

FACT SHEET

Discovery Kits

BACKGROUND

When a new unit of study is undertaken by a class, students and teachers need a variety of library materials to use as supplementary resources. Because of students' diverse learning styles and differences in reading and learning abilities, these resources should be in several formats and cover a range of reading levels. Kits have long been a useful way of gathering together a collection of multi-format materials on a specific subject, and are an efficient way of delivering the needed resources in a quick and timely fashion to the classroom. Families also like to utilize kits when a subject is of particular interest to all the family members and they wish to share and enjoy learning about a topic together. This may be especially true for homeschooling families. Including materials in nonprint formats and on varying reading levels assures that adults and children of different ages can all enjoy learning something about the topic.

MASSACHUSETTS LONG-RANGE PLAN GOAL\OBJECTIVE

Goal 4: Strengthen the role libraries play in children's and young adults' learning and their success in life.

Objective 2: Promote the development of skills, competencies, and knowledge that contribute to professional levels of children's librarianship.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The library will develop at least 10 major kits of substantial size and quality on 10 different topics for use by classes of specific grade levels studying those topics. Kits would include books (on varying reading levels), videos, audiocassettes, models or realia, computer software, educational games/puzzles, pamphlets, significant articles, bibliographies, a list of other kinds of resources (for example, museum exhibits and passes, historical sites, science or nature centers, programs, etc.), and suggested activities for classes, family groups, or individuals – all revolving around the kit's theme. Evaluation sheets should also be included.

Smaller, mini-kit versions of the same topics may be developed for borrowing by individual students and their families (using some of the same materials) or by homeschoolers. Mini-kits would be in addition to the 10 large kits. Duplicates of any kits may also be made as needed, especially where large numbers of students are involved. If the library plans to produce only the 10 required large kits, it should probably not request the maximum amount of the grant. The kits are primarily for circulation, not just for in-library use. They are to be comprised of *library* materials, and while some pieces of realia or a small model or two may be included, they should not contain a lot of equipment or supplies that amount to subsidizing the programs of other departments, e.g. the math or science departments. Kits will be the property of the library, and as such, should be returned intact to the library at the end of the circulation period. If the applicant is a public library, kits may be loaned, but not *given*, to the school for a determined circulation period.

The selection of themes and the ideas and concepts for the kits' contents should be developed in cooperation with teachers and the counterpart librarian (i.e., school or public library) in order to search out, evaluate and carefully select the most appropriate materials/activities for inclusion in the kits. Letters of support are strongly advised.

Two Open House programs should be held during the course of the grant year, one in the school library and one in the public library, in order to explain the project and display the kits to the school community (parents, teachers, students) and to the general public, respectively. The project director should create a timeline which indicates that at least five kits will have been completed and made available for circulation by February 1, and another five by April 1 of the grant year.

Discovery Kits projects will be funded with amounts *up to a maximum of \$7,500* each.

No more than \$1,000 of grant funds may be used to pay personnel. Personnel paid with grant funds must work outside their normally scheduled hours.

ELIGIBILITY

- Public libraries and school libraries are eligible to apply. They must be members of a regional library system and, for public libraries only, remain certified in the State Aid program throughout the application and award process.
- Have a long-range plan on file at the MBLC by October 1 of the prior year (October 1, 2005 for the FY07 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, 2005 for the FY07 grant 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 Discovery Kits 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, 1-800-952-7403 ext. 232, or by e-mail at **beth.wade@state.ma.us**.