Massachusetts Libraries Board of Library Commissioners
mass.gov/mblc

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS monthly regular meeting**

**Date** : Thursday, May 1, 2025

**Time** : 10:00 A.M.

**Place** : Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners Offices- Hybrid Meeting

Boston, MA

**Board**

**Present** : Vicky Biancolo, Chair; Timothy Cherubini, Vice-Chair; Karen Traub, Secretary;

George Comeau, Esq.; Debby Conrad; Joyce Linehan; Jessica Vilas Novas

**Absent :** Kate Chang

**Staff Present:**

Maureen Amyot, Director; Heather Backman, Library Building Specialist; Andrea Bono-Bunker, Library Building Consultant; Kate Butler, Library Information Systems Specialist; Celeste Bruno, Communications Director; Terry D'Angelo, Administrative Assistant / Business Office; Tanesha Deane, Contract Specialist; Tracey Dimant, Head of Operations & Budget / Business Office; Allyson Dowds, Consultant to Special Populations; Susan Faiella, Accountant; Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development; Al Hayden, Library Advisory Specialist; Rachel Masse, Assistant to the Director; Jaccavrie McNeely, Electronic Services Specialist; Cate Merlin, Head of State Programs; June Thammasnong, Communications Specialist

**Observers Present:**

Courtney Andree, Massachusetts Center for the Book; Eileen Chandler, CLAMS Library Network; Kim Charlson, Executive Director, Perkins School, Watertown; Sarah Jackson, Boston Public Library/LFC; Deborah Lang Froggatt, MA School Library Association; Marie Letarte, Director, Clinton; Jeanette Lungren, Network Administrator, C/W MARS; Philip McNulty, Minuteman Library Network; Libby O'Neill, Boyden Library, Foxboro; David Slater, OCLN, Braintree; Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director, Massachusetts Library System

**Meeting called to order by Chair Biancolo**

Chair Biancolo called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.

**Roll Call of Commissioners**

Commissioner Traub stated that she is required to take a roll call of Commissioners to comply with the Open Meeting Law for hybrid meetings.

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|  | Commissioner Cherubini- Present | Commissioner Linehan- Present |
| Commissioner Biancolo - Present | Commissioner Comeau- Present | Commissioner Traub- Present |
| Commissioner Chang - Present | Commissioner Conrad- Present Z | Commissioner Vilas Novas- Present |

**Approval of Minutes from the regular monthly meeting:**

**April 3, 2025**

Chair Biancolo asked if there were any corrections to the April 3, 2025 as presented.

Commissioner Conrad stated that she submitted minor corrections to Rachel Masse.

Minutes were approved with corrections submitted.

**Chair Report**

Chair Biancolo provided the following report.

* April 8: I met with Roles & Responsibilities ad hoc subcommittee
* April 11: I attended the library summit on social cohesion “Together We Thrive: Libraries as Catalysts for Social Cohesion” at Devens Common Center
* April 23: I attended a meeting of the Construction subcommittee
* April 23: I attended the eBoard meeting
* April 25: I attended MLA Legislative meeting

I submitted my April entry for the Mass Center for the Book Reading Challenge. To meet the prompt “A book about books, bookstores, or libraries,” I read *Bookshops & Bonedust* by Travis Baldree, prequel to *Legends & Lattes*. I recommend both.

Dr. Maria McCauley, Director of the Cambridge Public Library, has been elected president of the American Library Association for 2026-2027. She will start in June as ALA president-elect. During her term, she will continue to serve as director in Cambridge.

We all know that we are in an uncertain situation with already allocated federal funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). However, because of excellent planning, teamwork, and creative thinking, the MBLC staff is still doing the great work they do. At the moment, most programs are running as they normally would. The statewide databases, ComCat, Network grants, and direct grants are funded through the end of the current fiscal year.

However, the House Ways and Means Committee has released its FY2026 budget numbers, and all library lines have been level funded. This is below what was requested to provide level services, and coupled with the possible blow to federal funding, this is a funding crisis indeed. At the moment, we can’t do anything about the IMLS; we can try to do something about state funding.

The Massachusetts Library Association Legislative Committee recently posted a call to action on the allregions listserv, which deftly outlines the 7 budget amendments that have been filed to increase the MBLC’s budget lines. You can find it there, on the MLA website under “News,” or on their Facebook page.

Today I would like to speak to one of them, # 323 to H.4000, amends line 7000-9101, which is the MBLC administrative line. This line, along with IMLS funding, supports some MBLC salaries. The MBLC is already a very lean agency. With no staff to administer programs, even if we are adequately funded, those programs can’t run. To be clear, if we lose staff, we lose programs.

