

FROM THE DESK OF:
Representative Pam Marsh
House District 05



Ready to Read Grants and the State Library Budget Support SB 5518 and the State Library

SB 5518 is the State Library of Oregon budget, which includes funding for the Ready to Read grants to local libraries. The State Library provides resources for blind and Oregonians with print disabilities, supports the other executive agencies, and offers technical assistance to libraries in Oregon. The Oregon Library Association strongly supports maintaining the State Library's budget, including Ready to Read grants at their current level of \$1,465,695, or \$1.02 per child.

About the State Library of Oregon:

The State Library serves three key functions. First, it provides free audiobooks and braille publications for blind and other Oregonians with print disabilities. Second, it supports other state executive agencies through research assistance, cooperative purchasing of information resources, and serving as depository for state and federal publications. Third, it assists public, school academic, and tribal libraries by offering expert consulting, digital resources, training, and grant programs, including the Ready to Read grant. The State Library is funded by the General Fund, federal monies, and assessments on other state agencies.

About the Ready to Read Grant Program:

In 1993, the Legislature created the Ready to Read grant program to improve library services to children by providing funds to every public library in the state. Oregon's public libraries use the Ready to Read grants to help children learn to read and to maintain their literacy skills as they grow.

This program is successful!

- Attendance at library literacy-based activities for children and teens continues to increase – 1,477,788 this past year.
- Summer reading participation has nearly doubled to 267,399 in 2018 since the grant program started. 113 public libraries used state funds to implement and enhance their programs.
- 134 eligible public libraries in Oregon applied for and were awarded a grant in 2018.
- Kids read over 166,463 books this past summer in library summer reading programs.

The evidence is clear that children who start school reading or ready to read will be more successful in school. Research also shows that about two-thirds of the achievement gap can be attributed to unequal access to summer enrichment programs such as library reading programs. Fully funding the Ready to Read Grant Program would ensure public libraries address this need for all children from kindergarten through age 14.

Ready to Read grants are the only State General Fund program directly supporting Oregon's public libraries. **In 2018, each \$1 of state funds leveraged \$1.88 in local funds.**

For more information:

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