

# MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS

FOR THE **COMMON GOOD** SINCE **1890**

## MBLC Service Update

January 28, 2026



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### MBLC Monthly Board Meeting on February 5 (*Hybrid*)

Contact: [Rachel Masse](#)

The regular [monthly board meeting](#) of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners is scheduled for **10AM on Thursday, February 5, 2026, at the MBLC Office, 90 Canal Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA.**

### MBLC to Restore Research Databases

After uncertainty surrounding federal funding and the fallout from [Executive Order 14238](#) caused [significant cuts to statewide research databases in May of 2025](#), the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) has started a phased process to restore some databases starting in July of 2026. [In December, IMLS funding was reinstated. For more about the MBLC restoring research databases, visit the MBLC website for the press release.](#)

### Explore Grants Awarded as Part of Federal Rebuild

Contact: [Lyndsay Forbes, Rob Favini](#)

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) is pleased to announce that 12 libraries have received a combined \$58,500 as the FY2026 recipients of Explore Grants. These grants were initially awarded in FY2025, but had to be [cancelled due to federal funding cuts to the Institute of Museum and Library Services \(IMLS\)](#). The MBLC uses federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding from IMLS to provide Explore Grants that improve library services, collections, and programs. [In December, IMLS funding was reinstated. For more about these Explore Grants, visit the MBLC website.](#)

### Shutesbury Public Library Grand Opening

Contact: [Andrea Bono-Bunker, Heather Backman](#)

The Shutesbury Public Library celebrated their grand opening and ribbon cutting on January 10, 2026. [Shutesbury was awarded a Small Libraries Construction grant in 2022](#) as part of the Small Library Pilot Project from the MBLC's [Massachusetts Public Library Program \(MPLCP\)](#). [For photos from Shutesbury Public Library's Grand Opening, visit the MBLC Flickr album.](#)

### MBLC Strategic Planning Focus Groups ([Multiple Locations](#) in-person)

- [Tuesday, February 3 at 1:30PM at Lakeville Public Library - Registration & More Information](#)

- [Friday, February 13 at 1:30PM at Cape Cod Community College - Registration & More Information](#)
- [Wednesday, February 25 at 10AM at Greenfield Public Library - Registration & More Information](#)

Library workers, users, partners, stakeholders, and community members are invited to share their thoughts, concerns, and questions about the future directions of Massachusetts Libraries broadly and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC), the Commonwealth's state agency that supports libraries through funding, guidance, partnerships, and the coordination of statewide services. Learn more about the MBLC, its mission, and its current programs and services by visiting [the agency's website](#).

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## [\*\*Order the 2026 State Aid to Public Libraries Guide for Municipal Officials\*\*](#)

Contact: [Celeste Bruno, June Thammasnong](#)

[The 2026 State Aid to Public Libraries: Guide for Municipal Officials](#) is [available to order](#) and be shipped to your library **free of cost**. This booklet is a guide for local and public officials about the importance of the State Aid to Public Libraries Program, including why staying State Aid certified matters. [The 2026 State Aid to Public Libraries Guide for Municipal Officials](#) can also be downloaded and printed from the MBLC Awarehouse at any time.

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## [\*\*19<sup>th</sup> Annual Bruins PJ Drive\*\*](#)

Contact: [Rachel Masse](#)

We're once again joining the Boston Bruins, Cradles to Crayons and DCF/Wonderfund to collect pajamas for kids in need from February 1 to March 15 (It's OK if you don't want to do the full 6 weeks!) The goal is to collect 10,000 pairs of new PJs!

### **Here's how it works:**

- [Register to participate in the PJ Drive through Cradles to Crayons](#)
- Pajamas *should not* be placed in MLS delivery.
  - Cradles to Crayons is state-wide, please contact them to arrange picks up for the pajamas your library collects. If you have a problem reaching someone, please [contact Rachel Masse by email](#) or cell phone, (857) 488-6953.
  - We are reaching out to the DCF/ Wonderfund for an updated list of gatekeepers and pajama drop-off locations.
- [Bruins PJ Drive promotional materials are available to download and print on the MBLC Awarehouse.](#)
- Library Patrons can make individual donations through the [Amazon Wish List](#) and PJs get sent to directly to Cradles to Crayons. ([Printable flyer with the Amazon Wishlist QR code is available at the MBLC Awarehouse.](#))

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## **Help for New Americans**

Contact: [Ally Dowds](#)

Information about [LUCE Immigrant Justice Network of Massachusetts](#), Know Your Rights Guides, Immigration Resources, Family Preparedness and Citizenship can be found at the [MBLC's New American Resources page](#). The page also includes a Library Resource Guide with links to gathered information from several Massachusetts libraries and [ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom Office on Libraries and Immigration Enforcement](#).

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## **Justice Involved Library Services: A Roundtable Discussion (Online)**

**Contact:** [Ally Dowds](#)

[Thursday, February 5 at 1PM - Registration & More Information](#)

Connect with fellow librarians providing library services to individuals currently and formerly experiencing incarceration in state, county and youth facilities in Massachusetts. Join this conversation to exchange ideas, collaborate on projects, and build a supportive community. **Whether you work directly in a carceral facility, have experience collaborating with institutions to provide outreach, or you are a librarian interested in developing an outreach partnership**, this meetup group provides a forum to come together for meaningful discussion and resource sharing.

Registration is not required. This is an existing group that meets monthly on the first Thursday at 1pm.

