



Executive Search



Executive Director

The Opportunity

The Association of Legal Administrators (ALA), located in Chicago, IL, is conducting a search for its Executive Director. Founded in 1971, ALA is an international professional association representing leaders and managers in the legal industry. ALA has approximately 8,500 members worldwide, representing more than 30 countries. ALA's Executive Director will report to the association's Board of Directors and be responsible for the management, operations, and success of ALA.

ALA: An Overview

ALA provides extensive professional development, collaborative peer communities, strategic operational solutions, and business partner connections that empower its members to lead the business of law. It has a staff of 35 and an \$8M operating budget.

About ALA's Members

The association is open to professionals who support the management of legal organizations, including legal professionals employed in private law firms, legal service clinics, corporate legal departments, university legal departments, governmental legal agencies, court systems, charitable legal agencies, and any other organizations engaged in the legal industry.

About ALA's Work

ALA is in the final year of a two-phase strategic plan aimed at positioning the association as the leader in the business of law. Phase I (2013-2016) included the creation of new publications, events, online educational resources, and other member benefits. Phase II (2017-2020) focuses on five strategic goals:

- **Define Our Identity:** As the legal management profession changes and evolves, ALA must clearly define its role and leadership in the industry. Establishing and communicating a compelling and engaging identity is essential to achieving our long-term vision.
- **Increase Member and Business Partner Value:** ALA has a long history of delivering essential resources, knowledge, and networking to its members and business partners. With increasing competition, ALA must continue to build and enhance its reputation for value.
- **Enhance Industry Thought Leadership:** Leadership in the business of law requires that ALA take an active role in addressing key issues facing the profession and advance positions that elevate the critical role legal management professionals play in the industry.
- **Advance Legal Management Professional Development:** As legal management professionals face increasingly complex challenges, ALA must develop educational programs, resources, and networking opportunities to provide them with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to succeed.
- **Build Community and Engagement:** ALA members and business partners have identified networking and community as the most valuable benefits of their involvement in the association. Building on that strong foundation is essential to our continued, long-term success.

Structure of ALA

ALA is led by a 12-member Board of Directors, which sets the association's vision and direction and provides guidance to the Executive Director. A 15-member Chapter Resource Team supports the association's chapters, and standing committees and teams provide volunteer leadership for a number of initiatives. ALA also convenes committees to plan its major annual conferences.

Executive Director Role and Responsibilities

The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors of ALA (the Board). They serve as the chief of staff responsible for the management, operation, and success of ALA. Principal duties and responsibilities of the Executive Director include:

Critical Competencies for Success

Strategic Leadership

- Initiates and implements periodic strategic planning processes to advance ALA's purpose.
- Assists the Board with formulating ALA's mission, goals, objectives, and policies (ALA's "purpose").
- Evaluates the effectiveness of the ALA strategic plan on an ongoing basis and recommends revisions needed to achieve ALA's purpose.

Board, Committee, and Chapter Support

- Shares, with the Board, responsibility for ensuring that ALA's governance policies are monitored and adhered to. Advises the Board if the Board is not in compliance with its own policies.
- Plans and facilitates Board meetings. Ensures that agenda items are consistent with the Board's purpose, are scheduled for consideration in a timely manner, and are well-researched and clearly presented to the Board.
- Serves as an ex-officio member of the Board Executive Committee in the role of Board Secretary.
- Provides guidance to Board members and volunteer leaders, to assist them in executing their responsibilities. Includes planning, developing, and implementing volunteer leadership training through the Annual New Board Member Orientation, the Chapter Leadership Institute, and the Association Leadership Institute.
- Provides business and management advice and guidance to ALA's Chapters and their volunteer leaders. Ensures that headquarters staff also provide encouragement, assistance, and support to Chapters.
- Serves as an ex-officio member of all ALA Teams (Committees), which includes:
 - Providing guidance and advice for their work
 - Providing necessary staff liaison and support for their functions

- Working with Teams/Committees to prepare reports and recommendations for the Board
- Serves as a member of the Steering Committee of ALA's Large Firm Administrator Caucus (LFAC), which includes:
 - Acting as organization staff liaison
 - Overseeing LFAC membership, retreat program planning, its Listserv, and all other activities

