

FACT SHEET

“On the Same Page”

Community Reading Campaign Program

BACKGROUND

Launched in Seattle and quickly picked up by Chicago and New York, the concept of a community read-a-thon where libraries promote reading the same book among a variety of constituents has attracted enthusiastic supporters around the country. In Massachusetts, Greenfield, South Hadley, Beverly and many other communities have all embarked on providing the “one book” experience to local residents. Each community has tailored its approach in a somewhat different manner, but essentially is building a community of readers through providing opportunities for its citizenry to engage in thoughtful discussion of the same book.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This mini-grant program provides up to \$7,500 to purchase books (in both print and audio formats), develop public relations strategies, feature reader’s advisory support tools and provide book-related links to promote the project on the library’s webpage, in order to promote discussion of a shared title over a period of weeks. Funds may be used to support a part-time staff person to help the library coordinate the reading campaign; in some cases an author visit may be sponsored. The library may choose to purchase additional materials supporting the theme of the chosen book or to buy other titles by the same author. Copies of the book should be available through the public and school libraries for extended check-out, or if people wish they may purchase the book at a discounted rate with a local book dealer.

Promotional materials may include banners, signs and an “On the Same Page” button to identify that someone is reading the same book. (Some of these materials should be purchased with local funds—the workshop will address this matter.) In conjunction with the evaluation of the project, funds may be used to plan and purchase materials for a future discussion. Communities are expected to identify funds to continue promoting the “one book” project in future years. This would be an especially excellent project for Library Friends groups to undertake.

Libraries will be responsible for developing a strategy to work with local bookstores, colleges and/or schools, newspapers, councils on aging, resident homes, or other community groups which could serve as locations for a series of coordinated book discussions—the possibilities are endless and will depend on the specific resources of the community. Readers should receive and be asked to wear a “On the Same Page” button during the weeks when book discussions take place, to demonstrate participation in the project and to promote spontaneous conversations outside the library.

Technical support will be provided through online discussions among grant recipients and site visits from the MBLC. Each applicant will be considered for funding for up to \$7,500.

This program will promote a culture of reading, and increase closer ties among community members through the shared experience of reading and discussing the same book. It supports the broad intent of increasing literacy in the Commonwealth which is achieved by reading and discussion.

MASSACHUSETTS LONG-RANGE PLAN GOAL

Goal 6: Massachusetts residents, regardless of age, will have access to lifelong learning resources and programs through their local libraries.

ELIGIBILITY

Primarily for public libraries; however, nonpublic libraries that can present a strong case for community-wide collaboration and partnership with a variety of local agencies may be considered also that meets standard eligibility requirements for Direct Grant programs is eligible to apply. Libraries should:

- Be prepared to work with MBLC staff on outcomes evaluation for the project.

INTERESTED?

Applicants must submit a **Letter of Intent** form with the "On the Same Page" option checked off under **TYPE**. If you need more information about this program, call Shelley Quezada at the MBLC, 1-800-952-7403 ext. 235 or e-mail shelley.quezada@state.ma.us.