

Dear ALA Leaders,

July was a busy month across the organization as we wrapped up one of our signature youth programs, continued preparing for National Convention, and supported a full slate of programs and activities across the Auxiliary.

ALA Girls Nation concluded another successful session in Washington, D.C., bringing together remarkable young leaders from across the country for a week of government, leadership, and civic engagement. From elections and Capitol Hill Day to the many opportunities for delegates to learn from one another, the program once again demonstrated the impact the Auxiliary can have in developing the next generation of leaders. The response online was incredible, with ALA Girls Nation content reaching well beyond our usual audiences throughout the month.

And now, National Convention is almost here. Staff across National Headquarters is deep into final preparations, and I know departments are doing the same. There is a tremendous amount of work happening behind the scenes to ensure a successful convention while continuing the programs, operations, and day-to-day work that keeps the organization moving forward.

Below are July's highlights and updates across the divisions.

Highlights

- **ALA Girls Nation 2026 wraps up a successful session:** Delegates from across the country gathered in Washington, D.C., for a week of government, leadership, and civic engagement. ALA Girls Nation social media also saw exceptional engagement, including more than 1.6 million Instagram views during the reporting period.
- **National Convention is almost here:** Final preparations continue across National Headquarters as staff works to support delegates, departments, national leaders, and members preparing to gather for the organization's largest annual event.
- **ALA Girls State leaders coming to National Headquarters:** For the first time, the ALA Girls State Leadership Conference will be held at National Headquarters Sept. 18–20, bringing program leaders together to share ideas, strengthen programs, and plan for the future.
- **Mission Training registration opens Sept. 2:** The 2026–2027 Mission Training and National Junior Meeting schedule includes five locations, with three events again being held in conjunction with The American Legion and Sons of The American Legion.

- **Strong communications engagement continues:** ALA eNews maintained a 41.8% open rate, while ALA Girls Nation content experienced significant growth across Instagram and Facebook throughout July.
-

Programs

ALA Girls Nation

ALA Girls Nation concluded another successful session in Washington, D.C., bringing together young leaders from across the country for an immersive experience in government, leadership, and civic engagement.

The following participants were selected to receive 2026 ALA Girls Nation scholarships:

- President Deborah Nkurumeh, Oklahoma – \$2,000
- Vice President Tessa Ahn, Maryland – \$2,000
- Outstanding Senator, Federalist Party: Juliann Harlan, West Virginia – \$2,000
- Outstanding Senator, Nationalist Party: Greta Gronfeld, Minnesota – \$2,000
- Outstanding Junior Counselor: Claire Koch, Wisconsin – \$1,000

ALA Girls State Leadership Conference

For the first time, the ALA Girls State Leadership Conference will be held at National Headquarters Sept. 18–20.

ALA Girls State leaders from across the country will gather for a weekend focused on collaboration, shared learning, and strengthening programs. Bringing these leaders together provides an opportunity to learn from successful practices across departments while continuing to strengthen one of the Auxiliary's signature youth leadership programs.

Junior Recognition

The following members were selected for Junior Member of the Year and Rising Star Junior recognition:

- National Junior Member of the Year: Abigail Jones, Michigan
- Eastern Division Junior Member of the Year: Shelley Rose Widmer, New Jersey
- Southern Division Junior Member of the Year: Alexandra Ridgeway, Virginia
- Central Division Rising Star Junior: Avary Jones, Iowa
- Northwestern Division Rising Star Junior: Charlotte Cleo "C.C." Fitzgerald, Colorado
- Southern Division Rising Star Junior: Averil Rose Krogh, Florida

No submissions were received for Northwestern or Western Division Junior Member of the Year, or for Eastern or Western Division Rising Star Junior.

Program Activity

- 7 Good Deed Awards and 9 Youth Hero Awards distributed
- 209 Junior Patch Program patches awarded
- 2 Spirit of Youth patches awarded totaling \$120 in donations
- 8 VAVS certificates processed

Membership

Membership staff continued work on the ALAMIS upgrade throughout July. The upgrade is focused on improving system functionality and creating a better experience for departments and members.

Work continues as staff addresses remaining issues and prepares the system for full use.

Events & Education

National Convention

National Convention is quickly approaching. Members and leaders are encouraged to continue checking the National Convention section of the ALA website for the latest information, schedules, and updates.

Mission Training & National Junior Meetings

Registration for the 2026–2027 Mission Training and National Junior Meeting cycle opens Sept. 2.

