

MLA Store Design Contest

Calling all artists, designers, doodlers, and creative library people! MLA is looking for original designs to feature on apparel in the MLA Store, and we want to see what our community can create!

We invite you to submit an original design inspired by books, libraries, reading, intellectual freedom, banned books, or library life. Designs can be clever, funny, bold, artistic, nerdy, advocacy-minded, or simply celebrate the joy of libraries and reading.

Selected design(s) will be turned into merchandise available for purchase through the MLA Store, with proceeds supporting the Michigan Library Association and its mission to lead the advancement of all Michigan libraries through advocacy, education and engagement.

What Do the Winners Receive?

First Place

- \$75 Bonfire gift card to use at the MLA store, or the Bonfire store of their choice
- Free shirt featuring winning design
- Design featured on merchandise in the MLA Store
- Recognition in MLA's newsletter and social media
- Bragging rights every time they see someone wearing the design!

Second Place

- \$25 Bonfire gift card to use at the MLA store, or the Bonfire store of their choice
- Free shirt featuring the design
- Design featured on merchandise in the MLA Store
- Recognition in MLA's newsletter and social media
- Bragging rights every time they see someone wearing the design!

Both winning designs will become part of the MLA Store collection, with proceeds supporting the Michigan Library Association's mission and programs.

Selection Process

MLA will select a group of finalists based on originality, creativity, connection to books and libraries, suitability for merchandise, and overall visual appeal. MLA members will then be invited to vote for their favorite designs to determine the first- and second-place winners.

MLA reserves the right to select additional submitted designs for future merchandise opportunities with the designer's permission.

Design Guidelines

Submissions should:

- Be an original design created by the person submitting it. No AI-created designs will be accepted.
- Relate broadly to books, reading, libraries, library workers, intellectual freedom, or banned books.
- Be suitable for printing on apparel and merchandise.
- Be appropriate for MLA's broad professional audience.
- Avoid copyrighted or trademarked characters, logos, artwork, slogans, or other intellectual property belonging to someone else.
- Be submitted as a high-resolution PNG, PDF, SVG, EPS, or other requested file format. Vector artwork is preferred when available.
- Be designed with merchandise printing in mind. Simple designs and limited color palettes generally reproduce best.
- Designs may include words or typography, illustrations, graphics, or a combination of these elements.

Who Can Enter?

- The contest is open to anyone creative with a passion for Michigan libraries.
- There is no fee to enter. Each participant may submit up to 5 designs.

Selection Process

Submissions will be reviewed by MLA staff based on originality, creativity, connection to libraries and reading, suitability for merchandise, and overall visual appeal. MLA will select a group of semi-finalist designs for a final vote of the membership.

MLA members can vote for the design they want to see in the MLA Store, and based on the outcome of that vote up to two designs will be available for purchase, with proceeds benefiting MLA.

MLA may select more than one design for production. Submission does not guarantee that a design will be selected or produced.

Dates

September 24, 2026 – Design contest opens

October 22, 2026 – Last day to submit designs

October 26, 2026 – Semi-finalist selections announced

October 26-30, 2026 – MLA members vote open

November 6, 2026 – Winners announced and designs available for sale

Important Fine Print

By submitting a design, entrants confirm that the work is original and that they have the right to submit it for commercial use.

The creator retains ownership of their original artwork but, if selected, grants the Michigan Library Association permission to reproduce, adapt, resize, recolor, print, promote, and sell merchandise featuring the design. MLA may make minor modifications necessary for printing or production when appropriate.

Selected designers will not receive royalties or other compensation from merchandise sales beyond the stated contest prize. Proceeds from merchandise sales benefit the Michigan Library Association and support its mission and programs.

MLA reserves the right not to select a winner if submissions do not meet contest or production requirements.

How to Enter

Submit your design by October 22, 2026 at

<https://milibraries.slideroom.com/#/permalink/program/91497>.

Please include:

- Your name
- Email address
- Library/organization, if applicable
- MLA membership status
- Design title
- A brief description of or inspiration for your design
- Your design file (up to 5)

Questions? Contact Amber Sheerin at asheerin@milibraries.org