



ALDA NOTE #5 **RESOURCES**

Regardless of whether you are in the early stages of forming an ALDA Chapter or are leading a group that has been around for a while, there are times when you will want help. You may have questions about ALDA procedures or traditions. Perhaps you want to start a newsletter. Or maybe you are frustrated because your group just doesn't seem to be growing. Information on these subjects, as well as a wealth of other topics, is available.

You have many resources and supports at your disposal. These resources fall into three broad categories: (1) those within your own Chapter or Group; (2) those available from or through ALDA, Inc.; and (3) those found elsewhere.

Outside resources. The array of outside resources is huge. These include printed materials, Internet Web pages and mailing groups, organizations, and individuals not affiliated with ALDA.

Conventional library resources such as books, periodicals, and videotapes are in this category, and a visit to your local library is an excellent first step. Electronic resources are new additions to this roster and include World Wide Web pages, mailing lists, and Usenet groups. Internet resources change so rapidly that it is almost silly to make specific suggestions. You might want to start by using any search engine to identify sites with key words such as "deaf," "late-deaf," "outreach," "volunteer group," "vertigo," or whatever strikes your fancy.

Various organizations provide information on specific topics, and you should not limit your investigation only to organizations involved with deafness. For instance, the League of Women Voters offers a pamphlet entitled "Simplified Parliamentary Procedures" that Chapters may find helpful in conducting their Board meetings. There are numerous state and local resources as well. For example, about 14 states have commissions that provide services to deaf and hard of hearing people, and an additional 25 states have such services provided by an office, council, department, or division. A listing of state agencies serving deaf and hard of hearing people can be found on the ALDA website

(www.alda.org/resources-state-agencies/).

There are a host of not-for-profit organizations working with or for deaf and hard of hearing people. A list of such organizations can also be found on the ALDA website (www.alda.org/resources-organizations/). Local organizations of potential use can often be found by visiting your local reference librarian.

"People resources" are also a rich source of information. The coworker who belongs to AARP, the neighbor who raises funds for his kid's Scout troop, the relative active with her local museum – nearly everyone is delighted to share his or her expertise. You might ask: *How did you accomplish that? Do you have any suggestions for this type of project? What activities do your members enjoy?* A surprising wealth of information and help are yours simply for the asking.

ALDA resources. ALDA provides a range of resources tailored to ALDA Chapters and Groups. These resources include:

- **ALDAcon**, is the annual convention of ALDA where you can attend a variety of workshops including the Leadership Workshop, learn about new technology in the Exhibit Hall, and ask questions of other Chapter or Group leaders.
- **ALDA Website**, your source for a variety of information useful for starting or maintaining an ALDA Chapter or group. For example, the website contains all of the *ALDA News* issues and transcripts of many of the presentations given at ALDAcon for many years.
- **ALDA Notes**, the information sheets initially prepared to help people start chapters and groups, are available on a variety of topics such as “History, Objectives, and Purpose of ALDA,” “ALDA Programs and Activities,” “Forming an ALDA Chapter?,” “Locating Late-Deafened Adults,” and “Increasing Member Involvement.”
- **Other ALDA publications**, which can be helpful for specific needs. These include *ALDA News*, the occasional *ALDA Reader*, the ALDA brochure, and several volumes of ALDAcon presentations that can be found on the ALDA website.
- **ALDA Chapter Coordinator**, assists Groups and Chapters with daily operating issues, provides informational support to people wanting to form new ALDA Groups, presents issues relevant to Chapters and Groups to the ALDA Board of Directors, and facilitates Group and Chapter renewals and applications for a Chapter tax exemption. The Chapter Coordinator may also develop chapter-related content for the *ALDA News*.

- **ALDA Regional Directors**, respond to queries from ALDA Chapter and Group leaders, as well as individual ALDA members, in their geographical regions.

Resources within your group. Perhaps your most under-recognized resource is your own group. There are several established techniques to get a handle on group resources.

One method is to have everyone list information about his or her background, interests, hobbies, abilities, and special skills. These lists are shared with all group members, who then ask questions to learn more. These questions invariably trigger the discovery of additional resources, which are added to the lists.

Another technique for identifying group resources is for each group member to cite especially meaningful experiences and accomplishments. Other group members examine their colleagues’ successes with an eye toward identifying underlying causes of the success, particularly those that result from behavioral characteristics, decision-making processes, team leadership, and problem-solving methods. These behavioral skills are also resources you can use.

Regardless of which technique you choose, do not limit yourself to the handful of individuals forming your group’s active core. For instance, when you update your group’s mailing list you might include a checklist of interests and skills. “Interests” may include events planning; newsletter writing and/or editing; legislative advocacy; teaching or learning sign language. Your list of “Skills” might include general computer skills; desktop publishing; publicity and media relations; accounting and budgeting; fundraising. Once you get a sense of what your larger group has to offer, contact individuals and ask for assistance with specific projects or issues. If your experience is typical, you will usually gain the special help that you are seeking.