

First Contact: Students and Primary Sources

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This project will provide grants up to \$7500 for libraries to work with teachers and professors to promote the use and integration of primary sources (either as individual documents or as collections or parts of collections) in the classroom. Libraries and educators will identify appropriate collections, such as manuscripts, diaries, ledgers, account books, correspondence, oral histories, photographs, or any other primary sources and to make them available (either in the original or as digital surrogates) for classroom use. The primary sources will be fully integrated into the curriculum as an integral part of learning and research. Projects should also include visits to the repository, if possible, to introduce students to original research using special collections and to the proper care and handling of these original materials. While working with an individual teacher is most common, working with several teachers in the same grade would expand the impact and experience. The development of lesson plans, curricula, and other long-term projects, that can be used year after year, will help ensure the sustainability of the project(s).

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Any public, school, or academic library that meets standard eligibility requirements for Direct Grant programs is eligible to apply. Libraries must have set a goal, formal or informal, of supporting curriculum and identified an interest in working with the local public (or private) school(s) (K-12) or academic discipline/professor(s) in post-secondary education to incorporate their primary sources into the curriculum. Letters of commitment from the school or college/university will be required as part of the application.

INTERESTED?

Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent for with “First Contact: Students & Primary Sources” option checked off. If you need more information about this program, call Maura Deedy at the MBLC at 1-800-952-7403 ext. 236 or email maura.deedy@state.ma.us.

BACKGROUND

There is a growing movement throughout the country to introduce students, at all levels (K-12 and post-secondary) to the use of primary sources during their studies. This process stimulates

critical thinking and provides an opportunity for students to experience the thrill of learning about history, society, social mores, economics, etc. by consulting the original documents (or digital surrogates). Massachusetts has a rich history that is documented in many libraries, historical societies, archives, and colleges. This plethora of sources that document the stories of the towns or regions can be discovered through the use of original documents. Although many of these holdings are still “hidden” because they have not yet been arranged and described, there are still many other collections that are available to researchers and students. This grant opportunity will provide support to facilitate and enhance the use of these collections in support of educational goals.