



Ready to Read Grants and the State Library Budget Support the State Library Budget Bill

Request:

The Oregon Library Association (OLA) strongly supports the State Library's budget, including Ready to Read grants at their current level of \$1,653,457, or \$1.10 per child.

Ready to Read Grant Program Overview:

Oregon's public libraries use the Ready to Read grants to help children learn to read and to maintain their literacy skills as they grow.

In 1993, the Legislature created the Ready to Read grant program to improve library services to children by providing funds to every public library in the state. Grants are distributed annually to all legally established public libraries who apply for and report on their yearly grant spending. Grant amounts are calculated each fiscal year with a formula assigning 80% of the grant based on the number of children ages 0-14 being served, and 20% based on the library's geographic area service boundaries. Libraries receive a minimum grant amount of \$1000 and apply for the exact amount they are allocated each year. For 2023, the State Library plans to distribute \$801,345 to public libraries to use in their Ready to Read projects.

Outcome Focus:

Ready to Read Grants can be used flexibly by public libraries to suit the needs of their communities. The grants can be used to improve early literacy for kids 0-6 by helping them develop literacy skills by the time they start kindergarten. The grants are also used for children 0-14 to help them develop or improve literacy skills and engage in reading activities over the summer.

Building on Years of Program Success!

- In 2021, 326,058 participants attended Ready to Read-funded library literacy-based activities.
- Summer Reading participants in 2021 read over 4 million hours - 4,545,566 - over the summer.
- 143 eligible public libraries in Oregon applied for and will be awarded a grant for 2023.

The evidence is clear that children who start school reading or ready to read will be more successful in school. Research also shows that about two-thirds of the achievement gap can be attributed to unequal access to summer enrichment programs such as library reading programs. Fully funding the Ready to Read Grant Program will ensure public libraries address this need for all children from kindergarten through age fourteen.

Ready to Read grants are the only State General Fund program directly supporting Oregon's public libraries. In 2021, each \$1 of state funds invested from Ready to Read grants leveraged \$3.61 in local funds.

For more information:

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