



## Book-Rich Environments Initiative (BRE)

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (GLR), the National Book Foundation (NBF), the Urban Libraries Council (ULC), the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are joining forces to transform the Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) into book-rich environments.

The BRE Initiative is a collaboration aimed to transform PHAs into book rich environments by providing diverse, high quality books and other literacy tools to children and families living in HUD-assisted housing to improve literacy outcomes and ensure all young people, regardless of background, have the tools they need to reach their full potential. PHAs, public libraries and other local and national education partners.

Nearly 4 million low-income children are living in HUD-assisted housing across the country. Improving their educational outcomes is essential to improving their life trajectories and launching them towards success. BRE hopes to encourage the love of reading and to improve educational outcomes of children living in HUD-assisted housing in participating communities.

### Goals

1. Distributing free, high quality, diverse books to children living in HUD-assisted housing
2. Engaging children and families in the love of reading and literacy activities offered by the local library and literacy partners
3. Establishing partnerships between the local PHA, the local public library, and literacy partners to develop and deliver ongoing programming that will improve the educational outcomes of PHA residents

### Major Components of the BRE Initiative

1. Book Distribution – PHAs participating in BRE will partner with the public library in their community. The library will receive a set of high quality and diverse books, secured by the National Book Foundation, and donated by national book publishers. The books will be designated for children who are residents of the local PHA. The number of books delivered to each site will be determined by that community's needs and capacity (e.g., the number of HUD-assisted residents in the community and the number of books the library branch can receive, store, and distribute throughout 2017).

Book distribution will launch in late Spring of 2017 (by the end of May) and may include up to three local distribution events in each community throughout the year:

- Your Public Library, Your Second Home: Focused on introducing children and families to the local library and encouraging a love for reading (May-June 2017).
  - Summer Fun and Learning: Focused on summer learning and engaging families in literacy activities outside of the school year (July-August 2017)
  - Leap Ahead at Your Library: Focused on going back to school and preparing for success in the next grade level (October-November 2017)
2. Partnership Building – Participating communities will utilize the launch events as a platform to engage local residents, and establish and maintain partnerships among the staffs of the local library, the PHA, local and national non-profits and foundations working on literacy, and the children and families living in HUD-assisted housing. The CGLR is mobilizing anchor partners including national education programs and the leading housing and education professional membership organizations that can help support ongoing local partnerships. Creating strong local partnerships is critical to ensure continued outreach and engagement of children and families living in HUD-assisted housing. Participating communities can also leverage existing cross-sector partnerships, such as their local MBK community efforts.
  3. Library Engagement – Local libraries will aim to engage kids and families in ongoing visits and opportunities. They will encourage all children and parents attending the book distribution event to get a library card for ongoing visits, give attendees a tour and explanation of all the resources a library has to offer, and encourage families to continue to utilize the library throughout the year. The library and PHA should also continue to partner to register families who were not in attendance for library cards and to promote strategies such as mobile libraries in public housing buildings and summer learning opportunities.
  4. Measuring Impact – BRE aims to measure impact and overall success of local efforts. The BRE partnership will create a common set of indicators that will enable localities to track progress and tangible outcomes.

## Sample Book Distribution Event

Theme: Introducing children and families living in public housing communities to the local library and encouraging a love for reading; introduce the library as their second home – for homework, computer access, reading, and special trainings.

Location: A local library branch located near a large public housing development or in an area where many HUD-assisted residents live.

Outreach: Outreach will be bolstered through a combined collaboration from HUD headquarters, the local PHA, and the local public library and may include:

1. Developing fliers and posters that can be hung in common spaces at public housing buildings or mailed to residents
2. Working with support service staff at the PHA to help spread the word among residents
3. Nominating resident leads (“Book Ambassadors”) who can help with engaging fellow residents
4. Working with anchor partners that may have programming for or with HUD-assisted residents

### Activities:

1. Book distribution – first of three sets of donated books
2. Library card registration and “Your Second Home” tours
3. Guest authors to give a reading
4. Demonstrations of digital literacy tools that children and families can use at home
5. Pop-up and permanent family reading room spaces

### Partners:

1. Library
2. Public Housing Agency
3. School District
4. Department of Education and Department of Housing and Urban Development
5. Community groups, such as resident advisory board or parent teacher associations
6. Literacy partners
7. Local foundations and funders that may be interested in supporting the efforts
8. Local elected officials
9. USDA Summer Meals Programs

Objective: Kids and families living in public housing will be targeted to receive books and resources that promote the love of reading and stronger educational and life outcomes.

