

LSTA Policies and Procedures 2008-2012

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

Direct Grant Programs

To be eligible to apply for direct grants, a library must be a member of a regional library system (see <http://mbic.state.ma.us/mbic/regional/membership/>) and have a current MBLC approved Long Range plan on file at the Board. In addition, public libraries must be certified in the Direct State Aid to Public Libraries program throughout the application and award period. For automated resource sharing networks or other cooperating groups, each member of the group must be a member of a Massachusetts regional library system as a contingency of any direct grant award.

Statewide Programs

All libraries, regional library systems, automated resource sharing networks, and other cooperating library groups in Massachusetts are eligible to participate in, and benefit from statewide services and programs funded with LSTA funds. The term library includes:

- public
- elementary school or secondary school library
- institution
- academic
- a research library “that makes publicly available library services and materials suitable for scholarly research and not otherwise available to the public...and is not an integral part of an institution of higher education,” [P.L. 104-208, sec. 213(2)(D)], and
- those special libraries that are members of a regional library system

General Policies

LSTA funds are made available for statewide programs and direct grants to libraries, regional library systems, automated resource sharing networks, and other cooperating groups. All activities must address goals and objectives in the *Massachusetts Long Range Plan, 2008-2012* and conform with state and federal guidelines.

Whenever possible, these activities will include cooperative and collaborative efforts that involve libraries, groups, and agencies, etc., of different types.

A State Advisory Council on Libraries (SACL), comprised of sixteen representatives of all types of libraries, and individuals who use them, acts as an advisory board to the program; participates in annual planning and budgeting activities; reviews and evaluates *Direct Grant Programs*, and other activities that implement this Long Range Plan; and makes recommendations for funding to the Board of Library Commissioners. The Board establishes the process for selecting SACL members and Board liaisons.

In reviewing applications for *Direct Grant Programs*, the following policies will apply, except where superseded by annual Fact Sheets for individual programs:

- LSTA funding is intended to provide seed money for the establishment of new services or supplemental funds for enhancement of existing services. Funds may not be used to operate programs or services on a continuing basis, to replace local operating money, or to fund projects from the same applicant for sequential or similar services.
- Multi-year projects may be considered for specific programs where the scope and complexity of the project requires activities to be conducted over a long period of time. Multi-year projects are not funded if the intent is to conduct the same activities continuously beyond one year.
- Prior to any LSTA grant award to applicants who have previously received a grant, all progress reports, evaluations, audits and other required documentation for those awards must be complete, up-to-date and on file at the MBLC.
- A portion (generally no less than 30%) of the expenses for any project receiving LSTA funding must come from local funds as part of the project's implementation, and there must be reasonable assurance that the project can be continued locally if successful. Grant funds may not be used to pay indirect costs.
- Libraries joining an automated resource sharing network should be aware that equipment (such as workstations, printers, and scanners), other one time costs (such as initial fees, training fees, retrospective conversion, and other similar costs), and ongoing membership fees are considered a local responsibility and will not be funded through LSTA unless a specific program permitting such costs is approved by the Board of Library Commissioners.

- Automated resource sharing networks may apply for equipment costs, including central site and telecommunications network hardware, software, and installation costs. Generally, LSTA funding will constitute no more than 60% of such costs.
- LSTA funds will not be used to fund standalone automated systems. Federal funds will continue to be used to support cooperative automation efforts through automated resource sharing networks.
- Major equipment (such as motor vehicles, kiosks, etc., having an acquisition cost of over \$10,000) is not an allowable cost, but may be considered only as part of a program of services to a population facing special challenges using libraries. Such equipment will be funded for a maximum of 50% of the cost of acquisition.
- All projects must have a significant program component that will link the materials and activities planned as part of the project with the population it is intended to serve. Requests for materials/equipment only are not considered.
- It is not the purpose of LSTA funding for personnel to replace local staff funds, to pay staff already working full-time, to pay staff working on non-project activities, nor to be continued beyond a very specific time period. Any fringe benefits required locally may only be paid in proportion to actual time spent on LSTA activities. Full-time staff who have no choice but to do some project work after hours may be paid via stipends or contracts for a limited number of hours. However, such hours and pay rates must be clearly justified.
- Costs for purchase of consultant services are allowed only if the specific expertise and/or resource required is not readily available at the applicant's regional library system or the MBLC.
- No more than one project is funded per applicant in any grant round, unless specifically allowed by an annual Fact Sheet. Exceptions may be made for regions, networks, or large libraries that can demonstrate the capacity to properly manage a second project, as funds permit. Libraries completing the second year of a two year project should not apply for a new project if the same staff will be involved.
- Libraries may not apply for the same program more than once, unless specifically allowed in the annual program Fact Sheet.