Upcoming locations include:

- Nov. 14 – Omaha, Neb.*
- Jan. 30 – Albany, N.Y.*
- Jan. 30 – Springfield, Ill.
- Feb. 6 – Atlanta, Ga.
- Feb. 6 – Las Vegas, Nev.*

*Events will be held in conjunction with The American Legion National Information Conference and SAL Regional Meeting.

Communications & Marketing

July was an especially strong month for ALA Girls Nation communications, with significant growth across social media as members, families, alumnae, and supporters followed the program throughout the session.

Auxiliary Magazine

Members received the August issue of *Auxiliary magazine* in early to mid-July. The issue is also available through the national website.

Staff is already working on the November issue, which goes to press shortly after National Convention. The communications team is also preparing extensive convention coverage across the magazine, blog, social media, text messaging, video, and photography.

ALA Blog

Top-performing July content included:

- Celebrate USA 250 in Style with National President
- Symbolism of the 13 Folds of the U.S. Flag
- National Convention to Celebrate Members
- ALA Girls Nation Alumnae Share Words of Wisdom
- Being Around Veterans Feels Good Again for NVCAF

Social Media

ALA Girls Nation Instagram

ALA Girls Nation experienced exceptional growth throughout the 2026 session:

- 1.6 million views, up 142.9%
- 177,300 accounts reached, up 56.6%
- 42,800 content interactions, up 222.8%
- 6,508 followers

Top-performing content included Capitol Hill Day, arrival day, election activities, visits to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial and Twilight Tattoo, and behind-the-scenes program content.

ALA Girls Nation Facebook

- 430,500 views, up 212%
- 19,200 interactions, up 197%
- 12,600 Facebook visits, up 127.4%

ALANHQ Facebook

- 238,000 views
- 36,000+ followers

Top-performing content included Independence Day, member stories, National Convention information, Spirit of Youth Fund promotion, and National President Pam Ray's Independence Day message.

NHQ Instagram

Content interactions increased 135.8%, with strong engagement around the collaborative ALA Girls Nation and Boys Nation content.

ALA eNews

- 285,794 emails sent
- 282,370 delivered
- 118,048 opens (41.8% open rate)
- 1,309 clicks
- 284,834 subscribers as of July 28

The open rate increased 12.3% compared with the previous 10 email campaigns.

Website

- 39,451 active users
- 137,178 total page views

Top content included the homepage, scholarships, membership renewal, and National Convention information.

Top downloads included:

- ALA Membership Application – 967
- 2026 Membership Report – 387
- Legion Family Membership Brochure – 327
- National Convention General Information – 293
- PUFL Application – 266

Development

Member Benefits & Strategic Partnerships

Development staff continued managing existing member benefit partnerships while negotiating and developing new opportunities involving Legal Resources, Consumer Cellular, and Hello by Grouper.

These efforts remain focused on expanding member value while ensuring partnership agreements and opportunities align with the organization's needs and long-term sustainability.

Fundraising & Donor Stewardship

Staff developed new online donation pages and donor messaging for ALA and ALA Foundation funds.

Development also continued communications with recurring donors related to the transition to a new payment processor to help ensure continuity in donor relationships and recurring contributions.

Human Resources

Human Resources remained focused on FY27 planning and ongoing organizational needs.

Work included finalizing salary, benefits, and other compensation-related projections as part of the FY27 budget process, along with preparation of annual employee increase recommendations for leadership review.

The division also continued administration of the 401(k) retirement plan, succession planning, coordination of required background checks, recruiting and hiring activities, employee relations, and work with an external HR consultant on compliance and organizational initiatives.

Closing Note

It is hard to believe National Convention is already upon us.

July was a great reminder of the range of work happening across the Auxiliary. We watched another group of remarkable young women complete ALA Girls Nation, continued supporting members and departments across the country, advanced important operational work, and moved into the final stages of preparation for our largest annual gathering.

National Convention also gives us an opportunity to celebrate the work accomplished throughout this administrative year. I'm grateful to National President Pam Ray, the NEC, our national leaders, and members across the country for the leadership and commitment they have brought to the Auxiliary this year.

I also want to thank our staff and volunteers for the tremendous amount of work that goes into this time of year. National Convention does not simply happen when everyone arrives. Months of planning, preparation, coordination, and problem-solving take place behind the scenes, and I'm grateful to everyone who helps make it possible.

Thank you for your continued leadership, partnership, and support. I look forward to seeing many of you very soon as we celebrate the accomplishments of this year and gather together for National Convention.

Safe travels, and I'll see you at National Convention.

Ben Hendricks

Executive Director

American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters

Phone: 317-569-4524 | Fax: 317-569 4502 | www.ALAforVeterans.org

A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families.

Veterans Crisis Line Dial 988 and Press 1