We know that when times get tough, our already busy libraries get busier. We need all voices to advocate for library funding increases. Please call your legislators, thank those who have filed amendments and ask those who have not signed on to do so. And call the Governor’s office. We need her support as well.

Keep an eye on the MBLC and MLA websites for updates about FY2026 funding.

**Commissioner Activities**

**Commissioner Cherubini**

* April 7- MLS Executive Board Meeting
* April 23- MBLC Executive Committee Meeting

**Commissioner Comeau**

* Attended virtual meeting of the Construction Subcommittee

**Commissioner Conrad**

* April 17 – monthly meeting of the Central Mass Library Advocates
* April 28 – monthly meeting of the Massachusetts Library Association Fall Advocacy Event planning subcommittee

**Commissioner Linehan**

* Attended virtual meeting of the Construction Subcommittee

**Commissioner Traub**

* April 8- Roles and Responsibilities working group
* April 8- United for Libraries webinar  “Ask the Experts-Trustees with Maura Deedy, Chris Chanyasulkit and Debra Doyle"
* April 10- Western Mass Library Advocates
* April 11- Summit on Social Cohesion "Together We Thrive: Libraries as Catalysts for Social Cohesion co-sponsored by MLS, MBLC and Simmons University"
* April 14- MBLC Trustee Advisory hour-virtual
* April 14- Mass Library Trustee Association newsletter planning
* April 22- Mass Library Trustee Association monthly meeting
* April 23- MBLC Executive Board meeting

**Commissioner Vilas Novas**

* April 8- ad hoc committee Commissioner Roles
* April 11 - Library Summit on Social Cohesion
* April 15 - Melrose Ribbon Cutting
* April 16 - MA DE Coalition
* April 18 - Tuned into the IMLS hearing
* reviewed the LSTA grants as part of my committee work

**Director’s Report**

Director Amyot provided the following report:

**Business Office**

The Business Office has been working fast and furiously to keep up with all the changing information regarding federal, and now state, funding as we started the final quarter of the fiscal year.

With everything we’ve planned for in our FY2026 budget (including all salary lines shifted from federal to state lines, spending cutbacks, cancellations, etc.), funding at the proposed level in the House Ways and Means budget would leave us short in our agency line, 7000-9101, for FY2026. This means that we would **not be able to cover the basic costs for the agency** – salaries and the lease on our office space. There isn’t any place else within our budget lines that funding can come from. We have adjusted everything we are able to into other state budget lines, and there are no other shifts that can be made. **This situation is dire,** in that we are at less than bare minimum right now as far as staffing, and in order to provide the services required in MGL Chapter 78, we need every single person we currently have. If we cut staff, we will have to cut services, and that would put us out of compliance with state law. Amendments have been filed on all of our budget lines, and it is imperative that legislators are informed of the consequences if additional funding isn’t included in our line.

All of this is in addition to the items that have been and would likely continue to be cut due to potential loss of federal funding, including:

* ALA/United for Libraries membership
* ARSL (Association for Rural and Small Libraries) membership
* Books for the MBLC library
* Boston Book Festival (likely)
* Gale/Cengage database (likely decreased or cut)
* Conserv (MNMX) – Environmental Monitoring program (likely)
* Coughlan database (likely decreased or cut)
* Encyclopedia Britannica database (likely decreased or cut)
* Direct Grant program
* Books to correctional institutions program
* OCLC/Webjunction training
* Perkins Access Training
* Preservation Grants
* Proquest databases (likely decreased or cut)
* SHLB (Schools Health and Libraries Broadband) Coalition membership
* Transparent Learning database (likely decreased or cut)

We continue to work on plans and are in constant communication with the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) and vendors as we figure out funding levels that would allow us to continue as many services as possible with the funds we have left.

**Communications**

For the federal response, the Communications Team continues coordinating media inquiries and getting information to the library community, Governor’s office, legislators, and the public. The [federal page on the MBLC agency website](https://mblc.state.ma.us/federal-cuts.php) is updated weekly along with the [agency blog](https://mblc.state.ma.us/mblc_blog/). A new webpage was created for the public [on the consumer portal](https://libraries.state.ma.us/federal-funding-at-risk). It breaks the information down into non-library jargon and includes impact statements.  
  
After receiving a record number of applications (114) for summer Bruins/Blades visits, the team has selected and scheduled the 12 communities that will receive visits. This does not include the kickoff—we’re excited to work with Woburn Public Library to host the kickoff this year. The player who will be featured on the Bruins READ poster and reading certificate is Bruins goalie Jeremy Swayman. The Boston Bruins are increasing their support for the summer program to make summer 2025 possible. The When You Read You Score partnership with the Boston Bruins was started in 2009 and is a critical part of the MBLC’s statewide efforts to promote library-based literacy.  
  
