



**CHANGING LIVES
THROUGH LITERATURE**
BEST PRACTICES GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

History and Overview

In a Changing Lives through Literature (CLTL) program, individuals on probation meet with a judge, a probation officer, and a facilitator (typically a literature professor) in a college seminar-type setting, to discuss reading (and sometimes writing) assignments. CLTL is premised on a belief in the transformative power of literature, and the value of sharing ideas in a group setting.

Probation officers, facilitators, and/or judges may initiate CLTL programs, and programs may take a variety of forms, depending on the needs of the particular community. Some CLTL programs are limited to men or women probationers; some are open to all genders; and some are designed specifically for juvenile offenders or for incarcerated individuals. A unique program also exists for families through the Berkshire Probate and Family Court.

Judicial involvement and participation are critical components of a successful CLTL program. The judge completes all assignments, attends each meeting, and participates actively in the discussion. The judge also sponsors and orchestrates the graduation ceremony at the end of the program, which typically takes place in the judge's courtroom, and includes the presentation of a diploma and a book to each graduate, as well as remarks by the judge, the probation officer, the facilitator, and those graduates who wish to speak.

Judges who participate in the CLTL program and are required to leave their court before 4:30 p.m. to attend a class may use judicial education leave to account for their time.

In addition, judges and MPS employees who must travel a distance to get to a CLTL class may be reimbursed for their travel expenses at the current trial court mileage rate.

A CLTL program will succeed when the judge, probation officer and facilitator all believe in the power of words, characters, and finely spun tales to capture the reader's attention, introduce fresh thoughts, and plant seeds of ambition. Participants in the program will ideally develop a sense of personal growth, a sense of hope, and a continuing curiosity to learn more about themselves and others.

Additional program information can be found at:
[Changing Lives Through Literature - Philosophy and Testimonials](#)

PART ONE: BECOMING INVOLVED WITH CLTL

Prerequisites

1. Each CLTL team member is required to attend and participate in at least two meetings of an established CLTL program or for a more in-depth experience, participate in the [Mentor/Mentee Program](#). The CLTL program administrator, together with the CLTL facilitator coordinator, will assist in scheduling and coordinating. If you are unable to attend one of these, please contact the CLTL program administrator @ ctl@jud.state.ma.us.
2. Each CLTL team member must also attend the annual CLTL spring training conference. If you are unable to attend, please contact the CLTL program administrator @ ctl@jud.state.ma.us.
3. Each CLTL team member must read this guide in its entirety.
4. Facilitators must be a Massachusetts State vendor before facilitating. Detailed instructions on how to become a vendor can be found in the Facilitator Payment Guide section.

Establishing a New Program

1. A CLTL program consists of a judge, probation officer, facilitator (the program team), and probationers.
2. Any judge, probation officer, or facilitator interested in initiating a CLTL program should contact the CLTL program administrator @ ctl@jud.state.ma.us.
3. The CLTL team should discuss the structure of the upcoming program, including group demographic (men/woman/mixed), number of participants, start date, length of program, and location of meetings.
 - A typical program consists of five to twelve participants, a minimum of six/maximum of ten classes meeting weekly or bi-weekly. A graduation is held outside of the regularly scheduled classes.
4. An outline of the new program must be provided to the CLTL program administrator at least two weeks prior to the program's scheduled start date. using the [Program Announcement Form \(CLTL-A1\)](#).
 - Funding for the program is not secured until the form's submission.
 - The judge and probation officer must obtain acknowledgement signature from their First Justice and Chief Probation Officer on the CLTL-A1 Form.
 - An updated CLTL-A1 Form should be submitted at any time to reflect program updates.

Programs Inside Correctional Facilities

CLTL also runs programs inside correctional facilities with the permission and support of the Sheriff. The team consists of a facilitator, judge(s), and correctional officers in lieu of probation. Programs are often run every week instead of every other week. Short stories or other short readings may be the most useful literary genre for this population. As an incentive for participating in this program, each graduate receives a certificate that may be used either at sentencing, as evidence of their ongoing participation in programming while detained, or when appearing before the parole board regarding their future release.

