

OVERVIEW

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) is the agency of state government with the statutory authority and responsibility to organize, develop, coordinate and improve library services throughout the Commonwealth. The Board advises library trustees and municipal officials on the operation and maintenance of public libraries, including construction and renovation. It administers state and federal grant programs for libraries; promotes cooperation among all types of libraries through the Massachusetts Library System (MLS), the Library for the Commonwealth and automated library resource sharing networks; and arranges for talking book and related services for blind and disabled residents. It also works to ensure that all residents of the Commonwealth, regardless of their geographic location, have access to essential new electronic information technologies and significant electronic databases.

Massachusetts was the first state to establish an agency of state government to guide the development of library service. Founded by statute in 1890, the Board of Library Commissioners oversaw the start of 100 public libraries in its first decade of work. Today, 350 of the state's 351 cities and towns have public library services. The Board has nine volunteer members appointed by the Governor who set policy for the agency and hire the director. The agency has a staff of 22.

MISSION

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners is the state agency that supports, improves and promotes library services throughout the Commonwealth. We seek to provide every resident of Massachusetts with equal opportunity to access information resources that will satisfy individual educational, working, cultural, and leisure-time needs and interests, regardless of an individual's location, social or physical condition, or level of intellectual achievement.

VISION

Every resident of Massachusetts has the information resources required to participate in our democracy and lead a secure and productive life.

BACKGROUND

All marketing is funded federally through the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences, therefore The 2014-2017 Statewide Strategic Communications and Public Awareness Campaign aligns with the goals and objectives in the federal Library Services and Technology Act 2013-2017 [Massachusetts Long Range Plan](#) which states, "Our libraries are being used more—being connected, having easy access to library resources, meeting the needs of a more diverse population, providing training for library staff and developing a shared e-collection and digitized resources are strong needs for the library community."

The MBLC must also meet State Performance Measurements. MBLC's state goals focus on several initiatives including delivering more efficient shared services and improving access to all library services for all residents of the Commonwealth.

TARGET AUDIENCE, MESSAGE, and STRATEGY

The MBLC works with the library community; but it also provides direct services to residents through mass.gov/libraries. Under each objective, potential target audiences are listed along with information that may be helpful in message development. The MBLC will work with the statewide Public Relations Advisory Committee and the selected marketing firm to further define target audiences, determine market messages, and to identify effective strategies for reaching target markets. However, strategy development should consider the following:

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- Ways to increase the ease at which users find library services online (online services as well as in-person library services and programs)
- Mobile options
- Online ways to connect library users with each other
- Partnership development
- Online ways to connect librarians with each other
- Ongoing feedback from library users and from the library community

GOALS

“Everything is online, so why do we need libraries?” is a comment often heard. The objectives in the 2014-2017 Marketing Plan answer that question as they help build a sense of value of Massachusetts Libraries.

#1 Promote statewide digital content and online services

The way people access information has changed. For many, the first step is a “Google” search. For the most part, this leaves out valuable digital library resources like databases, eBooks, and digitized historic collections of maps, photos, manuscripts and more. According to a recent PEW survey half of American adults now own either a tablet or e-reader. Many use these devices to access information and they expect to find all information via mobile services. The challenge is to make library resources easier to find and open access to libraries and library resources through mobile devices. Resources include: eBooks, databases, digitized historic collections, ReadsInMA.org, Commonwealth Catalog (new virtual catalog), statewide library card (under development).

I. Goal Alignment with LSTA and State Objectives and Measurement

LSTA Goal alignment: #2 Improve access to library services and resources for all residents of the Commonwealth

Key LSTA Output Target: By the end of 2017, all residents of Massachusetts will be able to search and retrieve online content as well as physical materials via statewide virtual catalog or consumer portal.

Key LSTA Outcome Target: by the end of plan, 50% of residents who have used the consumer portal will say that it has increased their use of the library.

Key LSTA Output Target: By 2017, 400,000 (10%) of currently registered residents will have registered for and received a statewide library card. 20% of those who register will have obtained their statewide card online.

State Performance Goal: Improve access to library services for all residents of the Commonwealth

State Performance Measurement: Pageviews on the consumer portal.

II. Potential target populations: to be determined from the LSTA Long Range Plan which includes children and teens aged birth to 17 years and their caregivers, English as Second Language learners/ New Americans and people with disabilities.

III. Opportunities

The consumer portal, mass.gov/libraries, can be further developed as the single location for connecting users with resources and each other.

Library digital content/eBooks are free.

Self-publishing component of the statewide eBook system allows for locally created material (local-interest/ local authors) to be published.

Database information is from reliable sources.

