

In September, ALA announced the save-the-date for the 45th annual National Library Legislative Day (NLLD), May 4 and May 5, 2020. NLLD is a pillar of ALA's year-round approach to advocacy. It is also the cornerstone of our relationship-oriented training program, which focuses on supporting and motivating all ALA advocates to develop strong connections with elected officials and community leaders at every level of government.

As in the past, our 45th NLLD will be a two-day event where hundreds of library workers, trustees, supporters, leaders, users, and community stakeholders from across the country, will gather in Washington, D.C., to learn from policy experts, to exchange best practices, and to raise awareness among federal legislators about libraries and their value.

We understand and appreciate that NLLD attendees come with a range of experiences and knowledge. That's why one of our biggest goals going forward is to provide an inclusive setting that nurtures the novice and builds on the knowledge base of those who are seasoned advocates. From our veteran advocates like the chief officers of state library agencies, to those who are fresh out of library school, we are designing NLLD to serve the gamut.

The face-to-face meetings with members of Congress during NLLD are our biggest opportunity. These meetings will

continue to strengthen the relationships ALA members have been building since the start of the 116th Congress. We are eager to bring diverse library stories to the Hill from as many congressional districts as we can on the same day, so we have the greatest impact. These stories are vital to cultivating meaningful relationships with legislators, step by step over time.

Advocacy is a different tactical and strategic challenge compared to when I first came to D.C. in the 1990s. A few decades ago, I could make calls to the chairs of my key committees and trust the message was heard. The process today is far more dynamic, with social media, grassroots, and the influx of communications to the Hill. In this changing landscape, ALA advocates must pull all the levers we can. I can tell you this: everyone else who is effectively working in advocacy is doing the same.

What hasn't changed is the ALA Public Policy and Advocacy team's commitment to working in partnership with libraries rather than on behalf of them. We see all library workers and supporters acting in alignment with ALA's mission "to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all."

Registration for NLLD will open later this fall. For more information, visit ala.org/nlld. To follow the conversation on social media, use #NLLD2020 and #ALAadvocacy. For other questions, email: nlld@alawash.org. **ZZ**

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