

Maryland Announces 2024 Young Readers Program Funding Recipients

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Contact: Tim Pratt, 443-695-6772

BALTIMORE – The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) announced that 16 public library systems and affiliate organizations will receive additional funding from the State budget passed by Governor Wes Moore to support early childhood literacy programs through the Young Readers Matching Grant Program.

The Maryland Governor’s Young Readers Program, the Baltimore City affiliate of the [Dolly Parton Imagination Library](#), is a book gifting program that began in 2016 and has since provided thousands of children with free, high-quality books. The Young Readers Program Expansion Act of 2023, spearheaded by Del. Marc Korman (D-Montgomery) and Sen. Cory McCray (D-Baltimore City) and signed into law by Gov. Moore, created a new grants program for MSLA that will help support the distribution of books through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to more than 39,000 additional Maryland children under 5.

As part of the program, children receive a free book every month to encourage a love of reading and learning, and to prepare them for school. Dolly Parton Imagination Library program affiliates have reported a better readiness for kindergarten, improved home literacy practices and increased student achievement, among other benefits.

“The Young Readers Program Expansion Act will help tens of thousands of additional children develop the skills they need to succeed in school and in life,” said State Librarian Irene Padilla. “I’m thrilled to see Maryland lawmakers and so many dedicated affiliates across the state laying the groundwork for the program to grow and support even more young readers in the future.”

The Young Readers Program Expansion Act of 2023 earmarked \$350,000 in State funding to support a matching grant initiative for programs across Maryland, in addition to the Baltimore City program, which is managed by [Enoch Pratt Free Library](#) and receives nearly \$200,000. The goal of the program is to support access to books for children, especially those in high-poverty ZIP codes.

Funds are being distributed this spring to the following public library systems and organizations:

- Allegany County United Way, Inc. (Allegany)
- Annapolis Area Imagination Library (Anne Arundel)
- Bright Minds Foundation (Howard)
- Caroline County Public Library (Caroline)
- Charles County Public Library (Charles)
- Dolly Parton Imagination Library of Cecil County (Cecil)

- Enoch Pratt Free Library (Baltimore City)
- Frederick County Public Schools (Frederick)
- Garrett Reading Council (Garrett)
- Imagination Library of Montgomery County (Montgomery)
- Imagination Library of Talbot County (Talbot)
- Imagination Library of Wheaton Woods Elementary PTA (Montgomery)
- Kent County Judy Center (Kent)
- Prince George's County Memorial Library System (Prince George's)
- Queen Anne's County Library (Queen Anne's)
- United Way of the Lower Eastern Shore (Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, Worcester)

The Maryland State Library Agency thanks Governor Wes Moore, Del. Korman, Sen. McCray and the General Assembly for leading the effort to expand access to resources for Maryland's youngest readers.

Learn more about the [Dolly Parton Imagination Library](#) and consider [donating](#) to your local affiliate today.

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