



MLA Engagement with Societal Issues Guidelines

May 2023

Definition and Scope of Association Engagement

The Medical Library Association (MLA), as an association whose [vision and core values](#) are centered on a foundation of accessible, navigable, trustworthy health information, actively engages with and responds to the evolving legislative, professional, and societal framework of health information.

MLA advocates in three broad areas:

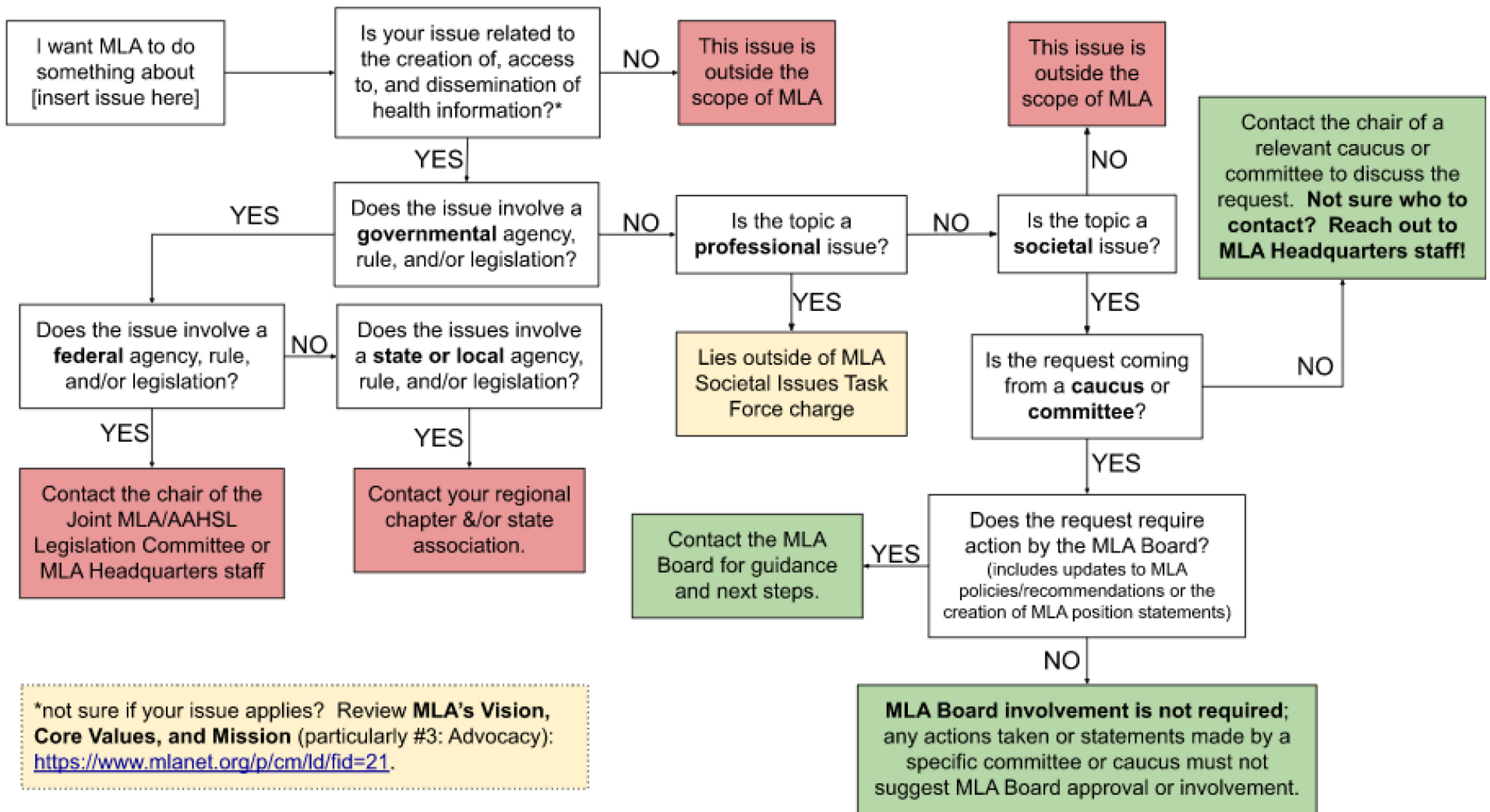
1. Regulatory/Legislative: including federal policies, government actions, requests for information/comment, etc.
2. Professional Practice: pertaining to the practice of health sciences librarianship.
3. Societal Issues: social justice and human rights as a function of the values of the association and of the profession as a whole.

Boundaries for MLA's engagement with issues:

- Issues must be related to MLA's mission, vision, and values which are centered on the creation, access, and dissemination of health information.
- Issues must be nationally relevant in scope.
- As a 501(c)(3) organization, MLA is forbidden from using its activities to influence legislation in a substantial way. It is typically not permitted to engage in lobbying (except in instances when its expenditures are below a certain amount).

Process of Association Engagement

Guide to Requesting Association Engagement



Flowchart describing process for requesting MLA Association Engagement with Societal Issues

Specific to Societal Issues, this Task Force recommends:

- Responses and statements of support around societal issues should be coordinated by individual [MLA caucuses, committees](#), and chapters whose interests align with the issue of interest.
- Caucuses, committees, and chapters are encouraged and empowered to collaborate in this area. Members can reach out to Community Council and Domain Hubs to find partners.
- Creators of societal issue statements should review these statements annually at the conclusion of the new leaders onboarding to determine if the statements are still relevant or should be archived.
- Members are encouraged to prioritize action-taking and practice impact over issuing statements. Examples of these efforts might include creating policies, guidelines, or tool kits.
- Co-signing statements is a possible action. Before requesting co-signing, members are encouraged to consider if partners authoring statements have the ability to meaningfully influence the issue.
- Response times will vary greatly based on the requested work. When bringing issues forward, members are encouraged to organize and streamline information so that it is easy for partners to understand the issue and how to assist.
- Contact the MLA Director of Information Issues and Policy (Mary Langman, mary.langman@mlahq.org) with questions.