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**National Book**   
**Foundation** *Presenter of the*  
National Book Awards

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## EIGHT PUBLISHERS COMMIT OVER 420,000 BOOKS TO SECOND YEAR OF BOOK RICH ENVIRONMENTS INITIATIVE

*With new partner and participating sites, Book Rich  
Environments programming to take place at 37 sites across 19  
states*

**New York, NY (April 5, 2018)** – The Book Rich Environments (BRE) initiative, now in its second year, aims to combat lack of literary access, often termed “book deserts,” by connecting communities with resources that help foster life-long, joyful relationships between readers and books. BRE is a collaboration between the National Book Foundation, which serves as lead partner, the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Urban Libraries Council, and the National Center for Families Learning, a new partner. This unique program works with HUD-assisted communities to strengthen home libraries, facilitate book-distribution events, and provide the information and tools to establish long-term connections between families, libraries, and other literary resources.

This year, with book contribution commitments from eight U.S. book publishers (Algonquin Books for Young Readers/Workman Publishing, Candlewick Press, Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins Publishers, Macmillan Publishers, Penguin Random House, Scholastic, and Simon & Schuster), BRE has secured a total of 422,000 free, high-quality, diverse books that will go to children and families in HUD-assisted communities. BRE programming will once again take place throughout the U.S., from Missouri to Colorado to New York, where last year, through BRE, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) received the largest book donation in its history. 37 sites across 19 states will participate, and two sites will be joining for the first time, one in Phenix City, Alabama and the second in northern Minnesota, serving communities on three Anishinaabe reservations: Leech Lake, Red Lake, and White Earth.

Each local public housing authority (PHA) partner pledges to hold at least three book-distribution events. The most visible part of the BRE program, these events are held at public housing buildings, community centers, and local library branches (providing opportunities for attendees to sign up for library cards). Past events have included a community barbeque in Cincinnati, a scavenger hunt in Springfield, MA, and an innovative plan to turn the otherwise tedious process of public housing renewal into a family-friendly book distribution event in Houston.

“Our commitment to supporting and encouraging readers of all ages is unwavering,” said David Steinberger, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Book Foundation. “We are thrilled that with the expansion of Book Rich Environments, we will be able to reach even more young people across the country with literature and stories that will be meaningful to them.”

“We firmly believe that the wonder and excitement of books are for everyone,” said Lisa Lucas, Executive Director of the National Book Foundation. “Access to those books—new, quality books that readers are able to take home and keep—is a strong foundation on which to build a rich, enthusiastic, life-long relationship with reading.”

National Center for Families Learning has joined as a new BRE partner this year. The Louisville-based nonprofit has a national footprint, and brings to the table nearly 30 years of broad experience with coalition-building, professional learning, and a family-centered approach to reading—experience that is invaluable to BRE’s goal of connecting families to the literary resources necessary to sustain an active interest in literature.

In its inaugural year, BRE provided over 270,000 free books to children and families in PHAs. This year’s quantity of 422,000 books represents a significant expansion in the reach of BRE resources. With a new programming partner and participating sites, BRE is not only able to provide free books that encourage and sustain home libraries for families, but is also able to activate local libraries and literary partners able to serve families in the communities where these public housing authorities are located, to develop and deliver ongoing literary and literacy programming, resulting in a program that is far reaching, but also responsive to each local community’s needs.

Books available at BRE book-distribution events include both English and Spanish language titles for kids ages 0-18, and include books by beloved children’s and YA authors such as Margaret Wise Brown, Evelyn Coleman, Donald Crews, Tomie dePaola, Arthur Dorros, John Green, and Sabaa Tahir. Titles by National Book Awards authors are also available, including *Bronzeville Boys and Girls* by Gwendolyn Brooks, *Ramona and Her Mother* by Beverly Cleary, *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L’Engle, *Mango, Abuela y yo* by Meg Medina, *The Great Gilly Hopkins* by Katherine Paterson, and *Challenger Deep* by Neal Shusterman.

With a focus on providing free books, programming, and vital connections to local resources, BRE seeks to make long-lasting impact within PHAs, helping to create sustainable book rich environments where literature is accessible and celebrated within the community. All participating BRE cities and counties can be found below.

Phenix City, AL  
Phoenix, AZ  
Chandler, AZ  
Contra Costa County, CA  
Fresno, CA  
Los Angeles, CA  
Marin County, CA  
San Diego, CA  
San Joaquin County, CA  
San Mateo County, CA  
Stanislaus County, CA  
Boulder, CO  
Sarasota, FL

Tampa, FL  
Nampa, ID  
Pocatello, ID  
Fort Wayne, IN  
Topeka, KS  
Cambridge, MA  
New Bedford, MA  
Springfield, MA  
Anishinaabe Reservations, MN  
Kansas City, MO  
Billings, MT  
Durham, NC  
New York, NY

Akron, OH  
Cincinnati, OH  
Brownsville, TX  
Edinburg, TX  
Harlingen, TX  
Houston, TX  
Gregory, TX  
San Antonio, TX  
Roanoke, VA  
Tacoma, WA  
Washington, DC

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The mission of the **National Book Foundation** is to celebrate the best literature in America, expand its audience, and ensure that books have a prominent place in American culture. In addition to the National Book Awards, for which it is best known, the Foundation's programs include **5 Under 35**, a celebration of emerging fiction writers selected by former National Book Award Finalists and Winners; the **National Book Awards Teen Press Conference**, an opportunity for New York City students to interview the current National Book Award Finalists in Young People's Literature; **NBA on Campus**, a partnership that brings National Book Award authors to colleges across the country; the **Innovations in Reading Prize**, awarded to individuals and institutions that have developed innovative means of creating and sustaining a lifelong love of reading; **Book Rich Environments**, a partnership between HUD, the US Department of Education, the Urban Libraries Council, and the National Center for Families Learning, which this year will provide over 420,000 books to children and families in 37 different public housing authorities around the country; **Why Reading Matters**, which brings together dedicated literary minds (authors, journalists, librarians, passionate readers) to explore innovative ways to celebrate literature, expand its influence, and create and sustain a love of books for readers at all stages of life; and **BookUp**, a writer-led, after-school reading club for middle-school students.

**The National Book Award** is one of the nation's most prestigious literary prizes and has a stellar record of identifying and rewarding quality writing. In 1950, William Carlos Williams was the first Winner in Poetry, the following year William Faulkner was honored in Fiction, and so on through the years. Many previous Winners of the National Book Award are now firmly established in the canon of American literature, including Ralph Ellison, Louise Erdrich, Jonathan Franzen, Denis Johnson, Flannery O'Connor, Adrienne Rich, and Jesmyn Ward.