Ethical Boundaries

LEGAL ADVICE AND PENDING CASES

Probation officers should inform probationers prior to the start of the program that they may not ask the judge for legal advice or discuss any pending cases with the judge. This applies not only to the probationer's own matters but also to matters involving friends, family, neighbors, etc.

RECUSAL

A judge participating in the CLTL program should not generally sit on cases involving probationers currently participating in the program. However, in some courts, practical considerations make this difficult, if not impossible. Judges faced with this concern can contact the program administrator at cltl@jud.state.ma.us

PRIVACY CONCERNS

Judges have different views about sharing personal information with the CLTL class.

- Each judge should decide how much or how little they are comfortable sharing.
- Most judges wish to maintain a level of formality, particularly in terms of how they are addressed and prefer not to be called by their first names. This is preferable, especially where a judge may have to preside over a case involving a current or former CLTL participant.

DUTY TO REPORT CRIMES OR MISCONDUCT

To be handled by the probation officer.

PART TWO: THE JUDGE

Role of the Judge

Judges who enjoy discussing literature and want to participate in a dynamic and beneficial probation program are ideal for CLTL. The judge gives judicial authorization to the program, serves as a role model for the probationers, and participates fully in each session.

While probation officers are often the primary source for referring participants to the program, judges may also make referrals when they sense that a person appearing before them for sentencing would benefit from and be a suitable candidate for CLTL.

The judge's involvement is central to the success of a CLTL program. The judge functions as a regular member of the discussion group, sharing insights and his or her appraisal of characters and themes. Judges who participate in CLTL gain a deep understanding of how both the literature and the discussions foster change so effectively. Individuals involved in the court system may feel ignored or disrespected by authority or may be unable to believe in themselves. When a judge listens to their ideas and acknowledges their opinions, the judge gives credit to their lives. By sharing his or her own views, the judge provokes discussion, enables thought, and helps facilitate the turnaround that occurs for many CLTL participants. The judge, in effect, steps off the bench. As one judge has put it: "by participating in the program, each judge is an exemplar of justice, a proponent for personal growth and change."

Judges lead CLTL graduations which offer public recognition of the probationers' success in the judge's courtroom, when practical. Graduates receive an incentive for successful completion of the program. The graduations are open to family and friends.

Judges who are considering initiating a CLTL program are encouraged to talk to other judges who have participated in CLTL. A judge, probation officer and facilitator who enjoy discussing literature and value constructive interaction with probationers make the best possible team.

Juvenile Court Programs

ROLE OF THE JUDGE:

The participation of a judge provides the juvenile participants the presence of a supportive authority figure. For those juveniles who view their involvement in the juvenile court as punitive, the contribution of the judge conveys to the participants that the primary objective of the Juvenile Court is that they "shall not be treated as criminals, but as children in need of aid, encouragement and guidance." The presence of a judge is also an expression of an expectation of seriousness and accountability.

The judge should lead any graduation ceremony, or other acknowledgement of completion of the program. If possible, parents, guardians and close family members should be encouraged to attend any graduation ceremony to share in a recognition of their child's success. The judge should acknowledge the child's dedication to successful completion of the program. The judge should also recognize that faithful commitment by the juvenile to such a program is an indication of future successes in other endeavors if pursued with an equivalent sense of serious commitment and hard work.

In counties with several judges, and multiple court sessions the CLTL judge may wish to take referrals from other judges so that the CLTL will not be overseeing the juvenile's case in the courtroom. Of course, for smaller counties with only one judge this is impossible.

Probate and Family Court Programs

The fundamental goal of using literature to modify behavior is retained in an adaptation of the CLTL program for use in the Probate and Family Court (“PFC”). The PFC has exclusive original jurisdiction over actions for divorce and paternity, including custody, support, and parenting time as well as jurisdiction over guardianships of minors. Differences in the types of cases that come before the PFC present opportunities to build upon CLTL’s fundamental goal. One example is a program that originated out of the Berkshire Probate and Family Court, aptly called *Enhancing Families Through Literature* (“EFTL”)

The major distinctions between cases pending in criminal courts and cases pending in family courts are that litigants in the family court are not subject to criminal sentences¹ and the court is concerned with modifying the behavior of both parties to the case. Moreover, there is an overriding concern about the best interests of the parties’ children who are often caught in the crossfire of the parents’ disputes.

