



# MLA Advocacy and Legislative Committee FY2022 Action Plan

## Michigan Priorities

### Funding

**Property Taxes:** Protect property tax funding structure for libraries.

- Monitor legislation to ensure the elimination of existing tax captures, prevent new ones, or exempt library millages from future schemes.
- Work in partnership with MML, MTA, MAC and others to reform the Headlee Amendment to allow millages rates to “roll up” during economic recession times.
- Maintain the ability to hold millage elections in key months of August and November.
- Encourage legislation to regulate tax tribunal proceedings so that “Big Box Stores” and similar entities pay a fair share of taxes.

**Penal Fines:** Monitor, protect and reverse any efforts to provide legislation for parallel ordinances and other methods to siphon this funding. Keep them until a permanent replacement and solid source of permanent funding can be put in place.

- Educate all parties (legislators, county treasurers, librarians) on how this system works
- Promote transparency and consistency in reporting methods to libraries by the state and county treasurers.
- Explore alternative sources of funding that moves away from penal fines. (Must be stable, predictable, secure and a more equitable system.)

**State Aid:** Protect and Increase State Aid to Libraries in the FY2022 Appropriations

- Prepare for testimony at budget hearing.
- Set up individual meetings with key legislative leadership on Appropriations after Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference in August.

## **Access to Information**

**Michigan eLibrary:** Encourage continued support and funding for Michigan eLibrary (MeL).

**Intellectual Freedom:** Protect intellectual freedom (where every individual has the right to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction).

### **Universal Access to Broadband:**

- Raise awareness of the digital divide and support rural broadband initiatives.
- Find Local/Regional/Statewide partners to identify solutions to this inequality.
- Expand Broadband/Wi-Fi Access for libraries, identify funding.

**Net Neutrality:** Oppose legislation that would encumber the internet allowing inequity of speed and influence of content.

**K-12 Libraries:** Continue to support the funding for K-12 School Libraries and support certified school librarians/media specialists in K-12 education.

- Letter to School Superintendents sent before school begins in September.
- Opportunity to promote use of APRA funding to increase libraries and certified librarians in K-12 education.

**Literacy/Early Childhood Education:** Explore options to promote and secure funding for libraries' participation in early childhood education, digital literacy and digital citizenship.

**E-Book Purchasing:** Work to propose legislation that would prohibit publishers from trying to stifle library access to new releases (like New York).

## **Safety**

**Open Carry:** Create a statement of principle and work to reform state law concerning open carry of firearms at public libraries.

**Pandemic:** Continue to monitor and react to COVID-19 legislation/emergency rules/orders

## **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEI&A)**

**Open Meetings Act:** Propose legislation allowing library and cooperative boards to meet virtually in perpetuity.

**Elliott-Larsen Act:** Respond to challenges or legislation that directly affect protected classes of people.

**Library Funding:** Address the individual inequities in penal fine funding by proposing a more just means of funding public libraries that doesn't depend upon the state penalizing individuals.

### **Library types**

**District Libraries:** Begin conversations about condensing the number of ways libraries can form in Michigan and exploring ways to boost formation of district libraries as a solution to funding independence (with the ability to levy up to 4 mills).

### **Other**

**Redistricting:** Monitor and promote library inclusion in the redistricting process for Michigan.

## **Federal Priorities**

Partner with ALA or others on moving stabilization and infrastructure legislation forward.

## **Member Advocacy Development**

Continue to motivate, mentor and assist library directors and trustees in building relationships with legislators on an ongoing basis.

Educate members about best practices for working with a legislator to change laws.

Encourage every library director to contact his/her legislators, offer to host office hours, host a tour.

Encourage directors to contact their legislators in support of appropriations goals.

Encourage all public library directors to invite legislators to summer reading kickoff programs and to read a book during March Reading Month.

Include a legislative update at MLA Annual Conference.

Thank legislators when they vote in support of library funding, issues or concerns.

Produce a statewide library advocacy day for library personnel and legislators.

- Provide advocacy training and talking points for legislative visits.

## **Communications**

Continue to disseminate a monthly newsletter for state legislators that speaks to the value and importance of libraries.

Hold regional meetings by zoom to introduce library members to legislators.

Establish October as Library Appreciation Month, encourage resolutions, letters to the editor, etc. about the importance and value of libraries in each community. Create a statewide campaign for libraries to use in their communities.

Produce short videos or talking point articles for library personnel about the issues.

Produce a statewide marketing/awareness campaign to amplify the value and importance of libraries post COVID.