

Massachusetts Libraries

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS

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FY2027 Library eBooks and Audiobooks (LEA) Content Program Fact Sheet

Background

Three networks (SAILS, OCLN and Minuteman) piloted a new inter-network lending model with the vendor OverDrive beginning in the winter of 2017-18. The pilot allowed, for the first time, patrons of one network to check out eBooks and Audiobooks from the collection of another network. Over the course of the next year, the remaining automated networks having OverDrive collections joined the program. By May 2019, with the on boarding of the final two networks, the Library eBook and Audiobook (LEA) lending program was available statewide. In addition, the SAILS network serves as the access point through which MassCat members and unaffiliated libraries may participate. MLS manages these participants.

Purpose

The LEA program creates a statewide eContent system more closely approximating how books and other physical materials are shared. However, the current marketplace for digital books bears little resemblance to that for physical books and media. Prices and license periods for eContent are in constant flux and often trend in ways harmful to library budgets. The LEA Content Grants funding will significantly supplement networks' own collection development purchases, will help reduce hold queues and patron wait times, and increase the breadth of the collection.

The LEA Networks' OverDrive platform fees will also be covered by grant funds as part of their participation in this program. Said fees will be paid out of account 7000-9702 (LSTA). For the Boston instance of OverDrive, BPL will be the platform grant recipient rather than MBLN.

Procedures

Each network provides MBLC with both the network spending and individual library spending on shareable content for the previous three fiscal years. Title and holdings counts of each network's shareable OverDrive collection are obtained directly from OverDrive. Items which are not shareable via LEA -- eMagazines, cost per circ, simultaneous use products, and non-shareable OverDrive Advantage copies -- are not eligible for inclusion. Awards will be calculated with a common base amount for each network, with the remaining funds apportioned based on the data provided: 50% for total spending and 50% for holdings.

All funds must be spent on eContent that is shareable through the LEA program and must be fully expended by the end of the fiscal year in which they are awarded.

Reporting

After the end of each fiscal year, networks will provide a narrative and expenditure report showing how the grant funds were expended, along with lending statistics for their shareable eContent collections.

Eligible Applicants

The eight networks participating in LEA having their own OverDrive platforms are eligible to apply: CLAMS, CW MARS, MBLN, Minuteman, MVLC, NOBLE, OCLN and SAILS.

Calendar

- Survey sent to Networks: July 10, 2026
- Surveys and Request Form due: August 14, 2026
- Meet with Networks to discuss preliminary figures: September 2026
- Board votes grant awards: October 2026

Anticipated Funding

The total available for this grant will be determined once the FY27 7000-9506 budget is known. The anticipated available amount for FY27 is \$1,000,000. If the total amount of funds available changes, the same formula will be used to re-calculate the award amounts.

To Apply

Complete the reporting survey for this program and submit the request form via email to: amy.clayton@mass.gov (Amy Clayton) via email by **4:00 PM on August 14, 2026**.

Questions?

Questions about this grant program should be directed to Jaccavrie McNeely, Electronic Services Specialist, at jaccavrie.mcneely@mass.gov, 617-725-1860 x238 or 800-952-7403.