

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
January 23 – 26, 2013
Chicago, Illinois**

**Issues and Advocacy Roundtable: Recommendations for
Action When Archives Documenting Underrepresented or
Alternative Communities Are Threatened
(Prepared by Hillel Arnold, Jeremy Brett, Laurie Rizzo,
Laura Starratt, and Scott Ziegler)**

BACKGROUND

At its January 25-27, 2012, meeting the SAA Council discussed the status of the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement's archives and library (0112-III-C). Out of that meeting came an official charge to the Issues and Advocacy Roundtable to "investigate and monitor the status of archives and library materials generated by the Occupy Movement," and report findings and any recommendations to the Council in time for the August 2012 meeting." The Council also asked whether there are takeaways from this situation that might inform SAA's response to similar issues in the future.

DISCUSSION

On September 17, 2011, the Occupy Wall Street protest began, at which time Occupy Wall Street (OWS) archives and libraries were formed as internal resources both to document OWS life as well as to serve the information needs of their communities. In October, reports began circulating that sanitation was a growing concern at the central OWS site in Zuccotti Park. In response, on November 15, 2011, the New York Police Department began clearing protesters out of the park, in effect destroying the "People's Library." "The People's Library" was one of the largest libraries (5,000+ volumes) in the Occupy movement, and part of the camp's archives were confiscated by city personnel. While initial reports indicated that confiscated items would be made available to OWS library staff, this did not turn out to be accurate. In fact, a large portion of the library and all onsite archival materials were destroyed.

While much is being done to highlight the issue and learn from the experience, the Society of American Archivists (SAA) Council should take more direct action when archives documenting underrepresented or alternative communities are threatened. The destruction of the library and archives of the Occupy Wall Street encampment at Zuccotti Park serves to remind the SAA of the importance of having a policy in place for responding to actions against endangered archives.

The American Library Association (ALA) issued a resolution within days, condemning the destruction of the OWS library, stating “The dissolution of a library is unacceptable. Libraries serve as the cornerstone of our democracy and must be safeguarded. An informed public constitutes the very foundation of a democracy, and libraries ensure that everyone has free access to information.”

SAA was, and remains, silent on the matter. SAA’s silence was largely due to inadequate preparation; however, the silence sends a public message of indifference, a message that runs counter to the proclaimed Core Values of Archivists as published by the SAA (see Appendix A). The Core Values hold more than sufficient justification for public positions on the destruction of archives of all sizes and scopes. The Diversity section of the Core Values gives special justification to public positions; it reads in part:

Archivists collectively seek to document and preserve the record of the broadest possible range of individuals, socio-economic groups, governance, and corporate entities in society. Archivists embrace the importance of identifying, preserving, and working with communities to actively document those whose voices have been overlooked or marginalized. They seek to build connections to under-documented communities to support: acquisition and preservation of sources relating to these communities’ activities, encouragement of community members’ use of archival research sources, and/or formation of community-based archives. Archivists accept and encourage a diversity of viewpoints on social, political, and intellectual issues, as represented both in archival records and among members of the profession.

CONCLUSIONS

There is little we can do about the silence that followed the destruction at Zuccotti Park, but we can use this opportunity to develop a plan for the future. The Issues and Advocacy Roundtable recommends both organizational and procedural changes to better address situations when archives documenting underrepresented or alternative communities are threatened in the future.

RECOMMENDATION 1

THAT the Issues and Advocacy Roundtable be transitioned into a committee and the new committee be named the Research and Public Information Committee (RPIC).

Support Statement: There has been significant talk about improving advocacy in the profession, and SAA has taken this on by making advocacy a core value of the organization. However, there is much we can learn from the ALA response to the Zuccotti Park situation and the structure of their organization in relation to how ALA formulates responses.