Financial Management and Administration

- Maintains ALA's non-profit and tax-exempt status.
- Serves as ALA's Comptroller, which includes:
 - Ensuring that financial and other assets are protected and adequately maintained without unnecessary risk
 - Supervising all financial planning, budgeting, accounting, and reporting functions
 - Developing and proposing an annual Plan of Work and budget for Board consideration, action, and approval
 - Arranging and managing an annual independent audit of ALA's financial records
- Serves as ALA's Investment Manager, which includes:
 - Serving on three-person Association Investment Committee
 - Working with and monitoring ALA's investment bankers
 - Retaining independent investment advice and counsel, as needed
- Serves as Trustee of ALA's 401(k) savings plan, along with one other Trustee, which includes:
 - Fulfilling all fiduciary responsibilities
 - Selecting and working with an appropriate Third-Party Administrator and independent investment advisers
 - Establishing and maintaining appropriate investment funds with the plan
 - Providing appropriate investment education programs and opportunities for plan participants
- Acts as ALA's Contract and Contracting Officer. Negotiates, reviews, executes, and administers all contracts on behalf of ALA.
- Serves as Trustee, Executive Director, and Treasurer of the Foundation of the Association of Legal Administrators (Foundation). Manages all operational activities of a Section 501(c)(3) foundation including administration and management of grant programs, projects, fundraising activities, contributions and donor recognition; recordkeeping and investments; legal compliance; and tax filings.
- Acts as ALA's Agent for Service of Process, which includes:
 - Retaining and utilizing outside legal counsel, when necessary
 - Managing disputes and litigation
- Serves as legal Publisher of all ALA periodicals. Assumes ultimate responsibility for content, editorial policy, regulatory compliance, advertising policies, and contracts of every nature pertaining to all publications.
- Establishes and modifies, when appropriate, ALA's organizational structure so that it is best-suited to accomplish ALA's purpose.

- Manages and directs all ALA staff, temporary and contract employees, and consultants in their roles. Includes developing and monitoring an appropriate supervisory structure.
- Ensures adequate and appropriate staffing for ALA, including hiring, classification, training, conducting performance evaluations, promoting, determining compensation, and terminating ALA employees.
- Promotes the growth and professional development of ALA staff through formal and informal educational opportunities.
- Establishes and manages a performance-based salary program for ALA employees.

Member Resources

- Fosters and maintains a culture that is sensitive and responsive to the needs, interests, and professional development of ALA's entire membership.
- Continuously evaluates opportunities to grow ALA's reach and impact.
- Assesses the implications of globalization, commoditization, and other legal trends on ALA's members, programs, and services to ensure relevance.

External Relationships and Communications

- Develops and projects a positive image of ALA members, the profession of legal management, and the value and meaning of ALA's brand.
- Represents and speaks on behalf of ALA and the legal management profession at conferences and other events.
- Promotes and enriches relationships with membership, business partners, other national and international professional associations/organizations, the legal profession, the legal industry, the academic community, ALA staff, and other stakeholders.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

- 10-plus years of organizational leadership at an executive level. Experience in a professional membership association a plus.
- Proven track record of working with boards and committees. Experience working with a chapter-based structure is desired.
- Experience contributing to the development and implementation of strategic plans, as well as experience coordinating communication between staff members, Board members, and volunteer leaders on strategic initiatives.
- Experience assembling and directing a team to carry out the business of an organization.
- A high level of competency and understanding of financial management issues, and the ability to foster effective presentation and reporting of the same.
- Experience serving as a chief advocate and spokesperson for an industry or group. Knowledge of the legal industry a plus.
- An authentic, transparent, approachable communicator who can build trust and foster open dialogue within an organization.

- A courageous leader to engages in the thoughtful, difficult conversations needed to guide an organization toward achieving its mission.
- The emotional intelligence, listening skills, and coaching skills needed to unite a diverse group of members into a community of shared purpose.
- A visionary leader who can conceptualize long-term goals and translate them into a succinct, understandable, and actionable framework.
- A motivated—and motivational—leader who leads by example.
- A lifelong learner who demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement in pursuit of operational excellence.

Compensation

A competitive compensation package will be offered to attract an outstanding candidate.

To Apply

To apply, please send a cover letter and current résumé (Microsoft Word® format preferred) to ALA@smartinsearch.com. The cover letter should outline how your experience fits the requirements of the position as this will be an important factor in considering your candidacy.

ALA is an equal opportunity / affirmative action employer committed to inclusion and cultural diversity in the workplace. Employment selection and related decisions are made without regard to sex, race, color, age, disability, religion, national origin, sexual preference, genetic information, or any other protected class.

Additional Information

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