The team is also working with the Office of Economic Empowerment again this year on materials that benefit libraries and library patrons.

**Library Advisory and Development**

**Webinars and Events**

On April 2, 2025, Ally Dowds hosted the *Special Populations Deep Dive: Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth* webinar that was joined by 48 attendees to learn about the Commission’s annual recommendations, the Safe School Initiative, and opportunities for trainings and technical assistance to schools across the state.

The *Library Summit on Social Cohesion* was held on April 11, 2025, at the Devens Commons in Devens MA. This event was cosponsored by the MBLC, Massachusetts Library System, and Simmons University School of Library and Information Science. Over 150 people attended and heard presentations by Sandra Harris, co-founder and co-lead of the Massachusetts Coalition to Build Community and End Loneliness; Beth Wahler, a social work consultant, co-host of the Surviving the Stacks podcast, and author of Creating a Person-Centered Library: Best Practices for Supporting High-Needs Patrons; and Noah Lenstra, director of Let's Move in Libraries and author of Healthy Living at the Library.

On April 15, 2025, Al Hayden hosted *Census Bureau Data: A Deeper Dive into Your Community by the Numbers* that featured the U.S. Census Bureau’s Nicole Esburnett McKenzie. 42 attendees learned how to find population and demographic data for various geographies, using [data.census.gov](http://data.census.gov), the Census Bureau’s premiere online data platform. The session included a live demonstration of data.census.gov and showed how to download, use, and share a variety of maps, charts, data tables.

On April 17, 2025, Kate Butler, in association with the Social Law Library hosted the webinar *What Public Librarians Should Know About Immigration Law* that featured a presentation by Attorneys Matt Cameron and Nicole Micheroni of Cameron, Micheroni & Silvia. The wide-ranging presentation explained the basic concepts of immigration law which every librarian (and every American) should know. Topics included:

* What are the different types of immigration status and how can you help someone research their own?
* What resources are available to low-income and unhoused patrons?
* What are the most common reasons that people are detained by ICE and where are the best sources for reliable information on what is going on with immigration enforcement in 2025?
* What rights do you have if ICE visits your library?

**LSTA Update**

Due to the uncertain, and currently halted, IMLS funding, the MBLC has placed a hold on the awarding of grants for the foreseeable future. However, keeping with our grant cycle calendar we did receive 6 grant applications through our Impact and Inspire grant program.

Even though we are currently not able to award the grants, we are holding our annual SACL grant application review on May 6, 2025 via zoom. We are doing this for two reasons. First, if federal funds do become available, we will be ready to approve and award the grants quickly. Second, we feel that applicants will benefit from going through the review process by having a strong grant proposal that may be used to apply to other outside funders.

**State Programs**

**Construction**

For 2016-2017 grant round projects, Andrea Bono-Bunker celebrated the grand opening of the Melrose Public Library and visited the Swansea Public Library to assess construction progress. For 2023-2024 grant round projects, she and Heather Backman met with library directors by Zoom, planned and held the first of two identical workshops for Owner’s Project Managers on those projects, and continue to keep open communication with the project stakeholders.

Andrea and Heather also updated the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP) Procedure Manual for FY26, workshopped changes to the construction webpages, and began planning the next series of webinars for the Northeast Summit on Climate Adaptation for Library Facilities with the regional cohort.

Andrea completed evaluations and deliberated with peer jurors for the American Library Association/American Institute of Architects Library Building Awards, which will be announced in June 2025.

**State Aid**

The State Aid team is preparing for the FY26 State Aid cycle already- time flies!

Aparna Ramachandran has been updating all the LibStat reports as typos and errors are found, and has finished the statistics report for the [American Library Directory](https://www.americanlibrarydirectory.com/). She worked with the Business Office team to install the new copier drivers on all staff laptops and continues to work with them to finalize a more efficient and logical process for ordering and keeping track of small and large tech items. She is working on a plan to transition us to Windows 11 this summer, and will be re-focusing on the MBLC data warehouse now that most tech upgrades and updates are done for the moment.

Uechi Ng continues to prepare the FY26 Annual Report of Information Statistics (ARIS) report questions and is working with Baker & Taylor to prepare it for opening in June. She has also organized and coordinated all training webinars.

Jen Inglis finished the first round of edit checks for the Public Libraries Survey (PLS) (the report that compiles all the state’s data from the ARIS report for IMLS) and was able to get the information submitted before IMLS shut down. There is usually a second review and another round of edits that need to be done, but that isn't happening this year (as of now). Since there will likely not be more edit checks, the team will use Jen's work that has been completed thus far and will import that data to Collect/Connect so that libraries can access their FY24 data in Connect for running reports and creating graphs/charts.

