

Go Local: Building Communities & Collections

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

As enduring community institutions, libraries have long served as repositories for local history. They also have a key role to play in capturing and making community stories available and meaningful to all. The local library is uniquely positioned to capture, preserve, and share the diverse voices of its service population and the rich local experience. Massachusetts libraries can draw on their strengths in this niche by developing projects that use historical documents and artifacts to surface unknown stories, or deepen the contemporary record by capturing the experience of current residents, everyday life, or community events.

Libraries have access to readily-available traditional and easy-to-use new tools to record and document community stories that build a history and shared identity. Librarians know how to digitize and create metadata for access. Libraries can bring people together to share stories, and to engage volunteers in helping with projects that bridge generations and overcome cultural and socio-economic divisions. Examples of projects might include collecting oral or video histories focused on a shared theme or event; capturing memories of a regional or community event; surfacing information about an individual, event or time period about which knowledge has faded; identifying and documenting knowledge of local landmarks; capturing the local experience of an underserved or historically marginalized population; or using a combination of video, photo and recording techniques to create a snapshot of the town and its residents. Projects might draw on and enrich local genealogical knowledge; involve veterans and students; develop the library's collection through the addition of traditional or digital content; or require collaboration between libraries in communities with a common background, history, industry, or immigration stories.

Projects should include a substantial partnership component, solid outreach to and collaboration with diverse and underserved groups or participants, and the creation of a lasting contribution to the local record.

ELIGIBILITY

Public libraries that meet standard eligibility requirements for direct grant programs are eligible to apply. Funding ranges from \$7,500 - \$15,000 for one or two years depending on project requirements and program design.

INTERESTED?

Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent form with the “Go Local: Building Communities & Collections” option checked off. For additional information about this program, please contact Kate Butler at the MBLC at 1-800-952-7403 ext. 253 or email kate.butler@state.ma.us.

2018-2022 MASSACHUSETTS LONG RANGE PLAN GOAL & OBJECTIVE

Goal 6: Connecting Communities: Promote libraries as centers of the community and support innovations that nurture civic engagement, strong democracy, and celebrate the community and its residents. Libraries provide common and inclusive spaces for everyone in the Commonwealth to share ideas and histories.

Objective 1: Improve people’s ability to participate in their community and in local issues.