Outcomes:

1. PHA residents leave with free books that can be used to encourage the love of reading at home
2. PHA residents are registered for library cards and aware of the programs and services of the library
3. The PHA, library, and local literacy partners engage in new or ongoing literacy strategies aimed at PHA residents such as mobile libraries or summer learning opportunities in public housing
4. Reading Rooms are created (preferably aligned with nutritional meals and snacks)

## Partners' Roles and Responsibilities

### **National Organizing Partners**

#### **Campaign for Grade Level Reading (GLR Campaign)**

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading will accord highest priority to building strong local coalitions with the capacity to harness the energy, local knowledge and resources of existing book distribution programs, libraries and funders around sustainable efforts to ensure children and families in public housing communities access to both hard copy and digital books.

GLR Campaign will coordinate with BRE anchor partners and the PHA leadership cohort. Activities will include support for the PHAs' involvement in book distribution events with the local public library, monthly webinars and learning activities and the co-development of a universal set of impact indicators along with program specific impact metrics by PHA community. Additionally, the GLR Campaign is exploring using CLPHA's newly online launch education hub to provide a platform for tracking impact indicators and nominating PHA Bright Spots.

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**National Book Foundation (NBF)**

National Book Foundation will work in collaboration with the Urban Libraries Council to coordinate book donations and confirm accompanying library programming. Book donations secured by NBF from partners in the corporate publishing community will be distributed to children living in local PHA residences and serve as a catalyst for ongoing engagement in library programming. NBF is available to work with the libraries to support program design and implementation, where possible. NBF has set a goal of securing full participation from all five of the major publishers, and working to create a collection of that book donations for readers across ages/grade levels, with titles that are representative of the diversity of the communities participating in the project. Beyond the launch, NBF aims to fundraise around the initiative, in order to secure resources for shipment of the books and other program-building elements, such as author visits.

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**Urban Libraries Council (ULC)**

The Urban Libraries Council is an enthusiastic partner in this effort. ULC has agreed to serve as the coordinating partner for delivery of the books received as a part of Book-Rich Environments Initiative to the local participating libraries. ULC will support a leadership cohort of public libraries that will plan and host up to three book distribution events in partnership with the local PHA leadership to invite and engage residents. The book distribution event(s) will commence ongoing partnerships to engage HUD residents with nearby public libraries -- for computer access and literacy, homework centers, reading opportunities and more. Each public library will collaborate with the PHA in their jurisdiction to develop their own respective book distribution events and engagement plans that leverage local anchor partners and other assets. All initial events will include distribution of books received; programming promoting books, literacy and libraries; issuance of library cards to interested residents to promote engagement going forward.

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**U.S. Department of Education (ED)**

ED will support this effort by providing relevant materials for the PHAs and libraries about leveraging books to promote a love of reading and literacy, will participate on webinars as needed, and will work to ensure that all Spring Events include the most effective materials about summer reading and meal opportunities in each community.

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**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

HUD will support the PHA leadership cohort and participate in the monthly webinars and learning activities. HUD will also:

- Conduct ongoing outreach to PHAs to support their BRE efforts and highlight their efforts nationally
- Serve as lead on the BRE PHA Peer-to-Peer Network – facilitating monthly conference call
- Work closely with CGLR to coordinate bi-monthly BRE webinars – offers anchor partnership opportunities and “PHA bright spots”
- Support PHA local BRE book distribution events by coordinating HUD press releases and providing HUD Field Office presence/support
- Use promising practices from PHA Leadership Cohort to expand initiative to additional PHAs
- Provide tools on creating Reading Room Projects (pop-ups or permanent)
- Provide technical assistance to PHAs for measuring success

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## **Public Housing Authority (PHA) Leadership Cohort**

Creating Book-Rich Environments in and around public housing communities will require active leadership from local PHAs. Thirty-Six PHAs have come forward to participate in the initial Leadership Cohort for the launch of the Book-Rich Environments Initiative. In addition to their strong interest in this work, each of the identified PHA communities has experience developing and implementing literacy-focused programming and a desire to deepen and expand their efforts for greater impact. In exchange for their commitment to the Book-Rich Environments Initiative, the PHA Leadership Cohort sites listed below will be the first identified sites to receive in-kind book commitments.

