

You are at: [ALA.org](#) » [ASCLA](#) » [Volume 24, Number 1 2002](#)

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### YSLead Massachusetts

by Doreen Metcalfe

In August 2002, sixty youth services librarians, interested in expanding their leadership role, will gather at Endicott College in Beverly, Massachusetts for YSLead Massachusetts, a youth services leadership institute for librarians sponsored by the Massachusetts Regional Library Systems.

For two years, YSLead Massachusetts's coordinators will identify sixty potential leaders in school and public libraries from across the state and bring them together, along with twelve mentors, for two and a half days of collaborative training in leadership and mentoring. Maureen Sullivan, a prominent national consultant, will facilitate the institute. Ms. Sullivan will address topics of interest including the understanding of leadership styles, the role of the leader, communication, coaching, and mentoring.

After the institute, those who participate will work as mentors, assist in the development and presentation of continuing education workshops focusing on leadership, and make a commitment to take an active role in selected regional, state or national library associations.

The benefits of YSLead Massachusetts include opportunities for personal and professional growth. Participants gain the skills and confidence to make a difference in their library and profession. The participants' libraries benefit by gaining an advocate for youth services and youth, an employee ready to mentor and coach staff, improved recruitment and retention opportunities, and a role model for other youth services staff.

The Massachusetts Youth Services Consultants jointly developed this project. It is a response to the compelling need for youth services staff to be leaders, mentors and recruitment experts if Massachusetts is to remedy the critical shortage of qualified staff serving young people. Prospective candidates are practitioners of library science in youth services departments who may or may not hold a Masters of Library Science degree or School Library Media Certification.

Preparations for YSLead Massachusetts began by holding continuing education workshops on leadership to generate interest and gather valuable information on the skills needed by staff serving youth. Upon acceptance of the grant, the state's youth services consultants hosted two steering committee meetings, held six focus group sessions, and worked toward the goal of recruiting potential candidates.

YSLead Massachusetts is a two-year initiative funded by an LSTA grant administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The first institute will be held in

August 2002 and the second in August 2003.

The [YSLead Massachusetts web site](#) offers a glimpse of the great work that accompanies this initiative. For more information, contact [Doreen Metcalfe](#), Youth Services Consultant, Central Massachusetts Regional Library System.

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