

Helping Libraries and Library Professionals Succeed

MLA Advocacy & Legislative Priorities

1. Six months prior to a new Michigan legislative session, MLA will conduct a survey of its members to establish priorities for advocacy work. At all annual meetings of the members, MLA will make it a priority to inform members of the legislative priorities and will elicit feedback on our advocacy goals.
2. The MLA Advocacy & Legislative Committee will analyze the results of the survey/input and establish legislative priorities, ranked in order of priority, for the year and for future work. (These priorities can be specific, like introduce and pass legislation to allow librarians to administer NARCAN; or they can be broader, like oppose any legislation that would change how penal fines are administered.) The MLA Advocacy & Legislative Committee will formally vote to recommend the priorities list to the MLA Board for approval.
3. The MLA Board will review the recommendations from the legislative committee, make changes/updates, if necessary, and vote to approve the priority list.
4. If later in the session it becomes necessary to make an addition to the list, the same process (steps 2-3) should be followed.
5. Once the priorities list is set, it is up to the MLA Executive Director and the lobbying team to create and execute a plan to accomplish the priorities; keeping the committee and the board informed as the work progresses.

Bills that MLA Needs to React and Respond To

This is the group of bills that pop up other than those on our priorities list. The process that we should use to take positions on these bills is similar to the process used above, but it is done on a monthly basis as part of MLA's Advocacy & Legislative committee meetings.

1. A bill can be flagged by Governmental Consultant Services, Inc. (GCSI) or anyone else that hears about forthcoming legislation. All members, GCSI, or any other person/entity will notify the MLA Executive Director and the bill will be placed on the agenda for the next legislative committee meeting.
2. At the meeting, the MLA Advocacy & Legislative Committee will discuss the substance of the bill, the political realities that surround the bill, the likelihood that the bill can/will be passed, and how the bill will impact libraries.
3. Then the Advocacy & Legislative Committee can take one of several actions:
 - a. First, the committee can choose to support, support with language changes, oppose, stay neutral but monitor progress, or take no position at all. A formal recommendation by the legislative committee to the MLA Board must include the reason for their position.

- b. Second, the committee could choose to ask the MLA Executive Director to take a poll of MLA members to better inform their decision and delay a decision by a month.
- c. Third, the committee could choose to pass the issue on to the MLA board for a final decision if the legislative committee cannot come to a consensus or if the issue is too important to be decided at the committee level.
- d. Should the circumstance warrant an expedited process may be implemented by the MLA Executive Director.

If an MLA member has a legislative idea that they would like to pursue, they have two options. First, they can go through the process outlined above to try and make the issue an MLA priority. Second, and probably more commonly, they should approach the MLA Executive Director, legislative committee, or any member of the board of directors about their idea, before they contact a legislator or lobbyist, and ask them to consider it.