In comparing the structure of SAA to ALA structure, we find that:

- Both organizations have a Council.
- Both organizations have Sections (in ALA these are called “Divisions”).
- Both organizations have Roundtables.
- Both organizations have Task Forces and Working Groups (ALA calls them “Special Committees”).
- Both organizations have Committees and Subcommittees (ALA calls them “Offices”).
- SAA has a Foundation (special funds) and Board (mostly to do with *The American Archivist* journal.)

In reviewing the Governance Manual, we propose that two new committees be created. The Issues and Advocacy Roundtable (IART) should become a committee: The Issues and Advocacy Committee (IAC). Additionally, a new committee should be formed: the Research and Public Information Committee (RPIC). This would show that advocacy is a priority for SAA and that the members of the Issues and Advocacy Committee (IAC) would be in a stronger position to react quickly with the support of the Council. The IAC would have more direct communication with the Council and would be more structured, creating a more effective path for creating and dissemination of information with definite objectives and goals.

The Research and Public Information Committee (RPIC) would combine the functions fulfilled in ALA by its Office for Research and its Statistics and Public Information Office and would be in charge of maintaining a "Message Book" and "Quotable Facts." It would be in charge of educating the public about archives (increasing public awareness about archives), including taking on projects that SAA staff has been leading including Archives Month and other public awareness programs.

These two committees would work together to formulate responses. The IAC would be responsible for bringing in and advocating the issues, and RPIC for researching and putting together the facts and figures for the committee to use. ALA was able to react quickly because of the existence of a “fact sheet” from which it could pull needed information. The RPIC, at its creation, would begin compiling such a document (a "Message Book" and/or "Quotable Facts"). Using the facts and messages prepared by the RPIC, the IAC will craft a response that is sent directly to the Council for approval. So as to make the committees more proactive, SAA’s “Message Book” and “Quotable Facts” would already have been approved by the general membership, so there is no need for an extensive open period for comments.

ALA was able to react quickly because of the existence of a “fact sheet” from which it could pull needed information. The RPIC would create the same advantage for the IAC. Using the facts and messages prepared by the RPIC, the IAC will craft a response that is sent directly to the SAA President for approval.

Impact on Strategic Priorities: A responsive Issues and Advocacy Committee (IAC) and Research and Public Information Committee (RPIC) would directly support Strategic Priority #3 Advocacy/Public Awareness: “Archivists must take an active role in promoting the importance of archives and archivists in order to increase public support, shape public policy, and obtain the resources necessary to protect the accessibility of archival records that serve cultural functions as well as ensure the protection of citizens’ rights, the accountability of organizations and governments, and the accessibility of historical records.” The work of these two committees would be too voluminous to be accomplished by one committee alone. They will have different charges and working in conjunction together can accomplish advocacy and public awareness more effectively and efficiently.

Fiscal Impact: If Issues and Advocacy Committee (IAC) and Research and Public Information Committee (RPIC) are created there would be a fiscal impact for any needed mid-winter meetings. Most of the group’s communication can be done via email and Skype or Google+ hangout. The indirect expenses associated with staff time to assist the task force cannot be estimated. (Note that the recommendations of these committees could have fiscal implications that would need to be assessed separately.)

RECOMMENDATION 2

THAT the following procedures be followed when any archives is under the threat of closing, regardless of the institution’s standing with the SAA, as well as of the individual viewpoints of any SAA member toward the holdings of said archives.

Creating Resolutions

Communication between the Occupy Archives and SAA was difficult to maintain because of the informal, decentralized nature of the Occupy movement itself. However, we believe that most endangered organizations will have a more centralized set of contacts. As such, SAA should be able to contact the endangered organization immediately after an issue arises. It would behoove SAA to be in contact with any newly forming or endangered archives before a threat becomes manifest. This could be best done through the IAC (who should be updating the Directory of Allied and Regional Organizations). When news comes to the attention of any official member of SAA of an archives in threat of being shuttered, a resolution draft should be created quickly.

