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September 16, 2021

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Worcester Public Library to Unveil Playscape at the Library Project

Worcester, MA – The Worcester Public Library was awarded a federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant for \$7,500 from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) for their *Playscape at the Library* project.

The project will be unveiled on Tuesday, Sept 21 at 10 a.m. in the new Arthur M. and Martha R. Pappas Children's Center at the Main Library, 3 Salem Square.

The Worcester Public Library is seeking to empower families with children ages 0-6 with the tools, space and information to support their child's development. Through the creation of a playscape in the new children's room at the Main Library, and the implementation of additional play spaces at our six branches, young children and their caregivers will have access to fee-free spaces in which to engage in playful learning opportunities.

"These opportunities will help children build and practice the executive functioning skills needed for healthy development," said Cynthia Bermudez, WPL Youth Services Coordinator. "Parents and caregivers from the Worcester community, including and especially those who are experiencing challenging circumstances such as living in poverty, early parenthood or new residents from other countries, will gain confidence in supporting their child's development through programs and materials explaining the importance of play."

The MBLC developed this direct grant program using federal funding to help libraries meet local community needs including programs that help New Americans learn English and become citizens, STEM and STEAM projects, programs that serve teen needs, and projects that preserve valuable historical documents. The MBLC also offers grants to increase access to library services for people with disabilities.

“We are proud to deliver grant funding to libraries for projects that fill unique needs of libraries across Massachusetts.” said Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development at the MBLC. “Libraries continue to be a vital resource to the communities they serve. Programs funded through LSTA grants illustrate the diverse range of topics and audiences served by Massachusetts libraries.”

In addition to the direct library grant program, the MBLC uses LSTA funds to support statewide programs and services including summer reading programs, research databases, the statewide eBook program, the Commonwealth Catalog [and mass.gov/libraries](http://and.mass.gov/libraries) which has information and resources for residents. LSTA is administered on the federal level by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in the Commonwealth by the MBLC. More information about LSTA can be found on Board's website at www.mass.gov/mblc.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s approximately 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. Their mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Their grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit www.ims.gov and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

For more information on Playscape at the Library contact Linnea Sheldon, Community Relations and Communications Manager, at 508-799-1654 or lsheldon@mywpl.org. For a complete listing of all programs, please visit: <https://mywpl.org/online-calendar>.

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