



MLA 2026 Spring Institute
CALL FOR PRESENTATION PROPOSALS
March 19-20, 2026
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Submissions welcome through *Friday, December 5, 2025*

Play It Forward: share your expertise and experiences with your peers! This year's Spring Institute focuses on the importance of play in learning and development. We aim to inspire one another while playfully engaging with the latest ideas and knowledge in professional development. We know that people grow through discovery, imagination, and hands-on exploration, so whether you've launched an innovative idea, created a standout program, or found fresh ways to foster play in your community, we want to hear from you!

Spring Institute is the premier professional development and networking event for Michigan library youth and teen services professionals. Spring Institute thrives on your energy, creativity, and expertise. You spend all year spearheading new initiatives, discovering new ways to reach your community, and improving your professional skills. Now is the chance to showcase that work. Let's inspire one another, grow together, and bring play to the forefront of professional development.

Submit a proposal and help shape the conversation. Let's play, learn, and lead together!

There are two types of proposals:

1. **Breakout Presentation:** A 45-minute session for you or a panel to present on a library experience or to lead a structured discussion on a topic of your choice.
2. **Workshop Proposals: Present a Library Program!** Bring one of your favorite programs to life by leading a hands-on workshop for your peers, who will participate as if they're your library patrons! As you guide attendees through the activity in real time, share insights into what worked well, what you might improve next time, and any helpful resources. This is your chance to offer a practical, immersive learning experience. Think *playful*, *interactive*, and *creative*! Some examples of workshop topics include: crafting or maker programs, escape rooms, STE(A)M experiments, life-sized board games, etc.

Proposal Submission General Guidelines

- Proposals must be submitted through the [Call for Proposals form on the MLA website](#). Emailed submissions will not be accepted without prior approval.
- You may submit multiple proposals, but you will need a different email address for each proposal.
- The submitter may or may not also be the presenter.
- You do not need to be an MLA member to submit a workshop or present.
- Presentations cannot include sales pitches for specific products or services.
- Presenters must be able to attend Spring Institute in-person in Grand Rapids on either March 19 or 20, 2026.
- Contact information is required for each presenter. MLA will publish the names, job title, organization, and a short biography of each presenter on the Spring Institute website, unless directed otherwise.
- Presentations and Workshops are both **45-minutes long**, including time for audience questions.
- MLA will not reimburse or compensate for presentation time, or mileage, or any other expense related to

participation in the conference.

- Presenters, including MLA members, must register and pay for the day(s) they attend Spring Institute if they plan to participate in any conference activities beyond their presentation.

Additional Workshop Submission Guidelines

- Workshops will be limited to **30 participants**, and attendees must be registered for the workshop in order to participate.
- Include a draft of your program outline in your proposal. List relevant details such as: program timeline, hands-on portions, supplies, etc.
- MLA will provide up to \$50 in supplies for each workshop. The workshop presenter will need to coordinate with MLA staff to obtain the requisite supplies for the workshop.

AV & Room Setup

- All presentation rooms will be supplied with a HDMI connected PC laptop, projector, screen, and microphone. Presenters may provide their own laptops or use the provided laptops.
- Wi-Fi internet will be in each presentation room, however, MLA cannot guarantee the speed and dependability of the services at any given time.
- Remote mouse devices/pointers are the responsibility of the presenter. If presenters choose to bring their own computer that does not have an HDMI connection, they will be responsible for providing their own cables or adapter.
- Rooms will be set with theater-style seating (chairs facing forward without desks or tables).

Agreements and Selection Notification

- MLA will contact each presenter in writing with regards to final decisions of the acceptance process by *January 9, 2026*.
- MLA will send all individual presenters a Presenter Agreement indicating date, time, and details of their presentation. This must be confirmed by the presenters and returned to MLA by *January 31, 2026*.

Handouts

- Handouts will be added to the event website and mobile app. Examples of handouts may include, but are not limited to: presenter contact information, a list of additional resources, a copy of presentation slides, or related worksheets. Handouts are not required but are *strongly* encouraged.
- Hard copies of handouts will not be printed or distributed by MLA. Presenters may provide hard copies of handouts if desired, at their own cost.
- All presentation materials will be due to MLA by *March 13, 2026* and will be posted to MLA's website and the event mobile app.

Selection Criteria

The MLA Spring Institute for Youth Services work group will use the following criteria to assess the viability of including presentations in the schedule. The work group retains the right to reject, modify, or combine proposals.

Additionally, preference will be given to proposals that connect to the 2026 theme: ***Play it Forward.***

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?
Scalability	Does the proposal clearly address the scalability of the topic to different library sizes and communities?
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 background experience to present on the proposed topic?

Timeline

- *Friday, December 5, 2025 — **Final day** to submit proposals. This deadline is firm and will not be extended.*
- *Friday, January 9, 2026 — **Selection notifications** distributed via email from MLA to all presenters.*
- *Friday, January 31, 2026 — **Presenter agreements** due to MLA office.*
- *Friday, March 13, 2026 — **Handouts received** for posting on MLA website.*
- *Thursday and Friday, March 19-20, 2026 — **MLA 2025 Spring Institute**, Eberhard Center, Grand Rapids.*

Questions

Please feel free to contact MLA Event Coordinator, Mackenzie Hanfland, or Courtnei Moyses, Spring Institute 2026 Conference Chair, with any questions you may have prior to your submission. Contact info:

Mackenzie Hanfland, Michigan Library Association: mhanfland@mlibraries.info
Courtnei Moyses, Grand Rapids Public Library | Ottawa Hills Branch: cmoyeses@grpl.org