



works to
combat

illiteracy and
aliteracy

The Massachusetts Center for the Book

Fund: 7000-9508

While it is organized as an independent 501c3, Massachusetts Center for the Book (MCB) is in effect a state organization. It operates as an affiliate of a federal agency, the Library of Congress (LOC), and represents the Commonwealth in several high-profile national initiatives, providing links for Massachusetts libraries to the programs and resources of LOC, programming the Massachusetts booth in the Parade of States at National Book Festival in Washington D.C., administering Massachusetts' portion of the national Letters About Literature student writing and reading program, spearheading an East Coast collaborative reading promotion project, Route 1 Reads, and representing the Commonwealth in all discussions about LOC national literacy initiatives, such as the David Rubenstein funded State Literacy Awards.

MCB also works within the Commonwealth to enhance library programming with statewide impact. These programs include the annual Massachusetts Book Awards, an online statewide calendar of events for Massachusetts libraries which improves access to free programming across community lines, an online and mobile tool for literary trails and tours and the development of literacy and literary programming that bridges communities and regions, bringing Massachusetts together through literacy efforts.

Why the Center for the Book is Important

MCB works to combat both illiteracy and aliteracy in order to ensure a robust and informed civic debate in Massachusetts and throughout a country that has demonstrated a collective inability to separate information from disinformation with increasingly negative results for civil society.

MCB provides materials for reading promotion free of charge, hosts platforms on which libraries can contribute local cultural tourism information for statewide consumption, and ensures commonwealth affiliation with federal programming opportunities through LOC and through the American Library Association's Public Programs Office (PPO), on whose advisory committee the MCB Executive Director serves. PPO hosts, among other crucial initiatives, public programs in media literacy to combat the negative influence of fake news.

How a Lack of Funding has Affected the Center for the Book

MCB has never had the minimum funding to operate effectively and with an eye to sustainability. Unlike many state centers throughout the country, MCB has had to annually relitigate its very existence. Minimal and insecure funding has forced MCB to mark time, maintaining core programs as best it can while forgoing opportunities for grants and partnerships that would allow it to increase programming resources in the library community. In a region that prides itself on being a leader in healthcare for all, MCB is unable to offer even minimal health care benefits to staff. To fulfill its commitment to operate as a public-private partnership, MCB must have the capacity to fundraise, which requires more than one full-time (unbenefited) employee who, owing to a shortage of administrative funding must manage every aspect of the organization with inconsistent part-time help and few volunteers.

What the Center for the Book Would Do with Increased Funding

While \$250,000 will no longer support a 2.5-person office, that appropriation would allow MCB to develop into a 1.75 FTE office that could augment its operations with some contract labor. (All labor would remain unbenefited.) The entire focus of this increase in capacity would be on developing partnerships and seeking grants to bring in more funds to continue MCB's mission to promote lifelong literacy through programming in libraries.