

# FACT SHEET

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## Serving ‘Tweens and Teens Targeted Grant

### BACKGROUND

Across Massachusetts eager and hopeful teens enter the library each afternoon, looking for a place to be with their friends, to relax and to work on homework. They may also be seeking a place to expand their world, to volunteer in the community, and to pursue new projects. Many public libraries have responded to their unique library needs by developing innovative programs and strategies to serve them.

The need for programs and services for middle school and senior high school age students is apparent. The average school day ends between two and three in the afternoon and almost every teenager in America must find somewhere to go and something to do after school. A survey commissioned by the AfterSchool Alliance entitled “*Working Families and Afterschool: A Special Report from America After 3 PM: A Household Survey on Afterschool in America*”<sup>1</sup> found that while 14 million K-12 children spend some portion of their afternoon taking care of themselves; only 6.5 million children participate in any form of after-school program. Even if every child in America participated in an after-school activity such as sports or drama, that activity would cover only part of the school year.

Julie Ann Walker, Executive Director of the American Library Association's Young Adult Library Services Association, states that while library services to young adults had been in decline, in the last five years there has been a reversal of that trend and "a whole movement toward community-based programming focused on youth development" as a result of new "assets-based research." This idea builds on the assets of at-risk, underserved youth with programs that intervene before these adolescents get into trouble. The purpose of this LSTA program is to provide an opportunity for libraries to develop programs and services that meet the needs of their young adult population. Ideally, every public library in the state would meet the Massachusetts Library Association's "Standards for Public Library Service to Young Adults." While some libraries have made substantial progress toward that goal, other libraries have yet to provide the space, staff, and/or services that address the needs of this group. It is hoped this grant program may help them achieve these important standards.

### MASSACHUSETTS LONG-RANGE PLAN GOAL

**Goal 4:** Massachusetts children and young adults will have access to public and school libraries that are active partners in providing resources and learning opportunities that foster literacy from birth through the teen years.

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<sup>1</sup> Please find this report at [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/press\\_archives/Working\\_Families\\_Rpt.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/press_archives/Working_Families_Rpt.pdf)

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This program will allow public libraries to receive up to \$15,000 in grant funds over a two year period to carry out a targeted program aimed at middle and high school-aged “tweens” and “teens.” Libraries must conduct a preliminary needs assessment including focus groups with teens, interviews with community leaders, parents, and teachers. As part of the grant program libraries will be expected to:

- Form or strengthen a Teen Advisory Board (TAB);
- With input from the TAB, develop creative programming strategies which will reach out and meet the needs of ‘tweens and teens;
- Develop collections of materials including books, books on tape, CDs, magazines, games, graphic novels and DVDs; collections should be aligned, in part, with material needed by the middle/high school students as part of standards and curriculum frameworks;
- Examine the library’s “teen space” and have it meet (or move towards meeting) the goals set by the teen board. This may include limited redesign.

Limited grant funds may be used to pay for extra hours for the Young Adult Services librarian or to hire staff to help with extra activities related to Teen Advisory Board or special programming during afternoon/evening or weekend hours.

Collaboration should be demonstrated with middle/high school librarians and school personnel as well as tie in with local youth centers, boys and girls clubs, YMCA/YWCA, scouts or sports facilities, religious organizations or community centers which serve diverse youth.

## ELIGIBILITY

Any public library that meets standard eligibility requirements for Direct Grant programs and has identified a need to serve middle and high school students in their long-range plans are eligible to apply.

## INTERESTED?

Applicants must submit a **Letter of Intent** form with the “Serving “Tweens and Teens” option checked off under **TYPE**. If you need more information about this program, call Shelley Quezada at the MBLC at 800-952-7403 ext. 235 or e-mail [shelley.quezada@state.ma.us](mailto:shelley.quezada@state.ma.us)