



MICHIGAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

MLA ADVOCACY AND LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE FY2025 ACTION PLAN

The Michigan Library Association leads, educates and advocates for the advancement of the Michigan library community. MLA is the collective voice for Michigan libraries, and we advocate for public, school and academic libraries through grassroots advocacy, lobbying, and statewide publicity. We advocate for and protect library funding and monitor and respond to challenges and issues that impact our libraries' ability to serve our communities. MLA will place the 5 key categories below at a high priority in the work plan for FY2025:

Funding

- Property Taxes: Monitor property tax and local income tax funding structure for libraries.
 - Monitor and react to legislation that ensures the elimination of existing and new automatic tax captures.
 - Work in partnership with MML, MTA, MAC and others to restore libraries' abilities under Headlee to roll up their millage rates to the amounts originally authorized by a vote of the people.
 - Maintain the ability to hold millage elections in key months of May, August and November.
- Penal Fines: Monitor, protect and reverse any efforts to provide legislation for parallel ordinances and other methods to siphon this funding, where appropriate.
 - 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 FY2025 Appropriations
 - Prepare for testimony at budget hearing.
 - Set up individual meetings with key legislative leadership on Appropriations after Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference in August.
- Capital Improvement Resources: Identify and propose investment from federal and/or state resources for capital improvement/infrastructure grants.

- Other: Identify other sources of revenue for libraries for programs/services/general operations.

Access to Information

- Intellectual Freedom: Protect intellectual freedom and the right to read. Continue to react and provide support for libraries experiencing censorship, election challenges and book bannings. Codify the Freedom to Read legislation.
- Protect Privacy: Monitor and respond to any challenges to library users' privacy.
- Michigan eLibrary: Encourage continued support and funding for Michigan eLibrary (MeL)
- Universal Access to Broadband: Raise awareness of the digital divide and support rural broadband initiatives by expanding Broadband/Wi-Fi Access for libraries and identify funding opportunities. Build relationship with the new Michigan High Speed Internet (MIHI) office.
- Net Neutrality: Oppose legislation that would encumber the internet allowing inequity of speed and influence of content.
- K-12 Libraries: Continue to build awareness of the need for K-12 School Libraries in Michigan schools to be staffed by certified school librarians/media specialists.
- Literacy/Early Childhood Education: Explore options to promote and secure funding for libraries' participation in early childhood education, digital literacy and digital citizenship.
- Third Party Vendors: Bring focus to e-book purchasing challenges which stifles library access to new releases.

Equity, Diversity, Accessibility & Belonging

- Open Meetings Act: Propose legislation that will allow library and cooperative boards to attend and participate in meetings on a virtual basis.
- Elliott-Larsen Act: Respond to challenges or legislation that directly affects protected classes of people.
- Library Funding: Address the individual inequities in penal fine funding by proposing a more just means of funding public libraries.

Safety

- Open Carry: Monitor legislation and work with partners to reform state law concerning open carry of firearms at public libraries.

Library Legislation Updates

- Explore updates to library establishments acts and to other legislation that affects libraries

- Explore and find incentive (money) for small libraries to join forces to form district libraries

Member Advocacy Development

- Continue to motivate, mentor and assist library directors, workers 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 and worker to contact their legislators, offer to host office hours, host a tour.
- Encourage library workers to contact their legislators in support of appropriations goals.
- Encourage all public library workers to invite legislators to summer reading kickoff programs and to read a book during March is Reading Month.
- Include a legislative update at MLA Annual Conference.
- Thank legislators when they vote favorable for issues/appropriations affecting libraries.
- Produce a statewide library advocacy day for library personnel and legislators.
- Provide advocacy training and talking points for legislative visits.

Communications

- Produce a statewide marketing/awareness campaign to amplify the value and importance of libraries.
- Build a statewide awareness campaign around reducing the spread of Mis-, Dis- and Mal-information.
- Continue to disseminate a newsletter for state legislators and government officials that speaks to the value and importance of libraries.
- Hold regional meetings by zoom to introduce library members to newly elected legislators.
- Continue to support October as Library Appreciation Month, encourage resolutions, letters to the editor, etc. about the importance and value of libraries in each community.
- Produce short videos or talking point articles for library personnel about the issues.