

Make the Case to Attend MLA 2019 Annual Conference

[Registration is open. Click here to register!](#)

How can you obtain support to attend the MLA 2019 Annual Conference? The key is understanding the professional benefits of attending and ultimately what this means from your employer's perspective. Read on for tips to help you make your case!

1. Emphasize the benefits of attending

Talk to your supervisor about how your organization can profit from the new ideas, information, connections and innovations you'll acquire as a result of attending. Here are some key points:

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"MLA Annual Conference is *the* premier education event for Michigan library professionals."

The sessions are presented by experts and colleagues who provide current information on challenges and solutions that are impacting Michigan libraries today. Multiple programs running concurrently allow you the flexibility to tailor an education experience that meets the specific needs of your institution.

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"I can make connections and gain insights from people who understand the exact issues we face." Meet your counter parts from across the state – or meet others in your area that you can stay in touch with throughout the year. With the many networking opportunities offered, you're bound to meet someone interesting that can advise you on an issue, compare notes on a topic or just make a friendly connection!

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"We can solidify our relationship with the companies who are already doing business with us." By getting to know your suppliers better, you can build collaborative partnerships that result in enhanced service, more responsive solutions—and bigger savings.

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"What I gain from three days here would take months to acquire any other way." Piecing together an experience that's equivalent to attending the annual conference would be almost impossible—and would keep you out of the library much longer and cost much more.

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"Our entire team will benefit." Is your expertise different from your colleagues? Are there overlapping sessions and events that you can tag-team? MLA education and networking opportunities benefit professionals at all levels and can provide an excellent opportunity to advance your library's performance across the board.

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"I need to learn the ropes." If you're new to the library field, this event is the best way for you to make connections that can help you be more effective in your position.

2. Demonstrate how you intend to spend your time

Put your plan on paper to show your supervisor that your trip to the MLA Annual Conference will be productive:

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Use the [Schedule at a Glance](#) to build an agenda that includes keynotes, breakout programs, networking functions and time to visit with vendors.

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Study the conference programs and choose the ones that apply to your position as well as your library's specific objectives.

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If you purchase products and services for your library, check out the exhibitor list for suppliers that offer what you need. Include the vendors you'd like to visit in the written plan that you show your supervisor. Even if you aren't responsible for purchasing, time is well spent gaining an understanding of new technology and products to keep up on new trends.

3. Crunch the numbers to illustrate the value

Your boss will not only want to know what it costs to send you to the conference but what it's worth. Be sure to emphasize the early bird registration discount. Other important considerations:

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Your registration expenses will depend on your goals. Do they require that you attend the entire conference or will a single day of sessions meet your objectives? Or perhaps visiting the vendors is enough.

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Is money the make-or-break issue? If so, see if you can quantify the value of certain aspects of attending. For instance, can you attach a dollar estimate to the savings you negotiate with vendors? How about the cost-cutting or program building techniques you learn in the education sessions? Can you gather information that can be shared with other staff when you return?

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Apply for an [MLA Education Fund Scholarship](#) to help defray the cost of attending annual conference. Deadline to apply is **September 6.**

4. Follow up after the conference

Assure your supervisor that you will give a full report on your conference activities upon your return. Your report should include:

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The sessions you attended, along with your evaluation of each.

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The vendors you visited.

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The products and services you learned about.

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The savings you realized by taking advantage of early bird discounts.

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News and information that you collected through networking, plus specific ideas and strategies you learned at the conference that will help your library better serve patrons and save money.