

Chapter 446

(House Bill 383)

AN ACT concerning

**Young Readers Programs – Establishment
(Young Readers Program Expansion Act)**

FOR the purpose of establishing the Baltimore City Young Readers Program within the Division of Children and Youth of the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services to mail free, high–quality books to certain children; establishing the Young Readers Matching Grant Program within the Division to provide matching grants to ~~counties~~ affiliated services to support the establishment and operation of book gifting services; requiring the Deputy Director of the Division to administer the programs; authorizing an affiliated service to apply for a program grant; requiring a program grant to be disbursed to a qualifying affiliated service; and generally relating to Young Readers Programs.

BY adding to

Article – Human Services

Section 8–1401 through 8–1403 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 14. Young Readers Programs”

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

Preamble

WHEREAS, The Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services has been funding the Baltimore City Young Readers Program since 2016; and

WHEREAS, The Program has been budgeted at \$200,000 annually; and

WHEREAS, The Program is an affiliate of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library; and

WHEREAS, The Program has been undertaken in partnership with the Banneker–Douglass Museum Foundation; ~~and now, therefore,~~

~~WHEREAS, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library has gifted over 172 million books worldwide to children, regardless of their family’s income; now, therefore,~~

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Human Services

SUBTITLE 14. YOUNG READERS PROGRAMS.

8-1401.

~~IN THIS SUBTITLE, “DOLLY PARTON’S IMAGINATION LIBRARY” MEANS A SERVICE THAT:~~

~~(1) MAILS FREE, HIGH-QUALITY BOOKS TO CHILDREN FROM BIRTH UNTIL SCHOOL AGE, WITHOUT REGARD TO FAMILY INCOME; AND~~

~~(2) IS AFFILIATED WITH THE DOLLYWOOD FOUNDATION.~~

IN THIS SUBTITLE, “EARLY READER ORGANIZATION” MEANS A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION:

(1) THAT IS TAX EXEMPT UNDER § 501(C)(3) OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE; AND

(2) WHOSE MISSION IS TO MAIL TO CHILDREN FREE, HIGH-QUALITY BOOKS DESIGNED TO AID THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING SKILLS.

8-1402.

(A) IN THIS SECTION, “PROGRAM” MEANS THE BALTIMORE CITY YOUNG READERS PROGRAM.

(B) THERE IS A BALTIMORE CITY YOUNG READERS PROGRAM IN THE DIVISION.

(C) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO WORK WITH ~~DOLLY PARTON’S IMAGINATION LIBRARY~~ AN EARLY READER ORGANIZATION TO MAIL FREE, HIGH-QUALITY BOOKS TO CHILDREN IN BALTIMORE CITY.

(D) THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR SHALL:

(1) ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM; AND

(2) CARRY OUT THE PROGRAM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ~~A NONPROFIT~~ AN EARLY READER ORGANIZATION ~~(501(C)(3))~~ PARTNER.

(E) FOR EACH FISCAL YEAR, THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF \$200,000 TO THE PROGRAM.

8-1403.

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) “AFFILIATED SERVICE” MEANS A BOOK-GIFTING SERVICE ~~AFFILIATED WITH DOLLY PARTON’S IMAGINATION LIBRARY~~ PERFORMED BY A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT IS TAX EXEMPT UNDER § 501(C)(3) OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OR A UNIT OF STATE, COUNTY, OR MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT THAT FORMS AN AFFILIATED PARTNERSHIP WITH AN EARLY READER ORGANIZATION.

(3) “PROGRAM” MEANS THE YOUNG READERS MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM.

(B) THERE IS A YOUNG READERS MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM IN THE DIVISION.

(C) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE GRANTS TO ~~COUNTIES THAT~~ AFFILIATED SERVICES TO:

(1) SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF AFFILIATED SERVICES; AND

(2) CONTRIBUTE AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO THE AMOUNT OF FUNDING PROVIDED FOR THE OPERATION OF AN AFFILIATED SERVICE ~~IN THE COUNTY.~~

(D) THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR SHALL ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM.

(E) (1) ~~A COUNTY~~ AN AFFILIATED SERVICE MAY SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR A PROGRAM GRANT ON THE FORM THAT THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR REQUIRES.

(2) AN APPLICATION FOR A PROGRAM GRANT SHALL:

~~(I) IDENTIFY AN AFFILIATED SERVICE OPERATING IN THE COUNTY; AND~~

~~(II)~~ INCLUDE A PLAN TO ENSURE THAT THE AFFILIATED SERVICE IS ABLE TO GIFT BOOKS TO ELIGIBLE CHILDREN, INCLUDING CHILDREN IN LOW-INCOME ZIP CODES WITHIN ~~THE COUNTY~~ ITS AREA OF SERVICE.

(3) A PROGRAM GRANT SHALL BE DISBURSED TO AN AFFILIATED SERVICE THAT QUALIFIES FOR THE PROGRAM.

(F) FOR EACH FISCAL YEAR, THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF ~~\$500,000~~ \$250,000 TO THE PROGRAM.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2022.

Approved by the Governor, May 16, 2022.