



a leader

**in digitizing
collections**

The Library for the Commonwealth at the Boston Public Library

Fund: 7000-9401

The Library for the Commonwealth (LFC) at the Boston Public Library expands access for all Massachusetts residents to collections, reference and research assistance, education and skill-building tools, and our shared cultural heritage. Over 102,000 active e-cards are being used throughout the Commonwealth, allowing residents to enjoy instant access to online services, including a broad selection of online resources, e-books, downloadable audiobooks and music, streaming service with audiobooks, music, television shows, and movies.

Why the Library for the Commonwealth is Important

Formerly known as the “Library of Last Recourse”, LFC provides services to all Massachusetts residents, filling in gaps in services that other libraries are unable to provide. In addition, through the Digital Commonwealth project, the BPL has become a leader in digitizing collections from all across Massachusetts, making them available for everyone, no matter where they live. 216 municipalities have at least one institution that has submitted materials to Digital Commonwealth.

How a Lack of Funding has Affected the Library for the Commonwealth

- LFC is unable to meet the demand for eBooks and audiobooks. Some collections have been eliminated.
- LFC has had to cancel vital online resources that benefit the entire Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- LFC is unable to institute new outreach and programming efforts to reach those who need the services the most.

What the MBLC would do with Increased Funding

- Broaden the digitization efforts across the Commonwealth, specifically by creating a historic newspaper database to preserve these important records and become a powerful tool for historians, genealogists, and students.
- Modernize delivery of remote reference by providing on-demand, online chat reference service during business hours to better align with current information-seeking behavior and tools.
- Expand outreach to underserved populations in Massachusetts, such as incarcerated adults and youth, immigrant communities, and those in need of workforce development and career-building skills.