

# Massachusetts Library System (MLS)

Founded July 1, 2010

# Library Landscape fy1997+

- Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC)
  - Programs: State Aid; Libs for Blind; Regional Libs; Technology & Res Sharing
- Funding fluctuations over the years
  - Peak: fy2001 \$34mil
  - Low point: fy2011 & fy2012 \$21mil
- Boston Public Library role (Library for the Commonwealth)
- 9 Networks (shared ILSs)
- The 2008/2009 economic downturn
- 3 Regions until 1997 -> 6 Regions until 2010 -> 1 Region (MLS)
- 1,700 multi-type member libraries

# Networks

Nine automated resource sharing networks (shared ILSs) service to about 400 Massachusetts libraries. The total budget for these systems was about \$12million in fy2011. Participating libraries circulated over 58million items and about 6.3million interlibrary loans.

## Network Membership as of FY2011

Network	Members / Sites				Membership Type			
	Public	School	Academic	Special	Total	Full	Mininet	OLA/ Associate*
<b>C/W MARS</b>	135 / 163	2 / 2	11 / 11	1 / 1	149 / 177	62	62	25
<b>CLAMS</b>	31 / 34	0 / 0	1 / 1	0 / 0	32 / 35	32	0	0
<b>FLO</b>	0 / 0	0 / 0	9 / 12	1 / 2	10 / 14	10	0	0
<b>MBLN</b>	3 / 32	2 / 24	2 / 2	1 / 1	8 / 59	8	0	0
<b>MLN</b>	35 / 53	0 / 0	7 / 8	0 / 0	42 / 61	42	0	0
<b>MVLC</b>	35 / 38	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	35 / 38	35	0	0
<b>NOBLE</b>	17 / 22	1 / 1	9 / 12	1 / 1	28 / 36	26	0	2
<b>OCLN</b>	26 / 34	0 / 0	2 / 3	0 / 0	28 / 37	28	0	0
<b>SAILS</b>	38 / 47	24 / 24	2 / 4	0 / 0	64 / 75	64	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	320 / 423	29 / 51	43 / 53	4 / 5	396 / 532	307	62	27

# MLS Resource Sharing

- Physical Delivery – 14mil items/yr
- Mediated ILL Centers – 26k/year
- Journal Article Document Delivery 4,599/year
- MassCat (70 small libraries on shared ILS subsidized with member assessment)

# Network Resource Sharing & Technology

- Nine shared ILSs with (400 libraries, most PLs, and some Acads & K-12) 58 mil circ; 6.5 mil ILLs
  - 85% member funding; 15% MBLC support
- Statewide Virtual Catalog connects the nine Networks
  - MBLC funded; managed by a network;
- Internet Connectivity for ILS use/many libraries also have cable for public access
- Some networks host websites and digital library for libraries
- MLS (35 libs) and One Network (75 libs) are working on BTOP project in Western Mass.

# Online Content

- Online Content (statewide databases: Gale, ProQuest Boston Globe, Encyclopedia Britannica)
  - Jointly funded by MLS and MBLC
- Eight networks have shared OverDrive Platforms
  - Member funded
- Some networks have shared online content, e.g., Novelist and other EBSCO, Facts on File, Learning Express
  - Member funded
- New statewide eBook platform planned; will be managed by MLS
  - Pilot project jointly funded by MLS and MBLC
  - Ongoing funding will require library funding

# Training & Advisory Areas

- Networks support their own services with training and advisory services
- MBLC supports Construction, Preservation, Trustees, Friends, Library Boards, and Certification
- MLS provides general support with some overlap for Trustees, Friends, Boards, and eBooks

# Enhanced MLS Services

- Physical Delivery
  - Sort-to-light labor, equipment, and paper savings
  - Holds, Returns, and Branches sorted to busiest libraries
  - Adding stops when needed
- Online Content (statewide databases)
  - Some regions had no supplemental content beyond the statewide project
- Collaborative Purchasing
  - Partnership with MHEC
  - Supplies, Materials, Subscription Agents, and more
- MassCat (Shared ILS)
  - Reduced fees
  - Will join statewide Virtual Catalog
- Massachusetts Broadband Initiative (Two-Year Broadband Project)
  - BTOP/Gates Grant funded project for more than 100 libraries
  - MBLC and CW/MARS (network) partnership
- Virtual Continuing Education
  - Lynda.com
  - Contracted content
  - LYRASIS content (at member rates)
  - MLS content
- BiblioTemps re-launched on larger scale



