



**Mississippi Library Commission
Library Services and Technology Act
FY2025 Public Librarian Scholarship Manual**

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Mississippi Library Commission (MLC) offers a scholarship program to help empower libraries. These funds are provided through a scholarship opportunity to all Mississippi public library staff through funds from the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant; Assistance Listing No. 45.310; appropriated by Congress and administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

Individuals requiring an alternative format of this or any other LSTA program information may contact the Grant Programs division for assistance.

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This manual and the following requirements are considered a part of the scholarship agreement. When signing the scholarship agreement, the participant is agreeing to all aspects of this manual and it must be included as a part of the official records and files for the awarded project(s).

The following requirements are developed in accordance with agency procedures governing grants, state and federal laws and regulations concerning grants, and statewide needs identified by MLC.

RULES/REGULATIONS

Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility Matters:

Per [2 CFR 200.214](#), participants are subject to the non-procurement debarment and suspension regulations implementing Executive Orders 12549 and 12689, 2 CFR part 180. Potential awardee must not be debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from participating in Federal assistance programs or activities.

All participants must certify, to the best of their knowledge and belief that the recipient through this program:

- a) has not been convicted within the preceding three years of any of the offenses listed in 2 C.F.R. §180.800(a) or had a civil judgment rendered against it or them for one of those offenses within that time period;
- b) is not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state, or local) with commission of any of the offenses listed in 2 C.F.R. §180.800(a); or
- c) has not, within a three-year period preceding this application, had one or more public transactions (federal, unable state, to or certify to local) terminated any of the for cause or in default.

Trafficking in Persons:

The recipient of federal funds through this program may not:

- Engage in severe forms of trafficking in persons during the period of time that the award is in effect;
- Procure a commercial sex act during the period of time that the award is in effect; or
- Use forced labor in the performance of the award.

Drug-Free Workplace:

The applicant must provide a drug-free workplace by complying with the requirements in [2 CFR Part 3186](#) (Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace [Financial Assistance]), in particular the requirements in [Subpart C](#), as the recipient is an individual.

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

See the specific program descriptions on page four (4) of this manual, as well as the scholarship agreement, for official application time frames and other critical information dates. Applications not submitted during the window will NOT be accepted. Applications must be emailed as an attachment to grantsprog@mlc.lib.ms.us by midnight of the application deadline date.

Should the situation occur where the top scores are achieved by more than two applicants or multiple applicants from the same system, MLC may use interviews, essays, or other determined methods to select finalists.

Proof of submission:

In the case of a lost application MLC may request proof of the submission. Retain in your files a copy of the email showing the attachment in some manner. Proof must contain date and time the e-mail was sent and the email address of the recipient.

REIMBURSEMENT AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The participant must maintain records and supporting documentation sufficient enough to determine if funds requested were: 1) received and 2) expended on allowable project costs.

Invoices and/or receipts are required for all scholarship funds received from MLC and expenses not supported by the proper documentation or outside the grant time frame may be disallowed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GRANTOR

Both IMLS and MLC require acknowledgment of federal assistance in all publications and products resulting from the award of the scholarship. The participant must include the logos of the IMLS and MLC or text in all publications or other materials produced in whole or in part with funds awarded under the agreement. The type of recognition varies according to the type of activity. Use the following guidelines for:

- Written acknowledgment: materials must include a credit line indicating IMLS and MLC as a source of support.
- Graphic items such as posters or brochures should include the IMLS and MLC logos, available at <https://www.imls.gov/grants/manage-your-award/grantee-communications-kit/imls-logos> and <https://mlc.lib.ms.us/lsta-grant-acknowledgement>.

- Electronic items should link to the IMLS and MLC Web sites, <http://www.imls.gov/> and <http://www.mlc.lib.ms.us>.
- Audio/video broadcasts must include a tag line indicating IMLS and MLC as a source of support. Video broadcasts should display the IMLS and MLC logos.

EVALUATION REPORTS

Evaluations are a means to examine and demonstrate the effectiveness of services/programs and to provide accountability of the expenditure of public funds. They must be completed on the forms provided by MLC and include all reporting information.

DISPUTES/COMMENTS

Any dispute/comment received, either in person, by mail, or email, by MLC concerning the program will be forwarded to the LSTA program coordinator, Jennifer Lena, who will respond as is appropriate to the situation, either through a phone call, an email message, or formal letter.

For any issue unresolved by the LSTA program coordinator, the dispute/comment will be forwarded to the Executive Director of MLC, Hulen Bivins, who will respond as appropriate to the situation, either through a phone call, an email message, or formal letter. The Executive Director of MLC is the person of last resort for disputes/comments concerning the program.

MONITORING

MLC is required to monitor program activities. Monitoring may include, but is not limited to, one or more of the following activities: evaluation of reports, audit of payment request, site visits, and review of audits and follow-up on findings. Records must be available for review or audit by appropriate officials of the Federal agency, pass-through entity, and Government Accountability Office (GAO). The participant will give MLC, or its duly designated representatives, at all reasonable times access to and the right to examine, monitor, audit, copy all records, books, papers, documents, or items of like or similar nature related to the scholarship program.

RECORDS RETENTION

Any records and supporting documentation pertaining to the program must be maintained until January of 2032 which is a minimum of three (3) years from the due date of the final grant report that must be submitted by MLC to IMLS.

