Dear ALA Leaders,

September was another busy month at National Headquarters as we continued the work coming out of National Convention, supported our departments and members, and welcomed the ALA Girls State Leadership Conference to Indianapolis for the first time.

One of the biggest stories this month was the response to the new membership eligibility language adopted at Convention. We expected the changes to generate interest, but the response was even greater than anticipated. When we shared the news through ALA eNews and social media, the resulting traffic actually crashed our website! Thankfully, we were back online within about 30 minutes. While a website outage is never ideal, it certainly demonstrated the excitement surrounding the opportunity to welcome more eligible members into the Auxiliary.

We also had the pleasure of welcoming 67 ALA Girls State leaders representing 35 departments to National Headquarters. It was wonderful to have so many members in our building, sharing ideas, learning from one another, and strengthening relationships. I hope we can continue finding opportunities to bring our members and leaders to Headquarters.

Beyond these highlights, work continues on our membership systems, scholarship processes, educational opportunities, and development efforts. We are also beginning to put our newly adopted strategic plan into action, with Mission, Members, and Means guiding our priorities. I hope our departments and units are finding this framework helpful as well. Ultimately, the plan will only be successful if it helps all of us focus our efforts and make a greater impact through our mission.

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

## Highlights

- **Membership eligibility announcement generates exceptional engagement:** The new eligibility language drove more than 9,600 clicks through September's ALA eNews, nearly 17,000 views of the related blog post, and significant social media activity. The response demonstrates tremendous interest in the opportunity to welcome additional family members into the Auxiliary.
- **ALA Girls State Leadership Conference comes to National Headquarters:** Sixty-seven attendees representing 35 departments participated in the Sept. 18–20 conference, the first held at National Headquarters. The event provided opportunities for learning, collaboration, and strengthening ALA Girls State programs nationwide.
- **Membership renewal and ALAMIS improvements continue:** The first 2027 mailed renewal notices went out Sept. 15, and staff continued addressing issues and improving the upgraded ALAMIS system. Two new units were also chartered during the reporting period.

- **Development advances member benefits and veteran support:** A new partnership with Consumer Cellular expands member benefits while creating an additional source of non-dues revenue. The updated Veteran Projects Fund Grant Guide is also complete, and preparations are underway for Veterans Day of Giving.
- **National C&B updated:** The Fall 2026 edition of the National Constitution & Bylaws is now available online, incorporating amendments from the 2025 National Convention, 2026 mid-year NEC meeting, and 2026 National Convention.

## Programs

### ALA Girls State Leadership Conference

The 2026 ALA Girls State Leadership Conference was held Sept. 18–20 at National Headquarters, welcoming 67 attendees representing 35 departments.

Thirty-one attendees had also participated last year, giving returning and new leaders an opportunity to build on previous conversations and share new ideas.

Hosting the conference at National Headquarters for the first time was particularly meaningful. It gave attendees an opportunity to connect more closely with the national organization while collaborating on ways to strengthen ALA Girls State programs across the country.

### National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

The Programs Division collaborated with The American Legion's Washington, D.C., office to draft a resolution supporting the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival for consideration by the Legion's National Executive Committee.

We're glad to be working alongside The American Legion to support this program and help more veterans benefit from the creative arts.

### Scholarship Application Improvements

Work is underway to transition our scholarship applications to a new platform. The goal is to simplify the application process, improve efficiency, and provide a more consistent experience for applicants and those administering scholarships throughout the organization.

### Program Activity

- 209 Junior Patch Program patches awarded
- 4 VAVS certificates processed
- 116 hour bars awarded, representing 142,600 hours of service

### Membership

ALAMIS continues to operate following the recent system upgrade. Membership staff is working through remaining issues and making adjustments to improve functionality and the experience for departments and members.

The first 2027 mailed renewal notices were sent Sept. 15 as renewal efforts continue for the new membership year.

### Additional Metrics

- Phone renewals: 1,537 processed
- Paid Up For Life: 25 applications processed
- ALAMIS: 155 users set up; 5 Department Full User training sessions conducted
- 2 new units chartered

## Events & Education

### Mission Training & National Junior Meetings

Registration remains open for the 2026–2027 Mission Training and National Junior Meeting cycle.

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

Mission Training registration and information

### October Webinars

- Oct. 13 – ALA Mythbusters: Membership & Governance Edition — 2 p.m. ET
- Oct. 20 – Creative Arts, Veteran Wellness & You: Understanding the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival — 1 p.m. ET
- Oct. 27 – AEP Open Enrollment with Wellcare — 4 p.m. ET

Registration and additional information are available through ALA Academy.

Beginning in October, our webinars are moving to a new platform. The change is intended to make participation easier for attendees while reducing costs for the organization.

### Honor Flight Partnership

The Events and Training team coordinated with Honor Flight Network to include 50 ALA-branded tote bags and membership materials in race packets for Honor Flight's Army Ten-Miler team, participating in the Oct. 11 event in Washington, D.C.

It's a small way to support Honor Flight Network and introduce more people to the Auxiliary.

