

# State organization awards library \$50K grant

LYNNFIELD — The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) recently voted to award the Lynnfield Public Library a provisional Planning and Design Grant, totaling \$50,000.

The grant is part of the MBLC's state-funded Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP). "We're grateful to the Governor and the Legislature for their recognition that libraries are a vital part of our communities," said MBLC Chair Frank Murphy.

The MPLCP helps libraries across the state meet the growing demand for library services with expanded and improved library facilities. "Libraries are busy," said Murphy. "But it's no longer just about books. Libraries are where people turn for help with technology, for support starting a business or for help looking for a job. The role of the library as a true community center continues to evolve and these grants help communities take the first step toward projects that benefit every resident."

Since 2000, visits to Massachusetts public libraries have increased by nearly 60 percent, with more than 35 million visits to libraries and 56.9 million items borrowed in 2013 alone.

"This grant represents an important step in planning for the future needs of the town of Lynnfield and the Lynnfield Public Library," said Robert Calamari Jr., chairman, Board of Library Trustees. "We are grateful to the MBLC for helping us to realize Lynnfield's vision for its library."

Twenty-eight library applications went through a rigorous independent grant review process. Libraries were selected based on many factors including community need, an understanding of future trends in library services, integration with the library's long-range plan, support from local officials and a plan for community input.

Planning and Design Grants may be used for preparation of a library building program, architectural feasibility studies, engineering analysis of an existing building or alternative sites, schematic design, cost analysis of options, site investigation and project management services. Planning and Design grants are capped at \$50,000 or two-thirds of the eligible project costs and require local match funding of up to \$25,000.

The library has set aside \$25,000 from a previous grant, meeting a requirement that libraries secure local funds to accept MPLCP grant funding. Voters at Town Meeting also approved article 18, which allowed the library to apply for the Planning and Design Grant to study the feasibility of expanding the library at its cur-

rent location or finding a new site in town for the library.

Planning and Design Grants and the support provided by MBLC Library Building Specialists benefit libraries that anticipate applying for Construction Grants from the MPLCP in the future.

Increasingly, public libraries are asked to play more important educational and socially connective roles within their communities. The range of services is extensive — ranging from adult programs such as author series, concerts, book discussions and community lectures, to increased teen programs and collections, to quiet spaces for reflective reading and study, to community meeting spaces for special projects and activities.

Library officials believe the current library facility is both inadequate for these present needs and incapable of meeting the most pressing future demands as well, therefore the grant presents a great opportunity.

As the population shifts to a predominance of young children and older retirees, the library must tackle the challenges of basic transformation and divergent interests, expanding the library's image from book-lender to the center of a new intellectual and social community.

In addition to Lynnfield the following communities received provisional Planning and Design Grants: Amherst, Chester, Dartmouth, Dighton, East Bridgewater, Erving, Falmouth, Greenfield, Hadley, Kingston, Littleton, Nahant, North Attleborough, Seekonk, Springfield, Sutton, Upton, Westborough and Westford.

Funding for this grant round is made possible through a 2008 state bond authorization by the Patrick-Murray Administration and the Legislature. Library construction projects in Athol, Buckland, Dudley, Boston (the East Boston and Matapan branches of the Boston Public Library), Falmouth, Foxborough, Granby, Holyoke, Mashpee, Millis, Walpole, Westhampton, West Tisbury and Westwood were completed with MPLCP grants from the 2008 authorization in conjunction with local match funding.

MPLCP projects are currently underway in Eastham, Edgartown, Everett (the Shute Memorial Branch of the Everett Public Library), Framingham (the McAuliffe Branch of the Framingham Public Library), Reading, Salisbury, Scituate, Shrewsbury, South Hadley and West Springfield. For more information, visit <http://mbic.state.ma.us>.