

OLA ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mandate:

The OLA Advocacy Committee reports to the OLA Board of Directors to support initiatives related to advocacy as outlined in the 2025-2028 OLA Strategic Plan. This committee will provide opportunities for individual library workers to gain advocacy skills through organized networking and professional development opportunities.

Responsibilities and Deliverables:

The OLA Advocacy Committee will directly support the larger OLA Strategic Plan (2025-28) Goal 1: *Protect Libraries. Secure their Future* by:

- facilitating networking, professional development, and communication opportunities relating to advocacy;
- identifying advocacy needs and resources for members' individual growth (i.e., toolkits, individuals, associations);
- liaising with OLA Divisional Councils and determining the types of programs and professional development their members need in order to conduct Divisional Government Relations work;
- ensuring that the Committee engages with the many voices of the library sectors in order to meet members where they are;
- acting in an advisory role when issues related to advocacy for Ontario libraries arise (e.g., advocacy campaigns, like Ontario Public Library Week).

Composition:

Membership shall represent OLA's current advocacy and strategic priorities. Composition will be open to any active OLA member at the discretion of the OLA Board. The Committee will comprise 5-8 members. The committee is supported by the OLA Executive Director and the OLA Advocacy and Research Officer, with the OLA President serving as an ex officio member. Quorum for committee meetings will be in effect when a majority of committee members are in attendance for a meeting.

Qualifications:

- OLA members who have an interest in a leadership role in library advocacy;
- Candidates will ideally 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. While previous experience is not mandatory, a passion for advocacy is required.

Resources and Budget:

Resources required for this committee include:

- Ongoing support from the OLA Executive Director and OLA Advocacy and Research Officer;
- OLA staff support for virtual meeting arrangements and completion of meeting minutes, as needed; and maintaining a public advocacy web page on the OLA website;
- Funds for special projects, at the discretion of OLA Executive Director;
- Opportunity to meet in-person at OLA Super Conference, at the discretion of the OLA Executive Director.

Expectations & Timelines:

- Committee members can expect to meet every other month (5-6 times a year) virtually;
- As needed, working sub-committees will be created to complete specialized, time-limited projects;
- The OLA Advocacy Committee will report to the OLA Board at least once per year and complete action plan updates on a regular basis;
- 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.
 - Items will be distributed to committee members through email.

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, for a staggered term of 2 years. Co-chairs are responsible for coordinating the agenda, facilitating meetings, ensuring portfolios are assigned, liaising with the OLA Executive Director (or designate) and reporting to the OLA Board.

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