

FACT SHEET

Homework Center Program

BACKGROUND

Many libraries that have completed long-range plans have targeted children and young adults as their service priorities. These libraries frequently cited Formal Education Support Center and Independent Learning Center as important roles for the library to pursue. Moreover, as the condition of the state's school libraries has declined due to severe budget and staffing cuts, the children's departments in public libraries have felt increasing pressure from children, parents and even town authorities to provide more assistance to students in terms of time, materials, staff and services. This Homework Center Mini-Grant Program is a response to this growing need. It is intended to help the state's smallest libraries address that need, and to extend such services to neighborhoods reached by urban branch libraries.

MASSACHUSETTS LONG-RANGE GOAL/OBJECTIVE

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

Objective 4: Encourage libraries to advance children's and young adults' information literacy by developing programs and services that teach effective information research skills, utilizing both print and electronic resources.

PURPOSE

This grant was established to:

- Enable public libraries in communities with fewer than 15,000 people and public branch libraries in communities with more than 50,000 people to assist children and young adults more effectively with their schoolwork assignments
- Improve the study and research skills of children and young adults using public libraries

Children and young adults who take advantage of the Homework Center will get the opportunity to discover how libraries can help them learn, experience and grow. One-on-one interaction with library staff or volunteers who have been trained to provide homework assistance, access to the latest multimedia education products, and instruction in using licensed databases are all benefits that will be available to Homework Center users. In addition, the Homework Center will foster closer communication between schools and the library.

Participating libraries will receive a maximum of \$6,000 to purchase current reference and non-fiction materials, both print and non-print, to add to the children's and young adult collections for curriculum support. The grant funds will also be used to purchase a workstation and electronic educational software.

ELIGIBILITY

Open to public libraries that:

- Serve a community under 15,000 in population or a branch library in a municipality of over 50,000 in population according to the 2000 Federal Census population
- Have been certified in the FY 2004 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
- Can make a local commitment to staff the Homework Center for a total of 12 hours per week during the school year using library staff and/or volunteers
- Are willing to send a minimum of two individuals to two days of training during the project year, one of whom is the library director or branch director
- Have sufficient space to accommodate a workstation with internet access
- Are willing to complete reports and an evaluation of the program
- Are willing to work cooperatively with local schools
- Are willing to do extensive local publicity

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 Homework Center 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 at 800-952-7403, ext. 232, or by email at **beth.wade@state.ma.us**.