

FY2025 Telecommunications for Resource Sharing Fact Sheet

Purpose

The Telecommunications for Resource Sharing program offsets the annual operating costs for library connections to the internet and to the centralized services provided by their automated library network, including core library business transactions, such as searching, circulation, cataloging, and patron registration. Automated resource sharing networks have received state-funded telecommunications support for 37 years (since 1987).

Telecommunications for Resource Sharing also provides funding for those public libraries which are not members of any network to reach the internet. While the Small Libraries in Networks programs offset the costs of maintaining and administering connections for these public libraries, this grant opportunity pays for the monthly telecommunications costs associated with these connections.

Scope of this Offering

The Telecommunications for Resource Sharing program offsets three categories of telecommunications services: a) Small Libraries / Broadband, b) Remote-to-Host connections, and c) Shared internet connections.

- **Small Libraries / Broadband** – Public libraries that are not members of an automated network will receive support for access to the internet through CW MARS. Connectivity must be over MassBroadband 123 fiber if the library is a Community Anchor Institution on the MassBroadband 123 network. Otherwise, libraries may obtain internet via the best available alternative: cable, fiber, wireless (microwave/antenna), mobile broadband, satellite, or DSL.
- **Remote to Host** – These lines connect a library or branch building to the network central site, comprising the majority of the physical telecommunications infrastructure for libraries in Massachusetts (334 outlets in FY24). Circuits provided and paid for separately, by the municipality or library, are not supported.
- **Shared Internet** – Automated networks have a trunk connection to the internet, shared by central sites staff, network member libraries using the network for internet, and incoming users to reach the network's locally-hosted resources.

Priorities

The following priorities will be observed when grant awards are made.

Small public libraries that are not a member of the network will receive an offset of 85% of their costs. The library pays the remaining 15%. If actual telecommunications costs incurred during the previous fiscal year have exceeded the grant award to support these non-member libraries, the network will be made whole in the current fiscal year award.

Remaining funds will be applied to the remote-to-host and internet requests made by automated networks. The final award to each network will be based on a standard pro rata percentage not to exceed 85%, with a maximum cap (\$1,750 in FY24) per outlet per year for the remote-to-host circuits. In FY24, account 7000-9506 was able to completely fund all network requests with these parameters.

Procedures

In August, each network will report its final FY24 telecommunications costs for eligible services and will estimate its telecommunication bill for FY25. Estimates must be based on current costs, or specific quotes or new contracts from telecommunications vendors. These data will be provided to the MBLC in a formal request that will serve as the grant application. MBLC staff will verify data provided and adjust for any unexpended funds from the previous fiscal year. MBLC staff will share figures with the automated networks at their September meeting. After confirming that all data is fairly represented and calculations are correct, award recommendations will be made to the Board at their October meeting.

E-rate

Under the federal E-rate program, libraries may receive discounts on data transmission and Internet Access costs (as well as on certain network equipment). Libraries seeking discounts on Internet Access and network equipment must certify compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). CIPA requires having a filter in place on library computers, having an Internet safety policy compliant with CIPA's rules, and hosting a public meeting. Massachusetts does not require CIPA compliance for public libraries at the state level; instead, whether to comply with CIPA is considered a local decision (and most public libraries in Massachusetts have opted not to comply with CIPA). E-rate discounts can allow libraries to dramatically increase the amount of overall telecommunications funding available, however, as the request for an internet offset will reflect the total after E-rate discounts have been applied. Otherwise, the network may request an offset based on the full amount of their internet service costs.

There is a presumption that automated networks will apply for E-rate funds for the remote-to-host components of their telecommunications network unless the circuit is a broadband connection that carries both public and staff traffic. Under current rules, any connections that do not connect to the internet, such as remote-to-host links that can be defined purely as data circuits, do not require CIPA

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compliance. Even if they are compliant with CIPA, Networks are strongly encouraged, but not required, to apply for the eligible portion of their circuits (data transmission), by requiring vendors to submit itemized proposals (separating data transmission and Internet access) and allocating costs. The funding request that networks make will be based on the anticipated remote-to-host circuit costs after E-rate discounts have been applied.

Eligible Applicants

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

Calendar

Forms sent to Networks and MLS	July 10, 2024
Applications due	August 16, 2024
Meet with Networks to discuss preliminary figures	September, 2024
Board votes grant awards	October, 2024

Anticipated Funding

The total award for FY24 was \$457,046. The FY25 initial amount will be set at \$450,000.

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 amount 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 16, 2024**.

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.

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