The draft should be compiled by the IAC with research compiled by the RPIC based on information compiled through consultation with member(s) of the endangered organization. The draft will be presented to the Council, who will approve or create a new draft which can be posted online to solicit comments and suggestions from the membership of SAA and other interested parties. If a decision to post the response to the membership for comments is made, the process of drafting, soliciting comments, and incorporating those comments should take no more than one week.

Obviously neither the proposed new committees nor SAA as a whole can predict every potential event that may threaten a library or archives. However, we believe that this

system will be able to cover responses to most situations. Emergency situations will be handled more quickly as events dictate.

Letters to Appropriate Parties

Two types of official letter should be drafted no more than two weeks after news of an endangered archive comes to the attention of the Issues and Advocacy Roundtable (or the Issues and Advocacy Committee).

1. An open Letter of Support (see Appendix B) for the work of the archives, and the goals of the archivists, stating the importance of all archives (as outlined in the Core Values). A draft of this letter should be open for comments for one week before being revised (if needed) and presented to the Council for approval.

This letter should be directed to the individuals who work with the endangered archives, but should be composed as an open letter and shared with various news outlets. It can take a form similar to: "An Open Letter to the Individuals who work with the XYZ Archives," and then go on to say (to both them and the wider community) why SAA thinks their work is important to everyone.

2. An open Letter of Concern (see Appendix C) should be sent to the parties responsible for the closing of an archives (police chief, city mayor, governor, etc.), expressing the concern that closing any archive harms everyone (as outlined in the Core Values). A draft of this letter should be open for comments for one week before being revised (if needed) and presented to the Council for approval.

Also included are ALA's Tough Economy Toolkit (Appendix D) and ALA's Crisis Protocol (Appendix E).

Support Statement: Having a set of procedures in place will help the SAA respond more quickly and appropriately when archives documenting underrepresented or alternative communities are threatened.

Impact on Strategic Priorities: Having procedures in place for creating resolutions and writing Letters of Concern will support Strategic Priority #3 Advocacy/Public Awareness.

Fiscal Impact: There are no direct expenses anticipated if adopting these procedures. The indirect expenses associated with staff time to assist the Roundtable or Committee with implementing these procedures cannot be estimated.

Appendix A: Core Values of Archivists

[See especially the italicized portions.]

<http://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics>

Access and Use: Archivists promote and provide the widest possible accessibility of materials, consistent with any mandatory access restrictions, such as public statute, donor contract, business/institutional privacy, or personal privacy. Although access may be limited in some instances, archivists seek to promote open access and use when possible. Access to records is essential in personal, academic, business, and government settings, and use of records should be both welcomed and actively promoted. Even individuals who do not directly use archival materials benefit indirectly from research, public programs, and other forms of archival use, including the symbolic value of knowing that such records exist and can be accessed when needed.

Accountability: By documenting institutional functions, activities, and decision-making, archivists provide an important means of ensuring accountability. In a republic such accountability and transparency constitute an essential hallmark of democracy. Public leaders must be held accountable both to the judgment of history and future generations as well as to citizens in the ongoing governance of society. Access to the records of public officials and agencies provides a means of holding them accountable both to public citizens and to the judgment of future generations. In the private sector, accountability through archival documentation assists in protecting the rights and interests of consumers, shareholders, employees, and citizens. Archivists in collecting repositories may not in all cases share the same level of responsibility for accountability, but they too maintain evidence of the actions of individuals, groups, and organizations, which may be required to provide accountability for contemporary and future interests.

Advocacy: Archivists promote the use and understanding of the historical record. They serve as advocates for their own archival programs and institutional needs. They also advocate for the application of archival values in a variety of settings including, to the extent consistent with their institutional responsibilities, the political arena. Archivists seek to contribute to the formation of public policy related to archival and recordkeeping concerns and to ensure that their expertise is used in the public interest.

