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The Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program 2011 Grant Round Fact Sheet

Background

The Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP) was first funded by a state bond authorization in 1987. From July, 1989 through June, 2011, 204 construction grants totaling \$320.3 million have been awarded to assist cities and towns in construction or renovation and expansion of their public libraries. In addition, 91 planning and design grants totaling over \$1.8 million have been awarded to support public libraries as they prepare to apply for a construction grant.

Grants & Green Incentive

Planning and Design grants assist libraries in preparing to apply for MPLCP construction grants. Grant funds help with the preparation of library building programs, project management services, site investigations, soil studies, architectural design and engineering services for feasibility studies, schematic designs and site plans, and construction cost estimates. Grants are capped at \$40,000 and must be matched with \$20,000 in local funding. It is anticipated that the next Planning and Design Application Round will be announced later in FY2012.

Construction grants assist libraries with major capital improvement projects that involve building new facilities, expanding and renovating, renovating an existing library building, or adapting and reusing another building for use as a library. Funds pay for a portion of eligible project costs. These costs include the purchase of real property, design and engineering services, project management services, site preparation, construction and fixed capital equipment. Grant funds do not pay for furniture, computers, or landscaping and paving. The average grant award is 50% of the eligible costs. Local financial commitment of no less than 25% of the project's eligible costs is required.

Green Library Incentives help offset the cost of incorporating environmentally friendly and energy-efficient systems and materials in library building projects. Projects that attain the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification will receive 2% to 3.5% in additional state funds administered by the MBLC.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a MPLCP grant, an applicant library must be certified by the MBLC as meeting minimum state standards for public library service and must have a long-range plan on file with the Board. Any project funded under the program must meet the 20-year needs of the applicant's municipality. Proposals for new buildings and additions/renovations must be based upon a library building program that has been written prior to retaining an architect. Applicants must have local approval to apply for, accept and expend grant funds and for the proposed preliminary design.

MBLC Project Support

MBLC's library building consultants provide support services to library directors and their trustees, building committees and architects. Services provided include assistance with: assessing space needs; project planning and advocacy; evaluating library building programs; organizing workshops and providing information for completing MPLCP applications, and evaluating architectural designs. Support services extend throughout all stages of actual construction.

How grants work:

- Governed by regulations, 605 CMR 6.00, available on the Board's Web site: <http://mblc.state.ma.us/grants/construction/program/605cmr6.pdf>,
- On average, the state grant is 50% of the total eligible project costs. Communities typically raise the remainder of the funding through private fundraising, other grants and/or a municipal debt exclusion.
- Once the MBLC awards a provisional grant award, the municipality has until January 2012 to secure local funding and sign a grant agreement (contract)
- Grant funds are released for payments on the following schedule:
 - Upon signing grant agreement with the MBLC – 30%
 - With the completion of the public bidding process, signing of the contract with a general contractor and issuance of the building permit – 30%
 - At 75% completion of construction – 30%
 - When a certificate of occupancy is issued – 30%
- A project will receive additional funding through the MBLC's Green Incentive after documentation verifying official U.S. Green Building Council LEED certification is submitted to the MBLC.

Waiting list libraries:

- Fifteen applicants have been placed on a ranked wait list.
- Wait listed libraries will receive their grants as funds become available through the state's five –year capital plan.
- If a library that received a provisional grant on July 14, 2011 withdraws, the first library on the waiting list will receive a provisional grant award.

Libraries that are asked to resubmit:

- Six applicants have been asked to revise their applications and resubmit them by January 19, 2012
- MBLC staff will provide detailed feedback about their application and proposed design and work with them throughout the reapplication process.
- In the past, most libraries that were asked to submit a revised application were approved and added to the waiting list for future funding.

Recent Funding

In August 2008 Governor Deval Patrick signed the General Governmental Needs Bond Bill that authorized the expenditure of \$95 million for public library construction projects. In August 2008, the Board awarded provisional construction grants to the libraries that had been on a waiting list since 2005. In July 2011 the Board awarded provisional construction grants to eight libraries and placed fifteen others on a waiting list.

In 2002, Acting Governor Jane Swift signed an omnibus bond bill that authorized the expenditure of \$75 million for public library construction projects. In several grant rounds, the Board awarded Planning and Design Grants and Project for New Construction, Addition/Renovation or Renovation Grants to libraries across the Commonwealth.

More information about the program is available on the Board's Web site, <http://www.mass.gov/mblc>.

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The Board of Library Commissioners is the agency of state government with the statutory authority and responsibility to organize, develop, coordinate and improve library services throughout the Commonwealth. The Board advises municipalities and library trustees on the operation and maintenance of public libraries, including construction and renovation. It administers state and federal grant programs for libraries and promotes cooperation among all types of libraries through regional library systems and automated resource sharing. It also works to ensure that all residents of the Commonwealth, regardless of their geographic location, social or economic status, age, level of physical or intellectual ability or cultural background, have access to essential new electronic information technologies and significant electronic databases.