

Federal Funding

in Massachusetts Libraries

LSTA

Making a Local Difference

Using federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the MBLC develops grant opportunities for public, school, academic, and special libraries that go beyond what local funding can do.

Libraries use grants to address:



- Accessibility for **people with vision loss, dementia, or other health related** concerns

- Small **business development and assistance for entrepreneurs**

- **English language learning, citizenship classes,** and support for immigrants in partnership with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

- **Hands-on learning** through artistic and creative experiences in partnership with museums and cultural centers

- **Local history projects** that surface regional history, add to the historical heritage, and capture local experiences of underserved or historically marginalized populations.

- **Early learning** and social interaction among young children (aged 0-6) and their caregivers

- Access to archival collections that connect users with **Massachusetts' rich and diverse historic collections.**



To learn about grants to libraries in your district and statewide initiatives **scan the QR Code** or **visit mblclsta.com**



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Massachusetts Libraries
BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS

The MBLC received \$3.6 million in federal LSTA funds. In addition to grants and statewide services, the funding supports the E-Rate program, statewide trainings for librarians to increase access for people with vision loss, some staff salaries, and data collection and reporting.

Statewide

Programs & Services

Impact of Executive Order 14238

In the wake of **Executive Order 14238**, the MBLC was forced to make several rounds of cuts including the **elimination of accessibility** training to provide services for the blind and disabled, the **cancellation of grants to 18 communities** to help improve local library services, collections, and programs, and a **major reduction in statewide research databases**, heavily used by students.

Rebuilding the federal program

The MBLC is in the process of **rebuilding its federal program** with **local grants to libraries** and the **restoration of statewide research databases**, heavily used by schools.

On December 3, 2025, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) announced it had **reinstated all federal grants** which were terminated due to **Executive Order 14238**.

What federally funded services mean to people in Massachusetts:



“This catalogue [Commonwealth Catalog (Comcat)] gives me access to not only the books I love, but also the resources I need to support my special needs children. It allows me to research and learn about neurodivergence and how to connect with them more, how to advocate for them, and how to see the world through their eyes. I am also in my doctorate and use the library to support my research as a Northeastern student. **To have these things? I use them every day. To lose them? Then I am concerned that knowledge will only be accessible**

to the wealthy. And that’s wrong. That’s not what Massachusetts stands for. We need to fight this for our children so they have access to resources they deserve.” *—library patron*

ComCat gives residents access to millions of items that their own network doesn’t have.

People requested more than 124,000 items from over 500 academic, public, school, and special libraries.



“The library has shaped my family’s story in lasting ways. Losing or cutting funding for shared eBook [Library eBooks and AudioBooks (LEA)] collections would **hurt families across the state — not just materially, but in ways that make our communities smaller, lonelier, and less vibrant.** We can’t afford to let that happen.” *—library patron*

LEA allows people to access eBooks, audiobooks, from libraries across the Commonwealth.

Circulation has more than doubled since 2019 with more than two million items in 2025.



“Our **public schools could not teach the state and federally mandated curriculum** to our students without the resources provided through the MBLC.” *—teacher in Western Massachusetts*

Research databases



The statewide database program provides critical access to research databases **that no community or school system could afford to purchase on its own.**

On average 60% of database usage comes from schools. Last year more than 9.5 million articles were downloaded, a new high.