

OLA ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mandate:

The OLA Advocacy Committee reports to the OLA Board of Directors to support initiatives on current issues and strategies related to advocacy for libraries in Ontario. The committee works to organize networking and communication opportunities, and to compile and make available resources related to advocacy for libraries.

Responsibilities/Objectives:

The OLA Advocacy Committee will:

- provide broad advice on both emerging issues and those of strategic significance for libraries;
- ensure that they engage with, and include the voices of, all library sectors, including public, school, health, academic, special, and First Nations libraries;
- provide specialized expertise/resources on a specific issue/topic that arises (i.e. Municipal and Provincial elections, reduction to funding and programs, impact of policy changes);
- facilitate networking, professional development and communication opportunities relating to advocacy;
- identify advocacy needs and resources (i.e. toolkits, individuals, associations) while working in conjunction with specific sectors;
- support government relations strategies;
- communicate advocacy efforts to stakeholders.

Deliverables:

The goals of the OLA Advocacy Committee are to:

- ensure there is a strong and sustained advocacy plan and strategies for libraries in Ontario;
- in an advisory role, be available for consultation on issues related to advocacy for Ontario libraries;
- liaise with OLA Divisional Councils through committee member sector representatives.

Composition:

Membership shall represent the diversity of the following sectors:

- Academic, ideally representing college and university (2)
- Health,
- First Nations,
- Public, ideally representing diverse needs: rural/urban (2)
- Schools, ideally representing diverse needs: rural/urban; public/separate; elementary/secondary (2)
- Ex-officio members will include: OLA President. The committee is supported by the OLA Executive Director and the OLA Advocacy and Research Officer
- As needed, a working committee will be created to complete specialized, time-limited projects.

Qualifications:

- OLA members who have an interest in a leadership role in library advocacy.
- Members will bring expertise from their own sectors while supporting an overall advocacy mandate.
- Candidates should have advocacy experience, which may include: knowledge of current and systemic issues that affect libraries; experience with government relations and public policy; development of communication strategies; and expertise in social media, online engagement and new media technologies.

Resources and Budget:

Resources required for this committee include:

- Ongoing support from the OLA Executive Director
- OLA office staff support for teleconference arrangements and completion of meeting minutes, as needed; maintaining a public advocacy web page on the OLA website; posting/archiving of materials on OLA website and/or OLA Advocacy Forum
- Meeting space at OLA Office, as needed (1-2 times per year)
- Funds for expenses related to travel and food for in-person meetings
- Funds for special projects (e.g., Library Advocacy Summit, OLA Library Day at Queen's Park)

Timelines

Committee members can expect a minimum of 3 meetings per year, which will be a mix of teleconference and in-person (e.g., at OLA Office). The combined meeting and workload time (i.e. developing strategy, creating plans, attending meetings, building networks, etc.) is estimated to be approximately 6 days per year. OLA covers meeting expenses.

The OLA Advocacy Committee will report to the OLA Board at least once per year. Each designated Divisional Council Representative from the Advocacy Committee will report at Divisional Council Meetings as needed, at a minimum of once a year.

The Meeting Agenda should be available to members at least 5 business days prior to meetings. Minutes will be completed by OLA staff or committee designate and made available as soon as possible following meetings. These items will be distributed to committee members through email and also archived in the OLA Advocacy Forum available through the OLA website. Communication between meetings will usually be conducted through email.

Quorum for committee meetings will be in effect when a majority of committee members are in attendance for a meeting.

Type of Committee:

- Standing Committee** (responsible for a specific program or function)
- Task Forces** (time-limited tasks on a specific topic)
- Action Groups** (development of a limited program or activity)

Term of Appointment:

The term for OLA Advocacy Committee members generally runs for a period of 3 years, with the option to extend up to an additional 2 years at the discretion of the OLA Board. Member terms overlap to ensure knowledge transfer and consistency. Committee members are recruited from the OLA membership at large, as required.

Co-Chairs will be appointed annually from within the committee. Terms are staggered terms of 2 years. Co-chairs are responsible for coordinating the agenda, facilitating meetings, ensuring portfolios are assigned, liaising with the OLA Executive Director and reporting to the OLA Board.

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