Nationally, work on the PLS happens in three groups. Massachusetts is in group one, so most of the group one states’ data has been submitted and locked. 32 states and territories are not yet locked, so those State Data Coordinators who are finished are helping the remaining states get through the process without the assistance of the American Institute for Research (AIR), the vendor who processes the PLS for IMLS. They are meeting every other week. The goal is to have a healthy data set at each state level so that a federal set can be done when a solution is found.

It is also ramp up time for ARIS training, so Jen has been reviewing and updating the documentation. The team has made significant changes to the form (new questions, new edit checks to fix math early on), so there are lots of small pieces to move/edit/etc. In the short lull in her work created by the IMLS shutdown, Jen is working on an additional training tool that she has been wanting to do but hasn't had the extra time to work on - she is hoping that she can get this done so that it's ready for the trainings that begin in June.

Cate and Jen have led two State Aid Overview training courses for new Directors, and Cate will be leading another Baker & Taylor Connect training webinar in early May. She continues to work with libraries who are facing budget cuts for FY26, advising them on best practices for sharing information, working with advocates and municipalities, and how to meet State Aid requirements. She has scheduled a waiver training for early May - there is usually only one Waiver training in August, once the State Aid process is underway, but with so many libraries facing uncertain budgets, it is important that libraries understand the process and can explain it to their municipalities early in the budget cycle. Cate is putting together PowerPoint presentations to add to the agency website for these two trainings, so library staff can access the information as needed.

Cate continues to hold bimonthly State Aid Office Hours over zoom, and to connect with library directors one-on-one and in person. She is also finalizing an informational email to be sent out to all new Directors, including all details and requirements of the State Aid program, so that new Directors are aware of the program from their first day on the job, even if they won't need the information for a few months. She wants all directors to be prepared, especially as budgets (and the world) remain uncertain.

**Director Activities**

Although the overwhelming majority of my time and attention was consumed with federal funding cuts, the state budget, and agency planning, I did manage to fit in a few other activities.

I attended a lunch meeting and presentation from the current American Library Association president, Cindy Hohl, who was visiting Cambridge on a tour of libraries around the country. Following that meeting, several MLS board members and I participated in a virtual focus group for the MLS strategic plan via zoom from Cambridge.

I spoke with reporters from WGBH Radio, WWLP, the Boston Globe, and MassterList about the cuts that were announced at last month’s board meeting and the impact going forward. I shared links, when reporters provided them, with the board and staff, and they were shared to the library community as well. I want to thank Celeste Bruno again for all her help and support with drafting weekly messages and prep work for media interviews. She really knows how to make our agency shine!

I was able to attend the Library Summit on Social Cohesion mentioned earlier in this report, and joined Andrea Bono-Bunker and Celeste Bruno at the ribbon cutting for the Melrose Public Library. Commissioner Vilas Novas gave a wonderful and positive speech that was just the message everyone in the crowd needed to hear in these sometimes dark times. The new library is magnificent, and I hope we will get to hold a board meeting there soon.

I participated in the meetings with vendors to begin discussions about downsizing our database offerings, and met separately with Sarah Sogigian from the Massachusetts Library System on the same topic.

I also had numerous meetings with staff and legal counsel regarding a bid protest on the Amherst Jones Library construction project. Andrea and I had a contentious meeting with Amherst this week, and due to a bid protest, we weren’t sure we would be able to award their funding before the deadline. The Attorney General resolved the bid protest on April 24 without a hearing, so the project will move forward.

**Legislative Report**

Rob Favini provided following report:

**FY26 State Budget Update**

Monday, April 28th marked the beginning of House debate on the budget. Rep. Michlewitz, Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, set the tone by stating the following on the first day of debate:

* Our FY 26 budget is a reflection of not only the chaotic situation currently in Washington, but also the economic situation we have currently here in the commonwealth.
* Despite this, our budget proposal must consider all of the unknowns that may or may not come out of Washington or beyond. Considering all of this uncertainty, this budget contains no taxes or revenue increases. Now is not the time to introduce new taxes to our residents or to our businesses.
* We also feel that controlling the growth of the commonwealth's budget is critical at this time, which is why the house's bottom line is nearly $600 million below Her Excellency, the governor's H1 budget proposal…

<https://www.statehousenews.com/news/legislature/house/sessions/house-session-summary---monday-april-28-2025/article_6d91071c-21cd-420e-9b85-b5ae1f8a9254.html>

House debate is scheduled to last one week.

MBLC Budget Line Amendments

Included in the 1,650 amendments to the House budget are ones for each of the MBLC’s seven budget lines. Over the past week all of the MBLC budget line amendments have seen a healthy uptick in co-sponsorship signups. You can track where our budget amendments stand on [MBLC’s FY 2026 Budget Amendment spreadsheet](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1miAo3HEH6OLf_dsEnaucmWV_Bhgmyv0bk4IcpVCHVFg/edit?usp=sharing).

