**EBD # 10.7**

**2020-2021**

**TO:** ALA Executive Board

**RE:** Establishment of the Reclaim Membership Fund

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

To establish the “Reclaim Membership Fund” which will sponsor the ALA basic membership dues for renewing or reinstating library worker members who are experiencing financial insecurity.

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**

Committee on Membership

**CONTACT PERSON:**

Committee on Membership Chair, Christina Rodriques

Staff Liaison, Melissa Walling, mwalling@ala.org

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**

To establish the “Reclaim Membership Fund” which will sponsor the ALA basic membership dues for renewing or reinstating library worker members who are experiencing financial insecurity.

**DATE:** March 9, 2021

**BACKGROUND:**

The Reclaim Membership Fund is being established to ensure that that our library worker members can maintain a relationship with their fellow ALA members during times of financial insecurity. This program is rooted in the belief that keeping library workers connected to the resources and community that ALA provides to its members, will be pivotal to their career trajectory.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

The following pages include the program details, background, and timeline as well details about the process and the application.



**To:** ALA Executive Board

**From:** Committee on Membership

**Date:** March 9, 2021

**Recommendation**:

To establish the “Reclaim Membership Fund” which will sponsor the ALA basic membership dues for renewing or reinstating library worker members who are experiencing financial insecurity.

**Program Details:**

The Reclaim Membership Fund is being established to ensure that that our library worker members can maintain a relationship with their fellow ALA members during times of financial insecurity. This program is rooted in the belief that keeping library workers connected to the resources and community that ALA provides to its members, will be pivotal to their career trajectory. Members will be asked to contribute to this fund.

Recipients will receive a non-renewable sponsorship to cover their ALA basic membership dues for one year. Recipients will be limited to current Regular, International, Library Support Staff or Non-Salaried Members - or those who lapsed within the last 3 years while holding one of these four membership types. Applications for assistance are strictly confidential as are the recipients’ identities.

In addition to establishing this fund, ALA will continue to offer the following flexibilities to all members:

* The ability to pay dues through semi-annual installments with a nominal service fee.
* The discounted Non-Salaried Membership for those earning less than $30,000 annually.
* During the pandemic, an extended membership grace period of 5 months.

Special note: For those early recipients, they will also receive an ALA Annual Conference registration through the complimentary rate for furloughed members.

**Background:**

At the beginning of the pandemic, the Committee on Membership analyzed a member recommendation to waive membership dues for Student Members. While the Committee on Membership did not believe that waiving dues was an ideal solution, the Committee agreed that ALA should explore establishing a fund to support members during challenging times (not limited to COVID-19). This sentiment has been echoed in various conversations throughout the organization over the last few months.

ALA has also seen an increased effort on behalf of division and round tables to support members experiencing financial insecurity. ACRL and ALSC currently have a fund dedicated to BIPOC members; and two round tables recently leveraged the gift membership program to sponsor memberships (SRRT in January, IFRT is launching soon).

This program is limited to library worker members only because this is an area of higher attrition for members including those who are entering the workforce as graduating students. This fund is designed to support membership retention efforts.

**Timeline:**

Launch the Reclaim Membership Fund during National Library Week and encourage donations by the end of April to add to the $15,000 that is in the fund (this will sponsor at least 100 Regular Members).

**Program Criteria:**

* Applicant must be a current member of ALA or a member within the last 3 years with a Regular, International, Library Support Staff or Non-Salaried Member.
* Applicant must be furloughed or unemployed at the time of application.
* Applicant must intend to continue working within library services.
* Sponsorship is for the cost of a one-year ALA membership and are not-renewable.
* Applicants are encouraged to donate to the Membership Hardship Fund once their financial situation allows them to do so.

**Selection of Recipients:**

1. Sponsorships will be awarded monthly.
2. Membership Relations & Services (MRS) staff will review all applications for completion and for eligibility (we will use the honor system).
3. Eligible applicants will be funded for membership and notified that they have received the award.
4. Internally, MRS staff will work with the Development office to transfer funds.
5. MRS staff will report on the status of the program to the Committee on Membership. Any concerns or issues with the process will be reviewed by the Committee on Membership.
6. The application will be removed from the web site when the fund balance falls to $2,000 and will be re-published once it reaches a reasonable threshold of funding.

**Next Steps for ALA Staff once Fund is established:**

* Development staff to designate 21st Century Fund donations made by the end of April for this purpose.
* Online web page will be activated and will follow the outline of the page for The Merritt Fund (<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/affiliates/relatedgroups/merrittfund/merritthumanitarian>) which encourages both donations as well as applications.
* Working through the Communications and Marketing Office, ALA will release an announcement about the fund during National Library Week.
* Staff will integrate messages about the fund in appropriate communication channels across the association.

**Recommended Application Questions:**

1. Name, Contact Information, ALA ID#
2. What is the name of your most recent employer?
3. What is your current employment status? *(select one)*
   1. Furloughed
   2. Unemployed/In Transition
   3. Other *(mandatory comment box)*
4. What type of library do you work in? *(select one)*
5. How many years have you been working in libraries?
6. What does being an ALA Member mean to you?
7. How will you stay active and involved within ALA if you were awarded this dues relief renewal?
8. I have been an ALA Member (Regular, International, Library Support Staff or Non-Salaried Member) and confirm that I am currently experiencing financial insecurity.
   1. Yes
   2. No
9. I plan to secure employment within the library services field.
   1. Yes
   2. No
10. When my financial situation allows me to, I will consider donating to the Reclaim Membership Fund to support other library workers in need.
    1. Yes
    2. No

**References:**

This program was developed by reviewing the dues waiver processes and hardship funds of ALA Divisions, REFORMA as well as those of other associations. Here are a few examples:

[ACRL Membership Funding for BIPOC Library Workers](https://acrl.ala.org/acrlinsider/archives/20820)

[ALSC Relief Renewals for BIPOC Members](http://www.ala.org/alsc/member-center/alsc-relief-renewals-bipoc-members#:~:text=As%20these%20continue%20to%20be,hardship%20due%20to%20COVID%2D19)

[REFORMA Familia Fund](https://www.reforma.org/familiafund)

[Emergency Nurses Association](https://www.ena.org/membership/renew/hardship)

[Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography](https://www.sdms.org/foundation/programs/grants/hardship-grant#:~:text=The%20SDMS%20Foundation%20Hardship%20Grant,to%20%E2%80%8Bmaintain%20their%20sonography)