Diversity: Archivists collectively seek to document and preserve the record of the broadest possible range of individuals, socio-economic groups, governance, and corporate entities in society. Archivists embrace the importance of identifying, preserving, and working with communities to actively document those whose voices have been overlooked or marginalized. They seek to build connections to under-documented communities to support: acquisition and preservation of sources relating to these communities' activities, encouragement of community members' use of archival research sources, and/or formation of community-based archives. Archivists accept and encourage a diversity of viewpoints on social, political, and intellectual issues, as represented both in archival records and among members of the profession. They actively work to achieve a diversified and representative membership in the profession.

History and memory: *Archivists recognize that primary sources enable people to examine the past and thereby gain insights into the human experience. Archival materials provide surrogates for human memory, both individually and collectively, and when properly maintained, they serve as evidence against which individual and social memory can be tested. Archivists preserve such primary sources to enable us to better comprehend the past, understand the present, and prepare for the future.*

Preservation: *Archivists preserve a wide variety of primary sources for the benefit of future generations. Preserving materials is a means to this end not an end in itself. Within prescribed law and best practice standards, archivists may determine that the original documents themselves must be preserved, while at other times copying the information they contain to alternate media may be sufficient. Archivists thus preserve materials for the benefit of the future more than for the concerns of the past.*

Professionalism: Archivists adhere to a common set of missions, values, and ethics. They accept an evolving theoretical base of knowledge, collaborate with colleagues in related professions, develop and follow professional standards, strive for excellence in their daily practice, and recognize the importance of professional education, including lifelong learning. They encourage professional development among their co-workers, foster the aspirations of those entering the archival profession, and actively share their knowledge and expertise. Archivists seek to expand opportunities to cooperate with other information professionals, with records creators, and with users and potential users of the archival record.

Responsible Custody: *Archivists ensure proper custody for the documents and records entrusted to them. As responsible stewards, archivists are committed to making reasonable and defensible choices for the holdings of their institutions. They strive to balance the sometimes competing interests of various stakeholders. Archivists are judicious stewards who manage records by following best practices in developing facilities service standards, collection development policies, user service benchmarks, and other performance metrics. They collaborate with external partners for the benefit of users and public needs. In certain situations, archivists recognize the need to deaccession materials so that resources can be strategically applied to the most essential or useful materials.*

Selection: Archivists make choices about which materials to select for preservation based on a wide range of criteria, including the needs of potential users. Understanding that because of the cost of long-term retention and the challenges of accessibility most of the documents and records created in modern society cannot be kept, archivists recognize the wisdom of seeking advice of other stakeholders in making such selections. They acknowledge and accept the responsibility of serving as active agents in shaping and interpreting the documentation of the past.

Service: Within the mandates and missions of their institutions, archivists provide effective and efficient connections to (and mediation for) primary sources so that users,

whoever they may be, can discover and benefit from the archival record of society, its institutions, and individuals. Archivists serve numerous constituencies and stakeholders, which may include institutional administrators, creators and donors of documentary materials, rights holders, un/documented peoples, researchers using the archives for many distinct purposes, corporate and governmental interests, and/or citizens concerned with the information and evidence held in archival sources. Archivists seek to meet the needs of users as quickly, effectively, and efficiently as possible.

Social Responsibility: *Underlying all the professional activities of archivists is their responsibility to a variety of groups in society and to the public good. Most immediately, archivists serve the needs and interests of their employers and institutions. Yet the archival record is part of the cultural heritage of all members of society. Archivists with a clearly defined societal mission strive to meet these broader social responsibilities in their policies and procedures for selection, preservation, access, and use of the archival record. Archivists with a narrower mandate still contribute to individual and community memory for their specific constituencies, and in so doing improve the overall knowledge and appreciation of the past within society.*

Appendix B: Sample Letter of Support (outline)

An open letter to the individuals who have worked with [place name of unfortunate archives here].

