

OREGON STATE LIBRARY READY TO READ GRANT PROGRAM

Purpose:

Establish, develop or improve public library early literacy services for children from birth to six years of age and provide the statewide summer reading program for children from birth to 14 years of age.

History:

The Ready to Read grant program was established in 1993 through ORS 357.740-357.780.

Funding:

In 2013-15, grant funding is 94¢ per child for 0-14 years old with a \$1,000 minimum grant; these are State General Funds. In 2014, each \$1.00 in Ready to Read grant funds leveraged \$1.87 in local funds.

Distribution:

All legally established public libraries in Oregon are eligible to apply for an annual Ready to Read grant. Distribution is based on a statutory funding formula that includes number of children and square mileage of each library jurisdiction. All 131 eligible libraries applied for and were awarded a grant.

Grants:

The largest Ready to Read grant awarded was \$96,945 and the average award was \$5,217. Fifty-three minimum grants of \$1,000 were awarded; if the minimum grant was not in the Oregon Revised Statutes, the smallest grant would have been \$33.

Results:

Of the 131 libraries receiving Ready to Read grants, 52% provided all three services identified as best practices in library youth services. The three best practices are conducting summer reading programs, outreach to underserved children, and providing early literacy training for parents and caregivers. The participating libraries served 563,769 children. In 2014, the total number of children and adults attending library literacy programs was 1,240,611. The number of children and teens participating in the summer reading program was 207,449.

Proposed Changes:

The State Library is proposing changes to modernize the program based on feedback received from our stakeholders through a variety of outreach efforts. These changes include:

1. Change the age limits from 0-14 to 0-17.
2. Change the minimum grant to local libraries from \$1,000 to \$1,200.
3. Allows funding to be used for out-of-school-time program for K-12 students.
4. Requires funds to have an emphasis on underserved youth.
5. Change the name of the Ready to Read program to Reading for Success.

6. The new program will also include outcome based evaluation.

The addition of the 15-17 age groups would be a significant per child grant reduction from \$0.94 to \$0.77. The agency is proposing an investment (State Library policy option package 102) in the new Reading for Success program that would only cause a reduction from \$0.94 to \$0.85 with the requested investment of \$139,759.