# Service Reductions

- Mediated ILL
  - New local cost and effort (in some regions) for return shipping and ILL fees
- Training & Professional Development/Advisory
  - Fewer training/advisory personnel and smaller budget
- Library leadership program
  - LSTA funded but labor intensive.
  - Hope to revive if LSTA funding allows
- Digitization
  - Now covered by Library for the Commonwealth
- Local Data Bases
  - Members miss them

# Efficiency

- Significant Savings
  - Overall budget reduction 31%
  - Personnel costs reduced 70%
  - Operations/Facilities costs reduced 52%
  - Contracting libraries costs reduced 66%
  - Administrative costs reduced 34%
- Significant Increase
  - Online content investment increased 46% plus
- ROI Improved
  - Six Regions fy2009 value=\$107mil; investment=\$10.1mil
  - Return=\$10.60 per dollar invested
  - MLS fy2012 value=\$104mil; investment=\$6.9mil;
  - Return=\$15.07 per dollar invested

# Services and Deliverables

- Delivery – volume up slightly - cost have been reduced a bit and level of service improved with semi-automated sorting
- Training/Advising – 12 librarians at MLS vs. 22 at six regions  
270 MLS events ( 2,577 attendees); down 58% (57%); budget down 61%  
637 Regional events (5,951 attendees)
- Advising– Contact hours down 54%; budget down 21%
- Online Content – Investment up 46% plus with uniform statewide content for all residents
- Mediated ILL– 2 centers vs. centers volume down 36%; budget down 55%; new costs for some libraries
- Shared ILSs – Evergreen investment in 3 networks

# The Lead Up

- Early Warnings
  - Discussion in 2009 on the future of library services. Discussion focused on:
    - Statewide library card
    - User friendly/statewide look and feel
    - Network efficiency
  - Dire budgetary issues looming after 2008 downturn
  - Budget cuts handed down to State Agency
  - Decision to focus cuts in regional budget line item to have least impact on library services

# The Process

- A rushed process mandated by state budget time line and late notice of upcoming cuts to library funding
- Planning Participants – Executive Boards and Regional Staff all met. Decision to merge into single entity.
- Transition Team appointed
  - Executive Board Members
  - Regional Administrators
  - MBLC
- Creating Buy-In
- Facilitator
- Organizational Advice
- Legal Advice

# Results

- A partial merger (two corporations survive, one is dormant)
- Two offices about 100 miles apart
- Two Mediated ILL Centers
- Reduction in Force
  - Current staff: 17.3 FTE
  - Past combined staff: ~45
- Telecommuting is a necessity (also allows smaller offices)
- Executive Board of up to 15
- Six Advisory Committees

# Practicalities

- Acting director
- Hiring opening day staff and Management
- Continuity of benefits
- Compensation equity
- Merger vs Closing
- Record keeping and audit
- Assets and liabilities

# Challenges

- Perception in some areas that an area is underserved
- Involving all constituencies
- Crossing the old regional lines
- Viewed as public library centric
- Communications
- Preparing libraries and the organization for change



# Opportunities

- Leadership with statewide focus
- Decision making streamlined
- Relationships with stakeholders simplified
- Focused budget planning
- Statewide advocacy and visibility
- Statewide Brand/Communications
- Connector role
- Statewide eBook platform
- Virtual Catalog expansion
- Mediated ILL efficiency with self service and consolidation
- Expanded collaborative purchasing
- Wider range of training opportunities
- Access to wider range of advisory skills

# Thank You!

## **Massachusetts Library System**

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Experience: Served as founding Director of former regional system in NE MA for 12 years.

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Experience: Served in public libraries in three different regions and networks.