



MICHIGAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

## MLA Future Pathways Guidelines

Through the Future Pathways Grant Program, MLA affirms our commitment to equity, diversity, accessibility and belonging and demonstrates our commitment to empowering underrepresented individuals in the library community. By reducing financial barriers to career advancement, Future Pathways Grants aim to encourage the participation, engagement and leadership of racially and ethnically diverse library workers in the library profession and MLA.

The MLA Future Pathways grants will be used as an individual grant geared toward the professional development of individuals currently underrepresented in the library profession. This fund will reduce financial barriers and uplift the professional development for Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, North African, and Middle Eastern individuals by providing resources to be used for memberships, attendance at workshops, educational events or conferences of applicants' choosing, or for other purposes that they believe increase their ability to impact and transform the library profession.

MLA affirms its commitment to diversity and inclusion by seeking the broadest participation of racially and ethnically diverse librarians and library support staff who provide leadership in the transformation of libraries and library services.

### Eligibility Requirements:

- Applicant must be a resident of Michigan.
- Applicant must be Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, North African, or Middle Eastern.
- Applicant must work in a Michigan public, school, academic, or tribal library OR be a student enrolled in an accredited undergraduate or graduate School of Library or Information Sciences program.
- Applicant must detail the value of the grant to their work including how the activity will advance their capacity and/or increase their ability to impact and transform the library profession.

### Amount of Awards:

- Requests up to \$1,000 will be considered. Partial funding of a request is possible. Not all applicants will be funded.
- MLA Individual Membership will also be awarded for those not already a member of MLA for a one-year period (value up to \$170).
- *If the grant is being paid to an individual:* Each recipient will be required to submit an IRS W-9 form so that an IRS 1099 income statement can be issued by MLA for the recipient's tax records. All taxes and reporting of taxes will be the responsibility of the recipient.

- *If the applicant is a library on behalf of one of their staff members:* No additional information needs to be submitted.

**Examples of Activities:**

Grants through the MLA Future Pathways Fund provides funding for professional development opportunities and other programmatic activities. Applicants should apply for funding that advances career goals or innovative projects to include, but is not limited to:

- Educational opportunities (e.g., conference attendance, workshop participation, or tuition/books/etc. from a undergraduate or graduate School of Library or Information Science degree-granting program).
- Travel to educational opportunities, if warranted (mileage, airfare, overnight accommodations, food, etc).
- Memberships in any professional organization that helps build your professional capacity.
- Projects or activities in your local library that will be led by grant recipient that advance the transformation of libraries and library services through diversity, equity and inclusion.

**Restrictions of Funding:**

- Funds cannot be regranted or redistributed (e.g. as a pass-through or fiscal sponsorship) to any other person, organization, or entity.
- Funds cannot be used for debt reduction/elimination, student loans, penalties or litigation.

**Application Deadline:**

Applications will be reviewed two times each year in January and July.

**January Deadline:** All application materials are due to MLA by January 15.

**July Deadline:** All application materials are due to MLA by July 15.

**Project Timeline:**

The grants will be awarded for activities occurring in a one year period commencing on the date of the award notification.

**Application Package:**

The application form can be accessed from the following link: <https://www.milibraries.org/mla-equity-fund>

Applicants must submit all attached materials as one combined PDF file package in the following order by the grant deadlines:

1. Application form.
2. Narrative document (no more than 2 pages) - no smaller than 12-point font including the following:
  - a. Explain the professional development or programming activity for which you are requesting funding.
  - b. Timeline for all activities to take place.
  - c. Address how this activity will advance your capacity and/or increase your ability to impact and transform the library profession.
3. Budget (no more than 1 page) – please be specific and provide the amount for each item listed and a brief narrative. The total should equal the amount requested.

Example for a grant request of \$445:

Membership in ALA (12 month membership)	\$100
Travel to MLA annual conference (October 2025)	\$ 85
Registration Fees for MLA Annual (October 2025)	<u>\$260</u>
TOTAL:	\$445

4. One letter of support specifically addressing the grant request from a supervisor, director, or someone familiar with your work or request.
5. A current CV or resume.
6. A current headshot of applicant for marketing/publicity purposes.

Applicants should retain a copy of the application and materials.

**Evaluation Process & Selection Criteria:**

Applications will be reviewed by the MLA staff for eligibility and completeness before being assigned to an advisory panel for review, ranking and financial recommendations. This panel is appointed by MLA and is made up of a small group of qualified library professionals selected on the basis of their familiarity with, and expertise in library services. The MLA Board of Directors has final approval of all MLA Future Pathways grant recipients. Not all applicants will be funded.

Applicants will be evaluated according to the following:

- A complete application with a clear, focused explanation of the request.
- Evidence that activities advance career goals or interests.
- Achievement and experience as evidenced through current resume.
- Community support as evidenced through the letter of support.

**Notification and Awards:**

Recipients will be notified of their selection by email approximately 3 weeks after submission. Once the official award announcement has been made, an agreement, IRS W-9 form, and final report form will be mailed to recipient to complete and return.

**Agreement:**

Recipients must enter into a written agreement with MLA, which, when executed, has the legal effect of obligating the award, and which states the rights and obligations of the parties. No funds will be awarded in the absence of a signed agreement.

**Final Report:**

All recipients will be required to submit a final report to MLA within 30 days after the close of the one-year grant timeline.

**Publicity Materials:**

Recipients must agree to provide a headshot for publicity purposes, including use on the MLA website. Photographs may be altered, if necessary, for formatting purposes. MLA reserves the right to use selected images from recipient activities as documentation.

**Active Fundraising:**

The MLA board has committed to actively seek out contributions to replenish the fund on an annual basis.

**Contact Information:**

Questions concerning the MLA Future Pathways Grants that are not answered in the above guidelines should be directed to: Deborah E. Mikula, [dmikula@milibraries.org](mailto:dmikula@milibraries.org)