



# ASCLA

Association of Specialized and  
Cooperative Library Agencies

A DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

## Orientation Manual Interest Group 2017-2018

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**The Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies  
Interest Group Orientation Manual  
2017-2018**

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## THE BASICS

<https://www.ascladirect.org/interest-groups/>

### What is an Interest Group?

An interest group is a way to join with colleagues around common areas of focus and attention. Interest groups provide a dynamic system for ASCLA members to form communities around important emerging issues in the profession and to increase the opportunities for involvement within the organization. ASCLA Interest Groups are virtual groups hosted on ALA Connect, the active online member community site of ALA. Each community comes together to share knowledge and enthusiasm for a specific subject and makes valuable contributions to ASCLA and its core interests of strengthening the usefulness, efficiency and services of:

- Library agencies and individuals which provide library materials and service to populations with special needs, such as those with sensory, physical, health or behavioral conditions or those who are incarcerated or detained
- State library agencies, which are state organizations created to promote library services in the state through a variety of library services
- Library cooperatives, which are combinations, mergers, or contractual associations of one or more types of libraries
- Independent librarians and Library Consultants who work outside of traditional library settings

Interest groups offer each of us an opportunity to share, learn, and create valuable resources for our colleagues to grow our profession. As a member of an ASCLA Interest Group, your efforts could result in an educational webinar, a program or preconference for the ALA Annual Conference, an article for ASCLA's Interface e-newsletter, a discussion forum for members, or even an innovative new ASCLA product!

### What is the process for creating an Interest Group?

Any ASCLA member can propose the creation of an interest group by submitting an e-petition upon obtaining signatures of 10 ASCLA members. Signatures must be from current ASCLA members who agree to participate in the group, if it is established. The ASCLA Interest Group Coordination Committee (IGCC) reviews all submissions and recommends group creation to the ASCLA Executive Director.

The Interest group petition requires:

- A name for the interest group
- Name(s) and contact information of the interest group leader or co-leaders
- A description of the focus area
- Signatures of 10 ASCLA members
- A desired output for the first year

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To create an e-petition go to: <https://www.ascladirect.org/resources/how-do-i-start-an-ascla-interest-group/> Simply log on using your ALA login and password and follow the onscreen directions.

### **Who can join Interest Groups?**

Once an ASCLA Interest Group is formed, any ALA member may join by doing one of the following:

1. Call MACS (ALA's member services department) at the following number: 1-800-545-2433, x5 and request to have the interest group added to your membership, or:
2. Send an email to [membership@ala.org](mailto:membership@ala.org) with your request to be added to the interest group with subject line: *ASCLA free interest groups*.

Non-ASCLA ALA members may contact [ascla@ala.org](mailto:ascla@ala.org) to join any ASCLA interest group free-of-charge for one year. Non-ASCLA ALA members will be required to join ASCLA after one year to continue their membership in any ASCLA interest group.

The only requirement for joining an interest group is a desire to make a difference and be actively involved with colleagues to accomplish positive change within the interest group topic. There are no appointments or terms. You can join (and leave) interest groups at your discretion.

### **Obtaining Interest Group Member List**

To obtain a complete list of interest group members, please contact the ASCLA office at [ascla@ala.org](mailto:ascla@ala.org). Member lists may be requested at any time.

### **How does an Interest Group Operate?**

Once an interest group is established, it's time to get busy. Each interest group is expected to be an active working group. The following are the basics of operation.

#### *Leadership*

Interest groups may establish their own leadership structures and their own processes for selecting their leadership. At minimum, each interest group will have one individual designated as the interest group leader or chairperson. Groups may also have co-leaders, may establish leadership teams or may establish another leadership structure, as determined by the needs of the interest group. All interest group leaders must be ASCLA members. Interest group leaders may serve up to four (4) consecutive years in office.

The leader is responsible for coordinating the overall activities of the interest group

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and for reporting on group activities. Leaders will notify the chairperson of the ASCLA Interest Group Coordination Committee (IGCC) and the ASCLA Executive Director who the leader (or co-leaders) are by February 1 for the term starting July 1. Leaders shall promptly notify the ASCLA office of any subsequent changes in leadership.

#### *Members*

ASCLA members may join as many interest groups as desired, free-of-charge. Any non-ASCLA ALA member may join as many ASCLA interest groups as desired by contacting [membership@ala.org](mailto:membership@ala.org). Non-ASCLA ALA members may join interest groups free of charge for one year. After one year, in order to continue participating in an ASCLA interest group, the ALA member will be required to also join ASCLA.

#### *Functions*

Each interest group shall define its own goals and activities, and shall manage its own affairs, provided that the interest group does not adopt rules for the transaction of its business inconsistent with those of the ALA and ASCLA.

Each interest group is responsible for creating and implementing a plan for maintaining the history of the section and interest group. There shall be a documented process in place for reviewing and weeding materials from former sections.

Interest Groups may meet in-person at ALA Conferences. To meet by teleconference (voice conference call), or by Adobe Connect, visit the How to section of the [tools and resources page](#). Each interest group is also responsible for reporting at least twice a year to the ASCLA Interest Group Coordinating Committee about the interest group's major accomplishments, activities and products. Reports are submitted in writing to the ASCLA Interest Group Coordinating Committee chair 2 weeks prior or after the Midwinter meeting and the Annual Conference and will be shared with the ASCLA Board and staff.

Interest Groups also have responsibility for content on the ASCLA web that relates to their area of interest. That responsibility includes:

- Review content periodically to ensure that the content is accurate and current
- Add new content that would be useful to librarians and the general public

#### *Programs and Products*

Interest groups are encouraged to plan and offer ASCLA discussion forums, conference programs, preconferences, webinars and other formal and informational



professional development events and activities.

Interest groups are also encouraged to develop ASCLA products including publications, policy documents, Interface articles or other informative products of interest to ASCLA members. The expectation is that all interest group programs, products and activities will be consistent with the goals and purposes of both the Interest group and ASCLA. Interest groups are expected to adhere to ASCLA and ALA procedures, policies and timelines related to programs, publications and other products.

### **Planning a Continuing Education Event**

First steps when planning a continuing education event:

- Conference Programs: calls for program and preconference proposals are requested around April/May of each year for the following year Annual Conference and are generally due in early June. Information about planning conference programs and preconferences will be shared annually with all members by the ASCLA staff via the news page of [ascladirect.org](http://ascladirect.org).
- Webinars: Proposals for webinars are approved by the ASCLA Online Learning Committee. Calls for proposals go out in the summer each year and the call is shared with all members via the news page of [ascladirect.org](http://ascladirect.org) and via email every 1-2 weeks.
- Virtual Meetings using Adobe Connect: Instructions on how to schedule an interest group meeting using Adobe Connect can be found on the [Tools and Resources](#) page under how to.
- Meetings may also be held by teleconference (voice conference call) also, free-of-charge. No training is needed for teleconferences.

### **Continuance and Dissolution**

Interest groups will remain in existence as long as there is active leadership, participation, and action. The ASCLA Interest Group Coordination Committee (IGCC) may dissolve an interest group at the request of the group leader(s) or if evidence indicates the group is no longer actively advancing ASCLA purposes.

The ASCLA Interest Group Coordination Committee, chaired by the ASCLA President-elect, will meet to review the Interest Groups for continuation. The ASCLA Executive Director will produce a list of those Interest Groups with low activity for the IGCC to review. Before the IGCC meeting, the ASCLA Executive Director or the ASCLA president-elect will contact leaders of Interest Groups in danger of



dissolution before the IGCC meeting to:

- Indicate that because of low or no activity, the group is being considered for dissolution unless the leader provides a report indicating that Interest Group activity (in-person or virtual Interest Group meetings, discussions, projects, etc.) has taken place or will soon take place and to offer any assistance needed to continue activity.
- A second year of low or no activity will result a recommendation to the IGCC for dissolution.

## **LEADING AN INTEREST GROUP**

### **What are the Interest group leader's responsibilities?**

First and foremost, the leader(s) of an interest group must be ASCLA members. The leaders of an interest group are the facilitators and coordinators of all of the group's activities and efforts. Group Leaders are responsible for:

- Encouraging involvement in the Interest group
- Organizing virtual and physical meetings of Interest group
- Making sure the Interest group generates discussion topics, articles, programs, projects, etc. within the charge of the Interest group and following all appropriate ASCLA approval procedures, policies and timelines.
- Communicating regularly with Interest group members through ALA Connect about ASCLA and related ALA activities and initiatives
- Communicating regularly with ASCLA members about interest group activities and initiatives through ASCLA listservs, Interface and if appropriate, ASCLA-approved press releases, blog or web postings.
- Communicating regularly with the Interest Group Coordinating Committee
  - Reports on interest group activities
  - Changes in leadership
  - Any interesting discussions or innovations
  - Action Items to be referred to the ASCLA Board of Directors
- Ensuring that there are documented processes in place for maintaining the history of the group, including what materials need to be weeded and what materials are important for future members. Use of ALAConnect is encouraged for this purpose.
- Announcing/coordinating selection of leaders
- Encourage the use of ALA Connect

### **Communicating with ASCLA**

Interest group members are highly encouraged to share news and resources that they're working on with the rest of ASCLA's membership by completing out this form: <https://goo.gl/forms/POYIFF67An61bk5C3>. The content will be published on the news page of [ascladirect.org](http://ascladirect.org) as well as social media should you request it.

