

**The Michigan Library Association invites proposals for breakout sessions at the 2026 MLA Annual Conference to be presented October 28-30, 2026, at the Vibe Credit Union Showplace (formerly known as Suburban Collection Showplace) located in Novi. The Michigan Library Association Annual Conference is the premier professional development and networking event for Michigan library staff, students, and trustees.**

We invite any of the above groups as well as subject matter experts to propose breakout sessions aligned with our theme, Beyond Buzzwords: An Enduring Public Good. By offering a range of sessions, attendees will explore meaningful ideas, programs, and services that demonstrate the lasting value of libraries. What does it look like to move beyond buzzwords and put enduring public good into practice? What new ideas and approaches will you share?

We value the creativity and expertise of our library community and welcome proposals on a wide range of topics. To help guide prospective speakers, the following areas represent themes we are especially interested in featuring this year:

- ADA Compliance
- Artificial Intelligence
- Innovative or Unique Public Services
- Communication
- Community Partnerships
- Sustainability

### **Session Proposal Guidelines**

- Speakers must be able to present in-person at the conference hosted October 28-30, 2026 at the Vibe Credit Union Showplace. **Sessions may be placed anytime during the conference.** Speakers are not required to attend the conference beyond their session.
- Sessions are educational, generative, or inspirational in nature. ***Sales pitches of products or services will not be accepted.***
- MLA reserves the right to edit or combine session proposals before acceptance.
- Contact information must be provided for all speakers.
- You do not need to be an MLA member to submit.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

The MLA Annual Conference workgroup will use the following criteria in assessing the viability of including a program in the schedule. The work group retains the right to reject, modify, or combine proposals.

- **Purpose:** Does the proposal clearly identify a goal and takeaways for the audience?
- **Audience:** Is the target audience clearly identified?
- **Practicality:** Is the topic appropriate for a conference breakout session in content and target audience?

- **Engagement:** Will the presentation and presenter(s) keep the audience's focus and attention through clear speech, engaging visuals, useful and relatable content?
- **Timeliness/ Relevance:** Is the topic of current interest, bringing new ideas and a fresh perspective to its intended audience and theme?
- **Qualifications:** Does the speaker(s) have sufficient or relevant experience to present on the proposed topic?
- **Theme Adherence:** To what extent does the proposal fit with the theme Beyond Buzzwords: An Enduring Public Good?

### Agreements and Selection Notification

- MLA will contact each presenter in writing with the workgroup's acceptance decision.
- MLA will send all individual presenters a Presenter Agreement indicating the date, time, and details of their presentation. This must be confirmed by the presenters and returned to MLA.

### Handouts

- Handouts are strongly recommended for every session.
- Handouts will be added to the event website and mobile app. Examples of handouts may be, but are not limited to: presenter contact information, a list of additional resources, a copy of presentation slides, or related worksheets.
- Printed handouts are not distributed on-site by MLA. Presenters may provide hard copies of handouts if desired at their own cost. We also encourage providing access to handouts directly in your presentation via QR code.

### Deadlines and Due Dates

- **Friday, May 15, 2026 — Final day to submit proposals. MLA reserves the right to extend the submission deadline if needed; any extension will be announced publicly.**
- **Friday, June 19, 2026 —** Selection notifications distributed via email from MLA to all presenters.
- **Friday, July 24, 2026 —** Presenter agreements due to MLA office.
- **Monday, October 12, 2026—** Handouts due for MLA website and mobile app
- **Wednesday – Friday, October 28-30, 2026 —** MLA 2026 Annual Conference, Vibe Credit Union Showplace

### Program AV & Room Setup

- All presentation rooms will be supplied with an HDMI cord, screen, and podium with microphone at no cost to the presenter.
- Presenters are expected to use the provided microphone to ensure all attendees are able to hear the presentation clearly.

- MLA will have laptops on hand for use, but presenters are encouraged to bring their own device.
- Wi-Fi internet will be in each presentation room; however, MLA cannot guarantee the speed and dependability of the services at any given time. MLA encourages presenters to bring a mobile hotspot of their own, just in case, but it is not required.
- Remote mouse devices/pointers are the responsibility of the presenter. If presenters choose to bring their own computer that does not connect to an HDMI cable, they will be responsible for providing their own connection cables or adapter.
- Rooms are typically set theatre style. MLA will take every effort to make sure the presentation rooms are set up according to the needs of the presentation.