1. Statement of general commitment of the SAA to all archives.
 - a. Example: The Society of American Archivists is strongly committed to archives of all sizes and specialties. Archives are vital to our civilization; they represent our collective memory. They also offer examples that we learn from as we move forward as a people.
2. Statement specific to small, independent archives
 - . Example: Small, independent archives are of particular importance, as they represents an effort to keep alive voices and viewpoints that are often not included in larger institutions. By maintaining such voices, these independent archives are necessary to understand the world in which we all live.
3. Statement of support for the work of the archivists/volunteers in the archive in question
 - . Example: The Society of American Archivists supports all efforts to preserve our history and to include as many different viewpoints as possible. The SAA stands behind the efforts of the [archivists/volunteers] of [name of archive], and against any and all efforts to silence the voices that the archive has worked to protect.

Appendix C: Sample Letter of Concern

To Whom It May Concern:

The Society of American Archivists is strongly committed to all archives and institutions that collect and preserve records for the future. We support the mission and work of institutions of all sizes and specialties. It is for these reasons that we feel compelled to comment on (insert action).

Archives have always afforded a fundamental power to those who control them, and in a democratic society, such as ours, this power should benefit all members of the community. An informed public constitutes the very foundation of a democracy, and free information makes free citizens. Libraries and archives of all kinds ensure that every citizen has free access to a wide range of information.

(Paragraph on issue/organization that is supported, and the current action to which this letter is responding, and the deep concern/outrage over situation)

(Paragraph explaining opinion of SAA including the outcome that SAA requires)

Access to records is essential in all, especially (type) settings, and use of records should be both welcomed and actively promoted. Archivists recognize that primary sources enable people to examine the past and thereby gain insights into the whole of human experience. Such materials enable us to better comprehend the past, understand the present, and prepare for the future.

It is for these reasons that we ask that you (give recommendations on course of action).

Thank you,

Appendix D: ALA's Tough Economy Toolkit

Talking Points

Those in the library community know that the library is the solution to so many problems exacerbated by a tough economy, but sometimes it's difficult to articulate that message. The following talking points are filled with statistics and data to help make the case for your library quickly, concisely and accurately, whether you're talking to your neighbor, a school board, your mayor or the media.

1. Why Support Your Local Library

Libraries provide an invaluable service to the communities they serve. While all libraries are unique, they all share a few core principles that guide their service. These core principles form the foundation that makes libraries a public good.

- Libraries provide equal access to information for people of all ages and backgrounds.
- Libraries promote lifelong learning and literacy.
- Libraries preserve our culture and history for future generations.
- Libraries bring people and ideas together. Think of the library as the living room of your community.
- Libraries are unique. Where else can you have access to nearly anything on CD, DVD, the Web or in print – as well as personal service and assistance in finding it?
 - In a world where knowledge is power, libraries make everyone more powerful.
- Libraries don't just offer the hardware, but also offer the expertise of librarians in helping teach people how to use the Internet and find the information they need quickly. While Google can give you 50,000 responses to your inquiry, your librarian can help you find the one answer you need.
- Libraries are part of the American Dream. They offer free access to all. They bring opportunity to all.
- Libraries and librarians provide free and equal access to information for people of all ages and backgrounds – in schools, on college and university campuses and in communities large and small.
 - Libraries are for everyone, everywhere.

2. Libraries and the Economy

In times of economic hardship, Americans depend on their libraries. Libraries routinely see an increase in circulation and use of facilities during tough economic times.

- In times of economic hardship, Americans turn to – and depend on – their libraries and librarians.
- Libraries are part of the solution when a community is struggling economically. They provide free access to books and entertainment for

families, and help local businesses by providing meeting spaces, and technology training workshops.

- A library is an investment in a community's future.
- Libraries are America's great information equalizers – the only place people of all ages and backgrounds can find and freely use such a diversity of resources, along with the expert guidance of librarians.
- To combat the economic downturn, libraries design and offer programs tailored to meet local community economic needs. Libraries can provide residents with career advisers, workshops in resume writing and interviewing, job-search resources, and connections with outside agencies that offer training and job placement.
- During times of economic downturn, libraries see more users because people cut back on entertainment. People are able to rent movies for free and check out CDs, use databases and download audio books.
- When the economy is down, library use is up. Unfortunately, at the same time, tight city and state budgets are closing library doors and reducing access when it's needed most.

