

# The Massachusetts Center for the Book (MCB)

Fund: 7000-9508

**Massachusetts Center for the Book (MCB)** is our Commonwealth affiliate of a federal institution, the Library of Congress (LOC). There is an affiliated center for the book in each of the 50 states as well as in the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands.

Each center is funded by its state, commonwealth, district, or territory. Line item 7000-9508 was established to fund MCB operating expenses. It currently meets only 65% of need.

MCB links Massachusetts libraries to the programs and resources of the national library. It also programs Massachusetts contributions to National Book Festival (normally held annually in Washington D.C.), administers the Library of Congress/ Massachusetts State Literacy Award, spearheads a collaboration among the 16 East Coast centers for the book, Route 1 Reads, and collaborates with other state centers as it administers the Massachusetts component of a student reading/writing initiative, *Letters About Literature*.

In the Commonwealth, MCB collaborates with libraries on programming that will have statewide impact. It administers the annual Massachusetts Book Awards and develops and hosts an online literary tourism project, Mass Book Trails and Tours, an effort intended to drive readers to literary sites, including our 26 literary museums as well as hundreds of heritage sites, throughout the Commonwealth.

During the pandemic, MCB has worked to promote the literary economy of Massachusetts, informing its constituency about the activities of Commonwealth authors, publishers, and booksellers. It has also promoted distance learning and culture, pushing information about online exhibits and presentations on the history and art of the book in Massachusetts and throughout the nation.

MCB created and/or made available videos of Mass Book Awards authors as well as Massachusetts authors who were participating in National Book Festival. In collaboration with WGBH, it also sponsored a discussion group of Massachusetts librarians in connection with Masterpiece Theater's anniversary celebration, a project featured in a recent edition of *American Libraries*. Recently, *Publishers Weekly* highlighted the work of MCB, commending it for "adapting to offer its core programming digitally."

Two notable digital pivots for the pandemic year are detailed below:

## National Book Festival

From September 24 to December 30, MCB was part of the virtual National Book Festival, creating content for the Massachusetts component of the project LOC called "Roadmap to Reading." MCB featured Commonwealth literary and literacy information for visitors to the digital festival. Among other things, it highlighted its annual "Great Read," *The Word Collector* by Dedham author/illustrator Peter H. Reynolds, collaborating with Kid Lit TV to create a short video with the author, and including, as well, a video of the Obamas reading the book (an offering from the reading outreach project of the new Obama presidential library). It distributed information about other of its state-based programs and also distributed information about the Commonwealth provided from the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth. This last information is sought out by school children from across the nation who are completing research projects about the states, commonwealths, districts, and territories which comprise our United States of America.

## Book Bites

On November 14 and 15, MCB teamed up with Boston Book Festival for a bonanza weekend of local literature, featuring authors from across the Commonwealth, in all genres, introducing readers to their latest books in a fast-paced series of bite-sized videos. The event, called "Massachusetts Book Bites," featured fifty-one Massachusetts authors and poets with fiction, nonfiction, and children's books. The authors presented short introductions to their new and forthcoming books for attendees.

