

Manual of Practice - Appendix C – Best Practices for State Representatives

The duties of the state representative can be grouped into three major categories: communication, representation, and advocacy. Most of the work is done by e-mail, some by phone and some by travel. Here are some practical “best practices” and actionable ideas for advocacy, communication and representation that have been documented by the state representatives in each MPLA member state. While the focus of Appendix A is procedural in nature and focuses on **what** state representatives do; the goal in developing Appendix C is to address **how** the state representatives do their work.

Advocacy

- Obtain a list of librarians and library staff throughout the state. Your State Library or state library organization might have such a list. ALA has a library directory that could be useful;
- Review the list of membership from your state library association;
- Review the staff sections on library websites throughout your state. For example, a number of states organize their public libraries by county. Check these sites for potential MPLA members;
- Compare and contrast your state’s MPLA membership with the state rosters of librarians and staff you have available to you;
- Contact those librarians and staff who are not MPLA members and promote the benefits of MPLA;

Communication

- Submit information to the MPLA newsletter from your State Library and state library organization.
- Take the opportunity to use your State Representative Board updates published for the MPLA Executive Board meetings as a venue to publicize and share your state representative “best practices”;
- Review the State Representative Board updates from the other state representatives. Watch for their best practices and use them accordingly;
- Send MPLA updates to your state organization’s website, your state’s newsletter and to other key library information sites such as your State Library newsletter or website;
- Seek late-breaking, informational updates from your state contacts in various types of library institutions such as public, academic, school and special libraries;
- Submit information/stories to your state library organization’s newsletter;

Representation

- Attend your state organization’s annual conference and represent MPLA by being available at the MPLA booth.
- Some of us are from very large states with small populations. Try to physically represent MPLA by attending library events going on in your state when possible;

- Attending virtually or touching-base with colleagues by e-mail might be the only way to do this -- try to attend events in person when you are able to do so;
- Attend Annual Legislative Reception(s) in your state if your state organization sponsors one. Work with your state library/state professional organization to setup a legislative reception if one is not yet established;
- Establish contact with your county librarians and city librarians depending on the organizational structure in your state. Ask to talk at various library functions.