



## Maine Library Association Strategic Plan for FY24 and FY25

Adopted by the MLA Executive Board on May 12, 2023

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### **Mission**

Our mission is to advocate for Maine libraries and library workers, foster cooperation, offer professional development, and provide leadership in ensuring that information is accessible to all.

### **Vision**

*We envision a Maine Library Ecosystem where:*

- Library workers have frequent and affordable access to professional development, networking, and conference attendance, and where wages and library budgets are not a barrier to MLA membership.
- Wages for Maine library workers are more consistently in line with the level of skills and education involved, the work performed, and with comparable professions.
- Libraries of all types have strong and responsive support from the Maine library community and its partners, in advocating for intellectual freedom and opposing censorship.
- Library workplaces in Maine are increasingly diverse, representative of the communities they serve, and prioritize social equity.
- Libraries model economic and environmental sustainability in their communities.

### **Values**

As a chapter of the American Library Association, we uphold the core values of ALA, as stated in the [ALA 2021 Strategic Plan](#):

- Access
- The Public Good
- Confidentiality/Privacy

- Preservation
- Democracy
- Professionalism
- Diversity
- Service
- Education/Lifelong Learning
- Social Responsibility
- Intellectual Freedom
- Sustainability

## **Introduction**

Over the past several years, the MLA Executive Board has formalized our business practices, become a 510(c)(3) nonprofit, and built a more sustainable organization through our committee and interest group structure. Activities that no longer serve our mission or are not fiscally reasonable have been discontinued, with MLA's best interests in mind. We contracted with NELA for our association administration, which was a necessary step in making sure that our business management has long-term stability.

Over the past five years, we have expanded our membership by 39 percent and increased our professional development programs for members. Due to the pandemic, we were unable to hold our 2020 annual conference and held a virtual conference in 2021. We were one of the first state American Library Association (ALA) chapters to partner with Unite Against Book Bans (UABB), and our Intellectual Freedom and Legislative Advocacy Committees have been working nonstop alongside Maine Association of School Libraries (MASL) and other partners fighting book challenges in Maine schools and opposing legislation that attempts to legalize censorship in our state.

In 2023, MLA is at an exciting point where we are in need of a formal strategic plan that can be updated every two years, in the second year of a Presidential term. We are experiencing the growing pains of an organization that is expanding its offerings and we need to find ways to expand our capacity and make that growth sustainable. This plan will provide a roadmap for MLA to move forward in our core areas of professional development and advocacy, and develop our capacity through increased membership, financial planning and development, and improved marketing and communications strategies.

## Strategic Priorities

1. Advocacy:
  - a. Support Maine libraries in their efforts to defend, maintain, and grow their operating budgets, and advocate for better wages in libraries at all job levels.
  - b. Promote intellectual freedom in libraries and schools and support public policy and legislation that advances the missions of Maine libraries.
  - c. Refer libraries to organizations that can provide advocacy and/or legal support with funding challenges or censorship attempts, and connect them with others in Maine who have dealt with similar issues.
  - d. Work with partners and coalitions to advance community goals, such as literacy, digital equity, open dialogue, civic engagement, sustainability, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).
  
2. Professional Development:
  - a. Provide networking opportunities.
  - b. Reduce financial barriers to participation for our members.
  - c. Raise awareness of trends and opportunities from the wider LIS field.
  - d. Encourage members of marginalized communities to work in libraries, attend professional development programs, and serve on our committees and executive board.
  
3. Building Our Capacity:
  - a. Develop a financial plan with the goal of increasing our income and hiring an Executive Director within the next 3-5 years.
  - b. Increase our membership with targeted outreach to underrepresented library workers, library school students, and library board members.
  - c. Create and maintain ongoing marketing and development plans.