NEFLIN Emerging Leaders Academy 2027 FAQ

Do I need to manage people to apply?

No, the Emerging Leaders Academy (ELA) is designed for people who influence outcomes without necessarily having a supervisory or managerial role.

Do I need an MLIS?

No. If you have two years of paid, full-time equivalent professional library experience and you're self-motivated with a desire to make a difference by leading from where you are, ELA welcomes your application.

I work part-time. Can I apply?

Yes, you may apply if you have two years of paid, full-time equivalent professional library experience. You will likely need to work closely in advance with your supervisor to coordinate your attendance at all the required in-person and online sessions.

I've already completed MTI. Can I participate in ELA?

MTI generally serves library staff who are already in operational or people-management roles, and we typically see ELA as the earlier step. That said, the two programs build different skill sets. If you've completed MTI and want to focus on vision, influence, and leading beyond your own team, reach out and we'll talk through fit.

What if I'm not sure I'll still be in my current job when ELA concludes in September 2027?

Apply anyway. The program is about your development, and the skills travel with you. If you move to another NEFLIN member library, nothing changes. If you leave the region entirely, let us know, and we can discuss.

When is the $350 registration fee due, and how is it paid?

The nonrefundable registration fee of $350 is due before December 15, 2026. NEFLIN will invoice the member library after the cohort is announced on November 20, 2026. Participants paying on their own behalf should contact NEFLIN to arrange payment.

Does my supervisor have to do anything?

Yes, your immediate supervisor must approve your participation in ELA. The application includes fields for their name and email, and asks you to affirm that you have their go-ahead. Supervisors may be contacted prior to final selection to provide a brief recommendation.

How long is each in-person development session?

In-person sessions are planned as full days, running from 8:30 a.m.- 4:30 pm ET.

Where are the in-person sessions held?

In-person sessions will be hosted at Peoria Crossing Event Center, located at 3382 Peoria Rd., Orange Park, FL 32065.

How long are the virtual sessions, and what time of day?

Each virtual session runs 90 minutes. Once the cohort is selected, we will poll the group on preferred time of day and set a consistent time that works for as many people as possible.

What happens if I have to miss a session?

We expect participants at all nine sessions, as this is a small group and absences impact the entire cohort. If something unavoidable comes up, inform your supervisor and loop in ELA program lead Jenny Eason and facilitator Jay Turner as soon as

possible. The five in-person sessions carry the core content, so missing more than one makes it difficult to maximize the value of the program.

How much work is there between sessions?

Expect a modest amount: a short piece of pre-work before each virtual session, typically a video or podcast with discussion questions, plus ongoing work on your own leadership challenge project and light participation in the cohort's online community. This is designed to fit alongside a full-time job, not on top of it.

What is the online community, and how much do I have to participate?

The online community is a private space to stay connected between sessions, with periodic reflection prompts. While minimal participation is expected, it primarily exists as a channel to keep the cohort connected when nothing is formally scheduled.

What is the leadership challenge project?

Every participant identifies one real, unresolved challenge or opportunity in their own library, works it across the program year with facilitator and peer support, and presents what they learned at the NEFLIN Annual Meeting in September.

How big is it supposed to be?

Participants will work within, and potentially beyond, their spheres of influence to identify a project that fits inside the length of the program and alongside their job commitments. Scope, timeline, and deliverables should make sense for the individual and their library. Depending on the person and their environment, projects could run the gamut of a cost-benefit analysis, to a recommendations report, to a pilot initiative that actually has an opportunity to breathe, to name a few.

Can you give me examples?

Here are a few ideas to help participants, supervisors, and directors conceptualize what the end product might look like:

- *Analysis*: a cost-benefit analysis of an underused library space and what it could become.
- *Recommendations*: a plan for how frontline staff respond when a patron is in crisis, developed with local social service partners.
- *Pilot*: a redesigned training program for student workers, piloted with current student staff.

What does presenting at the Annual Meeting actually involve?

While the Annual Meeting and ELA's place within it are still being planned, participants should expect delivering some type of formal presentation and answering questions. The program specifically includes instruction on presentation skills and rehearsal time beforehand.

What commitment am I making as a part of the ELA cohort?

When you apply for the ELA, you will be agreeing to do the following:

1. Attend all sessions, both in-person and virtual.
2. Complete all assignments and projects.
3. Participate enthusiastically in group discussions and activities.
4. Attend the NEFLIN Annual Meeting (Sept. 24, 2027), which is the culminating event of the Emerging Leaders Academy.
5. Pay the nonrefundable registration fee of $350 before December 15, 2026.

Failure to complete any of these components may result in your removal from the program. However, the facilitator and NEFLIN staff are here to help you succeed. Please reach out to us at any time if you run into unexpected difficulties.