These differences also form the basis of a unique behavioral goal. Rather than attempting to rehabilitate a person’s criminal involvement, those of us in the PFC are concerned with modifying how parents resolve conflict and navigate co-parenting in a manner that serves the best interests of their children. Parents who have poor skills in these areas tend to dominate the already crowded dockets in the PFC. These cases drain valuable court resources and foment inter-parental conflict, which adversely impacts their children’s emotional adjustment and development. We seek therefore, a way to break the cycle of poor decision making and ineffective conflict resolution to keep families out of court and to protect children from harmful conflict.

EFTL was created keeping these goals in mind. Holding onto the essential ingredients of CLTL, EFTL was expanded to include both parents and their children. Augmenting the principle that the study of literature has been successful in modifying adult behavior, we introduced a segment designed to highlight the importance of reading to children in stimulating imagination, developing language, and listening skills, opening up opportunities for dialogue and growth and developing skills of self-discipline. The result is a twelve-week course. It begins with the court issuing an Order requiring the parties to attend the program along with their children.² Monetary sanctions (or community service orders for indigent litigants) are imposed for any non-compliance with the court’s Order.

The program takes place at our local library once per week for twelve weeks, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The evening begins with parents enjoying a catered meal together with their children. At 5:30 p.m., the parents retire to one area of the library, and the children go to a separate area. For the first eight weeks, the parents participate in a traditional CLTL formatted program. Our facilitator leads a discussion on assigned readings, including works by Raymond Carver, William Faulkner, and Franz Kafka. While the parents are studying literature, the children are participating in a program led by four certified Head Start Teachers called “Every Child Ready to Read Program” developed by the Association for Library Service to Children and the Public Library Association.

The final four weeks of the program consist of an interactive program among parents and children led by the early childhood educators. They teach about the importance of the word in parenting. Reading to children is modeled for parents. Parents and children work on projects together. At the conclusion of each of the twelve sessions, each child is given a book, so that by the end of the program the child’s library has increased by 12 books.

Like other CLTL programs, EFTL also culminates in a graduation ceremony at the courthouse. In addition to gifts of books awarded to all participants and children, Berkshire Community College issues a transcript to each parent documenting an earned college credit. Participants speak and share what the program meant to them and their family.

¹ While there are rare instances where litigants face criminal sanctions if found guilty of criminal contempt, those cases are rare.

² Authority to order litigants to participate in EFTL stems from the PFC’s inherent authority to refer parties to a parenting program in order to conserve limited judicial resources, aid in the PFC’s functioning and capacity to decide cases and to ensure the best interests of the children are being met in a pending divorce- or custody-related proceeding. See Bower v. Bournay-Bower, 469 Mass. 690 (2014).

The study of literature within this magic framework of classes with a judge, probation officer and college professor challenges participants to see the world through different eyes.

During class, participants hear differing views and interpretations of the same stories from classmates. Imagining how each character in a story feels often leads to eye-opening discussions. The discussions lead to listening. Listening leads to tolerance. Tolerance leads to acceptance. Acceptance leads to communication. Communication leads to better conflict resolution.

People share their thoughts, without judgment, and in doing so provide themselves and their co-parent with important insights and understanding. The benefits of this program continue to unfold. Parents begin to see themselves as a team raising their child rather than adversaries in a courtroom. In addition, the wonder of reading to children is spread to families that might not have experienced this joy before. Parents experience how snuggling and reading with a child opens communication between parent and child as well. Most important, the overwhelming majority of these families resolve their pending cases by agreement as they begin the journey of resolving future conflicts through communication and negotiation

PART THREE: THE PROBATION OFFICER

Role of the Probation Officer

A probation officer's involvement in CLTL is essential for the success of the program. By attending the sessions, reading the selections, and participating in discussions, the probation officer serves as role model for probationers in the classroom.

