



Library Conferences 101: Making the Most of Your Experience

Welcome & Introductions

Who We Are

- Florida Library Association (FLA) Professional Development Committee
- Additional FLA staff, board members, and committee members
 - Introduce yourselves!



What We Will Cover Today

- Brief overview of FLA & the 2024 Conference
- Making your case to attend
- Tips for 1st time presenters
- General tips for attending sessions
- Networking
- Vendor exhibits
- Self-care
- Getting involved in conference and FLA
- Post-Conference Tips

Florida Library Association (FLA)

About FLA

- Established in 1966 and now serves all library types
- Has over 900 individual, business and organizational members – but always needs more!
- Is a state chapter of the American Library Association (ALA), but operates independently of ALA

Mission

- The Florida Library Association is a statewide organization that promotes excellence in Florida libraries by advocating strongly for libraries and providing high quality professional and leadership development for a diverse community of library staff, volunteers, and supporters.

Committees:

- Advocacy & Legislative, Awards & Honors, Communications, Conference Planning, DEIA, Intellectual Freedom, Membership Development, and Professional Development

Active Member Groups

- Intellectual Freedom Mutual Support Group; Public Library Managers; Public Library Directors

Inactive Member Groups

- Academic Instruction & Information Literacy; Academic Libraries; Black Caucus; Friends, Foundations & Boards (FF&B); Library Technology; LGBTQ Library Services Support; New Members Roundtable; One Book, One State; Paraprofessional Task Force; Public Library Standards; and REFORMA de Florida

FLA Annual Conference 2024

Committee Meetings

(subject to
change)

Date	Time	Committee
Wednesday May 15, 2024	8:00 a.m.	Awards
	1:30 p.m.	Advocacy
	3:30 p.m.	Membership
		Public Library Managers Group
Thursday May 16, 2024	7:30 a.m.	Public Library Directors Group
	9:00 a.m.	DEIA
	10:30 a.m.	Communications
	1:30 p.m.	Professional Development
Friday May 17, 2024	8:00 a.m.	Conference Planning
	9:30 a.m.	Intellectual Freedom

Conference Highlights



Making Your Case to Attend

- Familiarize yourself with your library's travel policy
- Plan ahead for essential job duties that might be disrupted while you're at conference
- Highlight the conference's role in professional growth
- Define what attending this conference will do for your organization
- Highlight how direct interaction with vendors can provide insights into cost-effective solutions
- Explain how sharing challenges and solutions with peers can lead to improved practices at your library



Tips for First-Time Presenters

- You are representing yourself and your organization
- Propose a topic that is familiar to you
- Know your audience and engage with it
- Talk to peers who presented in the past
 - What has worked for them?
- Rehearse your presentation
- Back up your backup
- Encourage questions and discussion



Breakout Sessions

- Plan ahead!
 - Breakout descriptions and speaker bios are available on the website and app
 - Where is the session being held?
 - Arrive early for must-see events
- You'll need:
 - Something for taking notes
 - A bag for carrying your necessities
- Other considerations:



- Preconferences
- Ticketed events
- Lunch & Learn

Scan for current FLA schedule!



Networking

Tips

- Exchange business cards (and document meeting)
- Networking is expected — do not be shy
 - Plus introduce new contacts to others in your circle
- Attend additional events
 - Reception, breakfasts/lunches, social activities, fun runs, etc.
- Take photos and share/tag on Facebook and LinkedIn
- Follow up with individuals post-conference
 - Pace yourself! Not all networking has to happen in 3 days; short exchanges can be built on over time
- Share important interactions with your organization post-conference
- Reconnect with existing colleagues to strengthen those relationships



Why Network at Conferences?

- New relationships for collaboration, idea sharing, and resource sharing
- Gain new mentors and conference buddies
- Boost the profile of your organization
- Potential (eventual) career advancement

Vendor Exhibits



View FLA Annual 2024
Exhibit Hall Map



- Familiarize yourself with the Exhibit Hall layout
- Budget your time by visiting the booths you want to see during breaks
- Don't be shy to approach vendors to talk about new products available to libraries
- Let them know up front whether or not you have purchasing power
- Schedule a meeting with your vendor rep

Self-Care

- Dress for conference success with layers and comfy shoes
- Stay hydrated
- Need caffeine?
 - Starbucks (6am - 6pm at FLA's 2024 hotel)
 - Coffee Breaks & Networking Lounge
 - BYOC (easiest if staying in hotel)
- Lunch with exhibitors
- Research the hotel and nearby area
- It's OK to take a break if you need one



Get Involved

- Volunteer
- Attend a Committee meeting
- Attend the FLA Board meeting
- Subscribe to the FLA Listserv
- Join FLA
- Follow FLA on social media
- Post on your own social media
- Join a library social media group
- Look for #hashtags for FLA events and repost!





Post Conference

- Join a committee or an interest group
- Share with your library what you learned from the conference
- Follow up with people you met by sending emails or connecting with them on LinkedIn
- Take some time to reflect on what you've learned
 - Organize your notes and handouts
 - Post your experience on LinkedIn or social media
- Complete the conference survey



Questions?

Contact

Matthew David

FLA Professional Development Committee Chair

407-738-2134

matthewDlibrary@gmail.com

Marina Morgan

FLA Professional Development Committee Vice Chair

863-616-6450

mmorgan@flsouthern.edu

Mary Beth Isaacson

FLA Career Development Subcommittee Chair

727-816-3411

isaacsm@phsc.edu