

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
between
the Griswold Memorial Library, of Colrain, MA, and
the Belding Memorial Library, of Ashfield, MA, and
the Franklin County Sheriff's Office, of Franklin County, Massachusetts.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets the terms and understanding between the the Griswold Memorial Library, of Colrain, MA, and the Belding Memorial Library, of Ashfield, MA, and the Franklin County Sheriff's Office, of Franklin County, Massachusetts to ensure that people serving time at the Franklin County Jail have access to books from participating area libraries, and library services and programs.

Whereas the Franklin County Sheriff's Office philosophy¹ asserts, "The FCSO is committed to supporting criminal offenders by addressing the underlying causes of incarceration through effective, evidence-based treatment, vocational training, accountability and education," and,

Whereas "the American Library Association asserts a compelling public interest in the preservation of intellectual freedom for individuals of any age held in jails, prisons, detention facilities, juvenile facilities, immigration facilities, prison work camps, and segregated units within any facility, whether public or private,"² and,

Whereas the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto³ states, "The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, language, social status, and any other characteristic. Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, poor digital or computer skills, poor literacy abilities or people in hospital or prison," and

Whereas the Griswold Memorial Library Statement on Social Justice and Equity³ says, "We will actively seek to eliminate barriers that prevent the enjoyment of library programs and services," and "do our best to serve as a change agent for a more equitable and just community," and,

Whereas the Belding Memorial Library's Strategic Plan outlines the objectives to "Develop and expand community engagement," and "Increase our library's profile in the community,"

Whereas Section 8, Chapter 78 of the General Laws of Commonwealth of Massachusetts⁴ provide that "Any free town public library may loan its books or other library material to any other such library or to citizens of other towns or non-residents, under such written conditions and regulations as may be made by the board of trustees or other authority having control of the library so loaning," and,

Whereas the Belding Memorial Library, Griswold Memorial Library, and Greenfield Public Library have been providing library services to Franklin County Jail since 2021, including book lending,

book discussions, and a “Read to the Children” program for the families of eligible caregivers who are incarcerated in Franklin County, and,

Whereas an open grant awarded to the Belding Memorial Library from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) “aims to improve the accessibility of library services to community members impacted by incarceration in Franklin County, Massachusetts over a one-year period from 2023-2024. This grant will expand two public library programming initiatives that are currently underway at the Franklin County Jail and House of Correction, including the provision of print material to meet residents’ needs and the facilitation of book discussion groups with residents,”

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish the intent of Griswold Memorial Library, Belding Memorial Library, and Franklin County Sheriff’s Office to continue collaborating to provide books, library services, and programs at the Franklin County Jail, and to continue support for these services as far as possible through dedicated staff time and funding.

Furthermore, this MOU serves to clarify and describe the partnership between GML, BML, and FCSO and to describe each department’s role in the ongoing provision of library services inside of the County Jails:

I. Staff

- A. MLIS-accredited librarians from GML and BML will provide a rotating selection of paperback books from participating public libraries, create and maintain library cards (accounts), and offer reference and readers’ advisory services according to a schedule that is agreed upon by FCSO staff.
- B. Visiting librarians have completed the volunteer training from FCSO and will follow all facility rules and instructions from sworn staff.
- C. GML and BML librarians will communicate openly and directly with FCSO staff about program goals, outcomes, scheduling, and any requirements or changes to our services or programs.
- D. GML and BML librarians will coordinate with the FCSO Education Coordinator to develop services and programs that support their Program goals as well as those of our patrons’ and their families.

II. Library services

A. Materials

- 1. A rotating selection of paperback books from participating public libraries for loan to patrons at FCSO, stamped with barcodes from owning (lending) libraries;
- 2. Discarded paperback books for the FCSO library and pods, clearly marked as discarded, or unmarked altogether (no barcode), in good condition with no writing, not to exceed 30 books at a time/per week, clearly marked for the Education Coordinator for use in the library;
- 3. Library outreach (promotional) bookmarks and brochures;

4. With approval for individual patrons, audiobooks and playing device for visually impaired patrons and patrons who have a physical inability to hold a book for a prolonged time;
 5. Librarians will not censor materials according to their content, and should uphold the ALA's guideline that "The correctional library collection should reflect the needs of its community."
- B. Reference and readers' advisory services include informational requests and reading recommendations; these will be held in confidence between the librarians and patrons;
 - C. Programming such as book club discussions and Read to the Children recordings.

III. Access

- A. Book donations: Library staff should be permitted to drop off one parcel of paperback discards/donations per week from participating libraries.
- B. Visiting librarians will periodically bring paperback library books and outreach/promotional materials via "quick carts" to replenish the circulating collection.
- C. Library services and programs will be scheduled in advance.

IV. Purpose

- A. The purpose of library services to the FCJ is to promote library services, literacy, lifelong learning, civic engagement, and to engender a sense of connectedness, for incarcerated patrons and their families, as well as with FCSO staff.
- B. We hope to establish a model of library services for other public and rural libraries in Massachusetts and the U.S. for the provision of library services to jails, prisons, detention facilities, juvenile facilities, immigration facilities, etc.

V. Funding

- A. This MOU does not represent a commitment to fund by any partners/signors.
- B. GML, BML, and FCSO, as partners, should pursue and support continuing funding for library services and programming at FCJ.

VI. Duration

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by mutual consent of authorized officials from GML, BML, or FCSO. This MOU shall become effective upon signature by the authorized officials from GML, BML, and FCSO, and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by any one of the partners by mutual consent. In the absence of mutual agreement by the authorized officials from GML, BML, or FCSO this MOU shall end on 12/31/2048.

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Address
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Date:
(Partner signature)
(Partner name, organization, position)

Date:
(Partner signature)
(Partner name, organization, position)

Date:
(Partner signature)
(Partner name, organization, position)

References

1. Franklin County Sheriff's Office. Philosophy. Retrieved January 23, 2023 from <https://www.fcso-ma.us/mission>
2. American Library Association. 2019. "Prisoners Right to Read." Retrieved January 23, 2023 from <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/prisonersrightoread>
2. IFLA/UNESCO. 2022. "Public Library Manifesto." Retrieved January 23, 2023 from <https://repository.ifla.org/bitstream/123456789/2006/1/IFLA-UNESCO%20Public%20Library%20Manifesto%202022.pdf>

3. Griswold Memorial Library Library Board of Trustees. 2020. "Statement on Social Justice and Equity." Retrieved January 23, 2023 from https://colrain-ma.gov/files/GML_Statement_on_social_justice_and_equity-docx.pdf

4. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. "Section 8: Use of facilities by non-residents," in Chapter 78: Public Libraries. Retrieved from January 23, 2023 from <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter78/Section8>