

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Annual Conference, Washington DC  
June 24 – 29, 2010**

**Topic:** Board Role in Sponsorships & Partnerships

**Background:** According to BoardSource, two of the ten basic responsibilities for Board members are to ensure adequate resources and provide fiscal oversight. Corporate sponsorships and partnerships have been used in the past to fund critical initiatives like Teen Read Week and events at conferences. Developing and maintaining relationships with corporate contacts takes time and effort. At this time, the role of Board members has generally been limited to thanking sponsors or partners who have already signed on to support a particular effort. The Board may want to discuss how it can further support this process, especially since the recession has resulted in reduced corporate giving and increased competition among not-for-profits for limited corporate funds and resources.

**Action Required:** Discussion

---

YALSA's Executive Director works with the ALA Development Office to seek corporate sponsorships for:

- Conference events at Midwinter, Annual and the Symposium
- Initiatives including Teen Read Week and Teen Tech Week

**Sponsorships vs. Partnerships**

- Sponsorships are when a vendor or for-profit organization provides cash to YALSA to support a particular YALSA initiative. YALSA and the vendor work together to come up with activities that are mutually beneficial, then sign an agreement outlining what each party will do. For example, in 2008 Mirrorstone Books paid YALSA \$50,000 to be the official sponsor of the 2008 Teen Read Week.
- Partnerships are when a vendor or outside organization (either for-profit or not-for-profit) work together on a joint project or toward a common goal. The partner may or may not provide funds to YALSA, and there is not always a signed agreement. Partnerships may or may not be directly tied to an existing YALSA program or initiative, but they must fit with the mission of the organization. Partnerships can be extensive, like YALSA's 5 year involvement with WWE to jointly administer the WrestleMania Reading Challenge. However, partnerships can also be smaller, one-time efforts, such as the recent mailings YALSA did with the Federal Trade Commission about media literacy and online safety.

**Existing resources:**

- A sponsor information page and interest form are available via YALSA's web site at [www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/sponsors.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/sponsors.cfm)
- For each event or initiative, a special document is created and distributed that lists specific sponsor opportunities and contribution levels. An example can be found at: [www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/yalitsymposium/sponsors10.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/yalitsymposium/sponsors10.cfm)
- YALSA Sponsor & Vendor Participation Policy: [www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/aboutyalsa/sponsorvendor.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/aboutyalsa/sponsorvendor.cfm)
- FAQ about sponsorships for Chairs and member leaders: [www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/aboutyalsa/faqspendors\\_0908.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/aboutyalsa/faqspendors_0908.cfm)

**Possible Board Member Activities:**

- The Executive Director can alert the Board as to which vendors have been contacted about a particular sponsor opportunity. If a Board member has a contact at one of the vendors, he/she can contact the vendor to encourage him/her to sign on as a partner or sponsor.
- Board members can share with the Executive Director contacts they have at various companies that may be a good fit for potential sponsorships or partnerships.
- Other?

**Possible Next Steps:**

- The Fiscal Officer and Executive Director create resources that all Board members can use when communicating with potential sponsors or partners, including talking points and a sample email message.
- The Fiscal Officer and Executive Director create a Board development session to help prepare all Board members to begin supporting the sponsorship effort.
- In lieu of the entire Board participating in this effort, designate an ad-hoc group of the Board to focus on sponsor outreach.
- The Fiscal Officer and Executive Director update the existing YALSA sponsor policy document so that it provides a more in-depth framework for sponsorships.
  - Recommended policy language can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/2dhgqv>
- Other?

**Considerations:**

- Excellent communication will be required in order for an increased Board role to be successful. The Executive Director and Board members will all have to be diligent about keeping everyone informed as to who has been contacted and what the conversation was about.
- Is it feasible for all Board members to take on this additional responsibility?
- What, if any, is the role of the Financial Advancement Committee?
- Other?

**Additional Resources:**

- Best Practices for Successful Corporate Sponsorships from the National Council of Nonprofits: <http://tinyurl.com/2dcq42t>
- Corporate Sponsorship Toolkit from the National Council of Nonprofits: <http://tinyurl.com/2detakw>
- Sponsor Park: <http://www.sponsorpark.com/>
- Strengthen Your Collaborations: [www.resilientnonprofits.org/materials/](http://www.resilientnonprofits.org/materials/) (both a free archived webinar and a PowerPoint presentation are available)