3. Library Funding

According to the 2012 State of America's Libraries Report, nearly 60% of public libraries reported flat or decreased operating budgets in 2010–2011. Nationally, 16% of local libraries reported decreased operating hours; and for the third year in a row, the greatest impact was experienced by those living in urban communities: Nearly one-third of urban libraries reported reductions in hours. Academic libraries have faced similar budget reductions, and those matters are complicated by the rising cost of resources.

- Millions of people pass through the library each year, but without adequate funding, these resources might not be there when you need them.
- Like many Americans, due to the recent economic downturn, many libraries are being forced to do more with less.
- Libraries in almost every state have been affected by state funding cuts.
- Librarians know shrinking budgets demand a lot of hard choices be made. When it comes time to make those decisions, we need to ask elected officials and the public to think about how many people turn to us for job searches, free Internet access, health care information and for free resources for education and career development.
- Your ability to get information shouldn't depend on your ability to pay for it.
- If people speak up and speak out they can save their libraries.

Quotable Facts about America's Libraries:

- College libraries receive just less than three cents of every dollar spent on higher education.
- Americans spend over 18 times as much money on home video games (\$18.6 billion) as they do on school library materials for their children (\$1 billion).

- School libraries spend an average of \$12.06 per student on library media—about two-thirds the cost of a single fiction title (\$17.63) or about one-third the cost of a single non-fiction title (\$27.04).
- If the cost of People magazine had risen as fast as the cost of academic library periodicals since 1990, it would cost about \$182 for a one-year subscription.
- There are 584 students enrolled for every librarian in 2- and 4-year colleges and universities in 2010 the U.S. as compared with 14 students for each teaching faculty member.

4. Library Use

Despite decreasing budgets, libraries across American have seen an increase in usage.

- 58% of adults in the U.S. have public library cards.
- Americans visit libraries more than 1.3 billion times and check out more than 2.1 billion items each year. Users turn to their libraries for free books, to borrow DVDs, to learn new computer skills, to conduct job searches and more.
- A 2012 poll conducted for the American Library Association found that 94% of respondents agreed that public libraries play an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed because they provide free access to materials and resources.
- More than 92% of public libraries provide services for job seekers.
- Nearly all Americans (96 percent) – even if they are not regular library visitors – agree that libraries play an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed. They support our public education and lifelong learning.
- Reference librarians in the nation’s public and academic libraries answer nearly 6.6 million questions weekly. Standing single file, the line of questioners would span from Ocean City, MD to Juneau, AK.

Quotable Facts about America’s Libraries:

- There are more public libraries than McDonald’s in the U.S.—a total of 16,766 including branches.
- Americans go to school, public and academic libraries more than three times more often than they go to the movies.
- Americans check out more than eight books a year, on the average. They spend \$35.81 a year for the public library—about the average cost of one hardcover book.
- Americans spend nearly three times as much on candy as they do on public libraries.

5. Libraries and Technology

Libraries provide an invaluable resource for job seekers, as many patrons rely on the library as their only means of accessing the internet.

- Almost 89% of public library outlets now offer wireless Internet access. According to the FCC, over 80 percent of Fortune 500 companies

require that a job application be completed online. Patrons turn to library computers and Internet access to find work, apply for jobs online, type resumes and cover letters and open email accounts.

- Nearly 73% of libraries are their communities' only source of free computer and Internet access. This number increases to 82% in rural areas.
- Libraries help bridge the divide between those who have access to information and those who do not. Families making less than \$15,000 annually are two to three times more likely to rely on library computers than those earning more than \$75,000.