THE PROBATION OFFICER'S DUAL ROLE:

Probation officers are in a unique position to select candidates for CLTL. Because probation officers spend time getting to know each probationer's history and background, they are in the best position to locate, select and evaluate probationers for the program. A judge or attorney may recommend a referral. The probation officer can determine if a particular probationer is appropriate for CLTL by asking a series of questions:

- Can the probationer handle the literature?
- Is the probationer in a place in their sobriety/recovery that would allow them to participate in this program?
- Will there be job childcare conflicts?
- Is the probationer motivated to take on CLTL?
- Does the probationer have too many personal issues that will get in the way?

To answer the first question, many probation officers use a simple reading test to determine if the probationer can digest the material. This can be as easy as asking the probationer to read a magazine article or briefly discussing what the probationer likes to read.

Once the program begins, the probation officer follows up if a probationer misses class or does not complete assignments and advises about the probationer's continued participation in the program. Probation officers set up rules for participation, give accolades for success, provide sanctions as necessary, and maintain attendance records.

Juvenile Court Programs

ROLE OF THE PROBATION OFFICER:

Probation officers are in a unique position to select candidates for CLTL. Because probation officers spend time getting to know each probationer's history and background, they are in the best position to locate, select and evaluate probationers for the program. A judge or attorney may recommend a referral. Referrals may be made on delinquency cases and Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) cases. A CLTL referral may be particularly appropriate as a condition of an agreement for diversion of a delinquency prior to arraignment, or as part of an informal assistance period of a CRA.

Judges have differing views on whether to make participation in a CLTL program voluntary as an inducement for successful completion or to make it a condition of probation with a sanction for failure. The preferred approach is for participation to be voluntary, because it provides the juvenile with a greater sense of accomplishment when the participant responsibly commits to the program without the threat of sanction.

The juvenile should be informed at the time of the referral how successful completion of the CLTL program may positively affect his case. If completion of the program will affect the juvenile's conditions or status of probation, it should be memorialized on the record, and in writing.

LOCATIONS OF SESSIONS:

Programs should meet as close as is reasonably possible to public transportation because parents and guardians often have unreliable or non-existent private means of transportation. Also, many parents and guardians work, so they would be unable to bring the child. Often a large room in a courthouse may be the most accessible. Otherwise, facilitators should consider more convenient settings such as Family Resource Centers and other non-profit organizations that may provide private space for meeting.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS:

A clear attendance policy should be made available to all juvenile participants and their parents or guardians. It should be made clear that adherence to the attendance policy is necessary for successful completion of the program. Each will need to set its own attendance/tardiness policy.

Juveniles, unlike adults, must sometimes rely on their adult caretakers to transport them to the CLTL meeting. For juvenile CLTL programs it may be more practicable to have an attendance policy that does not delineate between excused/unexcused. For example, after two absences a physician's note will be required, but continued absences beyond a certain number of meetings, perhaps three meetings, will mean termination from the program regardless of reason.

Of course, tardiness after the start of a session, for instance fifteen minutes, should be considered an absence.

Near the conclusion of a CLTL session the probation officer and the judge should meet and confer as to whether each juvenile participant has successfully completed the program. The judge and probation officer should consider the juvenile's attendance, punctuality and participation.

Referrals, Screening, and Agreements

REFERRALS:

[*Referrals*](#) are most often voluntary, based on the recommendation of a probation officer (chosen by a probation officer.) They may also be made as a court order at sentencing or at a surrender hearing. For additional information, please contact cltl@jud.state.ma.us.

