

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Metropolitan Library Service Agency Event Support

August 26, 2025

Responses to Questions Submitted

Does the committee play any role in brainstorming around author possibilities or specific panel focus areas (ex., “Introduction to Writing Fantasy Fiction” in 2025)? How much of this is envisioned as the responsibility of the contractor?

- The committee and MELSA project manager are primary resources of author suggestions. Any knowledge of YA fiction, graphic novels both nationally and in Minnesota would be considered an asset for the contractor role.
- Panel focus areas tend to be organic based on commonalities we see among works of invited MN authors or trends we’re seeing in YA fiction and graphic novels. For example, in 2024 we had several authors with contributions to anthologies which became the topic of a panel discussion.

Is final approval of authors made by the Youth Services & Project Manager, or through the wider committee?

- MELSA’s Youth Services & Project Manager has final approval. Primarily to keep things moving forward.

How many Minnesota authors are tapped to round out the line-up? Do any/some/all take part in multiple sessions? What was their stipend in 2025, and is that rate variable based on their level of participation in panels?

- A minimum of six Minnesota authors are booked each year. The goal is to have three MN authors of Young Adult fiction and three MN graphic novelists (preferably author/illustrators). We tend to book additional authors each year for various workshops and panels. We prioritize authors with recent publications.
- Some authors take part in multiple sessions. These could include participation on a panel, doing a writing or drawing workshop, or interviewing a headlining author. We are flexible and want to offer sessions fitting the authors booked and audience interests.
- Stipends are varied based on the number of sessions, what we are asking authors to do and the level of preparation needed. In 2025 the base amount was \$400 for

participation in a 45-minute no-prep session and an optional book signing hour. Green Room access, an event tee shirt (their name on the back) and a box lunch are made available to all participating authors.

Confirming: Does every participating author have on-site sales and get a meet-and-greet + signing line? Or are some of those ‘perks’ exclusive to the traveling headliners?

- Every participating author can have on-site sales and a meet-and-greet +signing line. It is expected of the four traveling headliners but is optional for MN authors.
- The only ‘perks’ for the headliners would be an assistant to help navigate the school because their schedules are tight.

In the 10 years of the program to date, how smooth and efficient would you judge the travel model where keynote authors make their own flight arrangements?

- It has worked well. There have been only two incidents where any related issues were raised by an author. The only one that resulted in an author backing out had to do with additional money for airfare, not booking the flight. It should be noted that we have booked headliners primarily through publisher contacts and a few booking agents – either of which could have taken on the task of making travel arrangements without our being aware of it. Typically travel arrangements are sent to us by the author.

Please elaborate on how travel arrangements for the headlining authors are handled.

In addition to Twin Cities ground transit, has MELSA customarily arranged and covered lodging? Or is this traditionally among the visiting authors’ personal responsibilities (and ergo factored into their honorarium lump sum)?

- The all-inclusive honorarium for headlining authors is to cover event participation and all travel expenses. We suggest a hotel based on proximity to the airport and the event site, but authors are free to book elsewhere. We would just need details in a timely manner for the ground transportation service.

MELSA understands that at some point this process may need to be revisited, but it has been working for us. Also, the travel expenses are tax deductible for the author with the current process.

If MELSA is to both create contracts and issue payments, what remaining, specific tasks within the “coordinate and handle contracts with authors” bullet do see your consulting partner taking on?

- While MELSA creates the contracts we would rely on the contractor to make sure all paperwork is returned in a timely manner. Also keep communication open about travel arrangements, their sessions, schedules, etc. With headliners and MN authors.

Are approx. book sale volume and related metrics (ex., total number of SKUs provided for purchase, total quantity sold) available to vendors as a point of reference?

- Unfortunately, we do not have that information.
- There is no expectation that the bookseller will have every title from an author’s backlist nor every title in a series at the event.

Is the work entirely remote?

- Yes, the contractor’s work can be entirely remote. The contractor does not have to be onsite the day of the event. Meetings with the committee are all online except for a site walk-through shortly before the event – which the contractor would not be expected to attend. Meetings with the MELSA project manager can be remote as well.