

FACT SHEET

Information Literacy

BACKGROUND

“Information literacy is a critical life skill in today’s information jungle. It means knowing when a book may be more helpful than a computer. It means knowing how to find, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources. It means knowing what questions to ask. Is the information complete? Accurate? Is someone trying to sell me something? Good decisions depend on good information.” (American Library Association, *A Library Advocate’s Guide to Building Information Literate Communities*, 2001. p.6)

An information literate individual is able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one’s knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information
- Access and use information ethically and legally

(Association of College and Research Libraries Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education: http://www.ala.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ACRL/Standards_and_Guidelines/standards.pdf)

MASSACHUSETTS LONG-RANGE PLAN GOAL\OBJECTIVE

Goal 3: Emphasize the vital role libraries play in lifelong learning by focusing on the importance of information literacy skills.

Objective 1: Develop programs and services using traditional instruction and Web-based tutorials to improve the information literacy skills users need to identify, locate, evaluate, and use information effectively and efficiently in the digital age.

PROJECT DESIGN AND TARGET AUDIENCE

Under this Information Literacy grant program, a library will design a project offering continuous and regularly scheduled training and instruction in skills related to locating, evaluating and using information resources of all types. Instruction will focus on the use of the Internet (World Wide Web and email), licensed databases (statewide, regional, local magazine and book databases), and online catalogs (library’s network, statewide virtual catalog).

Depending on the applicant’s community of users, the target audience may be the general public, specific age groups (seniors, children, etc.), students (K-12, college and graduate, ESL), parents, specific community organizations, etc.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Prior to their application, libraries must have in place the following:

- Access to the Internet
- Professional reference staff (minimum 1 FTE) already knowledgeable in the use of online resources
- Project manager (project administration is funded by the library)

- Space for equipment and electronic instruction
- *Commitment to funding from local sources 50% of total equipment costs* (including LAN costs)
- Commitment to attend grant application and training workshops in January and October 2005
- Willingness to participate in an Outcomes Based Evaluation (OBE) component under MBLC guidance

Grant proposals **must** include the following:

- A designated target group of appropriate size so that programs will directly reach, on the average, 100-125 different library users each year that the grant funds are being received
- An advisory group, comprised of library staff and local resource people, to assist in developing a needs statement and proposed program design; the group must meet a minimum of twice per grant year
- A well-developed program offered in a multipart series, with a minimum of two parts covering the Internet (World Wide Web and email), licensed databases (statewide, regional, local magazine and book databases), and online library catalogs for users. Training may be delivered in-person or through computer-based instruction. In-Person classes should allow time for hands-on instruction. While one-on-one instruction may occur, it should NOT be the primary mode of teaching information literacy skills for this project
- Grant funds may not be spent on the development of OPAC manuals or computer software application (word processing, spreadsheets, or presentations) manuals
- A grant budget that shows 50% of total equipment costs (including LAN costs) funded from local sources (i.e., if total equipment needs are \$10,000, then \$5,000 must come from local funds.) Funds may not be requested for computer peripherals, Internet access, or WAN connections. Libraries choosing to purchase computers with grant funds must comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)

ELIGIBILITY

Grants are funded on a one- or two-year implementation schedule. All types of libraries are invited to apply for grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$20,000, depending upon the length and extent of project.

In addition, applicants must:

- Be a member of a regional library system and, for public libraries only, be certified in the FY2004 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 an Information Literacy 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 contact Marlene Heroux at the MBLC, 800-952-7403 ext. 250, or by e-mail at marlene.heroux@state.ma.us.