Quotable Facts about America's Libraries:

- Academic libraries held approximately 158.7 million e-books and public libraries held more than 18.5 million in 2010.
- A 2011 Pew study found that about 24% of library card holders had read e-books in the past year. Of them, 57% preferred borrowing e-books and about 33% preferred purchasing them.
- The 2011-2012 ALA Libraries Connect Communities study reported that 76.3% of libraries reported offering e-books, an increase of 9% from 2010-2011.

6. Economic Value of Libraries

Libraries are among the most effective of all public services, serving more than 2/3rds of the public with less than 2 percent of all tax dollars. A number of recent studies have shown that libraries are among the most effective types of public service, and that libraries routinely provide a positive return on investment.

- Investing in libraries is an investment in education and lifelong learning.
- Libraries are among the most effective of all public services, serving more than 2/3rds of the public with less than 2 percent of all tax dollars.
- Public libraries are a bargain. Nationally, the average cost to the taxpayer for access to this wide range of public-library resources is \$31 a year, about the cost of one hardcover book.

Return on investment examples:

- Seattle, WA – Visits to the new public library have increased King County tourism. Increased tourism of one percent yields \$1 billion in new economic activity statewide over 25 years.
- In Maryland, 90 percent of the state's citizens say public libraries are "a good investment." More than 40 percent of the citizens think of public libraries as an economic anchor, potentially attracting "good businesses" to their area.
- In Florida, for every dollar of public support spent on public libraries, income or wages increases by \$12.66, and returned \$6.54 for every dollar invested.
- In South Carolina, the total direct and indirect return on investment for every \$1 spent on the state's public libraries by South Carolina state and local governments is \$4.48 - nearly 350 percent.

Appendix E: ALA Crisis Protocol

American Library Association Protocol for Monitoring and Responding to Library Closings and Other Catastrophic Library Fiscal Crises

The American Library Association (ALA) has adopted a protocol to respond to library closures and other catastrophic library fiscal crises at the state and local level. The goal of ALA's involvement is to advance the efforts of the library and/or the appropriate state-level library organization to avert the closure or to restore library funding. ALA can only become involved when its efforts are welcome by and coordinated with the library and/or the state-level library organization.

A "Crisis Team" of ALA staff members has been created to continuously monitor and coordinate response to library closures and other catastrophic library fiscal crises situations. The ALA Crisis Team is headed by the Office for Library Advocacy and works in close coordination with the Public Information Office, *American Libraries*, the ALA Governance Office, the Association for Library Trustees, Friends and Foundations (ALTAFF), the Office for Government Relations, and the Chapter Relations Office. ALA Divisions are consulted as appropriate to the situation.

Step 1: Identification

Identification of a crisis can occur in one of the following three ways:

- Through external media coverage of the issue;
- Through ALA members or members of the library community bringing the matter to ALA's attention;
- Through ALA staff such as AL reporters.

Step 2: Strategy

When the crisis is statewide, the Crisis Team will initiate contact with the state library and appropriate state-level library organization to gather facts and background information.

With a local crisis, the Crisis Team will contact the local library director, trustees, Friends group, or other body legally responsible for library services within the given community as well as the state library and appropriate state-level library organization(s) to gather facts and background information.

Step 3: Response

The Crisis Team will share gathered information with the ALA President and Executive Director, who will then confer with the ALA Executive Committee.

The ALA President will work with OLA, PIO, the ALA Division President (when appropriate), the local trustees, and/or the president of the appropriate state-level organization(s) to issue a national statement in response to the crisis.

The response will be disseminated through ALA media outlets including but not limited to, news releases, *AL Direct*, *American Libraries*, and *American Libraries Online*. It will also be posted on ALA and appropriate ALA Division websites, newsletters, discussion lists, and social media in order to maximize publicity.

Step 4: Follow-Up

On an ongoing basis, the Crisis Team will update the ALA Board, ALA Council, and the ALA Division (if appropriate) with any actions taken in support of the library or libraries in crisis. Media contacts will also be shared with the ALA Board.