



MLA LEAD Award: Library Excellence in Access and Diversity

Purpose: Established in 2026, the MLA LEAD Award (Library Excellence in Access and Diversity) recognizes a Michigan library for outstanding, measurable contributions to equity, diversity, accessibility, and belonging within the past twelve months. This award honors libraries that demonstrate leadership in creating welcoming, inclusive environments and expanding equitable access to services, collections, and opportunities for all members of their community.

Eligibility: Libraries in Michigan that have demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing equity, diversity, accessibility, and belonging (EDAB) in the past year may be nominated. The award may recognize a single initiative, program, or service, or a sustained, comprehensive effort across the organization.

The nominated library demonstrates leadership in equity, diversity, accessibility, and belonging in one or more of the following ways:

- Advances equitable access to library services, programs, spaces, or resources
- Demonstrates a sustained commitment to equity, diversity, accessibility, and belonging in library policies, practices, or strategic priorities
- Develops or implements programs or services that serve underrepresented or marginalized populations
- Builds meaningful partnerships with community organizations that support or advocate for diverse populations
- Creates a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment where all individuals feel a sense of belonging
- Strengthens recruitment, retention, or professional development practices that contribute to a more diverse and inclusive workforce
- Curates or expands collections that reflect diverse voices, perspectives, and lived experiences
- Designs or improves services, spaces, or technologies to increase accessibility for individuals with disabilities or other barriers to access
- Demonstrates innovation and impact in advancing EDAB work that can serve as a model for other libraries

Nomination Packet Should Include:

- Nominee contact information (library director name, library name, address, phone, email address)
- Nominator's contact information (name, address, phone, email address). (Self-nominations are accepted.)

- Letter of nomination
- Minimum of one letter of support, maximum of three letters of support
- Maximum of three pages of additional supporting documentation (optional)

Nomination Letter Should Address:

- The reason for nominating the library for the MLA LEAD Award
- Specific programs, initiatives, or actions undertaken within the past twelve months
- The impact of these efforts on the community and/or staff
- How the library demonstrates leadership in advancing equity, diversity, accessibility, and belonging
- What distinguishes this library's work from others
- The library's involvement in the Michigan Library Association (if applicable)

Nominations should be submitted via MLA's SlideRoom webpage: mibraries.slideroom.com

Questions may be directed to: mla@mibraries.org

Amount of Award: \$500

Sponsored by the MLA Equity Fund