



Massachusetts Library Association

# Conference

And Other Events

## **Job Description for MLA Conference Committee Members**

The Conference Committee is charged with planning, organizing and facilitating the Annual Conference, usually held between late April and early May. The committee is led by a team of co-chairs who also serve on the MLA Executive Board. The co-chairs keep the executive board informed of conference plans. The committee usually meets once a month beginning in June. Not all committee members must attend all meetings, but all committee members are welcome to attend all committee meetings. Some meetings are dedicated to specific topics or subcommittees. There are many different jobs for conference committee members; not all members must plan programs. Committee members' activities include programming, subcommittee projects, and on site conference tasks:

### **Programming**

- Suggesting program ideas for conference
- Developing and submitting program proposals
- Inviting, making arrangements for, and working with speakers
- Writing program descriptions for conference brochure and other promotional materials
- Editing conference brochures
- Shepherding programs

### **Subcommittees**

The **PR Sub-Committee** works with the conference venue and MLA's PR Committee to promote the conference. This subcommittee writes (or solicits) articles for the MLA Newsletter and/or website. It distributes announcements about the conference via postcard mailings, e-mail listservs, and social media to the public, academic, school and special library audiences.

The **Sponsorship Sub-Committee** works with the MLA Executive Manager to develop a list of potential sponsors. Sponsors are not limited to library associated vendors and or organizations. Subcommittee members coordinate with the Sponsorship subcommittee chair to contact sponsors and secure donations. They also approach new vendors to exhibit at the conference.

The **Evening Fundraiser Event Sub-Committee** plans and coordinates the evening recreational events at conference. Such events are expected to raise funds for MLA.

The **Raffle Basket Sub-Committee** works to solicit and coordinates donations of baskets to be raffled off at conference. Subcommittee members staff the raffle table at conference, coordinate the ticket drawing, and connect winners with baskets.

The **Kay Bader Scholarship Sub-Committee** handles all aspects of the scholarships to attend conference. Members design the application, write the essay questions, judge the entries and award the scholarships. Committee members also register scholarship recipients and assist them in their conference attendance.

## **At Conference Duties**

- Staff the registration table
- Monitor programs
- Staff the conference book sale
- Staff the raffle table
- Help attendees navigate the conference
- Administer A/V needs
- Liaison with vendors

While there is traditionally one conference per year, there may be years in which MLA feels it is appropriate to hold smaller events possibly in collaboration with other library organizations. In such instances, planning for these events should be integrated into the meeting schedule of the Conference Committee. It may be necessary to organize subcommittees to plan these events. The Conference Committee Co-Chairs will organize these subcommittees, recruiting volunteers from the Conference Committee and other MLA members when appropriate.

## Planning Your Program

At the first Conference Committee meetings of the planning year (July, August), potential program topics and speakers will be discussed, identifying areas of interest. Some ideas will be generated that various committee members will volunteer to develop by refining the topic and identifying speakers. The committee will also send out a call for program proposals to MLA members. These submissions will be reviewed by the committee for inclusion in the conference. Submissions must be adopted by a committee member to be accepted into the conference. Once a program has been tentatively accepted, please consult these steps to move forward with the program.

