



## Citizenship Corners and Expanded English Language Services for New Americans **FACT SHEET**

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### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This program would provide \$7,500 to \$15,000 to develop a range of services for New Americans. Libraries may choose to set up Citizenship Corners that provide dedicated space for circulating materials and informational resources on citizenship and other immigration related topics. This would include offering a series of workshops at least twice a year to understand the naturalization process. These workshops would be conducted by recognized community agencies and local organizations that could provide information on the immigration process. In addition some funds could be used for staffing, equipment and selected resource material on civics and programming to deepen an understanding of American culture. The Citizenship Corners would be a one-year program and would be funded at no more than \$7,500.

Should the library seek to expand existing English as a Second Language classes or create a Conversation Circle program they could apply for the higher range of funds. This funding could be used for a part-time volunteer coordinator and to pay for support materials on English language instruction. Libraries would need to commit staff time to organizing and training volunteers and agree to designate at least one staff member as support for this program. In addition, the library would set up a Citizenship Corner and offer informational workshops. Libraries applying for the ESL support program would need to commit to a two-year time frame.

### PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

#### Citizenship Corners - One-Year Grant

- Set up a special area of the library as a Citizenship Corner
- Feature information on immigration, naturalization provided by USCIS
- Partner with community organizations to offer a series of workshops on citizenship and naturalization at least twice during the grant year
- Commit to maintaining citizenship information as part of library services
- Cultural training for staff
- Materials and support of citizenship and English language learning

#### Expanded English Language Services – Two-Year Grant

- Create or expand a small group instruction program to learn and practice English using trained volunteers supervised by library staff
- Offer classes that focus on vocabulary building through informal conversation and topics of practical interest
- Include a Citizenship Corner as a designated area of the library
- Partners include USCIS and Mass Office of Refugees and Immigrants
- Cultural training for staff
- Materials and support of citizenship and English language learning

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Any public library that meets standard eligibility requirements for Direct Grant programs is eligible to apply.

Public Libraries must have identified a need to serve the Newcomer population and have identified the language and learning needs of a diverse population in their long range plans.

## **INTERESTED?**

Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent form with either Citizenship Corners or Expanded English Language Services option checked off. If you need more information about this program, call Shelley Quezada at the MBLC 1 800-952-7403 ext. 235 or email [shelley.quezada@state.ma.us](mailto:shelley.quezada@state.ma.us).

## **BACKGROUND**

According to a recent study conducted by the Immigrant Research Center at UMass Boston, 14.4 percent of Massachusetts residents are immigrants whose numbers are increasingly drawn from Latin America and Asia. As the demographic composition of the state has shifted, an influx of new immigrants plays an increasingly important role in providing the Commonwealth with a labor force that will enable it to be competitive in the world economy both now and in the future. Generally, this group is a younger demographic which helps to fill jobs vacated by retiring and relocating baby boomers. The state's economy is increasingly based on technology, science and knowledge. As an educational hub, immigrants who come to study here often choose to stay where they can contribute to the state's growing economy. Libraries have a critical role to play as a resource for information and as informal education centers where they offer structured opportunities to learn about the citizenship and naturalization process in a safe and trusted environment. They are the natural location to find resources to learn and practice English. These programs aid in the acculturation process by increasing knowledge of American culture and customs. Programs also serve as a forum for community members to meet and interact with others from different cultures.

## **2013-2017 MASSACHUSETTS LONG RANGE PLAN GOAL & OBJECTIVE**

**Goal 1:** Support learners of all ages with their individual educational and learning goals.

**Objective 2:** MBLC supports literacy programs for all ages.