

BOOK RICH ENVIRONMENTS | LOCAL PARTNERS ACTION PLAN 2018

Project Overview

Book Rich Environments (BRE) is a tri-sector collaboration between non-profit organizations, national government agencies, and corporate publishers that aims to infuse public housing communities across the country with a vibrant and accessible culture of books and connect families living in public housing communities with reading-related resources, in service of working to improve opportunities and outcomes for children living in public housing.

National Book Foundation serves as the project lead, with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Families Learning, and the Urban Libraries Council serving as key planning partners. Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) across the country serve as local partners, implementing the following three key initiative components within their community with support from the local public library and other literacy partners:

Book Distribution – free, high quality, diverse books provided to children and families living in HUD-assisted housing.

Library Engagement – young people and families engaged in the love of reading and connected with the ongoing literacy activities offered by the local public library.

Partnership Building – strategic partnerships on the local level, established between the local public housing authority, the local library, and local literacy partners to develop and deliver ongoing community and educational programming.

What does it mean to be a “book rich environment”?

Public housing communities are frequently classified as “book deserts.” Participating in Book Rich Environments as a local partner means you are pledging to work to shift that designation.

Research indicates that access to books and reading for pleasure help improve outcomes for young people and families living in under-resourced communities. In order to meet this need, creating and sustaining a book rich environment requires a multi-faceted approach and a variety of pathways for engagement, resulting in a network of resources and support that infuse books and reading across the entire community.

In a book rich environment:

- Books are easily available—through both book ownership and library engagement. While the BRE initiative centers around large scale book giveaways, these festive events should be seen as a jumping off point for engaging and connecting families with ongoing resources.
- Families see the value of books and reading, and feel that they have the necessary tools to support their children’s reading.
- All local players—including PHAs, libraries, social service and community organizations—are well-connected and poised to effectively collaborate in delivering literacy programming in a holistic and sustainable way.

2018 Action Plan for Public Housing Authorities

RESOURCES

As a local partner, you will receive the following:

High-quality, new, diverse books for distribution to residents who live in public housing. *Note: more information on how book quantity and selection is determined is included at end of document.*

Support from Urban Libraries Council in **collaborating with the local public library**.

Support from the national planning team in **connecting and collaborating with local literacy partners** who can contribute to BRE efforts.

Professional development and peer-networking opportunities through ongoing, regular conference calls and webinars (schedule to come).

Monthly email with project updates from National Book Foundation.

BRE logo for use in all public and printed materials, as well as a **BRE boilerplate description** and **press release template** to be utilized for any local marketing and PR efforts.

BRE resource page on National Book Foundation’s website, as well as information in the HUD portal.

RESPONSIBILITIES

As a local partner, you are expected to meet the following requirements. When relevant, a time period or deadline for 2018 activities is noted in parentheses. Schedule subject to change.

Participate in a **planning call** with a member of the national planning team (February)

Complete an online **Partner Information Survey**, provided by National Book Foundation (late March). This simple survey will ask you to provide information that helps us plan for book distribution, such as: how many books your community will receive; the breakdown in ages of young people served; demographic information including languages spoken or other cultural considerations.

Hold **at least one local planning meeting** in which PHA representatives come together in person with the local public library and other local literacy providers to discuss common goals (March-April) for working with public housing communities. National Book Foundation will provide a Planning Worksheet to help guide conversations.

Complete and submit a **Planning Worksheet**, provided by National Book Foundation (late April). This worksheet is designed to capture discussions from your local planning meeting and outline your plans for BRE implementation in 2018 before book distribution begins.

Accept, store, and organize **shipments of books** and accompanying materials for distribution events (mid May).

Plan, promote, and facilitate **at least three book giveaway events** between June and December 2018. As an alternative option for communities where public housing residents are overwhelmingly living in voucher-assisted housing, you may instead elect to develop a system for distributing books as part of annual voucher-assisted renewal process.

Pledge that **all donated books are distributed directly and at no cost to residents** for ownership. PHAs may keep a small selection of titles for onsite libraries or other projects that serve residents, but that number should not exceed 5% of the total donated quantity. Distribution events may continue into March 2019 in the event there is an excess of books at the end of 2018.

Track the following basic information throughout the year in preparation to **complete and submit a BRE Report** (December). *Note: we know different communities have different ways of tracking project information, we ask that you answer to the best of your ability and estimated answers are welcome when appropriate.*

- Total number of households served
- Total number of youth (ages 0-18) served
- Total number of books given away
- For each distribution event: date, location, attendance
- Examples of collaboration with the public library
- Examples of collaboration with other local literacy partners

Use provided **BRE logo and boilerplate description** of project and partners in any public materials, including press releases.

Submit links to any **press coverage** to National Book Foundation. *Note: National Book Foundation is available to assist with local press efforts as needed.*

2018 Action Plan for Public Libraries:

Identify a **team leader** to partner with the PHA team. (January)

Participate in a **planning call** with a member of the national planning team (February)

Attend and bring ideas to **at least one local planning meeting** in which PHA representatives come together in person with the local public library and other local literacy providers to discuss common goals for working with public housing communities. National Book Foundation will provide a Planning Worksheet to help guide conversations. (March-April)

Support PHA in the planning, promotion, and facilitation of **at least three book giveaway events** between June and December 2018. This can include hosting events at local branches, providing literacy activities at offsite events, engaging residents in learning activities, and increasing awareness of the public library and its resources.

Offer **library card sign-ups** at any Book Rich Environment event, and track the number of BRE-related sign ups, as well as any follow up data available (i.e., number of repeat visits from new patrons).

If identified as a need by the PHA, assist with accepting, storing, and organizing **shipments of books** and accompanying materials for distribution events (mid May).

Submit links to any **press coverage** to National Book Foundation. *Note: National Book Foundation is available to assist with local press efforts as needed.*

More information on book selection

The total number of donated books per site cannot be finalized until the donation solicitation process is complete (estimated: March). National Book Foundation then divides books based on 0-18 population numbers provided by HUD.

For example, if National Book Foundation secures a total of 100K donated books, and your local community accounts for 7% of the total 0-18 populations served by BRE, you will be eligible to receive up to 7,000 books. Your allotment will be

confirmed before shipping. Allotment can be reduced by request, but cannot be increased.

National Book Foundation strives to match requests for age-level, diversity, and other demographics in each allotment as closely as possible, but allotment is ultimately determined by available quantities.