



## Intent

Due to the retirement of the current Executive Director, the Michigan Library Association (MLA) Board of Directors is soliciting for an executive search firm with the expertise to secure qualified candidates for the position of Executive Director of the Michigan Library Association. This is an opportunity for an experienced, skilled administrator to oversee the operations of the MLA, the largest professional, membership-based library association in the state of Michigan.

The search firm should specialize in recruitment for executive and senior management positions in library service institutions or professional associations. To be eligible for consideration, the proposing firm must demonstrate that it, or the principal(s) assigned to the project, has successfully completed similar services to those specified in the Scope of Work section of this RFP, with similar complexity to the Michigan Library Association.

## Association Background

The Michigan Library Association (MLA) is a 501(c) 3 professional organization with a mission to lead the advancement of all libraries through advocacy, education and engagement. We are recognized statewide and nationally as the leading statewide association with a 133-year record of quality services and programs focused on ensuring the health and vitality of these key cultural institutions. MLA serves as a forum for collaboration, cooperation and partnerships, cultivating cutting-edge ideas and awareness of best practices in an open and supportive culture.

Our membership is comprised of more than 2500 library professionals, institutions, trustees, students and library supporters who come from urban, suburban and rural areas throughout Michigan. Although some services are exclusive to members, MLA's oversight of professional development, education and advocacy services assist all who are invested in building healthy and dynamic communities in all 83 Michigan counties.

The Michigan Library Association undertakes educational and advocacy initiatives for its members including lobbying for funding, governance and intellectual freedom issues. As a nonpartisan organization, representation, support and discernment from both sides of the aisle in state government are essential to the work we undertake.

Michigan's libraries are on the cutting edge of technological innovation and services provided to

the public. They are working diligently to help businesses grow and educate our citizens. Libraries are no longer just a place to get books. They are centers for learning and self-discovery, providing free and open access to information to all residents. Libraries are simultaneously community centers, tourist destinations, places to read, places to gather and socialize, places to study, and places to learn – cultural institutions in the heart of every community, and on every campus throughout Michigan.

Finally, Michigan libraries have a strong case for support because Michigan citizens value and depend upon their libraries. According to a March 2025 EPIC-MRA survey, a 79% solid majority of all respondents gave local public libraries a positive rating for the job they are doing providing programs, services and a diverse, quality collection of books and other materials to their library patrons.

## Scope

The MLA President of the Board of Directors has appointed a Search Committee to oversee the search. The consultant will be expected to communicate regularly with the Search Committee. Routine or procedural communication will be with the chair of the Search Committee or the committee as a whole.

The consultant selected will provide selected services outlined below:

1. Develop a comprehensive plan to conduct a comprehensive national search to identify highly qualified and willing candidates meeting the agreed upon qualifications.
  - a. The posting for the vacant Executive Director position should be no later than October 15, 2025 and the search completed by February 28, 2026.
2. Review the current job description and provide recommendations for changes where appropriate, by utilizing materials that have already been created by the Board that outlines the ideal profile of the selected candidate for the Executive Director position.
3. Advertise for the open position based on the candidate profile, appropriately posting the position through local, regional and national channels, journals and publications.
4. Receive and review resumes of applicants, determine those that meet the minimum qualifications.
5. Prepare and present to the Search Committee a written summary of a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 8 candidates with the most promising qualifications and experience.
6. Conduct initial telephone/video screening with top 5 candidates that the MLA selects, to assess candidate's fit with the MLA based on experience, skills, and alignment with MLA's needs.
7. Assist the Search Committee in evaluating these candidates and recommending the top 3 candidates for serious consideration and in-person interviews.
8. Organize and schedule in-person interviews with the top 3 selected candidates.
9. Design and finalize the interview process, preparing interview questions, determining panel make-up, etc.
10. Debrief with the panel following the interviews and identify additional candidates, if necessary.

11. Check references of the candidates including, but not limited to professional, financial, background and criminal.
12. Notify applicants not selected.
13. Provide placement guarantees. Include details on your firm's placement guarantee approach, ensuring that if the Executive Director leaves within 120 days of the hire date (via resignation or termination with or without cause), the search firm will reinstate a new search at no cost to the Michigan Library Association.

## RFP Assessment and Review

The Michigan Library Association's Search Committee will review the RFPs and recommend a search firm for full approval by the Board of Directors. The deadline to submit an RFP is August 13, 2025 and the award announcement is anticipated on September 12, 2025. Submissions will be accepted via email only and can be sent to Claire Meeker ([claire@romeodistrictlibrary.org](mailto:claire@romeodistrictlibrary.org)), MLA Board Member and Library Director of the Romeo District Library.

An award resulting from this RFP shall be granted to the consultant or firm whose proposal(s) is determined to be most advantageous to the Michigan Library Association, taking into consideration price and the evaluation factors set forth in the RFP. The right is reserved to reject any and all proposals received, to waive any informalities, and in all cases the MLA will be the sole judge as to whether a proposal has or has not satisfactorily met the requirements of this RFP.

The proposal must include the following details to be considered:

- An itemized cost for each one of the enumerated parts (1-13) listed in the Scope.
- A summary of the search process that includes understanding the specific needs and culture of the Michigan Library Association. They should be able to develop a search strategy that aligns with the organization's mission, goals, and the unique dynamics of serving underserved communities.
- A description of the firm's expertise for assessing candidates' qualifications, experience, and cultural fit.
- A strong track record of successful placements in similar organizations, with a focus on executive retention.
- Information on the firm's placement guarantee.

## Contract Terms and Approval

The MLA reserves the right to negotiate further with one or more proposers. The content of the successful proposal will become an integral part of the contract, but may be modified by the provisions of the contract.

By submission of proposals pursuant to this RFP, proposers acknowledge that they are amenable to the inclusion in a contract of any information provided either in response to this RFP or subsequently during the selection process. A proposal in response to an RFP is an offer

to contract with the MLA based upon the terms, conditions, scope of work and specifications contained in this RFP. The MLA retains the right not to make any subsequent award.

Furthermore, all proposers, by submitting proposals, agree that they have read, are familiar with all the terms and conditions of the different documents and will abide by the terms and conditions thereof. The MLA has the right to use, as it determines to be appropriate and necessary, any information, documents, and anything else developed pursuant to the RFP and the proposal.

The MLA will prepare a formal contract, if one is awarded, specific to this solicitation for execution by the successful proposer. This takes place after the Board of Directors approves the recommendation of award/contract.

The MLA reserves the right to accept or reject in whole or in part any form contract submitted by a proposer and/or to require that amendments be made thereto, or that an agreement drafted by the MLA be utilized.

## Public Access to Information

Proposals will be available for public inspection at the time and date approved by the Michigan Library Association.

## Unsatisfactory Work

The Michigan Library Association shall not be obligated to pay for unsatisfactory work.

## Compliance with Civil Rights Laws

By submitting and signing this proposal, the proposer agrees to abide by the requirements of the following as applicable:

- The Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act 453 of 1976, Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Opportunity Act of 1972, Federal Executive Order 11246, Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Title IX of The Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Act of 1975, and the proposer agrees to abide by the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- Proposer agrees not to discriminate in its employment practices and will render services under any contract entered into as a result of this solicitation without regard to race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, veteran status, political affiliation, or disabilities. Any act of discrimination committed by proposer, or failure to comply with these statutory obligations when applicable, shall be grounds for termination of any contract entered into as a result of this solicitation.