



## In Partnership with

### Spring 2026 Little Free Library (LFL) Read in Color Expansion Grant GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES and EXPECTATIONS

**Purpose** “Today, in the United States, more than 30 million adults cannot read or write above a third-grade level. Studies have repeatedly shown that books in the hands of children have a meaningful impact on improving literacy. The more books in or near the home [and in the community], the more likely a child will learn and love to read... Little Free Library book-sharing boxes play an essential role by providing 24/7 access to books and encouraging a love of reading ([www.littlefreelibrary.org](http://www.littlefreelibrary.org)).”

“Read in Color® brings diverse books to Little Free Library (LFL) book-sharing boxes around the world. Read in Color distributes books that provide perspectives on racism and social justice; celebrate BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and other marginalized voices; and incorporate experiences from all identities for all readers. Less than 25% of children’s books depict non-white characters. We believe everyone should be able to see themselves in the pages of a book. We also know that books can be a window into experiences that are different from our own. By reading diverse books, we can increase understanding, empathy, and inclusion ([www.littlefreelibrary.org](http://www.littlefreelibrary.org)).”

**Award:** One (1) Little Free Library (LFL) sharing-box, One (1) post and ground screw or set of legs for planting the LFL, One (1) box of 25 diverse books. Access to unlimited books via The Foundation’s Exchangerees.

#### Key Criteria & Eligible Projects:

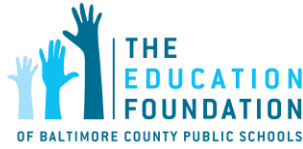
Review and award of grant materials will be based on the project’s anticipated need of supplies, resources, and opportunities/experiences to fulfill community needs and improve literacy rates.

Grant expectations:

- Submit an application (electronically) on or before October 31, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.
- Identify a Steward who will commit to maintaining and caring for the Little Free Library (LFL).
- Submit a photo with the desired mulched location for the LFL circled and the name of the establishment printed (*e.g., Battle Grove Elementary School printed on the photo and the mulched spot by the playground is circled*).
- Attend the LFL Grant Orientation for Stewards and Team Members from 5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m. on **March 18, 2026**, at the Exchangeree Windsor Mill.
- Plant the granted LFL in the community: at a school, office, or other community location on or before **June 14, 2026**.
- Ensure the Little Free Library Charter Number plaque is attached to the front of the Little Free Library.
- Plan and execute a ribbon cutting ceremony to officially open the LFL.
- Work with Dr. Heather Wooldridge, Associate Director of The Education Foundation of BCPS, to transfer the LFL Charter Number to the Steward and to register the LFL on the Little Free Library World Map ([www.littlefreelibrary.org/map/](http://www.littlefreelibrary.org/map/)).
- Keep the Little Free Library stocked with diverse books.
- Submission of Recipient Grant Project Summary and Storyboard to The Foundation on or before **June 14, 2026**.

Projects must be conducted and supervised by a BCPS staff member or Baltimore County community member. Projects must address an identified need that is aligned with BCPS goals, The Education Foundation of Baltimore County Public Schools, Inc.'s mission and vision, and the school’s progress plan (if applicable). The proposal must describe a quantitative and/or qualitative method to evaluate the project's success.

**Application** October 31, 2025, on or before 5:00 p.m.



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### Deadline:

### Notification of Recipients:

Recipients will receive an e-mail notification from the foundation's Associate Director, Dr. Heather Wooldridge, on or before **November 17, 2025**. A media release/Mission Moment blog post and announcement on [The Education Foundation of Baltimore County Public Schools website](#) and all social media outlets will be released the week of **November 17, 2025**.

### Awarding of Materials:

Materials will be provided to Stewards at the mandatory Orientation on March 18, 2026 at the Exchangeree in Windsor Mill. All LFLs must be planted in the ground and opened with a Ribbon Cutting ceremony on or before **June 14, 2026**.

### Proposal Review:

Proposals will be competitively reviewed by the Programs and Allocations Committee of The Education Foundation of BCPS, Inc. BCPS curriculum and instruction and/or business services professionals may be consulted as part of the proposal review for the purpose of compliance and alignment. All applications will be scored by three committee members.

### Initiative Summary:

A final project summary and storyboard with photos and grant highlights must be submitted to The Education Foundation of BCPS, Inc. upon the conclusion of the initiative no later than **June 14, 2026** (A Little Free Library Read in Color storyboard template will be sent electronically to the grant recipient in the congratulatory e-mail notification).

A grant recipient who does not submit a final project summary and storyboard **will not** be eligible for future funding consideration until both have been received.





