

# Making the Case

## for Employer-Paid Membership Dues

Check out these tips for talking to your Board and/or Friends about the importance of supporting library staff by covering their dues for membership in the Pennsylvania Library Association (PaLA), which will give them access to resources, networking opportunities, event discounts and more.

### Start With Why

As you formulate your approach, it's helpful to consider your organization's goals along with that of your position. Make sure you tie these in with your request as you present the need for support. What skills and understanding you will gain? How will this make you a better employee?

#### *You might consider saying something like:*

*"I am interested in getting more involved and developing professionally. The work of libraries is rapidly changing, especially regarding advances in technology, the latest state and federal library issues, and current best practices. I want to make sure that I have the knowledge and tools needed to perform at the top of my game and to do so most effectively for our organization."*



### Offering a Solution

Once you've laid the groundwork for why professional development and involvement is necessary for the success of your organization, offer a solution.

- Introduce the Pennsylvania Library Association (PaLA)  
Provide an overview of our professional association and its mission. Check out the About Us page on the PaLA website for helpful information.

- Provide details on membership dues  
Present the membership rates, which are available on the PaLA website. To help build your case, consider identifying upcoming PaLA events and workshops of interest and then calculating the potential savings by taking advantage of the member's rate as compared to non-members.
- Explain what is included in membership

Offer additional details regarding membership benefits to further demonstrate the potential impact of supporting you and/or your staff in this endeavor. Advocacy, networking, professional development, and education are the tip of the iceberg. See the PaLA website for an outline of benefits for personal members and institutional members.

## Broadening the Impact

Be sure to explain how membership will not only improve your performance but will also have a positive impact on the entire organization as well as the community it serves. If feasible, offer to share what you learn with your colleagues by providing updates at staff meetings, providing mini training sessions, etc. By helping your employer make the connection that this membership will benefit even more people, you'll be more likely to succeed.



### ***You might consider saying something like:***

*“We can all agree that our library’s most valuable resource is our staff. As ambassadors, they connect patrons and users with the library’s materials, programs, and services. Membership will not only expand my own knowledge, and skill sets but will enhance my ability to bring the latest news, opportunities, and ideas to the rest of the staff. By investing in staff development, we are investing in the future of our library.”*

**Want to put this request in writing?** The following letter template will get you started.

< insert date >

Dear < insert name >,

I'm writing to request your approval to < become a member of / renew my membership in > the Pennsylvania Library Association (PaLA). As you may know, PaLA is the preeminent professional association for those working in libraries in Pennsylvania, with more than 1,200 members from across the Commonwealth. The Pennsylvania Library Association continues to be a leading force by educating library workers via online resources, networking opportunities, advocacy and support, conferences, workshops, and leadership trainings.

Individual annual membership dues are just < insert annual dues > and grants me immediate access to the following:

- special discounts on registration fees for annual state conference and chapter workshops
- opportunity to attend PaLA's Academy of Leadership Studies (PALS)
- PaLA Bulletin, a quarterly publication providing information about the latest state and federal library issues and current best practices in the field
- exclusive access to members-only section of the Pennsylvania Library Association website
- online membership directory of colleagues working in all types of libraries across Pennsylvania
- advocacy and support to help fight censorship, promote literacy, and improve library services, and much more!

I sincerely believe that this membership would be a wise investment in our organization and would positively impact our processes and my own professional development. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon to discuss.

Best,

< insert signature >