Link
<i>E.g., Spirit of Reconciliation Initiative.</i>	<i>Delivered the Spirit of Reconciliation Initiative, funding three First Nation Public Library staff members to attend OLA Super Conference.</i>	Complete	4. Addressing the unique needs of rural, remote and Indigenous communities

Recommendations/ideas for next year:

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In a bullet point list or short paragraph, note any recommendations for next year. This could include ideas new initiatives, recommendations for changes, or general feedback on how the council operates.

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Council members

Please list all council members, including their positions and terms. Please also indicate if there any vacancies or upcoming vacancies.