**Library Related Bills**

The Massachusetts Library Association’s Legislative Committee (MLA Leg) has been meeting with numerous state legislators to discuss a number of library related bills that are in committee. In addition to the Freedom to Read (S.2328/H.3594) and eBook Overview (H3595) bills left over from last legislative session, there are an additional 17 bills that MLA Leg is tracking relating to libraries, education, and digital equity. The MLA Leg have been tracking the bills on a [spreadsheet](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11vRKVTdUdnHrNTHvKnsYXKzsbyzFrOC4LEJjNKheFiw/edit?usp=sharing) that they hope to have posted on the MLA website.

**IMLS Update**

The situation at the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has been constantly evolving. At the time of this update we believe that the office is being run by an administrator, a lawyer, and three staffers to process reimbursement requests. To put this in perspective when fully staffed the IMLS had over 70 staff that included 30 reimbursement processors. To date the Massachusetts’ Grants to State Allotment has not been terminated. However, the IMLS office has been hollowed out to a point where there is a great deal of uncertainty that requests for grant fund reimbursements will be processed. We currently have a reimbursement that has not been executed with no explanation. Due to this the MBLC has stopped spending all IMLS funds.

Court Cases Proceed

The library community is following two court cases with interest. Both seek to halt the Trump administration’s [Executive Order 14238](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/continuing-the-reduction-of-the-federal-bureaucracy/__;!!CPANwP4y!V-9L2kqQTjbXGNVyHz09pOYTak2pQwk64SazNPyTYmZQflBHYEG3-WcjGRf1BNt7OINHoo65SWRnB4tXesBu4PCJU4sG163S$) targeting the IMLS.

* [R.I. District Court Holds Motion Hearing on Fate of IMLS](https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/libraries/article/97591-r-i-district-court-holds-motion-hearing-on-fate-of-imls.html)
* [American Library Association, AFSCME Challenge Trump Administration Gutting of Institute of Museum and Library Services](https://www.ala.org/news/2025/04/american-library-association-afscme-challenge-trump-administration-gutting-institute)

The Future of the IMLS

Finally, we got an indication of what the future holds for the IMLS. State library agencies received the following letter from IMLS Acting Director Sonderling. In it he outlines the conditions that will have to be met to accept future funding. We are currently working with the Attorney General’s office and our legal counsel to craft a response.

Letter: **TO: Chief Officers**    
**CC: LSTA Coordinators**

Pursuant to 20 USC § 9134 and your obligations under the Grant Award Guidance and Statement of Assurances and Certifications, please provide IMLS with the following information:

Whether and how federal taxpayer dollars provided to you under the Grants to States program have been used, or are still being used, to subsidize programs that conflict with government policy as found below:

* + Executive Order [14151,](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.federalregister.gov/executive-order/14151__;!!CPANwP4y!U7w7M4OKRUopYfMvd4U_NNsFXySWzCA_Jja7BfZKDv_NSKZtEQ5LALLK3xtCfu3TIio7PjsjwdRgP0R83ieJ$) Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing, and
  + Executive Order [14253](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/04/03/2025-05838/restoring-truth-and-sanity-to-american-history__;!!CPANwP4y!U7w7M4OKRUopYfMvd4U_NNsFXySWzCA_Jja7BfZKDv_NSKZtEQ5LALLK3xtCfu3TIio7PjsjwdRgPyoDKtMs$), Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History, and
  + Executive Orders [13899](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/12/16/2019-27217/combating-anti-semitism__;!!CPANwP4y!U7w7M4OKRUopYfMvd4U_NNsFXySWzCA_Jja7BfZKDv_NSKZtEQ5LALLK3xtCfu3TIio7PjsjwdRgP511KAD8$) and [14188](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/02/03/2025-02230/additional-measures-to-combat-anti-semitism__;!!CPANwP4y!U7w7M4OKRUopYfMvd4U_NNsFXySWzCA_Jja7BfZKDv_NSKZtEQ5LALLK3xtCfu3TIio7PjsjwdRgP3RRBkgA$), Combating Anti-Semitism and Additional Measures To Combat Anti-Semitism, and
  + Executive Order [14168](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/01/30/2025-02090/defending-women-from-gender-ideology-extremism-and-restoring-biological-truth-to-the-federal__;!!CPANwP4y!U7w7M4OKRUopYfMvd4U_NNsFXySWzCA_Jja7BfZKDv_NSKZtEQ5LALLK3xtCfu3TIio7PjsjwdRgP_9Y8CZs$), Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government, and
  + Executive Order [14202](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/02/12/2025-02611/eradicating-anti-christian-bias__;!!CPANwP4y!U7w7M4OKRUopYfMvd4U_NNsFXySWzCA_Jja7BfZKDv_NSKZtEQ5LALLK3xtCfu3TIio7PjsjwdRgP9-Pi2bx$), Eradicating Anti-Christian Bias, and
  + Executive Order [14190](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/02/03/2025-02232/ending-radical-indoctrination-in-k-12-schooling__;!!CPANwP4y!U7w7M4OKRUopYfMvd4U_NNsFXySWzCA_Jja7BfZKDv_NSKZtEQ5LALLK3xtCfu3TIio7PjsjwdRgP1ZLVp5r$), Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling, and

