Massachusetts Libraries

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS

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FY2027 Network Infrastructure Fact Sheet

Background

The Network Infrastructure program provides annual support for the capital and infrastructure costs of the nine automated resource sharing networks that form the foundation for essential library services throughout the Commonwealth. This grant was first offered in FY15, replacing LSTA funding provided under the *Network Connections and Servers* targeted grant category.

Purpose

The Network Infrastructure Program provides a highly predictable funding stream for network capital costs and platform fees. Awards will be made based on a simple formula reflecting the number of network member outlets: main libraries, branches, bookmobiles, and offsite storage facilities[1].

Networks will be allowed to save and expend funds on larger capital projects through a rainy-day or reserve fund over a multi-year period (*e.g.*, a staggered, five-year equipment replacement cycle), rather than having to expend all funds by the end of each fiscal year. Networks will also be allowed to pay for infrastructure costs that are annual, such as Software-as-a-Service (SAAS) or cloud computing fees, as they represent contemporary best-practice analogs to more traditional server hardware and ILS software purchases.

At the end of each fiscal year, each network will provide a narrative and expenditure report showing how infrastructure grant funds have been expended and/or saved for anticipated future expenses.

This grant does not preclude networks from applying for LSTA funding for projects under the "Open" grant category.

Eligible Uses of Grant Funds

Networks may use funding for:

[1] The HELM (Higher Education Libraries of Massachusetts**)** library network is a consortium of 13 public higher ed libraries, primarily community college libraries. HELM's integrated library system is fully managed by FLO. HELM ILL data is included in FLO's member and outlet count. This network infrastructure grant award benefits both FLO and HELM members.

- Telecommunications Equipment - routers, switches, access points, cabling, and installation.
- Cybersecurity - hardware acquisition, software licenses, and network monitoring services (since FY24)
- Servers – hardware, installation, initial operating system and ILS application or backend database licensing.
- Network System Upgrades –hardware and software purchases and migration costs. Annual ILS/application licenses
- Cloud-based ILS hosting and maintenance fees
- Network monitoring and support fees
- Platform Fees – fees for enabling electronic content and/or tools related to discovery and improved resource sharing.
- Project-Specific Personnel and Benefits – personnel hired or contracted for, to accomplish a finite/discrete project, such as a software development project, or one-time equipment installation.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

Networks may not use funding for normal core business operating costs, such as:

- Regular Personnel and Benefits
- Office Overhead (rent, insurance, phone, mail, supplies, travel)
- Audit

Expenses that do not fall clearly within either eligible or ineligible categories shall be submitted to the MBLC program manager for determination of eligibility.

Reporting

The MBLC will require annually:

- A narrative report that describes the network's overall infrastructure health, upcoming needs/projects/changes, and projects that were addressed with network infrastructure grant funds during the previous fiscal year.
- A summary of how funds have been expended during the previous fiscal year.
- A financial report providing the year-end balance of grant funds from both the previous year and accumulated from previous years.

Eligible Applicants

The nine automated resource sharing networks are eligible to apply: CLAMS, CW MARS, FLO, MBLN, Minuteman, MVLC, NOBLE, OCLN and SAILS.

Calendar

Forms sent to Networks	July 6, 2026
Applications 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 finalized.

This is a formula-driven grant program. If the total amount of funds available should change, the formula will be applied to derive the recommended award amounts to each grant recipient.

To Apply

Complete the reporting and request forms for this program and submit 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 Kate Butler, Library Information Systems Specialist, at kate.butler@mass.gov, 617-725-1860 x253 or 800-952-7403.