**Direct Grants to Libraries Program**

The Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS) defines *libraries* as a library or a parent organization, such as a school district, a municipality, a state agency, or an academic institution, that is responsible for the administration of a library. Eligible libraries include public libraries, elementary and secondary school libraries, college and university libraries, research libraries and archives that are not an integral part of an institution of higher education and that make publicly available library services and materials that are suitable for scholarly research and not otherwise available, and private or special libraries that have been deemed eligible to participate in this program by the state in which the library is located.

In Massachusetts, Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA) funds are made available by IMLS for statewide programs and grants to Massachusetts libraries that are members of the Massachusetts Library System (MLS), MLS, automated resource sharing networks, and other cooperating groups of MLS members

All activities supported with LSTA funds must address goals and objectives in the *Massachusetts Library Services & Technology Act Grants to States Five-Year Plan, 2023-2027* and abide by state and federal guidelines[[1]](#footnote-1). Whenever possible, these activities will include cooperative and collaborative efforts that involve libraries and other groups having complementary missions.

**Eligibility**

To be eligible for the Direct Grants to Libraries program, a library must:

* Have an approved strategic plan on file at the MBLC.
* Submit an Action Plan update by December 1 for the fiscal year of the coming LSTA round. For example, by December 1, 2024, a library will submit an update for Fiscal Year 2026, which will cover activities during the period from July 2025 through June 2026.
* Public libraries must remain certified for the State Aid to Public Libraries Program throughout the application and award process.

**General Policies**

In reviewing applications for Direct Grants to Libraries Program, the following policies will apply, except where superseded by the specific programFact Sheet:

* LSTA funding is intended to provide seed money for the establish­ment of new services or supplemental funds for enhancement of existing services. Funds may not be used to operate programs or services on a contin­uing basis, to replace local operating money, or to fund projects from the same applicant for sequential or similar services.
* LSTA funds may be used to pay for staffing costs for project-related activities. LSTA funding cannot be used to pay staff working on non-project activities. Any fringe benefits required locally may only be paid in proportion to actual time spent on LSTA activities.
* ­Multi-year projects may be considered for specific programs where the scope and complexity of the project requires activities to be conducted over a long period of time. Multi-year projects are not funded if the intent is to conduct the same activities continuously beyond one year.
* Applicants who have previously received a grant must have completed and submitted all progress reports, evaluations, audits, and other required documentation to the MBLC by the required dates. History with grants, financial controls and organizational structure will be considered during the application process.
* No more than one project is funded per institution/library in any grant round, unless specifically allowed by the Fact Sheet. Exceptions may be made for MLS, automated networks, or large libraries that can demonstrate the capacity to properly manage a second project. Libraries with two-year projects cannot apply for a grant round that will overlap with their second year.
* Libraries may not apply for the same program more than once, unless specifically allowed in the program Fact Sheet.
* LSTA funds will not be used to fund standalone automated systems. Federal funds will continue to be used to support cooperative automation efforts through automated resource sharing networks.
* Applicants must show match contributions of at least 10% of their awarded amount. The match amount can be met through cost share, in kind, or a combination of the two.
* All grantees can cover indirect costs with LSTA funds. The federal Office of Management and Budget provides a 10% indirect rate for institutions that do not have a federally negotiated rate.
* Costs for purchase of consultant services are allowed only if the spe­cific expertise and/or resource required are not readily available at MLS or the MBLC.

**Direct Grants to Libraries Program Background**

A State Advisory Council on Libraries (SACL), comprised of representatives from multi-type libraries and individuals who use them, acts as an advisory board to the program. The Board of Library Commissioners has final approval of SACL members and designates a Board liaison to serve on SACL.

Direct Grant applicants are required to submit a Letter of Intent notifying the MBLC of their desire to participate. Staff assistance is available to help applicants prepare applications that meet the criteria for the program. All Direct Grant applications are reviewed by SACL; its recommendations are forwarded to the Board of Library Commissioners for approval. All grants are monitored by assigned MBLC staff who provide support and guidance to ensure compliance with program criteria and all applicable federal and state requirements.

1. Guidelines include but are not limited to adherence to Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards regulations (Uniform Guidance) promulgated by the Office of Management and Budget ([2 C.F.R. part 200](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200?toc=1)) and [related IMLS guidance.](https://www.imls.gov/grants/manage-your-award/administration/legal-references) Recipients must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations included in the following certifications and as may be otherwise required by law: Civil Rights - Nondiscrimination (42 U.S.C. § 2000 *et seq.*) (29 U.S.C. § 701 *et seq.*, including § 794) (20 U.S.C. §§ 1681-1683, §§ 1685-1686) (42 U.S.C. § 1681-1683); Debarment and Suspension (2 CFR 3185) (2 C.F.R. part 180); Lobbying (31 U.S.C. § 1352); Internet Safety Certification (20 U.S.C. § 9134(f)); Trafficking in Persons (22 U.S.C. § 7104(g)) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)