

FACT SHEET

BUSINESS – CAREER SERVICES

BACKGROUND

The state of the economy, both nationally and statewide, has heightened public interest in business and economic topics. Recent phenomena such as the globalization of business, increased competition, and the rapid growth of technology, along with the related rise of e-commerce, have all further fueled the sense of excitement. Surveying of librarians from all types of libraries has confirmed that their customers are hungry for information on these topics, as well as for research related to starting-up new businesses, investing, finding ways to improve and expand their products, services and markets, and investigating career opportunities. Concerns and questions around business, economy, and careers affect users at all age and education levels and in all types of libraries.

The Business and Economic Summit held by the Board of Library Commissioners in 1998 gave proof to the opinion that too few members of the business community, and indeed the public in general, are fully aware of the range of services libraries can provide to meet their business information needs. Moreover, so many new resources are now available, especially in electronic form, that librarians themselves are often hard put to keep up and may be unfamiliar with their content and how best to utilize them in the search for information. The University of Massachusetts Amherst libraries and its Mass Bedrock web site were one response to these concerns. Its web site, speaker's bureau and training programs are helping bridge the gap between libraries and the business community. The Board institute, "Libraries Mean Business," on which this mini-grant program is based, provided insight for over 100 librarians into the kinds of information that business people seek and the latest resources to use in meeting their needs.

This mini-grant program is designed to assist libraries to provide enhanced service to their patrons by applying the knowledge gained at the institute, resources made available through Mass Bedrock, and the statewide licensed reference databases to their own local situations. Libraries will then be better positioned and able to address the business and career needs of their local communities and contribute toward the economic health and vitality of the citizenry.

MASSACHUSETTS LSTA LONG-RANGE PLAN GOAL/OBJECTIVE

Goal 2: Extend and maintain effective library and information services for users by providing library staff with training and support.

Objective 2: Coordinate and provide continuing education opportunities, improve customer service, and enable library staff to become better managers, proficient guides to electronic resources, and more responsive to user needs in order to meet public expectations in an age of competing information providers.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Libraries will be selected to receive grants of \$10,000 - \$20,000 each to develop collections, conduct training, and implement programming around business and career information. The project should be based on the needs of the library's community and patrons, and should involve cooperation with one or more other groups, agencies, organizations, schools, or businesses in the community. Components of the project may include some combination of the following:

- Improving availability and developing collections of library electronic and print business & career resources and improving knowledge of web-based resources
- Training staff to improve response to patron needs in business, economics, and career topics and use of resources
- Publicizing and promoting the library's business, financial, and career resources

- Hosting workshops, programs, and seminars for the public and for students on the utilization of library resources
- Using the library as a "business center" or "career center" i.e., offering special reference services, e-mail and fax capability, word processing, and coaching/counseling
- Establishing outreach activities to generate support for the programs i.e. partnering with schools, businesses, professional groups to share information

BUDGET DETAILS

When designing your budget please note the following restrictions regarding personnel and equipment expenditures.

Of the total grant award:

- No more than 20% may be allocated for personnel costs
- No more than 30% may be allocated for the purchasing of equipment
- Internet access costs are not eligible

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to apply a library must:

- Be a member of a regional library system and, for public libraries only, have been certified in the current year's State Aid Program.
- Have a long-range plan on file at the MBLC by October 1 of the prior year (October 1, 2004 for the FY06 grant year), that meets the requirements of the *Massachusetts Long-Range Plan, 2003-2007* (see Appendix B). If a plan **is** already on file, an updated Action Plan must be on file by December 1 of the prior year.

INTERESTED?

Applicants must submit a **Letter of Intent** by the date on the LSTA announcement calendar with the "Open Grant" option checked off under **TYPE**. On a separate sheet of paper, applicants must indicate that they are interested in carrying out a Business and Career project, and briefly describe some activities they would like to include. An informational workshop to assist applicants in completing an application for this program will be held in late January or early February of the grant year. A preliminary schedule is enclosed. For additional information on this program, contact Beth Wade at the MBLC, 800-952-7403 ext. 232, or by e-mail at beth.wade@state.ma.us.