### **PHA Leadership Cohort (*\*In a Campaign for Grade-level Reading community*)**

Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, OH	Marin County Housing Authority, CA
*Housing Authority of Billings, MT	*Nampa Housing Authority, ID
*Boulder Housing Partners, CO	*New Bedford Housing Authority, MA
*Brownsville Housing Authority, TX	*New York City Housing Authority, NY
Cambridge Housing Authority, MA	*City of Phoenix Housing Department, AZ
*Chandler Housing Authority, AZ	*Housing Authority of the City of Pocatello, ID
*Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority, OH	*City of Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority, VA
Contra Costa County Housing Authority, CA	San Diego Housing Commission, CA
Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority, OH	*Housing Authority of the County of San Joaquin, CA
*District of Columbia Housing Authority, DC	*Housing Authority of the County of San Mateo, CA
Durham Housing Authority, NC	*San Antonio Housing Authority, TX
Edinburg Housing Authority, TX	*Sarasota Housing Authority, FL
*Fort Wayne Housing Authority, IN	*Springfield Housing Authority, MA
*Fresno Housing Authority, CA	*Housing Authority of Stanislaus County, CA
Gregory Housing Authority, TX	*Tacoma Housing Authority, WA
Harlingen Housing Authority, TX	*Tampa Housing Authority, FL
*Houston Housing Authority, TX	*Topeka Housing Authority, KS
*Kansas City Housing Authority, MO	
*Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, CA	

### **Each PHA in the Leadership Cohort has agreed to:**

1. Recruit, consult with, and engage parent groups and resident advisory councils
2. Foster and/or strengthen relationships with local agencies, organizations and programs including, but not limited to:
  - a. public libraries and museums, public schools, public health centers and law enforcement agencies
  - b. Local book distribution programs, literacy coalitions and nonprofit organizations.
  - c. YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Girls Inc, PAL and other youth-serving organizations
  - d. United Ways, community foundations and other local Funders
  - e. Barbershops, beauty salons, coin laundries, and other community hubs
3. Participate in Messaging and Mobilization events such as Read for the Record, Read Across America, National Night Out.

4. Support continuous improvement of the BRE Initiative by providing ideas, offering recommendations and nominating Bright Spots;
5. Designate a leader to serve as both a liaison to the Book-Rich Environment Initiative as well as a member of the Implementation Advisory Group.

### **Public Library Leadership Cohort**

Public libraries are committed to developing a love of reading and life-long learning for all members of the community while advancing digital inclusion and building healthy and sustainable communities. Thirty-one public libraries have expressed their commitment to participate as a leadership cohort for the Book-Rich Environment Initiative. Each public library is excited to plan and implement book distribution events in partnership with the local member of the PHA Leadership Cohort and to building on-going partnerships to engage children and families living in HUD-assisted housing in programming related to literacy as well as access to technology, maker spaces, and more.

### **Public Library Leadership Cohort**

Allen County Public Library, IN	Los Angeles Public Library, CA
Akron-Summit County Public Library, OH	Marin County Free Library, CA
Bell Whittington Public Library, TX	Nampa Public Library, ID
Billings Public Library, MT	New Bedford Free Public Library, MA
Boulder Public Library, CO	New York Public Library, NY
Brooklyn Public Library, NY	Phoenix Public Library, AZ
Brownsville Public Library System, TX	Queens Public Library, NY
Cambridge Public Library, MA	Roanoke Public Library, VA
Chandler Public Library, AZ	San Diego Public Library, CA
Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County, OH	San Mateo County Libraries, CA
Contra Costa County Library, CA	San Antonio Public Library, TX
Cuyahoga County Public Library, OH	Sarasota County Public Library, FL
District of Columbia Public Library, DC	Springfield City Library, MA
Durham County Library, NC	Stanislaus County Library, CA
Fresno County Public Library, CA	Stockton-San Joaquin Public Library, CA
Harlingen Public Library, TX	Tacoma Public Library, WA
Houston Public Library, TX	Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library, FL
Marshall Public Library, ID	Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, KS
Kansas City Public Library, MO	

### **National Anchor Partners**

The Anchor Partners Group includes national programs and the leading professional membership organizations that support housing authorities and community development agencies serving low-income families. In support of the initiative, members of the Anchor Partners Group have agreed to:

- nominate Bright Spots and provide advice and ideas on effective ways to engage their stakeholder constituencies to participate in the initiative
- endorse the Book-Rich Environments Initiative
- participate in the launch event
- deploy their communications channels to mobilize their stakeholder constituencies and lift up Bright Spots — PHAs and community development organizations that are engaged in the initiative and making an impact

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|---|------------------------------|
| • Age of Learning - ABCmouse                                  | • National Book Foundation   |
| • Book Harvest  | • Public Library Association |
| • Council of Large Public Housing Authorities                 | • Raising A Reader           |
| • Dolly Parton's Imagination Library                          | • Reach Out and Read         |
| • First Book  | • Reading Is Fundamental     |
| • Jumpstart   | • Scholastic                 |
| • Mind in the Making  | • Too Small to Fail          |
| • myON  | • Urban Libraries Council    |
| • National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials |                              |