



Massachusetts Libraries

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS

FACT SHEET

Customer Experience in the Digital Age

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Grants of up to \$10,000 will be awarded to public libraries to develop a two-pronged approach to customer service, focusing on traditional elements while embracing emerging technology. Libraries will agree to conduct a pre-and post-survey of the community as a part of this project.

In addition awardees will commit to:

- provide for all staff training in the use of emerging technologies and digital media including, but not limited to, downloadable content, social media and online resources;
- incorporate best practices in technology planning, including assessment and evaluation of current policies related to customer service;
- provide basic customer service training for all staff, using a variety of trainers both in person and online;
- funds may be used for public relations and/or consultant services to redesign or improve the library's online presence including website, online services and social media;
- library may purchase digital materials such as eBooks and apps for library-owned devices e.g. iPads, Kindles;
- partner with appropriate local high schools, colleges or other institutions that can provide technical advice and assistance as applicable.

Project budgets should reflect roughly equal amounts for staff training, consultant services and technology development.

ELIGIBILITY

Open to all public libraries that have not received a customer service LSTA grant in the past 3 years.

INTERESTED?

Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent form with the "Customer Experience in the Digital Age" 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

Customers use libraries in many different ways; some never step through the door but take advantage of services remotely. Since library customers frequently access an institution's website for a variety of information like hours of operation, upcoming events, and online databases, the institutions recognize the importance of this point of contact and the value of providing ease of use, helpfulness and full access to all online members of the community. Successful marketing of the library's services, both online and in other media formats, ensures that the public is aware of the benefits available to them.

Libraries must respond to changing technology that increasingly offers patrons diverse options (e-books, social media, streaming media, smartphones, etc.) to meet their informational and entertainment needs. However, it is often these emerging technologies that increase the stress level of both customers and library staff. Whether the stress is on the front line library worker who is dealing with a demanding patron seeking technology troubleshooting, or on the customer who feels library staff is not responsive, attitudes around customer relations can be traced back to those who manage libraries. Library administrators must provide their staff with the skills and training to deal with a host of new issues in order to be truly "user friendly," for ultimately, customer satisfaction is directly related to employee satisfaction. Moreover, there is a direct relationship between satisfied customers and community support.

2013-2017 MASSACHUSETTS LONG RANGE PLAN GOAL & OBJECTIVE

Goal 3: Enhance the quality of Library Services offered to residents of the Commonwealth.

Objective 1: MBLC will provide training and support to library staff; and trustees and friends of public libraries.