

# FACT SHEET

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## Serving People with Disabilities

### BACKGROUND

Under the Library Services and Technology Act *Massachusetts Long-Range Plan (2002-2007)*, the MBLC identified issues for libraries seeking to provide service for people who face special challenges using libraries. Many residents of Massachusetts cannot fully utilize libraries for a variety of reasons including disabling conditions such as visual, hearing and mobility impairments. Moreover, many libraries lack adaptive equipment, current library collections may be inadequate; and staff may lack the appropriate training to serve a more diverse group of library users. The MBLC has encouraged all types of libraries to consider their role as an information access point for all, including those members of the community who are traditionally under-represented among library users.

To aid libraries in developing services for people with disabilities, the MBLC hired Rhea Joyce Rubin of Rubin Consulting, Oakland, CA, to develop a streamlined planning process for libraries to use with their communities. Ms. Rubin is one of six consultants who developed the new ALA planning process, and she has had significant experience in dealing with the issue of service to the disability community. The new document, *Planning for Library Services for People with Disabilities* will be integrated into the library's existing long-range plan.

### MASSACHUSETTS LONG-RANGE PLAN GOAL/OBJECTIVE

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

**Objective 1:** Improve library services to people with disabilities through use of a specially designed planning process and encourage libraries to be responsive to user needs through special materials, training, and adaptive technology.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Libraries will be eligible to apply for grants ranging from \$7,000-\$30,000 each to plan and implement a project based on the specific needs identified in the library's ADA planning document. These grants will be funded on a two year implementation schedule.

Components of the project will include the following:

- Libraries will demonstrate how their project will ensure that library services are available on an equal basis to all members of the community
- Libraries will develop public relations strategies that attract people with disabilities to the library and outline how they will work in partnership with community agencies serving people this population and reach out to libraries in their region
- Libraries will provide training for all staff in the use of adaptive equipment and how best to serve patrons with a variety of special needs and promote their services within the region
- Libraries will provide equipment; materials and services that allow people to better utilize the library
- Identify a “staff team” who will become experts in the area
- Grants may be used for training, assistive technology, equipment and staffing but are not intended for renovation of facilities, e.g. Automatic doors, ramps, etc.

### ELIGIBILITY

Open to libraries that:

- Attend a one-day Library Services for People with Disabilities Training Workshop offered by MBLC staff and have written a special “draft” plan for services to people with disabilities

- 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
- Are members of a regional library system and, for public libraries, have been certified in the current year's State Aid Program

### **INTERESTED?**

Applicants must submit a **Letter of Intent** by 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 Serving People with Disabilities project and provide a brief abstract (100-150 words) of their project. 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. For additional information on this program, especially for fulfillment of the special ADA planning requirements, contact Shelley Quezada at the MBLC, 800-952-7403 ext. 235, or by email at [shelley.quezada@state.ma.us](mailto:shelley.quezada@state.ma.us).