SCREENING:

- Screening should be done before referral to ensure that the probationer is qualified to participate in the Changing Lives Through Literature program.
- The probation officer will also discuss course requirements and expectations, transportation, childcare issues, possible work schedule conflicts, and the prohibition on active drug or alcohol use.
- The probation officer meets with the probationer to assess the probationer's ability to read and, if necessary, may ask the probationer to read something in order to make this determination. If a probationer is unable to read but is otherwise qualified, options may include permitting someone else to read the material to the probationer or having the probationer use audio books.
- The probation officer also assesses potential safety concerns, which should be evaluated on a case by-case basis.
- The probation officer must also take into account any victims/survivors involved. If there is a victim/survivors connected of the case, and the probation officer determines that the probationer is still eligible to participate, then the probation officer must also adhere to all victim policies and provide notice to the victim(s) and take into consideration their feedback before moving forward with a referral.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT PACKET:

- Once the referral and screening have been completed, the probation officer will discuss the overview of the program, the probationer's obligations, and have the probationer sign the [Program Overview and Participant Agreement Packet \(CLTL-MPS2\)](#).
- The probation officer will also discuss that completion of the program will result in an incentive.

CHECKLIST OF PROBATIONER'S OBLIGATIONS:

- Punctual attendance at all classes.
- Complete all reading assignments.
- Positive, pro-active participation in classroom discussions.
- Complete all work assigned by the facilitator.
- Refrain from substance use.
- Be respectful of others in the class.

Dealing with Absence, Tardiness and Other Violations

- Each class, the probation officer will be responsible for accurately reflecting attendance via the [Attendance Form \(CLTL-MPS3\)](#).
- Attendance must also be logged on the probationer's MassCourts case using the chrono code "PCFV" probation contact "field visit".
- Every situation is different and should be handled individually. It matters if a probationer is voluntarily attending or is ordered to attend.
- Extenuating circumstances as described below should be considered:
- A probationer participating on a voluntary basis is in a car accident on the way to class and can verify it.
- A probationer under a court order to attend misses a class and when contacted by the probation officers says, "Sorry, I forgot." Upon further inquiry, the probation officer learns that not only did the probationer not attend, but also failed to read the book.

While both missed a class, due to the differing circumstances, they should receive different consequences. When determining appropriate consequences, a team should decide ahead of time how to handle certain transgressions and should be consistent in delivering appropriate consequences.

ABSENCE:

- The probation officer should give the probationer a first-time warning, discussing with the probationer their short- and long-term consequences. Together, have a conversation to hear why they missed the class, explain the importance of attending, and together come up with a plan on how the probationer can commit to each class, reminding them of their agreement.
- The probation officer can give the probationer a few essay questions on the material missed to bring to the next class to show that while they were unable to attend, they did the reading and thought about some of the questions raised in the story.
- Probationer will not receive any reduction of sentence.
- Probationer may repeat the program, if feasible.

TARDINESS:

- There is no right or wrong way of dealing with tardiness. The important thing is to be consistent.
- Some programs have a zero tolerance for tardiness. The door is closed when the class begins.
 - Others give a 10 or 15-minute window. Some give a warning the first time.
- Each team should talk it over in advance and decide how to handle it.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR IN CLASS:

- Criminal conduct will not be tolerated and will be addressed in court. A heated discussion or other behavior may cross the line and become inappropriate.
 - Such conduct may be effectively addressed simply by a probation officer having a few words with the probationer.
 - Sometimes it can be scary for people to participate and speak up. Facilitators are very good at bringing people into the conversation, but a probation officer may have to encourage participation.
 - When addressing a probationer's shortcoming in participation, it is important to avoid offending the individual. For many, it has been a long time since they were in a classroom. It may be just a matter of learning proper classroom etiquette.
 - The probation officer should speak with the probationer privately during an intermission or after the class.
 - The probation officer must balance offering encouragement and concomitantly being responsible for attendance, compliance, and good behavior.
 - With a little practice, you'll find a balance that works for you and your team.

Many probation officers view the opportunity to participate in Changing Lives Through Literature as a way to see their probationers in a new light. The probation officer can be effective in initiating lively discussions by sharing what they see in a text, and probationers look to the probation officer to see their reactions concerning texts. Probationers also want the probation officer to listen to them, appreciate them for their ideas and insights, and value their reflections on a text.

