

Access for All

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Libraries will be eligible to apply for grants ranging from \$7,500-\$15,000 to plan and implement a project to improve accessibility to library services based on the specific community need identified by the 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 must conduct a library and community scan using an MBLC- provided document to determine potential services for their user population as part of the needs assessment and prior to submitting the application.
- 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.

ELIGIBILITY

All types of libraries may apply for this grant.

INTERESTED?

Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent form with the “Access for All” 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.

BACKGROUND

Under the Library Services and Technology Act *Massachusetts 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. The library should conduct a scan of services *to better assess user needs within their communities. MBLC staff will work with libraries to identify the appropriate steps to integrate new accessible services into the library's existing long-range plan. Projects may be one or two years depending on approach and selected focus.