



Massachusetts Libraries

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS

FACT SHEET

Serving People with Disabilities

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Libraries will be eligible to apply for grants ranging from \$7,500-\$20,000 to plan and implement a project based on the specific needs identified by the library. The library scan and community assessment must be completed at the beginning of the grant process. Information on how to conduct the scan will be made available from the MBLC. These grants will be funded on a two-year implementation schedule.

Components of the project will include the following:

- Libraries will conduct a library and community scan of possible and potential services for their user population as part of the needs assessment.
- Libraries will develop public relations strategies that attract people with disabilities to the library and outline how they will work in partnership with community agencies serving people in this population and reach out to other local libraries.
- Libraries will provide training for all staff in the use of adaptive equipment and how best to serve patrons with a variety of special needs and promote their services in their community.
- Libraries will provide equipment, materials and services that allow people to better utilize the library.
- Libraries will identify a “staff team” who will become experts in the area
- 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 “Serving People with Disabilities” 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 Long Range Plan (2013-2017)*, 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 staff may lack the appropriate training to serve a more diverse group of library users. The MBLC has encouraged all types of libraries to consider their role as an information access point for all, including those members of the community who are traditionally under-represented among library users.

To aid libraries in developing services for people with disabilities, the MBLC developed a planning process for libraries to use with their communities several years ago. MBLC staff will work with libraries to identify the appropriate steps to integrate new accessible services into the library's existing long-range plan.

2013-2017 MASSACHUSETTS LONG RANGE PLAN GOAL & OBJECTIVE

Goal 1: Support learners of all ages with their individual educational and learning goals.

Objective 2: MBLC supports literacy programs for all ages.