Participant Program Feedback

- At the completion of the program, the probation officer will provide each participant with an anonymous, [Participant Program Feedback Form \(CLTL-MPS4\)](#).
- The probation officer will:
 - Provide a copy of each participant's form to the team facilitator.
 - Email a copy of each participant's form as indicated on the CLTL-MPS4 form.
 - Ensure originals are kept at the local probation office in a central CLTL folder.

PART FOUR: THE FACILITATOR

Role of the Facilitator

The **facilitators** in Changing Lives Through Literature bring their love of literature to the table; not by lecturing, but by choosing engaging texts and facilitating the discussion that follows. Facilitators make discussion happen; they provoke it, sometimes structure it, and at other times, allow it to flow freely. The goal is to find practices that engage all participants in the literature, the characters, and the themes, and to uncover questions that come from the texts. While the methods and strategies vary from classroom to classroom and facilitator to facilitator the emphasis is always on involving the participants.

The facilitator's role includes working with other team members to decide on the logistics and rules: e.g., how many weeks the course will meet, where best to hold the class, or how to deal with tardiness or absences. Most facilitators are affiliated with a college or university and arrange to have CLTL programs meet on campus. Facilitators who are not affiliated with a college or university arrange to meet in libraries or other non-court settings whenever possible. The facilitator should be involved in these decisions, if possible, because the more the facilitator functions as part of a team, the more invested he or she will be in the program.

The facilitator chooses the readings and may also ask students to do some writing, either in the classroom or in preparation for a given week's discussion. The number of sessions planned will be crucial in determining the kind of reading material.

Choosing the books and proposing topics to write on also means thinking about goals for each class. Facilitators generally do not know the details of why participants from the court have been assigned to the CLTL program. By relying on their own past classroom experience, facilitators select ideas to focus on in the classroom and issues that will make participants read and reflect between classes.

Juvenile Court Programs

ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR:

The facilitator should enthusiastically guide participants in a discussion of the reading that is understandable. The juveniles should be as close in age as possible. The facilitator must also consider that the juveniles will come with varying reading and learning abilities. It is recommended that the reading be read out loud in class by the facilitator or a volunteer participant. A juvenile participant should not be called upon to read because there may be some that have difficulty reading. The facilitator should provide a short period of reflection after the reading during which time the juveniles should be encouraged to write down any thoughts on the reading. If time permits, it may be beneficial to read the reading again so that the juveniles have a full comprehension of the reading.

The facilitator should encourage open, honest, and serious responses to the reading content. The discussions should be orderly and provide each juvenile the opportunity to participate. It is important for the facilitator to be mindful that many of the juveniles that will participate have experienced significant trauma, and they may have an emotional reaction to a particular reading's characters and topics such as parental abandonment; substance misuse; domestic violence; sexual abuse; and homelessness.

The facilitator may provide a copy of the next week's reading to the participants should any have the initiative to read it before the next meeting.

What makes a good CLTL facilitator? A good facilitator needs to be somewhat of an improviser. When comments take the group in a direction one is not prepared for, or a participant hasn't understood the book at all, or the book chosen falls flat, a facilitator must make quick but thoughtful decisions on how to handle the situation. The ability to bring ideas and feelings out of the group and to stimulate thinking is at the core of an effective CLTL session.

Texts should allow participants to reflect on their own experiences through the characters. This means texts that resonate with the facilitator. Unless a facilitator is engaged in the literature, they most likely cannot engage others.

A CLTL facilitator understands the piece they are teaching from one perspective, and maybe even from other perspectives, but realizes that other voices in the room are valid and bring their own ways of seeing the text. A successful facilitator draws out this diversity, learns over time how to capitalize on it, and allows the text to be the teacher.

CLTL is a way of looking at literature and a way of listening to others' insights. It is choosing literature with themes that resonate for a group, literature that speaks to underlying issues. It is finding ways to engage the disengaged, to give voice to those who feel unheard, and to include those who have felt disenfranchised by our social system. CLTL is as much a way of approaching a discussion about literature as it is a list of texts. And its methods can be used with groups that have members from diverse cultures, opinions, and backgrounds.