### **Disclaimers**

All speakers must agree to the following statements:

- I understand I will not be reimbursed or compensated for presentation time, mileage, or any other expense related to my participation in the conference.
- I agree to adhere to MLA's Code of Conduct
- I will be responsible for registering and paying for the conference if I plan on attending other sessions or events beyond my allotted presentation time.
- I will be required to provide my own computer or tablet during the presentation time, and any handouts should I choose to bring physical copies.

### **Questions**

Please feel free to contact MLA's Program and Event Director Amber Sheerin or Conference Chair James Pugh with any questions you may have prior to your submission.

- Amber Sheerin, Michigan Library Association: [asheerin@milibraries.org](mailto:asheerin@milibraries.org)
- James Pugh, Cedar Springs Public Library: [director@cedarspringslibrary.org](mailto:director@cedarspringslibrary.org)

## **2026 Session Proposal Information**

Please provide the following information to the MLA Annual Conference Workgroup for evaluation and acceptance in the 2026 program.

### **1. Session Title**

In 10 words or fewer please provide a title for your proposed session.

*The best titles are clear, succinct, and describe exactly what will be covered in the session.*

### **2. Session “Elevator Pitch”**

In 150 characters or fewer please provide a short description that identifies the intended audience and gets attendees excited about attending this session.

*If accepted, this may be used for social media and related marketing purposes.*

### **3. Session Description**

In 500 characters or fewer, please provide a concise description of your proposed session.

*If accepted, this will appear in the final program, app, and the conference website.*

*Please write it in the third person, and make it lively, informative, and interesting. It may be edited for publication. Speakers will be listed separately; they should not be listed in the session description.*

### **4. Learning Outcomes**

Please identify three (3) learning outcomes for your session that begin, “At the end of the session, participants will...”

*Learning outcomes should use active verbs, be measurable, and state what the participants should know or be able to do after attending your session. Learning outcomes should not simply repeat topics that will be addressed or activities that will take place during the session. Your proposal will be evaluated on the clarity and specificity of its learning outcomes.*

### **5. Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Belonging**

Fostering a culture of [equity, diversity, accessibility, and belonging](#) is a top [strategic priority of MLA](#). In 1 paragraph or less, describe how this session aligns with those goals or contributes to wider representation of diverse groups and points of view.

### **6. Timeliness of Information**

In 1 paragraph or less, describe why your session is relevant to the library profession or aligns with the conference theme.

## **7. Session Format**

Please select your planned session format.

- Presentation – A 45-minute presentation on a particular issue, program, or service followed by a 15-minute casual discussion and/or Q & A session with the audience. Or a 60-minute talk with active learning to engage attendees and opportunities for discussion throughout the session. It may feature 1-4 speakers.
- Deep Dive Presentation – The speaker shares or analyzes the results of a specific study, program, or service with the audience. It may feature 1-4 speakers.
- Panel Discussion – A moderated session featuring multiple speakers focused on a particular issue, program, or service. Panel discussions allow panelists to share thoughts, opinions, and experiences about a particular issue, program, or service followed by discussion driven by audience participation. May feature 3-5 speakers including a moderator.
- Skill Building Workshop – The Speaker shares knowledge and expertise through interactive learning that enables the audience to develop and hone particular skills. Handouts should be provided to attendees. It may feature 1-4 speakers.
- Other – If your session does not fit into any of the above categories, please describe the format.

## **8. Program Length**

Please select your proposed session length.

*Educational programs are typically scheduled for 60-minute time blocks, including time for Q&A. MLA may entertain shorter or multi-part 2-hour sessions.*

- 60 minutes
- Other – Please describe your desired session length

## **9. Audience Interaction**

Please select the level of attendee contribution to your session.

- Limited – There will be time allotted for Q&A
- Moderate – The audience will be asked to participate during the presentation
- Heavy – The audience will help set the agenda or lead discussion

## **10. Knowledge Level of Audience**

Please select the level of knowledge attendees should have on this topic to gain the most benefit from attending your session.

- Beginner– For those with no previous knowledge of the topic
- Intermediate – For those with some knowledge of the topic
- Advanced – For those with substantial knowledge of the topic

#### **11. Session Track**

Please select up to two tracks that you think best describe your session:

- Management
- Public Services
- Collection Development
- Support Staff
- Trustees/Friends
- Communications
- Operations
- Community Engagement
- Other

#### **Presenter Information**

The following information is required of every speaker:

- Name
- Organization
- Job title
- Email
- Phone
- Mailing Address
- Emergency contact name and phone number
- Previous speaking experience or qualifications on chosen topic (500 characters or less)
- Biography (500 characters or less) *If accepted this will be used on MLA website*
- Headshot photo *If accepted this will be used on MLA website*