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### **State Aid Office Hours**

**Contact:** [Cate Merlin, Jen Inglis](#)

[Wednesday, February 4 at 10AM – More Information & Zoom Link](#)

[Wednesday, February 18 at 2PM – More Information & Zoom Link](#)

Join the MBLC State Aid team and your fellow Library Directors seeking advice and answers as we embark upon the FY27 budget season. Make sure your next budget, materials spending, and hours open fully meet State Aid requirements. FY27 is shaping up to be a rough budget year for many municipalities- ask your budget and certifications questions here.

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### **State Aid Waiver & Certification Workshop (Online)**

**Contact:** [Cate Merlin, Jen Inglis](#)

[Wednesday, February 10 at 10AM – More Information & Zoom Link](#)

Is your library facing budget issues for FY27? Are you facing a municipal override vote this spring, and want to know how a failed override and reduced budget will affect your library's State Aid and Certification?

In this workshop, we'll review the FY27 MAR (Municipal Appropriation Requirement), the MAR Waiver Application process if your budget does not meet the MAR, and how you can make your case to your municipalities for a stable and funded library budget. We'll go over what State Aid Certification means, what is lost if a library budget is drastically cut, and have time for individual questions at the end.

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### **State Aid Overview (Online)**

**Contact:** [Cate Merlin, Jen Inglis](#)

[Thursday, February 26 at 10AM – More Information & Registration](#)

This session is geared towards new and/or acting directors to provide an introduction to and overview of the State Aid to Public Libraries program and the requirements that need to be met in order to qualify for State Aid to Public Libraries funds.

**\*\*Please note:** This is not a workshop about how to fill out the surveys/forms. Those workshops will be held in June/July for the Annual Report Information Survey (ARIS) and in August/September for the Financial Report/Compliance Form for State Aid to Public Libraries.

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### **Web Accessibility Office Hours (Online)**

**Contact:** [Jaccavrie McNeely, Kate Butler](#)

[Friday, February 6 at 11AM – More Information & Zoom Link](#)

## [Wednesday, February 18 at 3PM – More Information & Zoom Link](#)

Need help making your web content accessible? MBLC staff are here to help! Join our office hours every first Friday at 11AM or third Wednesday at 3PM. View all upcoming Web Accessibility programming under the [Internet, Technology, and Access category](#) on our calendar.

## **Library Advisory Office Hours (Online)**

Contact: [Al Hayden](#)

[Monday, February 9 at 9AM - More Information & Zoom Link](#)

[Monday, February 23 at 2PM - More Information & Zoom Link](#)

Open to all Directors, Trustees, Library Friends, and Foundation Members. They are designed to be an open-ended, safe space for questions and interaction among participants. Sessions will NOT be recorded, and chats will NOT be saved. Registration is not required; stop by anytime during the hour!

## **Introduction to Canva for Library Advocates (Online)**

Contact: [Al Hayden](#)

[Tuesday, February 17 at 12PM - More Information & Zoom Link](#)

Library advocates are increasingly asked to communicate with library supporters across different platforms and in different ways. In this program, you will get an introduction to the basics of Canva with a focus on tools you can use to advocate for your library. Live demonstrations will get you started creating, editing, and adapting designs like infographics, flyers, newsletters, and more that can be used for fundraising, advocacy, and communications about your mission. **This session will be recorded, and the recording will be sent out to all registrants**, regardless of whether they are able to attend live.

## **Core Connections: Supporting Aging Populations (Online)**

Contact: [Ally Dowds](#)

[Thursday, Febuary 12 at 2PM - Registration & More Information](#)

Libraries are uniquely positioned to support aging adults with programs, spaces, and services that enhance lifelong learning, social connection, health, and independence. Participants will learn about statewide resources and gain practical strategies for developing age-friendly environments, strengthening digital literacy support, and cultivating partnerships with local aging-services organizations. Whether your library already has robust senior programming or is just beginning to plan, this session will offer tools and inspiration for serving older adults with purpose and creativity. [Learn more about the topics to come at the MBLC's Core Connections page.](#)

## **Library Trustee Orientation (Online)**

Contact: [Al Hayden](#)

[Wednesday, February 4 at 7PM – More Information](#)

[Wednesday, February 11 at 7PM – More Information](#)

Libraries need active and engaged trustees now more than ever. If you are a new trustee hoping to learn more about your role or a more seasoned trustee looking for a deeper understanding of the basics, you are invited to the MBLC's Library Trustee Orientation.

[If you would like to sign up for the remaining 2 sessions, please register for the 1<sup>st</sup> session on January 21.](#)

- If you are waitlisted, [please register anyway](#) to receive the recordings and resources.
- **Sessions will be recorded and sent to all registrants**

- Resources (including slides) will be sent to all registrants

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## **MBLC Monthly Board Meeting on March 5 (*Hybrid*)**

Contact: [Rachel Masse](#)

The regular [monthly board meeting](#) of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners is scheduled for **10AM on Thursday, February 5, 2026, at the Massachusetts Library Systems Offices in Marlborough.**

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## **Justice Involved Library Services: A Roundtable Discussion (*Online*)**

Contact: [Ally Dowds](#)

[Thursday, March 5 at 1PM - Registration & More Information](#)

Connect with fellow librarians providing library services to individuals currently and formerly experiencing incarceration in state, county and youth facilities in Massachusetts. Join this conversation to exchange ideas, collaborate on projects, and build a supportive community. **Whether you work directly in a carceral facility, have experience collaborating with institutions to provide outreach, or you are a librarian interested in developing an outreach partnership**, this meetup group provides a forum to come together for meaningful discussion and resource sharing.

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