



FACT SHEET

Manuscripts Arrangement & Description

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This program focuses on the needs of libraries to make their non-monographic collections available to researchers in an organized and logical manner according to accepted standards. It will provide funding for the arrangement and description of archival materials according to currently accepted national standards, assistance with collection development and other appropriate policies, training for staff in basic archival theory and practice, and preparation of finding aids at the collection level for increased access. (These finding aids should be online whenever possible.) These steps and training will be done by contracting with an archival consultant for the project. The MBLC will provide applicants with a list of archival consultants. Any consultant not on this list will need to be approved by MBLC staff.

Each applicant will be required to provide information as to the quantity, overall condition, and general subject matter of the manuscripts in their library; how these relate to local, regional, state, or national issues; a description of the current state of their arrangement and description (if any) and storage, including the environment and security; and a description of any archival training that staff have received. The completion of a Preservation Assessment and a library Preservation Long-Range Plan is required to be on file at the MBLC to be eligible for this program.

One approach (involving practical experience) will be to hire an archivist to:

- Inventory the holdings, arrange and describe one manuscript collection, and provide staff with training in basic archival theory and practice to deal with manuscript and other non-monographic materials to be arranged and described by the staff during the remainder of the grant period and in the future;
- Respond to questions and problems in person or by telephone during the remainder of the grant period;
- Return to the repository to review and evaluate the work of the staff and to provide further training as necessary;
- Assist in developing rules, regulations, policies, and procedures for defining the collection scope and content and for the secure operation of the local history/special collections/archives room.

A second approach will be to hire an archivist to:

- Inventory the institution's manuscript collections and provide full arrangement and description of these collections;

- Provide staff with basic training in archival theory and practice so that they may deal with manuscript and other non-monographic materials in the future;
- Assist in developing rules, regulations, policies, and procedures for defining the collection scope and content and for the secure operation of the local history/special collections/archives room.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Any library or cooperating group that meets standard eligibility requirements for Direct Grant programs is eligible to apply. A cooperating group may apply on behalf of one or more of its members. To be eligible to apply for funds this program, a library or cooperating group must have completed a Preservation Assessment within the past five years and developed a Preservation Long-Range Plan based on this Assessment.

PRIORITIES AND FUNDING

Under this program priority will be given to materials of local, state, regional, or national importance that contribute to an understanding of our historic and cultural heritage. Preference will be given to collections in the following order and subject areas: 1) collections documenting significant Massachusetts historical, geographical, cultural, economic, and natural developments and/or collections with direct application and relevance to Massachusetts; 2) unique collections representing resources unavailable in any other repository; and 3) collections located in Massachusetts repositories that provide a unique and/or cohesive resource, independent of subject area. Libraries will be awarded grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$30,000.

BACKGROUND

The documentary heritage of Massachusetts is essentially intact from its founding. Throughout the Commonwealth, repositories house irreplaceable collections of books, as well as private and public documents that serve as a rich resource for researchers involved in local, state, regional, national, and international studies. Library staffs in public and academic libraries and in other repositories have long collected materials that document their immediate and adjoining locales as well as focusing on specific collecting areas. Although much of this material is monographs and pamphlets, a significant portion is manuscript material (personal and organizational papers), photographs, posters, ticket stubs, broadsides, etc. Through this grant program, applicants can focus on the arrangement and description of archival materials. Much archival material housed in libraries remains unorganized and inaccessible due to the paucity of staff with archival training. Furthermore, many libraries do not have local history/special collections/archives' collection development policies that assist in determining the scope and subject areas of the institution's holdings.

INTERESTED?

Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent form with the "Manuscript Arrangement and Description" option checked off. If you need more information about this program, contact Gregor Trinkaus-Randall at the MBLC, 1-800-952-7403 ext. 236, or by e-mail at gregor.trinkaus-randall@state.ma.us.

2013-2017 MASSACHUSETTS LONG RANGE PLAN GOAL & OBJECTIVE

Goal 2: Improve access to library services and resources for all residents of the Commonwealth.

Objective 3: Ensure access to the literary treasures of Massachusetts by preserving source materials in their original format, reformatting or copying materials at risk of loss. Support the digitization of historical and other significant resource materials. Offer training for disaster preparedness and provide assistance to libraries needing help after a disaster.