



## MICHIGAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

### Code of Conduct

*Approved by the MLA Board of Directors - June 10, 2022*

MLA's vision is to be a highly effective, trusted network of libraries, library employees, trustees, friends and supporters working together to support and promote the highest quality library services throughout Michigan. To fulfill our vision, MLA has built, and is dedicated to maintaining, an inclusive and equitable community where **all people** can come together to advance our shared vision.

MLA is committed to providing a safe, productive, and welcoming environment for all participants and MLA staff. Each participant, including attendees, speakers, volunteers, exhibitors, staff, and service providers, is expected to understand and follow MLA policies and report any violations. These expectations apply to all MLA activities (whether virtual or in-person), including but not limited to those held in conjunction with conferences, events, and meetings. Any conduct that is prohibited in-person is also prohibited online, including but not limited to on MLA social media pages and other online platforms.

MLA conferences, events, meetings, online activity or venues, and social media accounts (collectively "MLA Functions") must be a safe, productive, and welcoming environment for all participants. MLA works with venue staff to assure participant safety. If you need assistance, ask any MLA staff member or the on-site security personnel to help you. If your safety or the safety of others is threatened, call 911 immediately and notify facility security.

The following is a non-exclusive list of unacceptable conduct:

#### Discriminatory Conduct

Discriminatory conduct occurs when there is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of an individual for their characteristics. MLA recognizes that some characteristics that may cause an individual to be the victim of discrimination, include, but are not limited to the following:

- Gender (incl. pregnancy, perceived pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions)
- Gender identity or expression
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Physical or mental disability
- Physical appearance or size
- Race
- Religion
- National origin
- Political affiliation
- Marital status

#### **Examples**

- Language that stigmatizes certain characteristics (e.g., racial slurs, sexist comments or homophobic slurs).
- Displaying violent or racist images, symbols or gestures (including but not limited to on a phone, as a virtual background, in a screenshot, or text message, etc.).
- Condescending or sexist remarks or jokes.
- Encouraging others to harass an individual.
- Language
- Employment or military status
- Citizenship status
- Socioeconomic status

MLA recognizes that, regretfully, individuals continue to be marginalized on these characteristics to this day. The MLA Board expects participants to avoid engaging in any direct or indirect, subtle or unintentional discrimination against all participants. Microaggressions can include:

- Asking individuals where they were born;
- Commenting that individuals “speak good English” or that they are “articulate”;
- Clutching a purse or wallet as another person approaches or walks by;
- Directing another to smile more often;
- Excessive staring at an individual or parts of their anatomy;
- Commenting on another’s weight;
- Making statements that presume an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

The diversity of its membership and MLA Function participants indescribably strengthens MLA. To protect all members of the MLA community the Board adopts a zero-tolerance policy against discriminatory conduct.

### *Sexual Harassment*

Sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel uncomfortable, offended, humiliated and/or intimidated. Sexual harassment does not refer to behavior or occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to behavior that is not welcome, is personally offensive, fails to respect the rights of others, and interferes with events and activities. To protect all members of the MLA community the Board adopts a zero-tolerance policy against sexual harassment.

## ***SEXUAL HARASSMENT***

- Unwelcome physical contact or inappropriate touching.
- Inappropriate use of nudity and/or sexual images in public spaces, in presentations, or through electronic messaging.
- The use of threats or rewards to solicit sexual favor.
- Comments or insults, including chat messages, based on appearance, age, private life, gender, sexual orientation, etc.
- Unwanted sexual advances.
- Whistling or “cat calling.”
- Repeated and unwanted social invitations for dates or physical intimacy.
- Sending sexually explicit messages.
- Display or screenshares of sexually explicit or suggestive material or images including through screensharing.
- Sexually suggestive gestures.
- Suggestive or explicit chat messages or e-list messages.
- Encouraging others to harass an individual.
- Sharing sexually evocative personal information.
- Sexual comments, stories, jokes, or innuendo.

### Violence, Threats & Criminal Acts

MLA does not tolerate threats or acts of violence against, nor criminal acts committed by, an MLA Function participant. The possession of a firearm or any other type of weapon (excluding pepper spray) at an in-person MLA Function is considered a threat of violence. Any participant threat or act of violence must be reported immediately.

### ***VIOLENCE & THREATS***

- Any act of physical violence, including sexual assault.
- Harassment, intimidation, or discrimination in any form.
- Any abuse, including physical, verbal or non-verbal abuse, of an MLA Function participant.
- Disruption of presentations at sessions, webinars, virtual meetings, in the exhibit hall, at any MLA Functions, at the meeting venue, hotels, or other MLA-contracted facilities, including virtual spaces.
- Threatening or stalking any MLA Function participant.
- Invasion of privacy, including taking photos, video, or screenshots of individuals without permission. The recording of virtual events by MLA staff for later use will be communicated with all attendees at the start of the session.

### Excessive Drinking

Both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages may be served at an MLA Function. MLA expects participants at our functions to drink responsibly. MLA and venue staff have the right to deny service to participants.

### **Reporting Code of Conduct Violations**

If you experience, observe, or hear of any incidents of Code of Conduct violation, contact:

Deborah E. Mikula, Executive Director (517) 394-2774 or [dmikula@milibraries.org](mailto:dmikula@milibraries.org)

OR

The current President of MLA whose contact information can be identified by calling (517) 394-2774 or emailing [MLA@Milibraries.org](mailto:MLA@Milibraries.org).

If possible, provide the following information, preferably in writing:

- Identifying information (name/badge number, appearance) of the participant;
- The behavior that was in violation;
- The approximate date and time of the behavior (if different than when making the report);
- The circumstances surrounding the incident;
- Other people involved in or witnessing the incident.

Reports may also be made anonymously. Authorities will be notified if the complaint is of a criminal nature.

**Response**

All complaints will be treated seriously and responded to promptly. Incidents will be handled with respect for the privacy of the victim and will be confidential to the extent practical and legal, given the circumstances.

If a person is determined by the Executive Director or MLA Board to have violated this Code of Conduct, MLA reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to do any of the following:

- Verbal or written warning;
- Removal from or suspension of attendance at MLA Function;
- Prohibit attendance at any future meeting or MLA Function;
- Reports of unacceptable conduct by an individual may also be reported by MLA to an individual’s employer.

A person suspended from an MLA Function due to a violation of this Code of Conduct Policy will not be eligible for a refund or any other compensation.

**Board Responsibility**

The MLA Executive Committee will review the policy at least every three (3) years and put forward any necessary changes for Board approval.

**Notice and Agreement**

The MLA Code of Conduct will be posted on our website and referenced as part of the registration, meeting or other sign-up processes and onboarding. An abbreviated version with emergency contact information will be posted at conference venues.

Upon initial appointment and reappointment to any MLA Committee or in attendance at any MLA Function, each individual will attest they have read, understood and accepted this policy by signing below.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature