

LSTA

Library Services Technology Act

Access for All

Grant Amount:
\$15,000

Time Range:
1-2 years

Eligibility:
Any

Staff Contact:
Shelley Quezada
shelley.quezada@mass.gov
1 800-952-7403 ext. 235

Summary:
Improve accessibility to library services.



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Libraries will plan and implement a project designed to improve accessibility to library services based on the specific community need identified by the library. Libraries seeking to provide services to this population should consult the Perkins School for the Blind [Planning for Library Accessibility document](#), and also review guidelines at [Project Enable](#). Both provide valuable information on creating an accessible and inclusive library.

Projects may focus on one or more of the following identified areas:

1. Provision of assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitation devices for people with disabilities. This would include selection and training in use of adaptive equipment and strategies for outreach to population in need.
2. Homebound delivery to extend delivery services to library patrons who are physically unable to visit including private residences and senior facilities.
3. Establishing “Memory Cafes” or “Dementia Friendly” services to a growing population of people who exhibit memory loss.
4. Outreach and support for specific identified populations, i.e. programs including ASL training and outreach to people who are deaf or hard of hearing, services for people with dyslexia, and programs and services for those on the autism spectrum.

Components of the project will include the following:

- Libraries will provide equipment, materials, and services that allow people to utilize the library and its services more effectively.
- Identify key staff to develop outreach strategies to attract users to the library; also work in partnership with community agencies providing services to this population.
- Libraries will provide training for staff in the use of adaptive equipment or include staff training on specific programs developed for patrons with special needs.
- Grants may be used for training, assistive technology, equipment, and staffing, but are not intended for renovation of facilities, e.g. automatic doors, ramps, etc.*

BACKGROUND

Under the Massachusetts Library Services and Technology Act Five Year Plan (2018-2022), the MBLC identified issues for libraries seeking to provide service for people who face special challenges using libraries. Many residents of Massachusetts cannot fully utilize libraries for a variety of reasons including disabling conditions such as visual, hearing, and mobility impairments. Moreover, many libraries lack adaptive equipment, current library collections may be inadequate, and the staff may lack the appropriate training to serve a more diverse group of library users. The MBLC encourages all types of libraries to consider their role as an information access point for all, including members of the community who are traditionally under-represented among library users.

* Review program activities that can be developed in a virtual environment, including ASL training, introduction and training on the use of adaptive equipment.

Consider adaptation of services available in a memory café that can be delivered remotely to caregivers and adult participants.

Examine expanded homebound services which are particularly appropriate in a time when in-library use has been restricted.

October 2020