Nothing takes the place of jumping in and learning from experience. Good facilitators bring something unique to the program, their own personal experiences to a text as well as their own methods of making that text come alive. This is one of the founding principles of Changing Lives Through Literature and a key to its success.

Selecting Texts

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Readings focus on themes and characters that provoke us to ask questions about our values, the kind of society we want to live in and what it means to be human. They should engage our imagination and ask us to delve deeply into our psyches through the safety of story. By examining such literature and language together we arrive at shared realizations and insights.
- Choices should be left to the discretion of the facilitators, their passion, and interests as well as their sense of the group.
- Readings should be adapted to each group. Readings should reflect/relate to the group's concerns and experiences but do not have to "mirror" them, i.e., choose texts written from a variety of time periods, perspectives, styles etc. Changing Lives Through Literature participants may be invited to participate in the full range of literary styles and in the ongoing discussion of such works or facilitators may choose to focus on styles they think are most effective with their class.
- Texts should cause us to question our assumptions about values, society, and behavior.
- For juvenile programs, short stories are the most appropriate material for teenagers given the limited time for reading when meeting, and the varying reading skills of participants.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY OF READINGS:

- Initial readings should be accessible to all. Work up to more challenging and complex readings as participants gain confidence. Use strategies that prepare participants for and help them through more difficult readings, remembering that characters, conflicts, and themes should engage us.
- Some facilitators prefer to start the first night with a short story and/or something short enough (often a poem) to be read aloud and allow the group to reflect on its responses. In this way, the facilitator models methods for critical close reading that probationers can use independently. Reading together that first class can alert the facilitator to any difficulties probationers may have (e.g., with the text or with the reading process). Facilitators work with team members to circulate the first week's reading by email.
- Some facilitators employ a "Go Round" approach to class discussion allowing all to participate and give a reaction before discussion ensues, allowing each person opportunity to speak and the chance for others to see differences.

- A list of novels, short stories, autobiographies, memoirs, essays and poems that have been used successfully in the program can be found in Section Nine, below.

INCLUDE CULTURALLY RELEVANT MATERIAL:

- Put readings in context of a variety of culturally diverse materials.
- Be respectful and appreciative of specific cultural experiences each probationer brings to reading. Each response enriches our understanding of the text.
- Bring to discussion the reasons why one is engaged and find relevant texts that may not directly reflect a facilitator's own cultural experience.

ROLE OF POETRY:

- Poetry is appropriate and useful to include if an instructor so chooses.
- Poetry fosters close reading and critical thinking.
- Poetry can be discussed thoroughly in a single setting.

AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIAL:

- The use of audio-visual material is optional but can be included if an instructor so chooses (and if the classroom setup allows it to be presented without hassle or delay). While the focus should remain on the written text, audio-visual material which resonates with the readings may be included. Audio books may be an attractive option for some participants (via Libby or other outlets).
- Visual literacy has gained increasing importance.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

- Reading, writing, and reflection deepen our experience of a text. Formal, graded writing assignments are not appropriate. However, multiple opportunities for informal written response help probationers focus on the reading, be more thoughtful about their response, and, in "authoring" their responses, help them find a voice.
- Some facilitators like to assign a short pre-class writing assignment that provides a common starting point for discussion and ensures everyone makes an initial contribution so even quieter probationers can contribute. Post discussion: some facilitators have students free write a more personal response to the story (e.g., write a letter of advice to a character, explain what this reading meant to them) or do some creative writing using the reading as a prompt.
- These practices are commonly used in college classroom to good effect.

Facilitator Payment Guide

We are thrilled to have you as a Facilitator, or as someone interested in becoming a Facilitator with Changing Lives Through Literature (CLTL) and want to make the process as seamless as possible. The following are a few key notes:

- You must be set up as a Massachusetts state vendor and have a current name, address, and bank account on file before facilitating.
- Facilitators are eligible to [receive a stipend](#).
- Facilitators are [reimbursed up to a budgeted amount](#) for the purchase of program reading materials and graduation books.
- For additional information, please contact ctl@jud.state.ma.us.

