



encourages

municipal support
and improvement

State Aid to Public Libraries

Fund: 7000-9501

State Aid to Public Libraries is an annual, voluntary program administered by the MBLC that distributes local aid money to municipalities. It encourages municipal support and improvement for public library service, bolsters reciprocal resource sharing among libraries, compensates for differences in municipal funding capacities, and offsets costs to libraries that circulate materials to patrons from other certified municipalities.

Why State Aid to Public Libraries is Important

About 98% of the Commonwealth's libraries participate in this voluntary program. The program is municipally focused, with the requirements applying to local municipal funding of the library as well as library services. The Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) is the required appropriation to the library based on municipal funding. The State Aid funds awarded to libraries can be used in any way that supports the library. Libraries that are state aid certified also have access to reciprocal borrowing from other libraries, MBLC library construction grants, federal LSTA grants, and the MBLC's Small Libraries in Networks program which provides libraries that serve communities with populations under 10,000 with funding to support their network memberships.

How a Lack of Funding has Affected State Aid

- State funding has not kept up with municipal funding, making state aid awards only a fraction of what libraries receive from their local governments.
- Rising costs and lower funding have forced libraries to use state aid funding to simply keep the doors open instead of for improvements that benefit their patrons and allow the library to keep pace with changing technologies.
- Although the program received a 3% increase last year, sustained funding is important to keep library funding stable across the Commonwealth

How State Aid is Used

State Aid is local aid and can be used for any library purpose without appropriation. For example:

- Updating technology
- Increasing the hours the library is open
- Paying a network membership fee
- Expanding physical collections for the library

In addition, being state aid certified allows a library to:

- Have access to millions of items across the state for their patrons to borrow saving both libraries and patrons money
- Receive federal grant money through the MBLC's LSTA Grant Program
- Have access to millions of dollars in library construction grants through the MBLC's Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program. (MPLCP)
- Participate in the MBLC's Small Libraries in Network program if the library supports a population under 10,000 residents.