

National Library Legislative Day

College-age voter participation in a presidential election reached historic levels this past November, but involvement in the democratic process does not have to end with a trip to the voting booth for young Americans.

In fact, library advocates have an opportunity to take their cause all the way to Washington.

As the ALA's Washington Office gears up for its annual National Library Legislative Day (NLLD), to be held May 11–12, 2009, getting more college-age participants involved is a top priority.

November's unprecedented voter turnout among younger voters turned the heads of the new Congress and gained the attention, and appreciation, of President-elect Barack Obama, who has frequently acknowledged the role the young crowd played in his claiming a victory. Additionally, President-elect Obama has spoken on behalf of libraries on numerous occasions—dubbing them sanctuaries of learning, crediting the New York Public Library with helping him obtain his position as a community organizer in Chicago, and citing library closures as one of the dire effects of the weakened economy.

With Congress' ear bent to young voters and the new Administration discussing the importance of libraries, there has never been a Washington more ready to hear from young voters—or library advocates—and NLLD is the perfect avenue for library advocates of all ages to speak directly to Members of Congress about the concerns facing libraries.

WHCLIST award

Each year, NLLD draws more than 500 participants from across the country, but the cost can deter college students from participating. Fortunately, there is a way for one lucky individual to participate at a reduced cost. Each year, the White House Conference on Library

and Information Services Taskforce (WHCLIST) provides a stipend of \$300, and, this year, a free two-nights' stay at the conference hotel to help defray the cost for a nonlibrarian participant to attend NLLD.

WHCLIST is an effective force in library advocacy nationally, statewide, and locally following the White House Conferences on Library and Information Services in 1979 and 1991. WHCLIST has chosen to provide its assets to the ALA Washington Office to transmit the spirit of committed, passionate library support to a new generation of advocates. Both ALA and WHCLIST are committed to ensuring that the American people get the best library service possible, and the WHCLIST award is used to further these efforts.

The criteria for the WHCLIST award are:

- The recipient should be a library supporter (trustee, friend, general supporter) and not a professional librarian.
- Priority will be given to first-time attendees of NLLD.
- Applicants must submit a registration form and a letter of reference from a library director, school librarian, library board chair, friend's group chair, or other library representative, and an essay or letter explaining why the candidate should be selected to: Kristin Murphy, Government Relations Specialist, American Library Association, 1615 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, First Floor, Washington, D.C. 20009; fax: (202) 628-8419; kmurphy@alawash.org.

The deadline for applications for the WHCLIST award is April 15, and the winner will be notified at NLLD. Representatives of WHCLIST and the ALA Washington Office will choose the recipient. The ALA Washington Office will contact the recipient's senators and representatives to announce the award.

The NLLD registration form, as well as additional information on NLLD (including an informative video) can be accessed on ALA Web site's under the Washington Office section at www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/wo/washevents/nlld/nlld2009.cfm. 

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