

**Frequently Asked Questions about the
AALL Government Relations Office (GRO) in Washington, DC
(Revised October 2011)**

Who are the Government Relations Office staff members and where do they work?

Emily Feltren is the Interim Director of Government Relations. The GRO was housed within the Georgetown University Law Center Library until August 2009. The Office is now located at 25 Massachusetts Ave, NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001, within blocks of the United States Capitol.

What is the role of the GRO in the development of AALL positions on information policy issues?

GRO staff work on information issues in accordance with [AALL's Government Relations Policy](#), which also appears in the *AALL Directory and Handbook*. They consult on a regular basis with the Copyright Committee, Digital Access to Legal Information Committee, Government Relations Committee, and, as appropriate for specific issues, with the President, Executive Director, and/or Executive Board. The GRO closely adheres to policies which have been established by the Association.

How does the Association determine policy in a new or developing area not already addressed by the Government Relations Policy?

Information policies in new or developing areas must be approved by the AALL Executive Board and typically come to the Board in the form of recommendations and/or motions from the Government Relations Office or an AALL committee or task force. In addition, the Executive Board may take action to determine a new policy or such a policy may be brought forward by AALL members through the resolution process.

Who is authorized to speak on behalf of AALL regarding information policy issues?

The official and customary spokespersons on information policy matters are the President, the Executive Director, and the Director of the AALL Government Relations Office. According to their charges, the Government Relations Committee and the Copyright Committee may, on their own initiative, in accordance with Committee and Association policy, prepare and communicate Association positions to appropriate governmental bodies and to other interested groups, while keeping the Executive Board informed of all such efforts. See the [Speaking for AALL](#) policy and in print in the *AALL Directory and Handbook*.

Who determines whether AALL presents testimony at a Congressional or other hearing? Who selects the person to testify and who writes the statement?

The Government Relations Office monitors significant legislation and legal developments within AALL's areas of interest. If a hearing is scheduled on such an issue, the Association may be invited to or may ask to provide a representative to present testimony. The GRO Director and the AALL President determine the name to be submitted as a potential witness. The proposed witness could be the President, the GRO Director, or a prominent AALL member who has expertise on the topic. If AALL does receive an invitation to testify, the testimony is often drafted by the Director of the Government Relations Office, in consultation with the Government Relations Committee.

AALL also works closely with other library organizations on matters of mutual concern, particularly copyright issues. If AALL and other associations agree on a consensus position, they may select one person to present testimony on behalf of all of them. That testimony may be written by the Copyright Committee in consultation with the GRO Director.

What role does the GRO take in addressing information policy issues at the state and international levels?

Although the GRO focuses primarily on information policy issues at the Federal level, the Office became involved in a state issue in the late 1990s, when AALL took a strong position in opposition to the [Uniform Computer Information Transactions Act](#) (UCITA). This draft uniform state law was being considered by various states and a number of AALL members were successful in efforts opposing it in their states.

The GRO is available to assist chapters who are concerned with state issues of information policy and to offer advice when asked. A critical state/local issue is funding for public law libraries, as many states faces fiscal challenges. The GRO will now work with AALL and chapter members to enact the Uniform Law Commissioner's recently approved [Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act](#).

AALL chapters monitor state issues on an ongoing basis for the AALL Government Relations Committee and the GRO. AALL has also become involved internationally on the issue of copyright law, seeking to promote balance in copyright law and protect fair use and the public domain.

How can an AALL member learn more about the Association's information policy positions?

The GRO has a [web page](#) on AALLNET. GRO staff members are available to talk with members, as are the chairs of the Copyright Committee, the Digital Access to Legal Information Committee, and the Government Relations Committee. AALL members are also welcome to contact AALL officers and Executive Board members about the Association's information policy positions.

What is the history of AALL's involvement in advocacy concerning information policy issues?

A compiled history of the Association's advocacy efforts in the past 20 years, *Highlights of the History of the AALL Government Relations Office (formerly the Washington Affairs Office)* is posted [here](#) on the GRO web page.

How can law librarians become involved in AALL advocacy efforts or bring an issue to the attention of the GRO?

AALL members interested in becoming involved in advocacy are encouraged to contact the GRO Director or the current Chair of the AALL Government Relations Committee. Advocacy workshops are held each year in conjunction with the AALL Annual Meeting. AALL members can apply to serve on one of the three AALL policy committees. Many of AALL's chapters have government relations committees and welcome new participants.