PROCEDURES

Direct Grant Programs

SACL develops and recommends to the Board of Library Commissioners a *Program and Budget* that is responsive to the *Massachusetts LSTA Long Range Plan* goals and objectives and the needs of the library community. The annual announcement of the *Direct Grant Program* includes individual program fact sheets and application procedures. Applicants are required to file a Letter of Intent form notifying the MBLC of their desire to participate. Workshops and staff assistance are available for all grant programs to help applicants prepare applications that meet the criteria for the program. All grant applications are reviewed by SACL; its recommendations are forwarded to the Board of Library Commissioners for approval. All grants are monitored by assigned MBLC staff who provide support and guidance to ensure compliance with program criteria and all applicable federal and state requirements.

This Long Range Plan and annual program announcements are distributed to all libraries and related organizations through email distribution lists, the MBLC's web site, and U.S. mail when necessary.

LONG-RANGE PLANS

Although several formal planning approaches are available to libraries, no specific method is required. Regional library system consultants are available to guide and support libraries in implementing a planning process. For the purposes of this Long-Range Plan, all libraries, automated networks, and formally organized cooperating groups are required to complete a multi-year (3 to 5 years) plan. At minimum, the plan must include:

- a) a mission statement;
- b) an assessment of user needs;
- c) multi-year goals and objectives;
- d) an action plan for at least the first year of the multi-year goals and objectives that includes activities, with specific timeframes and/or other means for measuring progress, for achieving objectives;
- e) a brief description of the planning methodology;
- f) approval of the governing board;
- g) annually, by December 1st of each year, an update of the action plan for the following state fiscal year (July to June).

REVISIONS: To maintain eligibility, libraries and other organizations must keep their long-range plans up to date. Under this long-range plan all such entities will have two years after the expiration of existing plans to complete a new planning process and file a new plan.

DUE DATES: New plans must be submitted to the MBLC for review no later than October 1. Annual Action Plans must be submitted no later than December 1.

COOPERATING GROUPS: Any formally organized cooperating group of regional member libraries may develop a cooperative plan.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES: School library plans may be submitted by an individual school library or by a district. However, an individual school is not entitled to apply for a grant on its own unless it has filed its own plan.

REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEMS: The plan of service and annual program and budget will serve as the planning document.

LONG-RANGE PLAN COMPONENT DEFINITIONS

- **mission statement**—a concise declaration of the purpose of an organization, specifying the fundamental reason for its existence and identifying its major service roles and the major user groups at which they are directed.
- **assessment of user needs**—a description of the needs of the community the library serves; includes a gathering of information based on an analysis of the population, results of surveys and/or focus groups, and a description of the library's existing services in relation to the community's needs and/or those in other similar libraries; addresses the library's need for technology; and takes into consideration other plans developed at the state, regional, and local levels. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), every public library regardless of staff size should have completed a review of its facility for architectural accessibility and compliance with the ADA. The needs assessment component of the library's long-range plan should include this subject and identify barriers, outline corrective action, and include a mechanism to involve community members to discuss the process of making the library and its services fully accessible to all patrons.

- **multi-year goals and objectives**—goals are broad statements describing desirable end results toward which the library will work over the long-term, encompassing a vision of what services should be available; a goal is not measurable and may never be fully reached but will probably not change over a three to five year period; together with objectives, goals define a course of action for meeting the needs of a community. Objectives are specific, short-range statements of results to be achieved to implement a goal; they define how it will be done, who will do it, and when and under what conditions; objectives are measurable, include time frames and may or may not change over a three to five year period depending upon progress made.
- **action plan with specific timeframes and/or other measurements for achieving objectives**—the means used to accomplish an objective including specific tasks that will be done in a given year to achieve that objective; activities should include specific timelines and/or other measure for determining when the activities will take place and how the objective will be accomplished.
- **brief description of planning methodology**—identification of a specific planning process, such as the PLA process or MBLC school library planning process, and any modifications to it; or, if a library has not used a particular process, a description of what was done, who participated, to what extent, how and what data was gathered, and during what period the plan was developed.
- **approval of governing board**—assurance that the library's trustees for a public library; principal, superintendent or school committee as appropriate for a school or district; dean, provost or president for an academic library; or other governing unit as appropriate has reviewed the contents of the plan and voted to accept it.
- **annual updates of action plans**—by December 1 of each year, the action plan should be reviewed and revised to reflect activities that will take place in the next fiscal year to achieve the long-range plan's goals and objectives.