1. Contact your speaker(s). See “Contacting Your Speaker” below.
2. Stay in close contact with Conference Co-Chairs about program content, ideas, expenses, etc.
3. **All expenses must be approved by a Conference Co-Chair.**
4. Make sure you and the speaker(s) are in agreement about the program so that the blurbs you write will be accurate.
5. **Fill out a Program Planning Form for each program you are responsible for. The Program Planning Form is online.**  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/11CDCxHDofFWEkhzaLH73xvJ9v7oW\\_fvgnvpOZLetQ2g/vi/wform?edit\\_requested=true](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/11CDCxHDofFWEkhzaLH73xvJ9v7oW_fvgnvpOZLetQ2g/vi/wform?edit_requested=true)
6. Verify spellings, titles, and affiliations. Please do not guess! Be accurate and legible when filling out the **Program Planning Form**.
7. Determine the speakers’ need for audiovisual equipment at the time of contact. Program rooms generally are equipped with a podium, stationary microphone, screen and projector, wifi, and a laptop. If speakers require any additional A/V equipment please include that on the **Program Planning Form**. This information is needed well in advance in order to secure the proper equipment. While internet access is standard, outages can happen. Please remind speakers that screen shots are recommended as a backup.
8. MLA does not cover the cost of printing handouts. Speakers are encouraged to furnish MLA with electronic copies to be posted on the MLA website in lieu of hard copies.
9. **Don’t forget to register your speakers for the conference.** Every single person who attends the conference MUST be registered, whether they are receiving an award, speaking on a panel, or visiting the exhibits. If you are not sure whether you need to register someone, or if someone else is responsible, ask a Conference Co-Chair.
10. Speakers who are doing a solo program or are speaking as part of a panel receive complimentary registration for the day(s) they are speaking. They do not receive registration for the whole conference. They do not receive complimentary meals. Employees of Massachusetts libraries do not receive compensation for speaking at conference. They may receive mileage reimbursement. Out of state speakers and non-librarian speakers are encouraged to donate their service but may receive an honorarium if requested. Honorariums must be approved by the Conference Co-Chairs in advance.
11. Conference attendees who introduce, moderate, or make announcements at a program do not receive complimentary registration.

**ALL ANNUAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM PLANNING FORMS MUST BE SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY BY September 28th to one of the Conference Co-Chairs.**

## Contacting Your Speaker

1. Contact your speaker by telephone or email to discuss the possibility of presenting at the MLA annual conference. If your speaker is interested, discuss the program and topic thoroughly to ensure you and the speaker understand what is expected what the expectations are. Discuss

- **Dates and location** (when and where the conference will be held. Exact day and time of programs is set by the co-chairs)
- **Format of the presentation** (lecture, panel, Q&A, performance, demo, round tables, etc)
- **Number of speakers (Please keep panels at under 3 speakers)**
- **Audiovisual needs** (laptop, projector, screen, microphones, etc.)
- **Room set up** (theater style, round tables, etc.)
- **Audience** (public-school-academic-special librarians, paralibrarians, children's librarians, new librarians, etc.)
- **Travel and accommodation requirements** (airline tickets, lodging, etc. see Policy on Fees, Honoraria and Complimentary Registration for guidelines.)

2. **Try to get speakers to present without charge.** Don't mention payment unless the speaker is reluctant to present. Massachusetts librarians and paralibrarians are not paid to speak at the conference. Out of state librarians and non-librarians may be eligible for an honorarium. Consultants and other professional speakers usually have set rates and are not shy about their fees. Conference co-chairs must approve all speaking fees. Don't guarantee any fee to a speaker without approval from a co-chair. Honorariums are generally under \$300 for a speaker and under \$100 for a panelist. Fees for major speakers, such as keynote speakers, speakers presenting programs lasting over 3 hours, or speakers presenting multiple programs, are negotiable. Please feel free to ask a co-chair for help in negotiating a speaker fee if you aren't comfortable with this. Speakers receive free conference registration for the day they are speaking. Meals are not included. In some cases adjustments may be made at the discretion of the co-chairs. When requested, MLA may reimburse mileage at the standard rate.

3. After all the basic arrangements have been made, confirm in writing with your speaker. Confirm:

- **Date, day, and time** (if known)
- **Venue name and location**
- **Program title, description and details**
- **Information on other program participants**
- **Lodging details** (night of accommodation, name and location of hotel)
- **Travel details**
- **Speaking fee if applicable** (see Speaker Agreement form, volunteer or paid)
- **Plan for further communication**
- **Your contact information**

4. Keep in touch with your speaker in the months before conference. Send them all promotional materials including brochures, post cards, and programs.

5. Confirm all arrangements within one month before conference. Register all speakers for conference attendance. Make arrangements to meet your speaker at the conference.
6. Please send thank you notes to your speakers after the conference.

## Policy on Fees, Honoraria and Complimentary Registration

1. **Major Speakers:** For keynote speakers or speakers conducting a program of three hours or more, all fees must be approved by the conference co-chairs. Total fees may include speaking fees, travel expenses and conference meals.
  