Digitized material from all over the Commonwealth gives access to historic/vintage photos, records, manuscripts, maps, artwork that were previously only accessible via an in-person visit to the library
Existing Partnerships/Collaborations: Massachusetts Library System, Boston Public Library, Boston Bruins

IV. Challenges

Narrowing the broad target audience

Currently no single search for all digital resources/at least three different ways to access eBooks

The process of downloading eBooks is complicated

Amazon and Google are quick and easy

Wide variety of library digital resources: databases, eBooks, digitized collections

Currently no statewide mobile application

#2 Increase awareness of the statewide services and opportunities available through the MBLC and its partners

Libraries are in the process of evolving. There is still much demand for services that are considered traditional, such as story-times; but demand for eBooks in Massachusetts libraries has increased more than 5,000% between FY2005-FY2012.

For many libraries, municipal funding is not keeping pace with the increase in library usage; and state funding to libraries is at or below where it was in 2001 (library visits are up 50% since 2001). The challenge for librarians is to incorporate innovation while still meeting traditional needs with budgets that are already stretched thin.

MBLC services and programs help librarians do just that. Librarians use LSTA grants and State Aid to Public Libraries funding to help meet local library needs. The MBLC's Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program assists libraries in building new or renovating existing library buildings. The MBLC partners with the Massachusetts Library System to offer databases that can be used by any Massachusetts resident. The MBLC is also responsible for statewide data collection which libraries can use to determine local needs, in "telling their stories", and to advocate for better local funding. The MBLC recently began using Counting Opinions which has additional components that libraries can use for conducting surveys such as customer satisfaction surveys.

The 2012 Resource Sharing Unbound conference yielded three major goals for statewide library service: improved access to eBooks, a single search discovery platform for all online resources, and a statewide library card. As a result a new statewide eBook system was developed and continues to be refined; and work continues on a statewide library card as well as the discovery platform. Boston Public Library is also making librarians aware of the resources available to them and their patrons through the Library for the Commonwealth.

I. Potential target populations: librarians, library trustees, Friends of Libraries, new directors

II. Goal Alignment with LSTA and State Objectives and Measurement

LSTA Goal alignment: Goal #1: Support learners of all ages with their individual educational and learning

goals.

LSTA Key Output Targets:

By 2017, at least ten school and public libraries will apply for grants to advance emergent literacy and literacy skills for children (0-teens) by providing resources, program, and training.

State Performance Goal: Enhance the quality of library services

State Performance Measure: Number of Facebook 'likes'

State Performance Measure: Percent of libraries participating in the statewide eBook system

State Performance Measure: Number of new or renovated library construction projects underway

III. Opportunities

MBLC is uniquely positioned as the intersection of Commonwealth government goals, statewide library goals, national library goals, and local library needs and as such can develop innovative library initiatives and services.

While MBLC staff cannot advocate for libraries, the nine-member volunteer Commission is active, involved and informed and have consistently demonstrated their willingness to serve as advocates.

There are an estimated 60,000 members in Friends of Libraries groups.

The MBLC Newsroom already exists as a location for information for librarians.

Existing Partnerships/Collaborations: Massachusetts Library Association (MLA), The Massachusetts Library System (MLS), Library For the Commonwealth at Boston Public Library (LFC), Massachusetts Library Trustee Association (MLTA), Massachusetts Friends of Libraries (MFOL), Perkins/Worcester Talking Book Libraries, Massachusetts School Library Association (MSLA)

IV. Challenges

The library community confuses the MBLC with other library agencies.

Wide variety of services

MBLC is short-staffed leading to overload for some, lack of time for professional development, and lack of time to develop new initiatives.

State funding to libraries is at or below where it was in 2001 even though library usage has steadily climbed; federal funding to the MBLC has also declined.

Many of the important national library conferences occur in other states; and MBLC staff cannot attend trainings, workshops, and conferences that occur in other states unless they pay for them themselves.

#3 Assist the library community in promoting the statewide services and programs they receive through the MBLC and its partners

Today's public library is so much more than a source of books. It is an early literacy center, a community meeting place, a center of civic engagement, an internet access point, a computing center, a disaster recovery center, an access point for e-government, a center for job seekers, a health information provider, a welcome center for new Americans, and much more. One of the major challenges for libraries is simply making people aware of all they do. In a recent PEW survey 30% of library users said they know little or nothing about the services their library provides.

Massachusetts libraries are busier than ever before and many libraries do not have staff or resources to dedicate to promoting library services. These services include: library programs developed with LSTA

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grants, eBooks, databases and other digital material; the Commonwealth Catalog, online summer library program, public library construction and state aid.

I. Potential target populations: librarians, library trustees, Friends of Libraries, new directors

II. Goal Alignment with LSTA and State Objectives and Measurement

LSTA Goal alignment: Goal #3: Enhance the quality of library services offered to residents of the Commonwealth

Key LSTA Output Targets

By 2017, 40% of public libraries will use the information found in the Newsroom to promote the services they provide.

