

FACT SHEET

“EqualAccess” Grant Program

BACKGROUND

As public libraries are increasingly called upon to respond to the changing demographics of their communities and to vastly expand the range of programs and services they offer, many librarians feel excited by these opportunities, but also overwhelmed and unsupported. To respond to this situation, EqualAccess Libraries™ was developed by Libraries for the Future (LFF), a national non-profit organization that supports innovation and investment in America’s libraries (see <http://www.lff.org>).

EqualAccess Libraries™ is a professional development program that trains public librarians and library staff in how to address their community’s most pressing needs through assessment and information gathering, the development of strategic partnerships with local organizations, and the creation of innovative work plans that reflect their community’s unique character. In addition, EqualAccess participants are trained in the latest trends impacting health consumers, Baby Boomers and older adults, and youth; new uses of technology to expand services to these target populations; and creative approaches to expanding related programming.

In Massachusetts, the EqualAccess grant program represents a collaboration between LFF and the Board of Library Commissioners, which has dedicated \$260,000 of LSTA grant funds to EqualAccess grants over a three-year period (2006–2008). In 2006 and 2007, twenty-nine libraries—as diverse as tiny, rural Hinsdale and larger, urban Worcester—participated in the EqualAccess training (the EqualAccess Institute) and received EqualAccess grants to expand programs and services in health, lifelong, or youth programming, referred to as Health Access, Lifelong Access, and Youth Access, respectively. In 2008, thirty main libraries and library branches will receive EqualAccess training and \$3,000–\$5,000 EqualAccess grants.

MASSACHUSETTS LONG RANGE PLAN GOAL

A library may focus on any goal of the LSTA Massachusetts Long Range Plan 2008–2012.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This program will allow thirty main libraries and branch libraries to receive \$3,000–\$5,000¹ grants to develop or expand programs and services for youth (teens and ‘tweens), Boomers and older adults, and health consumers. Each participating staff member or librarian will choose a program focus (Youth, Health, or Lifelong Access) and be responsible for the completion of summer grant tasks and program implementation following participation in the four-day EqualAccess Institute.²

Successful program participation and receipt of the LSTA award entails the following:

- The participation of one to two frontline librarians in the four-day EqualAccess Libraries Institute, to be held at the Nevins Memorial Library in Methuen, MA, on April 2nd, April 3rd, May 6th, and May 29th, 2008.

¹ Main libraries with four or more non-custodial fulltime equivalent staff will be expected to send two participants to the Institute and will receive a \$5,000 EqualAccess grant. Branches applying separately will be expected to send one participant to the Institute and will receive a \$3,000 EqualAccess grant. Small libraries (three or fewer non-custodial fulltime equivalent staff) will be expected to send one participant to the Institute and will receive a \$3,000 grant. For more information on application guidelines for branches, please call Eleanor Stafford at 1-800-952-7403, ext. 228.

² The quality of the EqualAccess Institute is best summed up in the words of two previous Massachusetts participants: “One of the best training programs I have ever attended in 36 years!”; “Presenters were very impressive—knowledgeable, thorough, positive, invigorating, and approachable.”

- By August 2008, completion of targeted assets and needs assessments by Institute participants.
- By September 2008, completion of Youth, Health and/or Lifelong Access work plans and evaluation plans that address identified opportunities and challenges and define achievable outputs and outcomes.
- Implementation of Youth, Health and/or Lifelong Access programs and services in 2008-2009.
- Completion of two LSTA progress reports and all distributed EqualAccess Institute and Program evaluations and surveys.

Libraries receiving \$5,000 LSTA grants may allocate their grant to one EqualAccess program area or divide it between two, depending on the priorities of the library and the Access program area(s) in which Institute participants receive training. \$3,000 grants may be allocated to a single program area.

ELIGIBILITY

This program is open to public libraries and branches of public libraries that:

- Are members of a regional library system and 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, 2007 that meets the requirements of the *Massachusetts Long-Range Plan, 2008-2012* and the *LSTA Policies and Procedures 2008-2012*. If a plan is already on file, an updated Action Plan for FY2009 must be on file by **December 3, 2007**.
- Agree to send one to two staff members, as appropriate, to the entire four-day EqualAccess Institute.

INTERESTED?

Application materials are available at <http://ea.webjunction.org/do/Navigation?category=18847> and will be due on January 31, 2008. An **application/informational workshop** will be held at the Reading Public Library on December 18, 2007 (from 10-11); for those who cannot attend the workshop, informational **teleconferences** will be held on January 3, 2008 (from 11-12), and January 8, 2008 (from 2-3). Please email Rachel Devin at rachel.devin@state.ma.us to register for the workshop or the teleconferences.

If you need more information about the EqualAccess grant program, call Eleanor Stafford at the MBLC, 1-800-952-7403, ext. 228, or e-mail eleanor.stafford@state.ma.us. You may read more generally about the EqualAccess program and view agendas from the 2007 Massachusetts EqualAccess Institute at <http://ea.webjunction.org> and <http://ea.webjunction.org/do/Navigation?category=14011>, respectively.