

# FACT SHEET

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## Community Languages

### BACKGROUND

According to the most recent census 10% of the American population, a total of 25,831,000 people, are foreign-born. This is the largest number of foreign-born residents in U.S. history. The latest figures indicate there are now 6,210,578 persons residing in Massachusetts, an increase of 194,153 persons above the 1990 Census. Census information for 2002 indicates the foreign-born population at 814,549. This is 13 percent of the state's overall population and an increase of 42 percent above the 1990 population of 573,733 foreign-born residents. The increase in foreign born residents was greater than the state's overall population increase from 1990 to 2002. Massachusetts now has the 7<sup>th</sup> largest population of foreign born in the country. Two-fifths (40.1%) of those foreign born in 1990 had entered since 1980.

Since 1990 there has been a marked increase in the Asian and Hispanic population in the Commonwealth. Nationally, those two groups account for over two-thirds of all immigrants. The Asian population increased by 67.8 percent and the Hispanic population increased by 49.1 percent. The increase in those two population segments accounted for over two-thirds (71.7%) of the state's population increase. Another indicator of the change in the immigrant population is data on the share of the population that speaks a language other than English at home. Between 1990 and 2000 the share of non-English speakers at home in Massachusetts increased by over two-fifths, from 15.2 percent to 18.6 percent.

Although estimates of the number of language minority students in our schools vary, there is consensus the numbers are rising dramatically. Without a doubt, our classrooms are increasingly multilingual, multiethnic, and multiracial. In response, a number of program models have been developed to meet the needs of language minority students, many involving the integration of language and content instruction. In addition, attention to the lack of foreign language proficiency among native born Americans has led to a reassessment of the need to have foreign language programs which are teaching students to use foreign language as part of their instruction in science, social studies, and other academic subjects. Emphasis on a knowledge and understanding of community languages is increasingly being recognized as the cornerstone for our participation in a global economy.

Community libraries face requests for material from Hmong to Cape Verdean as well as many of the more common languages. Newcomers seek materials on English language pronunciation to improve their English. Commuters flood the library with requests for Italian or Japanese language audiotapes so they can prepare for their next business trip or European vacation. The need for material in a wide variety of formats from fotonovelas to the current issue of a Russian language newspaper place demands on library staff.

This program supports the purchase and acquisition of materials in "Community Languages" e.g. those languages where there is an expressed need to augment current collections either in any of the traditional languages such as Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, Russian or in previously less common languages such as Khmer, Tibetan or Somali. In addition, this project will support the development of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) materials for the many newcomers who seek opportunities to practice the English language. In addition to print materials (e.g., books, periodicals, newspapers) libraries are encouraged to purchase other media, such as videotapes, music, and computer software. The program also funds materials in American Sign Language.

### MASSACHUSETTS LONG-RANGE PLAN GOAL/OBJECTIVE

**GOAL 5:** Provide a full range of services to persons who face special challenges using libraries.

**Objective 2:** Strengthen the role of libraries in developing literacy and lifelong learning skills for adult new readers and those with limited English proficiency.

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

This program will allow four libraries to receive grants of between \$10,000-20,000 to purchase materials in “Community Languages” as described above. Funds may also be spent to catalog the materials purchased. In addition, libraries will be expected to:

- develop creative program strategies which will reach out to the target audience to make them aware of new collections
- prepare public relations materials such as brochures, posters, pamphlets, bibliographies and spots on local cable and radio in the target languages as appropriate
- work in partnership with local schools, adult education centers and community agencies serving this population to promote new collections and services

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Open to all types of libraries that:

- Have identified a need to serve the language and learning needs of a diverse population in their long-range plans
- Have a long-range plan on file at the MBLC by October 1 of the prior year (October 1, 2006 for the FY08 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 (December 1, 2006 for the FY08 grant year).
- Are members of a regional library system and, for public libraries, are certified in the State Aid Program throughout the application and award process.

## **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 Community Languages 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. If you need more information about this program, call Shelley Quezada at the MBLC at 800-952-7403 ext. 235 or e-mail [shelley.quezada@state.ma.us](mailto:shelley.quezada@state.ma.us).