



Budget Office

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

April 28, 2023

The Honorable Darrell Clarke
City Council President
City Hall, Room 490
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Council President Clarke,

This letter is in response to questions raised by Councilmembers regarding the Proposed FY24 Operating and Capital Budget.

Council President Clarke: Does the FLP have any existing programs that provide reading materials to community organizations or businesses?

The Free Library connects with community organizations, day cares, schools and businesses in various ways.

The Central Public Services Division, which consists of Parkway Central Library and the Library for Accessible Media for Pennsylvanians, distributes:

- Donations of classroom sets of books to teachers
- Chapter books to Strawberry Mansion Learning Center

Both Neighborhood Library Services Division, which consists of 49 Neighborhood Libraries and 3 Regional Libraries, and Central Public Services Division participate in our “Books to Go” program which provides free books to local schools and community organizations.

Our Youth Services and Programs Division distributes materials through the following partnerships and grants.

- **Literacy in Early Learning Spaces** – This grant-funded project partners with Star 1 & 2 Child Care to provide professional development, coaching and technical assistance for teachers and directors, literacy based family engagement (a free book is given to each child), and, a book nook for each classroom (infants, toddlers, preschoolers) with age appropriate books, shelving, and some cozy seating as appropriate, along with other materials that support literacy like puppets, letter blocks, and more. We are working with 26 childcares (63 classrooms) across the City in a 2-year cohort.
- **Philadelphia Housing Authority collaboration** – While we are not giving books to PHA, we are in a partnership/grant with them called Book Rich Environments, where we are supporting them in distributing free books they received through the grant to PHA families.
- **Summer Camp Challenge** – In this grant funded project, FLP provides professional development, read-aloud books and activity guides, and literacy materials to summer camps to use to infuse literacy into the daily camp activities. Summer Literacy Outreach Specialists visit



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camps to support the camp staff with implementing literacy activities and model what read alouds and activities can look like. In previous years, we also distributed leveled books for K-3rd graders to practice their reading, but this is not happening this year because the project funding has ended and we are using the remaining funds in a no-cost extension phase. In addition, while the campers read the leveled reading books over the summer, it was not a popular part of the program.

Previously, through the Words at Play program, we partnered with barbershops and laundromats to give them a small book nook, books, and carpet for children and families to access books while they are waiting. That program ended several years ago at the end of the grant, but we left the materials with the partner locations. Since this time, Read by 4th has been working with community businesses to provide book nooks (see below for more information).

Currently, there is a William Penn funded project to put books into laundromats.

<https://philadelphia.chalkbeat.org/2022/2/8/22923644/lessons-laundromat-philly-initiative-learning-opportunities-outside-school>

Read by 4th has a partnership with Barbershop Books to collaborate with Barbershops to do the same through Read by 4th.

<https://www.readby4th.org/initiatives-community/book-nooks>

If you have more questions, please do not hesitate to ask.