## In Partnership with

1. Describe why it is important for your community to have access to a Little Free Library (LFL) and diverse books. *(20 points)*
2. Describe how your selected project supports literacy and is aligned with BCPS goals, The Education Foundation of Baltimore County Public Schools, Inc.’s mission and vision, and your school’s progress plan (if applicable). *(20 points)*
3. Explain specifically who this project will impact the most and how. *(20 points)*
4. What is your measurable impact of the success of the project? *(20 points)*
5. Logistics: *(20 points)*
  - Who will serve as the Steward of your Little Free Library (LFL)? Why was this person chosen?
  - Where will your LFL be planted? ***(School’s must plant their LFL in a mulched garden bed if planted outdoors).*** Take a picture of the location, print it, write the name of your school/office/business/organization on it, and circle the exact location you wish to plant your LFL. *(e.g., Battle Grove Elementary School printed on the photo and the mulched spot by the playground is circled).* Upload this picture as part of your online grant application.
  - What is the proposed date and time of your Ribbon Cutting Ceremony? Please describe the event, including how you will incorporate the opportunity for participants to sign the Read in Color pledge.

### Self-Checklist for Completion of Application

Project application is appropriate for submission if the following questions can be answered in the affirmative:	YES	NO
• I have the permission of my Principal/Supervisor to plant a LFL at our location.		
• The project clearly describes why it is important for our community to have access to a LFL and diverse books.		
• The project clearly supports literacy and is aligned with BCPS goals, The Education Foundation of Baltimore County Public Schools, In’s mission and vision, and our school’s progress plan.		
• The project clearly explains who this project will impact the most and how.		
• The project articulates the measurable impact of the success of the project.		
• Project includes a detailed description of the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, including how participants will sign the Read in Color pledge.		

## Spring 2026 LITTLE FREE LIBRARY (LFL) READ IN COLOR GRANT | RUBRIC

Key Criteria	4	3	2	1	Score
<b>Description of Selected Project and Resources Needed</b> <i>20 Points</i>	Describes a need for the selected project to support, and the resources needed for implementation. <b>13-20 points</b>	Describes a need that somewhat addresses the selected project to support, and the resources needed for implementation. <b>5-12 points</b>	Does not describe a need that addresses the selected project to support, and the resources needed for implementation. <b>1-4 points</b>	No reference to a need or resources needed for implementation. <b>0 points</b>	/20

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<p><b>Explanation of How Project Addresses Identified Need with Alignment</b> <i>20 Points</i></p>	<p>Explanation is consistent with BCPS goals, aligned with the ED Foundation's mission and vision, and the school's progress plan. <b>13-20 points</b></p>	<p>Explanation is somewhat consistent with BCPS goals and somewhat aligned with the Ed Foundation's mission and vision, and the school's progress plan. <b>5-12 points</b></p>	<p>Explanation is not consistent with BCPS goals nor aligned with the ED Foundation's mission and vision, and the school's progress plan. <b>1-4 points</b></p>	<p>Does not explain how and is not consistent with BCPS goals nor aligned with the ED Foundation's mission and vision, and the school's progress plan. <b>0 points</b></p>	<p>/20</p>
<p><b>Impact of the Project and How?</b> <i>20 Points</i></p>	<p>Project has the potential to impact a large number of students academically and social-emotionally within the classroom/schoolhouse making an impact. <b>13-20 points</b></p>	<p>Project has the potential to impact a large number of students either academically or social-emotionally within the classroom/schoolhouse with some impact. <b>5-12 points</b></p>	<p>Project has the potential to impact a minimal number of students either academically or social-emotionally within the classroom/schoolhouse with little impact. <b>1-4 points</b></p>	<p>Project does not have the potential to impact a large number of students nor address potential academic or social-emotional impact on students. <b>0 points</b></p>	<p>/20</p>
<p><b>Measurable Impact for Success</b> <i>20 Points</i></p>	<p>Objectives are clearly defined, attainable, and address the stated needs for the project. Educational outcomes are stated and are measurable. <b>13-20 points</b></p>	<p>Objectives are defined and address the stated needs for the project. Educational outcomes are stated with very little measurable outcomes. <b>5-12 points</b></p>	<p>Objectives are defined. Educational outcomes are not clearly stated and cannot be measured effectively. <b>1-4 points</b></p>	<p>Objectives are not clear. No measurable outcomes are included. <b>0 points</b></p>	<p>/20</p>
<p><b>Logistics</b> <i>20 Points</i></p>	<p>The logistics are clearly mapped out and all questions are addressed in detail. <b>13-20 points</b></p>	<p>Most of the logistics are mapped out and most of the questions are addressed. <b>5-12 points</b></p>	<p>Some of the logistics are mapped out and some of the questions are addressed. <b>1-4 points</b></p>	<p>The logistics are not mapped out and the questions are not addressed. <b>0 points</b></p>	<p>/20</p>
<b>TOTAL</b>					<p>/100</p>



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**Little Free Library®**  
Take a Book. Share a Book.