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The interest group leader is responsible for communicating the activities of the Interest group to the IGCC. New ideas and great conversations are always of interest of the IGCC.

Interest group leaders are responsible for providing at least two updates each year to the Chair of the IGCC. Updates should include membership, activities, projects, timelines, and any additional information about the Interest group.

*Reporting Dates:*

Update 1 – Mid-Year Report - Due January 1 before ALA Midwinter or within two weeks after the Midwinter Conference

Update 2 – End of Year Report – Due June 1 before ALA Annual Conference or within two weeks after the Annual Conference.

*How and When to Provide a Report*

All interest group reports should be sent to the ASCLA IGCC chairperson (the current ASCLA president-elect) and the ASCLA Executive Director. The reports will also be shared with the ASCLA Board.

All Interest groups are encouraged to communicate at anytime with the IGCC Chair to ask questions or to discuss ideas, issues, challenges or policies.

**Quick Calendar of Activities and Due Dates**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Interest group leader notifies ASCLA office of any changes in leadership for terms starting July 1	<b>February 1</b>
Mid-Year Report of Activities sent to IGCC chair and ASCLA Executive Director	<b>January 1</b> or within two weeks after the Midwinter Conference
Confirm Interest Group Leaders with the ASCLA office	<b>February 1</b> (for the term starting July 1)
End-of-Year Report of Activities sent to IGCC chair and ASCLA executive director	<b>June 1</b> or within two weeks after the Annual Conference

**Starting and Managing an Interest Group**

Managing an online interest group can be an exciting challenge. Here are just a few tips and ideas for leaders to consider as they work with their interest group.





### *Starting*

- Get to know ALA Connect. It will be your primary tool for communicating with your Interest group members and leadership.
- Think about how you will promote your Interest Group to other ASCLA and ALA members. How can you encourage people to join? Work with the ASCLA staff on a press release. Write an article for Interface. Post a notice on the ASCLA listserv. Reach out to others in the library community who may be interested in the Interest Group's purpose or focus.
- When you begin, be sure to create an opportunity for everyone to get to know each other. It can be as simple as quick bios or asking members to share a few fun facts about themselves and why they joined the interest group. Have a place for all members' information to be available and a process for introducing new members.
- One of the first conversations with the interest group should be what are the expectations of participating in the interest group and how you will communicate with each other. This will help set up the foundations for the work of the group. It helps create the norms for the group. Be sure to document and have it ready for new members.
- Make sure to decide as a group how you will nominate and elect leadership.
- The group will need to decide and document how the group will maintain all materials related to the Interest Group for historical purposes.
- The group should also brainstorm and agree to what you want to accomplish in the year.
- Define roles and responsibilities.

### *Managing*

- Use ALA Connect to share documents and resources.
- Create a schedule and calendar of activities including conversations and meetings.
- Be sure to have a process for bringing in new members to help them acclimate and dive in.
- Consider setting up regular opportunities for communications. This will help to keep the group's activities and initiatives in front of the members.
- Create an evaluation process to get input from the members. Institute a debrief opportunity to find out what is working and what could be done better to support the Interest group.
- Experiment.
- Have fun.

**ASCLA Office:** For updated contact information and staff, visit <https://www.ascladirect.org/about/contact-us/>.



**ASCLA [INSERT NAME OF INTEREST GROUP] REPORT**

Please submit committee reports twice a year. They are due within 2 weeks before or after each Midwinter and Annual conference. A committee report is a 1-2 page summary/overview of activities and plans covering the last several months. Post all reports to: <http://connect.ala.org/node/208110> and label accordingly. In addition, please send a copy to the ASCLA Executive Director and the ASCLA President for distribution to ASCLA Board

<b>DATE:</b>
<b>COMMITTEE / INTEREST GROUP NAME:</b>
<b>NAME OF COMMITTEE / INTEREST GROUP CHAIR/CO-CHAIRS/LEADERS:</b>
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBERS [Interest groups may skip this section]:</b>
<b>ACTION ITEMS IN PROGRESS / PENDING:</b>
<b>ACCOMPLISHMENTS / ACTION ITEMS COMPLETED AND WHICH <u>ASCLA STRATEGIC PLAN</u> GOALS/OBJECTIVES THEY SUPPORT:</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE:</b>
<b>OTHER COMMENTS:</b>
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>