



Nebraska Library Association

2024 Strategic Plan

Strategic Planning Committee

Brenda Ealey, Chair

Members: Becky Baker, Cali Biaggi, Dr. Sara Churchill, Amy Dissmeyer, Holli Duggan, Lane Gibson, Shelby Janke, Matt Kovar, Margaret Mering, Emily Nimsakont, Wyatt Packard, Lacey Partlow, Anneka Ramirez, Deb Robertson, Michael Straatmann, and Tammi Thiem.

Report prepared by Wyatt Packard

Introduction

The Strategic Planning Committee was established by Nebraska Library Association President Emily Nimsakont in May 2022. Brenda Ealey was appointed to chair the committee. The committee met multiple times over the course of 2022 and 2023. The committee's primary goal was to create a plan for NLA to implement to address declining membership and operating losses.

During the past six-year period (2018-2023), NLA operated at a net loss of approximately \$55,000. Membership also declined, with some members and potential members asking "What is the point in joining and participating in NLA?" Solving these problems is crucial for NLA's viability. If a solution is not achieved, the committee estimates that NLA has enough cash reserves to continue at the current level of operations for roughly eight years.

The positive takeaway is that the association has time to implement achievable solutions which will make NLA financially successful and enable the association to better accomplish its mission.

Committee Chair Brenda Ealey invited members to join the committee based on their engagement with NLA, experience with the association, and involvement with different sections, round tables, and committees to ensure that a wide range of perspectives were shared.

The Strategic Planning Committee members included:

- Becky Baker (PLTS)
- Cali Biaggi (C&U and NMRT)
- Dr. Sara Churchill (Nebraska Golden Sower Award)
- Amy Dismeyer (Auditing)
- Holli Duggan (NLA President)
- Brenda Ealey (ALA Councilor)
- Lane Gibson (Bylaws and Handbook, Diversity, Library Week)
- Shelby Janke (Communications)
- Matt Kovar (PLTS)
- Margaret Mering (C&U)
- Emily Nimsakont (Past-President)
- Wyatt Packard (IF and AFCON Representative)
- Lacey Partlow (NMRT)
- Anneka Ramirez (Treasurer)
- Deb Robertson (Advocacy)
- Michael Straatmann (TSRT and MPLA Representative)
- Tammi Thiem (President-Elect)

Additional association members were consulted during this process and the committee appreciates their contributions.

Strategic Priorities

To develop a strategy for NLA, the committee reviewed budgets, surveys completed by members, membership trends, and feedback. After evaluating and discussing this information, the committee identified four strategic priorities that NLA must implement to succeed.

1. **Increase membership value to acquire and retain members.** This will be accomplished by offering:
 - Discounted rates for annual conference, spring meetings, and other events
 - Free continuing education opportunities for members each month
 - Opportunities to network and find support amongst peers
 - Professional development via NLA involvement
 - Option to join any NLA section or round table of interest for no additional fee
 - Multiple membership options - including advocate memberships for those who want to support Nebraska libraries
2. **Increase revenue to operate at a profit.** This will be accomplished by prioritizing:
 - Membership growth and retention
 - Responsible annual conference and event planning
 - Vendors and sponsorship opportunities for all events
 - Encouraging library supporters to become Advocate members and donate
3. **Create a productive organizational structure.** This will be accomplished by:
 - Fostering collaboration between groups by assigning specific responsibilities
 - Onboarding new talented leaders seeking experience
 - Providing orientation to new board members at the December board meeting
 - Creating goals for the association and reflecting those goals in the budget
4. **Improve communication with NLA members.** This will be accomplished by:
 - Updating members on what NLA is doing using the newsletter, social media, and email updates
 - Marketing the value of membership to library workers
 - Providing important information regarding library issues
 - Having monthly board meetings
 - Sharing written reports/updates from Executive Committee meetings with the full board

Implementation

To implement the four strategic priorities, the Strategic Planning Committee recommends that the Board of Directors, sections, round tables, and committees implement the actions noted below. As some of these actions will require changes to section and round table bylaws at the 2024 annual meeting, it is expected that all changes will be implemented by the end of 2024.

The Strategic Planning Committee and the Board of Directors do not ignore the independence of the sections and round tables. The members who make up these groups are central to the

association and continue to be the most successful at fostering engagement and community. Because of this, the committee recommends that sections and round tables adopt the tasks noted in the **Appendix** if they are not already included in their bylaws and handbooks. Doing so makes each group an integral part of NLA's structure, creating synergy that increases NLA's ability to be a powerful force for library workers and supporters.

One significant change for sections and round tables is the request that they set their membership fees to \$0 during a two-year trial period so that all NLA members who are interested in a section or round table feel encouraged to join and participate. Funding for sections and round tables will instead be a part of the budgeting process, which will result in the association being more active in funding and promoting activities.

The committee expects that a change in NLA membership rates and types will make up for this lost revenue and members will receive a huge benefit in being able to engage in any sections that interest them – resulting in more members and volunteers to lead.

Timeline for Actions

Below is a timeline for the Board of Directors to implement the strategic priorities identified by the committee.