1. How federal taxpayer dollars provided to you under the Grants to States program are being used to facilitate access to resources that cultivate an educated and informed American citizenry, and
2. How you plan to involve your agencies in the upcoming celebration of the 250th anniversary of the United States of America?

Kindly provide this information **by Monday, May 5, 2025** to [**stateprograms@imls.gov**](mailto:stateprograms@imls.gov) with the subject line “Response to IMLS Request for Information.”

IMLS appreciates your dedication to serving the American public.

Sincerely,

s/ Keith Sonderling

Keith E. Sonderling  
Acting Director

**Report from Massachusetts Library System**

**Strategic Initiative 1**

**MLS ensures its services are sustainable, prioritize member needs, and equitably serve all member types.**

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| Goal | Actions | Measurement of Success | **Monthly work towards goal** |
| MLS ensures service value to all member types. | MLS will create new avenues for active member engagement, including task forces, class leaders, and project engagements. | *MLS will report to member libraries on an annual basis the number of active member engagements.* | Changes made by the new School Library Membership Policy are being implemented.  Sarah Sogigian and Rob Favini (MBLC) launched their 2023 Road Trip program  Two Masscat public library members (Huntington and Becket) have signed contracts to join C/WMARS, with support from MLS. |
| MLS will continue to strengthen its partnerships and collaborations to allow MLS to focus on what it does uniquely well. | Utilizing the newly created partnership policy and process, MLS will explore possible partnership work with the Library for the Commonwealth and other organizations. | *MLS will report to member libraries on an annual basis the value of their partnerships.* | We launched the five-part webinar series with ALA on intellectual freedom topics. Three webinars occurred in February with 176 participants at the live events and 94 views of the recordings. Two additional webinars will occur in March. Recordings of the webinars will be available for 18 months.  We continued working with MBLC and other organizations to host a webinar series on mental health supports and libraries. One webinar occurred in February and two will occur in March.  Staff from MLS, MBLC, public libraries, and other New England state libraries began the *Touchpoints for Libraries* train- the-trainer program to teach the Touchpoints program to Massachusetts library staff. The training will continue in March.  We continued working with other New England states on this year’s Summer Summit, to help libraries prepare for the youth and adult summer library program. The event is scheduled for March 31. |
| New services will be designed to deliver the greatest statewide impact, able to expand and contract due to available funding and need. | MLS will evaluate current, new, and proposed services using a new internal service review process. | *MLS will ensure that services are able to expand and contract due to available funding, need, and capacity.* |  |

# **Strategic Initiative 2**

**MLS empowers leaders to emerge at every level of library service, connecting staff throughout the stages of their careers.**

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| Goal | Actions | Measurement of Success | **Monthly work towards goal** |
| MLS promotes excellence and continuity by providing professional development, conversation, and community around leadership. | Together with our partners, MLS will lead the planning of learning opportunities on leadership and management topics and ensure networking options in our engagements. | *MLS will report to member libraries on an annual basis the leadership and management learning opportunities hosted and the reflection from participants.* | We scheduled a series of four workshops with the Employers Association of the NorthEast on HR topics relevant for libraries (employment Law, interviewing, performance management, and documentation skills). They will take place March through May.  We are working with EANE to schedule four community chats on HR related topics. |
| Leadership, professional development, and networking opportunities will have flexible offerings in order to include participants from various library types, library sizes, and resources. | MLS will explore the creation of grants and/or scholarship opportunities to support member library staff in their professional development work. | *MLS will report to member libraries on an annual basis the number of opportunities available, awarded, and the reflection from participants.* | We launched the Language Learning Grant program and approved 20 applications in February. |