2. PUBLIC LIBRARIAN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Scholarship funds are being awarded to:

Increase the number of professionals in the field of library and information services in Mississippi

- Award amount: Total cost of tuition and mandatory fees for forty (40) semester hours
- Who can apply (must meet all three requirement below):
 - individuals employed in a Mississippi public library for at least eighteen (18) hours per week,
 - individuals employed in a Mississippi public library for at least one continuous year,
 - a resident of Mississippi for at least one continuous year.

General Information:

- Award cover time is thirty-six (36) months, beginning with the semester immediately following notification of award.
- Number of awards: Two (2)
- Complete application packet consisting of: completed application, letter of acceptance to master's program accredited by American Library Association (ALA), three (3) Letters of Recommendation, and Certification of Employment form.
- Application must be submitted by e-mail.
- Recommendations and Certificate of Employment must be completed as directed and submitted to the Library Commission on forms provided and by the deadline.
 - **Regardless of persons completing any of the documents, the applicant is responsible for timely submission of all application documents.**
- Submit an unofficial transcript from the student portal to the MLC within thirty (30) days of the end of each semester for all classes funded through this grant.
- Submit an official transcript provided from the institution to the MLC following graduation showing the degree awarded. It is the Recipient's responsibility to ensure transcripts are sent by the institution to MLC.
- Funds may only be used to pay for tuition for courses in a master's degree program for Library Science accredited by the ALA, in addition to subsequent fees/costs associated with course registration. **No funds may be used to pay cost incurred prior to the award.**
- While a recipient may attend any ALA accredited master's program in Library and Information Science, the award amount will not exceed the program cost at the University of Southern Mississippi.
- Additional requirements of this program will be outlined in the scholarship agreement.

Application Process:

- Submit Public Librarian Scholarship Program application with acceptance letter to master's program if received to grantsprog@mlc.lib.ms.us.
- Have three (3) recommendation forms completed and submitted.
 - Two (2) recommendations must be from individuals familiar with your professional work in librarianship (supervisors, colleagues, etc).
 - One (1) recommendation may be from an individual of the applicants choice (it is suggested to use a professional reference rather than a personal reference).
- Have the Certificate of Employment form completed by the appropriate local personnel.
- The recommendations and the Certification of Employment form should be sent directly to the Library Commission **from those completing the forms.**
 - Within one week of the application deadline, the applicant should contact the grant programs coordinator if confirmation of completed application has not been received.
- Potential awardees will be required to participate in an interview with Library Commission staff.
- All required documents must be received by MLC's grant program by June 30, 2024.

Receipt of Funds:

- Participants are reimbursed for eligible tuition for each semester.
- Reimbursement requests must be completed based on invoices issued by the school.
- Participants must enroll in eligible courses that will be taken that semester.
- Participants must submit reimbursement request form to agency with copy of invoice from school (must use form provided).
- Request will be reviewed and processed for payment and funds will be deposited into a bank account of participant's choice via electronic funds transfer.
 - **Participants must use monies for eligible courses or repay to Library Commission:**
 - Within 30 days of determination that the courses/classes for which funds have been received will not be taken, funds must be repaid to the agency.
 - Participant must submit brief statement as to why funds are being repaid and make a check, or U.S. Postal Service Money Order, payable to the Mississippi Library Commission in the total amount owed.

Annual Reports and Plans:

The following documents will be required annually from participants:

- Deadline for reimbursement requests: July 10
- Prospective course schedule (full academic year): August 15
- Annual employment certification: August 31
- Annual evaluation: August 31
- Evaluations will be provided by MLC.
- Failure to submit reports and plans in a timely manner will result in withheld funds.

Extraordinary Circumstances:

- **If the recipient is unable to meet the program requirements, they must immediately contact the grant programs coordinator.** Each circumstance will be evaluated on its own merits and a determination will be made by the Executive Director.
 - Any extensions are limited to:
 - Extension of the thirty-six (36) months allowed to complete program of study for a master's degree in Library Science.
 - Extension of the forty-eight (48) months allowed to complete thirty-six (36) months of service in a Mississippi public library after graduation.
 - Participant must request extension in writing to the Executive Director prior to expiration of allowed time.
 - Under no circumstance will extensions be given for reasons of personal convenience or employment opportunities outside Mississippi public libraries.

Suspension and Termination:

MLC reserves the right to terminate or suspend participants from the program, at any point, due to non-compliance with program regulations. Suspension from the program will result in withholding of grant funds until the recipient is determined by the MLC to be in compliance with program regulations and removed from suspension. Removal from the program will require the recipient to repay all grant funds received under this program as outlined in the grant agreement.

Failure to repay grant funds in a timely manner may result in federal debarment or suspension. MLC also reserves the right to take any legal means necessary to recover funds due to the federal government for failure of the grantee to meet the requirements of this program.

For more information on the Mississippi Library Commission's grant programs, please contact:

Mississippi Library Commission
Grant Programs
3881 Eastwood Drive
Jackson, Mississippi 39211
1-800-MISSLIB (1-800-647-7542)
Website: www.mlc.lib.ms.us

9/23/2025: The Mississippi Library Commission serves as a library open to the public. For the purposes of this grant program, employment with the Mississippi Library Commission meets the grant requirement of employment in a Mississippi public library.

END OF MANUAL