50% of libraries using the tools, such as Newsroom and data analysis will report that library services and programs are used more frequently by residents.

State Performance Goal: Improve access to library services for all residents of the Commonwealth

State Performance Measure: Page views on Newsroom

State Performance Measure: Number of Summer Library Program Participants

III. Opportunities

The Newsroom already exists as a location for information for librarians

The consumer portal, mass.gov/libraries is a vehicle for reaching residents

MBLC works with a marketing firm (most libraries do not have staff or resources to do this)

Existing Partnerships/Collaborations: with MLS, LFC, Perkins, Worcester, Center for the Book, Boston Bruins

IV. Challenges

Resources for librarians are on a variety of websites/locations

Many online communities already exist

One MBLC staff person dedicated to communications, promotion and marketing

Wide variety of services

BUDGET

The recommended cost of this three-year Marketing Plan is approximately \$450,000 over three years.

Costs should be identified for each of the various functions of the marketing plan. The PR Advisory Committee will review the supporting statements for the need of each cost item as it relates to the objective of the marketing plan and the target markets.

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Activity Timeline

Activity	Year	Responsible Party
Goal 1: Promote statewide digital content and online services		
eBook promotion through consumer portal, mass.gov/libraries and through the Bywater site	2014-2015	PR Committee, Communications Specialist, hired agency
eBook promotion print materials for consumers	2014-2015	PR Committee, Communications Specialist, hired agency
eBook/digital content toolkit for librarians	2014-2015	PR Committee, Communications Specialist, hired agency
eBook/digital promotion through online campaign/social media	2014-2015	PR Committee, Communications Specialist, hired agency
Consumer survey on mass.gov/libraries	2014-2015	PR Committee, Communications Specialist, hired agency
Development of mobile application for digital content/eBooks	2015	Communications Specialist, hired agency, Library Information Systems Specialist
Ensure measurement is in place for all strategies. Make adjustments as needed.	2014-2017	Communications Specialist, hired agency, Library Information Systems Specialist
When statewide library card achieved, develop campaign to promote it to residents	2016-2017	PR Committee, hired agency, Communications Specialist, Information Systems Specialist
Promote summer reading through the portal. Promotion will highlight the online component ReadsInMA.org	2015 2016 2017	Communications Specialist, hired agency
Complete landing page and brochure for the new virtual catalog called Commonwealth Catalog	2014-2015	Communications Specialist, hired agency, Library Information Systems Specialist

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Develop standards for tagging online information and photos	2015	Communications Specialist, hired agency
Finish changes to consumer portal	2014	Communications Specialist, hired agency, Library Information Systems Specialist
Create consumer email contact list	2015	Communications Specialist
Evaluate; make adjustments	2014-2015	PR Committee, Communications Specialist, hired agency

Activity	Year	Responsible Party
Goal 2: Increase awareness of the statewide services and opportunities available through MBLC and its partners		
Develop campaign for librarians that promotes LSTA opportunities	2015-2016	PR Committee, Communications Specialist, hired agency, Head of LSTA
Develop campaign for librarians that highlights eBooks, digital resources and other statewide resources and services available to all libraries	2015-2016	PR Committee, Communications Specialist, hired agency
Evaluate effectiveness of publications for librarians: MBLC News (online only) Construction brochure LSTA brochure MBLC Agency Brochure Legislative Agenda (print and web version) State Aid brochure Annual Reports	monthly 2014-2017	Communications Specialist, hired agency
Implement MBLC Brand Guidelines	2014-2015	Communications Specialist, hired agency, Library Information Systems Specialist
Re-develop MBLC Agency site	2015-2016	MBLC Web team, hired web developer
Evaluate; make adjustments	2014-2017	PR Committee, Communications Specialist, hired agency

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Activity	Year	Responsible Party
Goal 3: Assist the library community in promoting statewide services and programs they receive through the MBLC and its partners		
Re-develop MBLC Newsroom	2015	PR Committee, Communications Specialist, hired agency
Promote the Newsroom to librarians	2015-2016	PR Committee, Communications Specialist, hired agency
Standardize promotional support for grant recipients: online and print	2015	Communications Specialist, hired agency, Head of LSTA
Content creation, particularly for LSTA funded programs	2015	Communications Specialist,, hired agency, LSTA Consultants
Explore the development of an online community/blog where librarians can share	2015	PR Committee, Communications Specialist, hired agency
Explore the development of statewide event calendar	2015	Communications Specialist, hired agency, Library Information Systems Specialist
Evaluate; make adjustments	2014-2017	PR Committee, Communications, Specialist, hired agency