# **Strategic Initiative 3**

**MLS will take the lead in facilitating important conversations, and support member-facing initiatives focused on DEI: diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and social justice.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Goal | Actions | Measurement of Success | **Monthly work towards goal** |
| MLS will integrate the core values of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and social justice into its policies, practices, procedures, and programs. | Utilizing learnings from our work last year, MLS will continue its review of documents, resources and practices to ensure they align with core values.  In partnership with trusted experts, MLS will begin an accessibility audit of MLS services. | *MLS will demonstrate both increased resource allocation as well as substantive, visible progress in representation throughout MLS services.* |  |
| Following the lead of trusted experts, MLS will build awareness in using the DEI tenets with member library staff to identify and eliminate barriers to inclusive library services. | Utilizing established services, MLS will showcase member libraries that are using the core values of DEI within their communities. | *MLS will report to member libraries on an annual basis the DEI learning opportunities hosted and the reflection from participants.* |  |

**Report from the Library of the Commonwealth**

Sarah Jackson provided the following report:

**Digital Services Update:**

The Statewide digitization team launched a new quarterly email newsletter, "The Statewide Scanner," for partner institutions. The newsletter will keep partners informed about new collections added to the Digital Commonwealth repository, Statewide activities, and upcoming events and opportunities for engagement. This initiative is part of a Statewide refresh project that is underway, which aims to update the program’s service and outreach strategy for FY26. We’ll be sharing more about the refresh effort at a Statewide Digital Town Hall on Zoom on May 1, 2025, for which more than 150 people have registered.

The Statewide Digital Town Hall is on **Thursday, May 1 at 1:00 PM** via Zoom. Learn more about our vision for the future and to address any questions you might have about the Digital Commonwealth program. Register [**here**](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2F47h6dyvab.cc.rs6.net%2Ftn.jsp%3Ff%3D001syYmzIPq1E45PS0nJ-cJ3c_GD3dDb9WZ4eg7xKGBD3t-fnLr_EYdBbEpNqrc2wqTF0NanLYU95OW6GiWSZ-XwDrzZBQYQ_z_QsxUG4jP3YeMvHV8HCyhWZz5S1DLRx3c1Stie3jwMavgCB2HkRAnFmNgA4KtTicqoktOsOSs43K-Q5QMIxfCF0St2b2uCNjvD7p4pys9myY22mXg2QLK6kqwUCnc-H06%26c%3DPOpGTW-VLPh9rFIlOvevYUjVPwr3fFOeMuVL57_-2-U9tACYJDJqWg%3D%3D%26ch%3D9arhkHDv8FK2iqk4fYLUlzy-5xf4LgGktNx542bKxq8HBzA6e2KiZQ%3D%3D&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7C90ee80dc530647b94b0608dd784287ea%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638798949373945672%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=kEfWJvroyYV0Ho%2F1P%2BI3rLlqOE5gk55ZEvNjawcemvI%3D&reserved=0) for the town hall.

If you cannot access the link directly, you can cut and paste the following link to register:

<https://boston-public-library.zoom.us/meeting/register/2fUvfQtETpaML7bXzZD4hg#/registration>

**Community Learning Update:**

Excel High School Update:

There are currently 100 students actively enrolled in the scholarship program for Excel Adult High School. 18 of those students have enrolled since the beginning of the 2025 calendar year, including 12 in the past 30 days. We have 61 total graduates - 17 since the start of the 2025 calendar year, including 4 in the past 30 days.

**Community History Updates Match/April 2025**

Dory Klein, Community History Supervisor

Program highlights:

A Night of Line Dancing with Gays for Patsy Dance Club: Gays for Patsy is a queer line dancing group that was born at a Pride march in the 80s, and has become a vital and longstanding source of gathering, advocacy, and joy in Boston's queer community. The event was a line dancing class, with a baked-in history lesson; a couple of the long-timers shared the history and context around the group, while reaching new and familiar audiences. This program served as an example of the ways in which Community History programs offer space and platforms for community organizations, grassroots groups, and individuals to share the histories of which they are a part. 25 people attended and March programming statistics: 5 programs attended by 112 people

**April 2025**

**Oral History Live:** Trans Stories Panel with SpeakOUT: Presented in partnership with The History Project and SpeakOUT Boston, this panel highlighted the lives and experiences of trans Bostonians; 27 people attended this moving program, and attendees were deeply affected and engaged throughout. Patron testimony included: “People on the panel spoke from the heart and touched mine” and “Do more queer and trans programming!”

**History Slam! Community Activism in Boston:** On April 28, Community History and the Community Learning Department are partnering on a pilot history slam, during which patrons will present (pre-selected) PowerPoints about histories of local activism and community organizing.