BECOMING A VENDOR:

Step 1: Complete the [New & Existing Facilitator Information Form \(CLTL-A2\)](#).

Step 2: The Facilitator Coordinator will contact you and discuss your qualifications.

Step 3: Following step 2 and upon approval, a Request to Establish Facilitator as a Vendor. Packet will be emailed to you for completion.

After submission of all documents, it will take approximately 2 weeks to become established as a vendor and be issued a vendor code. Please note: Always retain the assigned vendor code.

UPDATED VENDOR INFORMATION:

Facilitators are responsible for keeping their information accurate. Current information can be viewed by searching [VendorWeb](#). Please refer to the "[How to use VendorWeb](#)" guide. For additional assistance, please reach out to jason.colbert@jud.state.ma.us. Please note:

- Banking information cannot be accessed via VendorWeb.
- To update banking information, complete the [New & Existing Facilitator Information Form \(CLTL-A2\)](#).

GETTING PAID:

A [Facilitator Request for Payment and/or Reimbursement Form \(CLTL-F3\)](#) must be submitted. After submission of documents, it will take approximately 2 weeks to receive payment.

- **To receive your stipend:**
 - Your program must conclude before submitting for reimbursement.
- **To receive book reimbursement:**
 - Materials must be purchased under your name.
 - Avoid purchasing through a shared account or using a form of payment that is not in your name.
 - You can submit for reimbursement once you receive the materials. You do not need to wait until your program concludes.

WHERE IS MY PAYMENT?

Please use [VendorWeb](#) to check the status of your payment. Please refer to the "[How to use VendorWeb](#)" guide. For additional assistance, please reach out to jason.colbert@jud.state.ma.us.

PART FIVE: OFFICE SUPPLIES

Judges and/or probation officers may order office supplies such as pens, pencils, notebooks (no furniture) through the court's office supply account. Please provide the total cost of office supplies on the program's [Program Announcement Form \(CLTL-AI\)](#).

PART SIX: GRADUATION

At the conclusion of each program a graduation is held in the judge's courtroom (recommended and when practical). The judge presents each graduate with a [Certificate of Completion](#), as well as the gift of a book. The book is a new reading, one different from material used during the program.

- A [budget](#) for the purchase of graduation refreshments is available.
- Complete the [Purchase Request Form for Graduation Food/Catering \(CLTL-F2\)](#).
- Requests should be submitted a few weeks in advance to allow for processing time.

PART SEVEN: APPENICES

Appendix A: Suggested CLTL Readings and Viewing List

View the full [Suggested CLTL Readings and Viewing List](#) online.

Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I Visit a Program?

Yes, Contact the CLTL program administrator @ cltl@jud.state.ma.us to assist with coordination.

2. How do I find a facilitator?

To find a facilitator, please [view the facilitator listing](#). Contact the CLTL program administrator @ cltl@jud.state.ma.us for assistance.

3. How do I find a venue for the program?

To find a location for the program, please [click here](#) for a listing. Contact the CLTL program administrator @ cltl@jud.state.ma.us for assistance.

4. Must a judge participate in the program?

Yes.

5. Can I give a job/college recommendation?

At their discretion, some judges, probation officers and facilitators provide job and college references.

Appendix C: Program Forms Directory and Templates

To access each form and template, click on the hyperlinks.

FORMS DIRECTORY:

- [CLTL-A1 - Program Announcement Form](#)
- [CLTL-A2 - New & Existing Facilitator Information Form](#)
- [CLTL-F2 - Purchase Request for Graduation Food & Catering Form](#)
- [CLTL-F3 - Facilitator Request for Payment & Reimbursement Form](#)
- [CLTL-MPS1 - Referral Form](#)
- [CLTL-MPS2 - CLTL Program Overview & Participant Agreement Packet](#)
- [CLTL-MPS3 - Attendance Form](#)
- [CLTL-MPS4 - Participant Program Feedback Form](#)

TEMPLATES:

- [Certificate of Completion](#)