December 2023

- Vote to approve the planning of a 2025 Annual Conference with location TBD. Plan on having an annual in-person conference each year. COMPLETED

January 2024

- Review and approve NLA 2024 Strategic Plan
- Update website

February 2024

- Review the contract for the Executive Director and specify their duties and responsibilities. Discuss the number of hours worked and if the current expense aligns with value added.
- Discuss 2025 membership types and costs
- Have meetings with sections and round tables to share plan and request bylaws changes

March 2024

- Approve 2025 membership types and costs
- 2024 Advocacy Day – 3/19 and 3/20 in Lincoln

April 2024

- Report on progress with sections and round tables regarding bylaws changes and organizational structure
- Start on membership marketing plan
- Review new online store options

May 2024

- Approve membership marketing plan
- Approve new online store

June 2024

July 2024

August 2024

September 2024

- Make sure that all sections and round tables have meetings scheduled and that they will vote to amend their bylaws to remove membership fees
- Make sure that any changes needed in the NLA bylaws are set to be voted on
- Begin 2025 strategic plan discussions

October 2024

- 2024 Annual Conference – 10/8-10/10 in Kearney
- 2025 Strategic Plan meeting at conference

November 2024

- Budget priorities discussion

December 2024

- December board meeting orientation for new members
- Review 2025 Strategic Plan with new board members

Appendix

Identified Priority Job Duties and Responsibilities

The duties listed below are not intended to be a comprehensive overview of everything that these positions do. Rather, they are a list of tasks that the committee identified as a strategic division of labor and priorities that should be made. It shall be the responsibility of the Bylaws and Handbook Committee Chair to ensure that these responsibilities are included in the Bylaws and Handbook.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for overseeing and managing the direction of the organization. Key activities include:

- Develop a strategic plan for each year
- Set priorities that are reflected in the budget
- Collaborate with sections and round tables to achieve greater efficiencies within the organization

Executive Director

- Keep the website up to date and maintain the appearance and organization of webpages
- Process membership renewals
- Respond to internal and external communications
- Oversee the management of conference planning including contracts, reservations, and logistical planning and update the Board of Directors and Conference Planning Committee
- Review and manage contracts
- Share updates to membership lists with appropriate sections and round tables monthly. Promptly provide new member information to the New Members Round Table
- Update and manage the association’s calendar of events and the website

Past President

- Chair of Finance Committee
- Elections Committee Chair

President

- Preside over monthly board meetings
- Spokesperson for the association
- Nominate committee chairs for approval by board
- Oversee board actions

Vice President

- Conference Committee Chair
- Professional Development Committee Chair
- Work with Long-Term Conference Planning Committee and representatives from each of the round tables/sections/committees
- Spring meetings oversight

Treasurer

- Finance Committee
- Oversee budget
- Lead budget priorities meeting at NLA Board Meeting (November) - happens before the budget proposal (December)

Secretary

- Records minutes
- Member of Communications Committee
- Send out NLA Activities
- Establish communication plan

Executive Board/Team

- Agendas - Every meeting with Executive Board Report
- Personnel issues
- Set meeting schedule - standard day and time

College and University Section (C&U)

- Member recruitment
- Conference programs
- Spring meetings
- ACRL Member

Public Library and Trustee Section (PLTS)

- Conference programs
- Oversee Tiny & Mighty Interest Group

School, Children's and Young People's Section (SCYP)

- Madhatter Award
- Summer Reading Workshop
- Conference programs

Intellectual Freedom Round Table (IF)

- Be aware of challenges and censorship efforts
- Communicate information to NLA
- Offer support
- Conference programs

- Automatic sign-up for all members
- Conference programs
- Welcoming new members – Executive Director will share list with NMRT on the first business day of each month
- Coordinate social opportunities (ex. Libraries & Lattes)

Technical Services Round Table (TSRT)

- Become section
- Conference programs
- Spring meetings

Tiny and Mighty Interest Group

- Become part of PLTS

Information Technology and Access Interest Group

Diversity Interest Group

- Dissolved due to lack of participation. May be restarted in the future.

Nebraska Golden Sower Award Committee

- Selects Golden Sower Nominees
- Annual celebration
- Manage GS store
- Manage GS website
- Collaborates with NLA board

Advocacy Committee

- Annual Advocacy Day
- Track legislative issues year round
- Coordinate with ALA/One Click Politics
- Coordinate with IF
- Coordinate with Lobbyist
- Coordinate with AFCON

New Members Round Table (NMRT)

Auditing Committee

- Annual review of financial activities
- Work with accountant

Bylaws and Handbook Committee

- Annual review
- Write and propose updates

Communications Committee

- Newsletter
- Social media
- Website?
- Press releases?
- Marketing
- Add “Marketing” to title
(Communications and Marketing Committee)

Professional Development Committee

Finance Committee

- Past President, Treasurer, Audit Committee, Executive Director (ex-officio)

Elections Committee

Scholarship and Awards Committee

Consider Establishing

Membership Committee

- Welcome to renewals and new
- Recruitment
- Mentorship
- Tracking
- Share info with other NLA groups

Note: These duties could go to NMRT

Ethics & Strategic Planning Committee

- Bylaws & Handbook Updates & Review
- Oversight and value statements
- Assist sections and committees with documents
- Strategic planning
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion priorities

Long-Term Conference Planning Committee

- Assist with conference planning
- Work with VP