**Presentations**

The Community History Department spoke on a panel at the conference of the Association of Asian American Studies with our Boston Research Center colleagues from Northeastern University, along with Vivian WuWong of the Immigrant History Trail and Chinatown Community Land Trust. We spoke about what the Community History Department offers, the nature of our BRC partnership, and spoke at length about the Chinatown History

Directory (including highlights about the site’s upcoming aesthetic and usability facelift). <https://chinatowncollections.library.northeastern.edu/>

**Digital Commonwealth Update:**

**Hosted collections added:**

Boston Public Library:

* [The Boston Traveler](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3Azc780x32d&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7Cef834378dab5435b7a5408dd720640ec%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638792093389763557%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=KdffqQ1d2PHmsF2hoipgKoSkhCIXuOnc7125IusRmiQ%3D&reserved=0) (1,776 items; issues of the daily newspaper from 1925-1931)
* [Joseph Connolly Courtroom Sketches](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3A5x2222386&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7Cef834378dab5435b7a5408dd720640ec%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638792093389786351%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=eBMaIHWecFoL6KzsZNj85zmSHMYprVaM3l%2Bz3PwVSPA%3D&reserved=0) (286 items; courtroom sketches by a Massachusetts artist from 1975-1999)
* [Medieval and Early Renaissance Manuscripts](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3Anp193j758&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7Cef834378dab5435b7a5408dd720640ec%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638792093389802038%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=lkdzlZDogaWkOJYcAP8TKplOBNSy1LPubf6yd1yaT7g%3D&reserved=0) (1 item; illuminated prayer book from the late 15th century)
* [Our Bodies Ourselves](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3Aww72jn567&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7Cef834378dab5435b7a5408dd720640ec%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638792093389817917%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=dSBFWp8ldSlxIcH675Oo%2FdFIyEHA0tVeorXTEeu1vWQ%3D&reserved=0) (6 items; early editions of the groundbreaking women's health publication from 1971-1973

Heritage Museum and Gardens:

* [Peter K. Meier Cranberry Collection](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3Abg25g043d&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7Cef834378dab5435b7a5408dd720640ec%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638792093389832904%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=APu8IUJl4WdKvtyNVymP9USygfruIMCBq8xKYtSjkLM%3D&reserved=0) (184 items; cranberry barrel stencils and labels from the late 1800s and early 1900s)

Ipswich Public Library:

* [Streets of Old Ipswich, 1634](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3A61092s980&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7Cef834378dab5435b7a5408dd720640ec%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638792093389848090%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=CjxJtsN3Paju4HCTB2GuJ6lxV4vHiSz0d2UMezwQUxk%3D&reserved=0) (1 item; history of properties in 17th-century Ipswich with hand-drawn maps)

Millicent Library:

* [The Fairhaven Star](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3A2n501k66p&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7Cef834378dab5435b7a5408dd720640ec%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638792093389866156%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=3fUI33kXQvEck71fjAOiqeexdO%2FuF9szlgNLJfAwm0A%3D&reserved=0) (4,540 items; issues of the weekly newspaper from 1880-1967)
* [http://The Star]The Star (49 items; issues of the weekly newspaper from 1879-1880)

**Harvested collections added:**

[Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute Library](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Finstitutions%2Fcommonwealth%3Aj3860924v&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7Cef834378dab5435b7a5408dd720640ec%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638792093389881811%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=X4l3g9341DCwMYzfvZha3cBE03guGoyJxPexmu%2Bhke4%3D&reserved=0) - 137 new items

**Stats:**

Item views: 146,406

Total item-level records: 1,376,152

Total hosted items: 692,890

**Unfinished Business and General Orders**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Deborah Lang Froggatt, Outreach Director presented the following report:

MSLA Report - May 1, 2025

1. MSLA Call to Action

* [HD.625](https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/HD625), [HD.1221](https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/HD1221)  School Library Standards Bill:  Representative Puppolo filed [HD.4488](https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/HD4488). He signed on to  [S.428](https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/SD1769).

State House Meetings: SO - signed on; NSO- not signed on

4/22/25: Sen. Comerford, Rep. Linsky (SO & attended), Rep. Owens (NSO), Rep. Ashe (NSO), Sen. Fattman (NSO), Sen. Crighton (NSO)

* 4/23/25: Rep. Sabadosa (SO); Sen. DiDomenico (NSO), Rep. Montano (SO & attended), Sen. Oliveira (SO)
* One Pagers: [School Library Media Month w/ Standards Bill Legislation](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1suD_xp26xm0mJjv13900cJ4e_qkTwTKm/view?usp=sharing)

1. School Librarian Evaluation Rubric

* Finalized by the end of the month and implemented in September
* Based on new [DESE Teacher SISP](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/) (linked here below new teacher rubric)

1. DESE  Update

* Welcome Letter to new Commissioner Pedro Martinez:

\*To review  Literacy Launch, ask to be involved in MCAS update, and review librarian rubric.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:22 AM



Karen Traub

Secretary