2. **General Program Speakers**
  - a. MLA members and Massachusetts librarians and paraprofessionals are **not** eligible for speaking fees as they have a professional obligation to contribute to the professional development of their colleagues. Additionally, many institutions pay individuals in this group while they are at the conference. These speakers receive complimentary registration for the day on which they are speaking. **If requested**, reimbursement for mileage at the standard rate may be paid.
  - b. Non-librarians and out of state librarians are eligible for a speaking fee but are encouraged to donate their services. Negotiate with your speaker to get the lowest rate possible. Feel free to ask a co-chair to help. These speakers receive complimentary registration for the day on which they are speaking. If necessary, their travel and lodging expenses may be covered by MLA. Travel expenses include reimbursement for mileage at the standard rate or the cost of one round trip coach airline ticket. Lodging expenses include one night's stay at the conference hotel. If the speaker is speaking on more than one day, additional nights may be covered. **All speaker fees and expenses must be approved by the conference co-chairs.**
  - c. Speakers do not receive conference meals gratis. Special arrangements may be made to extend conference meals with approval of the conference co-chairs prior to conference. Meals may not be added at conference.
  
3. **Conference Committee Members and Association Officers**

The following receive complimentary conference registration for the conference:

  - a. Conference Committee members who attend 50% of planning meetings and
    - i. Plan, shepherd or moderate a program, or
    - ii. Administer a special conference activity
  - b. The MLA President and President Elect
  - c. The NELA President
  - d. Individuals receiving an award presented at the conference (For the day of the presentation only)  
*Individuals who are presenting an award do not receive complimentary registration unless expressly approved by the conference co-chairs.*
  - e. Others as approved by the Executive Board
  
4. **Hotel Accommodations**

The Association will cover the cost of hotel accommodations at the annual conference for:

  - a. The MLA President
  - b. The Conference Co-Chairs
  - c. The MLA Executive Manager

**Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Conference Committee Co-Chairs.**

## Hosting a Speaker

The most important thing about hosting speakers is to make sure they feel welcome at the conference. All speakers are different. Some will want lots of attention. Others prefer much less. Follow your speaker's preference. It is important that your speakers know how to reach you and that they know to contact you with any conference related problems.

1. Determine your speaker's travel plans and arrange to meet at a mutually convenient location. Sometimes this means the airport. If you cannot pick up a speaker at the airport, ask a co-chair about transportation arrangements. If meeting at the conference, the registration desk is often the best place to meet.
2. Make sure your speaker is registered for conference. Help with the registration or complete for your speaker.
3. Assist your speaker with checking into the hotel if applicable.
4. Guide your speaker through the conference registration desk, collecting his/her badge, conference program, and any meal tickets they have purchased.
5. Show your speaker the room in which he/she will be speaking.
6. If you are not the moderator, introduce the speaker and the moderator to each other.
7. Introduce your speaker to other conference committee members, MLA officers, and other attendees.
8. Make sure your speaker has someone (probably YOU) to sit with at any meals or social events they are attending.
9. Ensure that your speaker's departure arrangements are set.
10. Send the speaker a thank you note.

## Shepherd/Moderator Duties At Conference

The shepherd is the conference committee member who is responsible for the program and has developed it for conference. The moderator is the person in the room during the program at conference to assist the speaker(s) and perform conference related duties. The shepherd is often the moderator but not necessarily so. A copy of this checklist and suggested language or talking points for in-room announcements are kept at the podium in each program room throughout the conference.

The shepherd/moderator checks the program room, welcomes speakers, makes announcements; introduces program and speakers; and counts attendees. Feel free to word the announcements yourself or you can read from the provided scripts if you prefer.

1. Check room
  - a. Temperature
  - b. Set-up
  - c. A/V
2. Welcome the speakers privately
  - a. Verify pronunciation of names
3. Welcome attendees
4. Announcements
5. Moderator: Introduce program and speaker
6. Count attendees
7. Submit attendee count to co-chairs

## **Getting Reimbursed / Getting Speakers Paid**

1. All expenditures **MUST** be approved by a Conference Committee Co-Chair in writing.
2. Use the electronic payment request form to secure payment or reimbursement for your speakers.  
<http://www.masslib.org/resources/Documents/2017Conf/Misc/MLA%20SPEAKER%20PAYMENT%20REQUEST.pdf>