



engaged

in the project
of lifelong
literacy

The Massachusetts Center for the Book

Fund: 7000-9508

Massachusetts Center for the Book (MCB) is the Commonwealth's affiliate of the Library of Congress (LOC). It links Massachusetts libraries to the programs and resources of LOC and participates in national projects, such as programming the Massachusetts table in the Pavilion of the States at National Book Festival, administering Massachusetts' portion of the national *Letters About Literature* student writing and reading program, and spearheading an East Coast collaborative project, *Route 1 Reads*. At home, MCB is a statewide library programming office, developing programs which leverage library expertise and enhance community outreach/service. In this capacity, MCB administers the annual Massachusetts Book Awards, maintains the statewide calendar of events for Massachusetts libraries, improving access to free programming across community lines, hosts an online and mobile tool for literary trails and tours, and develops literacy and literary programming to offer in libraries statewide.

Why the Center for the Book is Important

We all believe in literacy, but we often stop too soon in our quest for universal literacy. It's not enough to ensure that people CAN read, it is imperative to ensure that they MAY read (that they have access to quality materials) and also that they DO read (that they are engaged in the project of lifelong literacy). MCB engages not only in literacy training for young families but also with reading promotion for tweens, teens, and adults. The Center works to combat both illiteracy and aliteracy to ensure a robust and informed civic debate in Massachusetts.

MCB provides materials for reading promotion free of charge, hosts platforms on which libraries can contribute local information for statewide and national consumption, and informs libraries of federal programming opportunities through engagement with the resources of our nation's library. In addition, MCB serves on statewide committees of library professionals to enhance capacity.

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

MCB was established in Jan 2000 but not adequately funded to perform the functions with which it is charged. In FY2015 line 7000-9508 was established to fund MCB but the line has never been funded at the amount requested (\$250,000). In addition, funding for 7000-9508 has been re-litigated each year, meaning that MCB has operated for one to two quarters with no security that it would have funding for the next year. In FY 2018, funds were delayed by nearly five months. All staff were laid off and all programs were put on hold. During the months of hiatus, MCB was unable to apply for several important program grants and had to retreat from talks that were well advanced to secure media sponsorship for projects.

What the Center for the Book would do with Increased Funding

With baseline funding of \$250,000, MCB can hire a second full-time person and increase the number of grants and the amount of fundraising it undertakes so as to fulfill its promise to operate as a public-private partnership (following the model of the national center for the book in the Library of Congress). The funding will pay rent and salaries for a director, a development professional, and part-time support staff so that the Center can increase the offerings to libraries and the activity in local communities that will result from those offerings.