## Governance & Resources

### Updated National Constitution & Bylaws

The Fall 2026 edition of the National Constitution & Bylaws is now available on the national website.

This updated edition incorporates amendments adopted at the 2025 National Convention, the 2026 mid-year NEC meeting, and the 2026 National Convention.

Printed copies will also be available for purchase through Emblem Sales soon.

### Communications & Marketing

September was an especially strong month for communications, driven largely by the announcement of the new membership eligibility language.

The response was immediate. When the September issue of ALA eNews and our social media announcement were released, the resulting traffic briefly overwhelmed the national website. Service was restored within approximately 30 minutes.

To put the response in perspective, a typical issue of ALA eNews generates approximately 2,000 total clicks. The eligibility article alone generated 9,672 clicks in September.

The interest also extended beyond our existing social media audience, helping us reach individuals who may not have previously engaged with the Auxiliary.

### Auxiliary Magazine

The November issue of *Auxiliary magazine* completed its final production upload Sept. 30. Work on the February 2027 issue began shortly afterward.

### ALA eNews

- 338,305 emails sent
- 332,230 delivered
- 163,998 opens (49.4% open rate)
- 366,931 subscribers as of Sept. 21
- 115 unsubscribes

The most-clicked content was the membership eligibility change, with 9,672 clicks, followed by the 9/11 National Day of Service cemetery cleanup and the Wellcare Business Spotlight.

### ALA Blog

Eighteen blog posts were published by the end of September.

The new membership eligibility article received 16,945 views, accounting for the vast majority of blog traffic during the month.

Other popular content included the 9/11 National Day of Service cemetery cleanup, the beginning of the 2026–2027 administrative year, and recognition of Department Merit Medallion winners.

### Website

During the reporting period, the website recorded:

- 60,499 active users
- 288,673 page views

The homepage, member account pages, member portal, and eligibility announcement were among the most-visited pages.

## Social Media

### ALANHQ Facebook

- 403,087 total views, up 59%
- 39,394 engagements, up 99%
- 301 new followers, up 157%

The Sept. 10 eligibility announcement was the month's strongest-performing post, generating approximately 83,700 views, 680 shares, and 136 comments.

Notably, nearly 68% of the post's viewers were not already followers of our Facebook page. That suggests the announcement reached well beyond our existing audience.

Other strong-performing content included the POW/MIA recognition reel, Convention photos, and Merit Medallion recognition.

### ALANHQ Instagram

- 26,600 views, up 33.6%
- 7,100 accounts reached, up 262.7%
- 1,400 interactions, up 145.3%
- 76 new followers

Content featuring ALA Girls State leaders, 9/11 remembrance, and POW/MIA recognition performed particularly well.

### ALA Girls Nation Social Media

- 41,600 views
- 1,496 interactions
- 45 new followers
- 6,436 total followers

Convention-related content featuring the ALA Girls Nation president and a photo-sharing reel were among the strongest performers.

### ALANHQ YouTube

- 2,100 views
- 114.3 hours of watch time
- 22 new subscribers
- 1,849 total subscribers

ALAMIS instructional videos were among the most-viewed content, reflecting continued interest in resources that help members navigate the upgraded system.

## Development

Our development team continued working on several projects in September, including new member benefits, updates to the Veteran Projects Fund, and preparations for Veterans Day of Giving.

### Veteran Projects Fund

The updated Veteran Projects Fund Grant Guide, *Funding Innovative Solutions for Veterans*, was completed, along with updates to the ALA Foundation website.

The revised materials provide clearer information about grant requirements, eligible projects, quarterly application reviews, cost-sharing expectations, and reporting requirements.

### Veterans Day of Giving

Preparations continued for the 2026 Veterans Day of Giving campaign, which will launch Oct. 28 ahead of Veterans Day on Nov. 11.

This year's campaign will benefit the Veteran Projects Fund and encourage members to make a gift in honor of the veteran whose service established their eligibility for ALA membership.

### Member Benefits

A new member benefit partnership was established with Consumer Cellular, expanding the benefits available to ALA members while providing an additional source of non-dues revenue for the organization.

### ALA Girls State Leadership Conference

The development team also participated in the Sept. 20 ALA Girls State Leadership Conference, sharing fundraising resources and information about SmileAssociate and ALA Foundation subgrants with program leaders.

## Closing Note

One thing that became clear in September is that the decisions we made at National Convention are already having an impact.

The response to our new membership eligibility language has been tremendous. Now comes the important part: making sure our departments and units have the information and tools they need to turn that interest into new members. We also have a new strategic plan to guide our work, and I hope we're all beginning to think about what Mission, Members, and Means can look like in our own areas of the organization.

It was also great to have so many ALA Girls State leaders at National Headquarters this month. I really enjoy opportunities like these because they give our staff a chance to spend time with the members who are doing this work every day. I hope we can find more reasons to bring our members to Indianapolis.

We're just getting started with the 2026–2027 administrative year, and there's plenty to do. I'm grateful for the support and partnership of President Coral, the NEC, and our leaders throughout the Auxiliary. I'm looking forward to what we can accomplish together this year.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out with questions, comments, or feedback.

***Ben Hendricks***
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